

ChinaSecurity

Vol. 4, No. 2 Spring 2008

中国安全

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Debating China's Future

Li Cheng • Thomas P.M. Barnett • Harry Harding • Cui Liru • John J. Mearsheimer
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*This issue was made possible through the generous support of
the Ford Foundation, Secure World Foundation and the
Robert and Ardis James Foundation*

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Debating China's Future

Editor's Notes

The Blind Men and the Elephant

In 2005, *China Security* was established with the vision of examining the breadth of China's strategic development – from grassroots social policies to nuclear weapons – and its impact on the world. We did so, eyes wide open, cognizant of the risks of such whopping ambition. Like the blind men touching the different parts of the elephant, each thinking it is something different depending on where he touches, comprehending a colossus like China in any kind of sweeping sense is a similarly confounding task. In addition to the complexity of the country at cultural, political, social and strategic levels, there is also the time factor. Change in China moves at a phenomenal clip.

Despite these caveats, three years into our project, we feel it is time to take stock of how far China has come. Plus, it is open season on China in light of all the attention holding Summer Olympics entails. To mark this important chapter in China's journey, we have invited many of the leading thinkers on the subject, from inside and outside its borders, to reflect on China's accomplishments and contemplate its future – in fewer than 500 words. With the Olympics a kind of "hurrah" for China's 30 years of economic progress, we want to know if China has "arrived" as a great nation. And if so, what does it stand for? What does it have to offer the world besides another economic stanchion for the world economy? Will it challenge the international status quo or invest in its future?

In the essays that follow, a number of thematic threads emerged. Many struggle with the meaning of China's growing economic power matched by its military build-up. Would China be friend, foe or both? Others dismiss talk of China's ascendance in the world as ultimately subordinate to its domestic challenges. "Internal contradictions" are a prevailing theme, particularly among our Chinese authors. Still others attempt to sketch out what a unique worldview China might offer in the decades ahead. If any consensus is discernible, it can best be characterized as a deep uncertainty about where China is headed, how it will get there and the effect it will have on others and itself along the way.

These short essays would otherwise comprise another variant of "China's rising," however, a subtle but important shift has taken place in the discourse. Implicit in most of these think pieces is the assumption that, at least in relative terms, China's rise is a *fait accompli*. Even five years ago, China's rise was spoken of as a work in progress. Now, its ascendance, in an economic sense, has

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reached a certain plateau. Even among those who emphasize the salience of China's internal contradictions as the key to its future, no one disagrees that those domestic issues themselves are a result of China's impressive level of progress.

A number of conclusions flow from this. The certainty of China's specific economic, political or military attainments is juxtaposed with the uncertainty of how China will employ its new-found progress. The discussion has shifted from *means* to *intent, orientation and motivation*. Although China's material rise is indisputable, its direction is highly uncertain. The second phase of China's ascendancy will be a far more complex one to handle, as many point out, both for China, initiating it and those countries on the receiving end.

Perhaps more pertinent than outsiders' peering in with a sense of unease, China herself is not sure. As many of our authors correctly note, China's progress is impressive by most economic and development standards, yet the "contradictions" in society have only increased. This is a profound issue for the country's future, because it is China's citizens who have benefited the most from its material growth and yet their uncertainty remains over what lies ahead. The quid pro quo for raising people's level of prosperity is support for the government. This contract the government has made with its people has thus far held up, yet, the pressure for continuing progress to other fronts such as an effective judicial system, freedom of press, ethnic autonomy, human rights, and more continues. In short, progress has largely been in material terms, not in values, individual freedoms, or as one author calls it, "social capital."

Nationalism has been employed to fill that gap, as several people note, and has succeeded to an extent. But this remains a salve, if a dangerous one, to the uncertainties and contradictions awaiting China. Rallying around the flag focuses on external injustices rather than on China's most profound challenges, most of which are domestic. China must focus energy on building nonmaterial, value-based, even spiritual capital in society. As one essayist puts it, the Chinese must learn to "get along," not just "get ahead."

The uncertainties regarding China's future among the Chinese and outsiders are connected. China's behavior abroad will depend fundamentally on its domestic circumstances more than any other factor. Internal stability and confidence in the future are deeply reflective of their attitudes with the outside. This latest bout of nationalism was directly related to unrest in Tibet, and coincided with rising inflation and a social contract between party and people increasingly under strain. China's domestic state of mind is increasingly felt outside its borders. The Chinese government can no longer control information sufficiently to tame adverse reaction to events, whether its own egregious policy faux pas, the population's reaction to national disasters – witness the nationwide response to the recent earthquake – or national insult as with the torch relay. The latter was not merely a government-controlled overreaction by an easily manipulated and insular populace. It was because of China's high level of connectedness with the outside that images of disruptions in the torch relay fanned resentment and outrage across China. In fact, much of the strident criticism came from abroad, with little government coercion as one of our essayist's points out.

One further implication of the uncertainty over China's future is the window it creates for other nations, particularly the United States, to have a role in influencing it. This may come from a presidential resolve to check China's negative tendencies, as one author writes, but, it also arises from not treating China precisely as the threat we hope it does not become. Most importantly, outside influence, large or small, will not materialize through sermonizing about human rights and currency policies, but helping build the bridges that will connect the Chinese to a larger international community. Because, concludes Xiang Lanxin, ultimately it is Chinese people who will decide the nations' fate, no government can escape that reality. How China will get there is another elephant for the blind men to figure out.

- Eric Hagt, Chief Editor

Meng Luding

Purify



Meng Luding is a painter and professor and has a studio in Beijing.

Li Cheng

Speed vs. Direction

In the middle of a trans-Pacific flight, an aircraft pilot announced to the passengers that he had good news and bad news. “The good news,” he said, “is that we are running ahead of schedule. The bad news is that we are lost.” No story better captures the realities of present-day China.

To many observers, China appears to be a rapidly growing economic powerhouse, but one that seems to be lost when it comes to the political destination it wants to reach. On the domestic front, China’s political system has become increasingly inadequate for dealing

with the complicated, and sometimes contradictory needs of China’s economy and society. Although the Chinese Communist Party has tried to build up its public support on the basis of economic growth, social harmony and nationalism, one-party rule will always have to struggle with the issue of legitimacy.

On the international front, China’s poor image has become a major liability, as evident in the recent widespread protests over China’s human rights problems, its investments in Sudan, and its crackdown in Tibet. Chinese leaders will soon realize, if they have not already, that China’s rise to prominence in the 21st century will ultimately depend on its ability



to adapt to global governance norms, including political pluralism, openness, transparency and the rule of law. To be sure, some of the international criticisms of China reflect Western biases or double standards. Yet, the Middle Kingdom needs to find a sound political vision – and a core value system – to express what China stands for in today's world.

Coincidentally, the generation of Chinese leaders that has just emerged on the national stage is mainly composed of members of the so-called “lost generation.” These individuals, born in the 1950s, lost the opportunity for formal schooling due to the Cultural Revolution. Many were sent from cities to the countryside to work as farmers, and some later entered college when the higher education system reopened. These experiences not only enabled them to put their careers back on track, but also suggest that they are likely to be more flexible and bolder than their predecessors about political reform. A central issue for the next decade or so is whether this unique “lost generation” of leaders, who made drastic changes and dramatic “comebacks” in their own lives, can also

find a path to democracy for their country.

Li Cheng is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's John L. Thornton China Center and William R. Kenan Professor of Government at Hamilton College. His latest book is *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy* (Washington: Brookings, 2008).

Thomas P.M. Barnett

The Inevitable Alliance

China's main strategic vulnerability right now is that it possesses economic and network connectivity with the outside world that is unmatched by its political-military capacity to defend. This forces Beijing to “free ride” on Washington's provision of global security services, a situation that makes China's leaders uncomfortable today – as it should. American blood for Chinese oil is an untenable strategic transaction.

The United States faced a similar situation in its “rise” in the late 1800s and set about “re-branding” its military force over a several-decade period that culminated with a successful entry into World War I. Since World War II, the United States has maintained a primarily ex-

peditionary force that is able to access international crises, and since the end of the Cold War has done so with unprecedented frequency. This too is an untenable strategic burden.

America needs to encourage China's effective re-branding as an accepted worldwide provider of stability operations. The problem today is two-fold: 1) major portions of America's military require China to remain in the enemy image to justify existing and new weapons and platforms; and 2) the Chinese military is hopelessly fixated on "access denial" strategies surrounding Taiwan, meaning it buys the wrong military for the strategic tasks that inevitably lie ahead.

So long as both nations insist on such mirror-imaging, their respective militaries will continue to buy one military while operating (or, in China's case, *needing* to operate) another force that remains under-developed. Such strategic myopia serves neither great power's long-term interests, which are clearly complimentary throughout the developing world.

The good news is that both China and the United States are within a decade's time of seeing new generations emerge among their respective political and military leaderships. These future leaders view the potential for Sino-American strategic alliance far differently than do the current leadership generation. If Washington and Beijing can navigate the next dozen or so years without damaging current ties, I fully expect to see a Sino-American strategic alliance emerge.

I do not present this as a theoretical possibility, but as my professional judgment based on years of extensive contacts through both nations' national security establishments.

Grand strategy often involves getting leaders to understand certain future inevitabilities. The global primacy of the Sino-American strategic alliance in the 21st century is one such future inevitability.

Thomas P.M. Barnett is the senior managing director of Enterra Solutions, and author of *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004).

Harry Harding *Blazing a New Trail*

Tentatively, gradually, and as yet unofficially, China is formulating a new development model for the Third World. Chinese don't call it the Beijing Consensus – that's a term devised by Westerners. Nor do they contrast it with the Washington Consensus – if only because they want to maintain good relations with the World Bank. Instead, they call it simply the Chinese model, drawing a contrast with the American model. But, regardless of the term used, they believe their model is superior and that the Third World will come to agree.

The Chinese draw three sets of distinctions between these two models. First, the goals. They say the main objectives for Third World countries are development, stability and human rights, and that all three need to be kept in proper balance. They imply that the United States emphasizes human rights above all other objectives, and is willing to sacrifice development and stability in the name of promoting that priority. Moreover, the Chinese definition of human rights is broader than America's – it includes collective rights in addition to individual rights, and economic and social rights as well as political and civil rights. Their model therefore transcends the single objective of democratization that so many developing countries now associate with the United States.

The second and most important distinction involves the strategy of development. Chinese say their model is based on experimentation, rooted in local conditions, rather than the universal application of an abstract ideal. They advocate an incremental approach to reform, rather than "big bangs" or "shock therapy." Their model features the creation of a powerful state that is committed to development, rather than deregulation and marketization. Democratization should be postponed until a later stage of development, so as not to undermine the effectiveness of the developmental state. When it eventually occurs, it may involve consultative authoritarianism rather than genuine

Yin Qi

Landscape of 2008



Yin Qi is a freelance artist.

pluralism.

A third distinction addresses the terms of official development assistance. China's aid program focuses on building infrastructure more than on providing policy advice or promoting institutional reform, let alone constructing civil society. The Chinese reject the idea of conditioning their aid on good governance, accountability or environmental standards in the recipient country. Rather, they impose a different set of criteria, packaging their aid with direct investment projects that can give China access to energy and natural resources. This aspect of the Chinese model is actually quite familiar: in some ways it resembles American aid at the height of the Cold War and Japanese aid even more recently. Above all, as their argument goes, Washington has tried to impose its model by force, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, whereas Beijing has not.

The Chinese model appears attractive in

many parts of the Third World, especially to governments who resist the West's conditional aid, reject the American emphasis on promoting democracy, or admire China's rapid and sustained pace of economic growth. But for how long will this admiration last? Much will depend on whether China can continue to perform well at home, despite the growing problems of corruption, inequality, abuse of power, environmental degradation and the erosion of the social safety net. It will also depend on whether the Chinese model works in Third World countries that seek to apply it. Above all, the Chinese model will be competing with the American version – and it remains to be seen whether the American model, with its emphasis on human rights, good governance, conditional aid and civil society, may not prove superior in the end.

Harry Harding is a professor of International Affairs at George Washington University.

Cui Liru

The Absence of a Model

A heated debate has taken center stage about the notion of a “China model” in development. This question is particularly pertinent as China completes 30 years of its unique path of opening up and reform.

As I see it, the principle characteristic of China's development path is precisely the lack of a model. What this means is that in practice, China has not stuck to one development method, rather it has widely embraced the advantages of a variety of models, adopted measures to local conditions and taken development as the first priority. In other words, China pursues a “comprehensive model” confined by no one set model and embodied by several characteristics.

First, “reform” required a delicate balance based on China's basic national conditions (economy, history, culture, geography, population and ethnic groups) and the changes in international relations since the start of the reform drive. The point of that effort was to transform China from a planned economy into a market one. To get from one bank to the other required “groping for stones to cross the river.” That is, in the complex domestic and international context of the time, maintaining a comprehensive balance was requisite for survival, and implies gradual policies both internal and external.

Second, there is “opening up,” which means to connect with the outside world. There is no doubt that the current international system is dominated by the West and led by the United States. Thus, to integrate with it one therefore has to admit the dominant position of the West, which China does. China's merger with economic globalization accelerated after the mid-1990s, a process that was pushed forward by the West. However, in the process, China also became a noticeable beneficiary and key proponent of the system. Though the negative impact of globalization on China is real (a fact that is receiving more and more attention), three decades of history authoritatively

conclude that China's growing relationship with the world has largely been benign and the interaction mutually stabilizing.

Cui Liru is the president of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

John J. Mearsheimer

Rivalry in the Offing

History shows that powerful states on the rise often fight wars with other major powers. Does this mean that a rising China is destined to end up in an intense security competition, maybe even a war, with its neighbors and the United States?

Many American and Chinese strategists say no. Some argue that China has a “Confucian culture” which is inherently passive, while others maintain that the economies of China and its potential rivals are too closely intertwined to allow them to fight a war. The economic costs would be too great. Still, others claim that shared dangers of international terrorism or global warming will foster enough Sino-American cooperation to dampen future rivalry. Even nuclear weapons are cited as a potential force for peace in Asia.

But these optimists are likely to be proved wrong. An increasingly powerful China will seek to become the most powerful state in Asia and dominate that region the way the United States dominates the Western Hemisphere. China is unlikely to pursue regional hegemony so that it can conquer other Asian countries, the way Japan did between 1931 and 1942. It is more likely that Beijing will want to be in a position where it can dictate the rules of behavior to its neighbors, as the United States does in the Western Hemisphere. A rising China is also likely to try to push America out of Asia, similar to the way the United States pushed the European great powers out of the Western Hemisphere.

China is likely to pursue regional hegemony for sound strategic reasons. In a world where states cannot be certain about the intentions of other states, and where there is no higher

Rob Gifford

The Ghosts of China Past and Present: A Dialogue

Past: *Hey buddy, how's it going?*

Present: *A few peripheral problems, but generally pretty good. You?*

Past: *OK, I guess, though no-one seems to pay me much attention these days. They're all too busy looking at you.*

Present: *Well, I have changed a lot, it's true.*

Past: *So what happens next?*

Present: *What do you mean?*

Past: *Well, what's your plan? Your vision for the future?*

Present: *My vision?*

Past: *Yeah, what are you going to become?*

Present: *I'm going to become a strong, powerful nation, respected in the world.*

Past: *But what are you going to do about the internal contradictions between a mobile modern economy and society and a 1950s political system?*

Present: *Don't worry, something will work out.*

Past: *That's not good enough, dude. What are you doing about all the angry peasants? What about those Tibetans? They're not happy.*

Present: *They are just two of China's ethnic minority groups. They are part of the happy family of minorities. And the peasants....their lives are improving.*

Past: *Haven't you learned anything? You can't be open to the world and still retain your territorial integrity.*

Present: *Why not?*

Past: *Because you're an empire, dummy. The contradictions will tear you apart. Can't you spell Q-I-N-G?*

Present: *No, I'm a nation. One of the family of nations.*

Past: *Yeah right. And you feel equal with all those other nations, right?*

Present: *Well, certainly none of them has 5,000 years of continuous civilization, that's true. But we can work together.*

Past: *Tell that to the U.S. Congress.*

Present: *I have. And besides, how the West sees me isn't dependent on what I'm like, it's solely dependent on their own prejudices. Now if you'll excuse me, I have issues to deal with in Africa and Latin America.*

Past: *That's another thing I need to talk to you about. They say you're the new colonialist.*

Present: *What nonsense. I'm just following the usual rules of global commerce.*

Past: *Yes, but they're worried about you, dude. They think you're the new Japan.*

Present: *I would never invade anyone. And besides, it's all I can do just to hold myself together.*

Past: *But you're not what they call a status quo country. That's where you and I are different. You're pretending to be one, but you're not. What are you going to do about Taiwan?*

Present: *That will resolve itself one day, I'm sure. Why are you so pessimistic? Can't you see, I've proved it's possible to be a one-party state and a market economy at the same time.*

Past: *Well, I hope you're right. But all I can tell you, my friend, is that it never worked for me. Plus ça change plus c'est la meme chose.*

Present: *Say what?*

Past: *It's French: the more things change, the more they stay the same.*

Rob Gifford is the London Bureau Chief of U.S. National Public Radio. He was NPR's Beijing correspondent for six years. His first book, *CHINA ROAD: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power* (New York: Random House, 2007).

authority they can turn to when threatened by another state, the best way to survive is to dominate your immediate surroundings and make sure that no other great power duplicates that feat in another region. A rival state that dominates its own region will be an especially powerful foe that is free to cause trouble in your backyard. That is why the United States sought hegemony in the Western Hemisphere, and spent the 20th century helping prevent Imperial Germany, Imperial Japan, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union from achieving hegemony in Europe or Asia.

This same logic implies that the United States will try to prevent China from becoming a hegemon in Asia. Beijing's neighbors – to include India, Japan and Russia – are likely to help America contain China, leading to intense security competition between Washington and Beijing. War between the United States and China is not inevitable, but Asia is likely to be a dangerous region in the decades ahead.

John J. Mearsheimer is the R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago.

Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

The Rise of Uncertainty

One-third of Americans believe that China will “soon dominate the world,” while 54 percent see the emergence of China as a “threat to world peace,” according to a recent poll. Some commentators have argued that China will be as disruptive to the beginning of the 21st century as the Kaiser's Germany was to the 20th century.

But such views exaggerate China's power. Measured by official exchange rates, China is the fourth largest economy in the world and is growing at 10 percent annually, but its income per capita is only one twenty-fifth that of the United States. If both the United States and China continue to grow at their current rates, it is possible that China's total economy could be larger than ours in thirty years. Even then, however, American per capita income will remain four times greater.

Feng Danggang

Stucture



Feng Danggang is a freelance artist.

In addition, China's military power is far behind, and it lacks the soft power resources such as Hollywood and world class universities that America enjoys. In contrast, the Kaiser's Germany had already passed Great Britain in industrial production by 1900, and launched a serious military challenge to Britain's naval supremacy.

The fact that China is a long way from overtaking the United States does not prevent a possible war over Taiwan, which China regards as a lost province. Weaker countries sometimes attack stronger countries – witness Japan at Pearl Harbor.

But such a conflict is not inevitable. China's internal evolution also remains uncertain. It has lifted 400 million people out of poverty since 1990, yet another 400 million still live on less than \$2 per day. It has enormous inequality, a migrant labor force of 140 million, severe pollution and rampant corruption. Political evolution has failed to match economic progress. While more Chinese are free today



than ever before, China as a whole is far from free. The danger is that party leaders, trying to counter the erosion of communism, will use nationalism as their ideological glue, and this could lead to an unstable foreign policy.

Faced with such uncertainty, a wise policy combines realism with liberalism. By reinforcing the U.S.-Japan alliance, we have hedged against uncertainty while at the same time offering China integration into global institutions as a “responsible stakeholder.” The greatest danger is an escalating fear of enmity on both sides that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Joseph S. Nye Jr., University Distinguished Service professor, is also the Sultan of Oman Professor of International Relations and former Dean of the Kennedy School.

Mao Yushi

Change...and its Malcontents

With the dazzling economic successes over the past three decades, China is no longer the country it once was. The society’s material progress has grown but so have its social contradictions, and it is safe to say that the so-

cial contradictions are bound to change this society. As such, China will not be able to repeat its performance in the next 30 years – let alone the next five – using the model of the past. What is not easy to predict is how this change will come about: By violent revolution? Intra-Party division? Financial crisis or international pressure? It is equally difficult to foresee the consequences of such wrenching change: Decades of chaos or the ushering in of a democratic government? A split into a federation or a return to the Mao-style rule?

The more important question is perhaps how China will get there. Compared with the system of other countries, one can clearly see that developed countries have in common the qualities of freedom, equality and democratic rule of law. These are precisely the things that developing countries lack, and the root of China’s social contradictions lies in the deficiency of these values. Although more and more people inside China and out agree with this analysis – including leaders – coming to terms with the solution is highly problematic because of the system’s dissonance between vested interests and meaningful reform. Those with power must yield their vested interests in order to achieve true reform. It strains the mind to envision how this change will transpire, but one thing is certain, change must come.

Mao Yushi is the director of the Unirule Institute of Economics. Previously, he worked at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and as a visiting scholar at Harvard University.

Bates Gill

Inside Out

Model or menace? Rogue or responsible player? Great power or weak state? What is the China we will face in the decades ahead? Judgments about China’s strategic future in world affairs requires a close look at how it acts in its own backyard since this nation is shaped most by how it deals with its enormous internal challenges.

Through this analytical lens, two critically important facets come into view to illuminate our questions about China’s strategic future.

First, what happens inside China will increasingly have an impact beyond its borders. China's domestic ability to manage internal problems will inexorably affect its relations with its neighbors and partners around the world, and will determine whether China can claim to be a "responsible" power in world affairs.

Chinese actions to prevent the emergence and global spread of infectious disease from within China's borders will indicate how seriously China recognizes and acts on its responsibilities in the international system. Similarly, steps by Chinese authorities to stem the destabilizing flow of sensitive weapons and technologies from China to other parts of the world tells its neighbors and global partners much about what kind of role China wishes to play internationally. How Beijing chooses to address the country's relentless environmental degradation and its impact on the regional and global environment is another indicator of what kind of China will emerge in the future. The list could go on.

Second, how Beijing chooses to tackle ongoing and emergent domestic challenges will

also affect the kind of sociopolitical system to emerge in the country in the years ahead. China's approach and solutions to a wide range of problems – internal unrest, corruption, delivery of public goods, widening income and developmental gaps, environmental threats, and many others – will tell us whether its governance structures are moving in the direction of greater openness, equity, justice and constructive self-confidence or taking a different, more troubling path. In turn, the nature of China's domestic regime in the future will profoundly affect how China opts to engage the international community.

China's leaders and strategists understand these points better than anyone. They are trying to grapple with domestic challenges in ways that reflect and lead to a responsible approach to world affairs, worthy of emulation and great power status. Whether they will succeed is not yet clear. But we on the outside need to look to China's internal developments and change for insight into what kind of global power it will be.

Bates Gill is the director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.



Tang Shiping

Coming Intellectual Power

Much ink has been spilt over China as a regional great power and even a potential burgeoning global great power. The focus is on China's growing economic and military might, and secondarily its growing cultural and political influence, or "soft power." Missing in all of this is the intellectual dimension.

Among the four great ancient civilizations (China, Egypt, Greece and India), only the Chinese and the Greeks have left a recognizable imprint upon the enterprise of human knowledge, largely because they have left numerous and profound texts behind. Most of us have studied Socrates and Plato, and many of us have at least heard of Lao Tzu and Confucius.

The development of modern science has allowed the West to eclipse all other civilizations

and dominate the world for the past 400 years. The coming of the West to four corners of the earth wreaked great havoc on many people, but it also brought the growth of knowledge through scientific research.

After slowly absorbing modern science as a "new religion" for more than 150 years, China is now poised to become a major intellectual force. Because genius is born randomly, China – by any measure – possesses the largest talent pool in the world. If so, once China establishes the basic institutional foundation for intellectual growth (achieved in part, though improvement required), it is inevitable that China will once again become a formidable intellectual power.

In some ways China has already arrived. In the field of natural science and technology, China is now recognized as a major force. The

Shen Qin

An Intellectual Dialogue



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outside world is slow in recognizing China's power in social sciences largely because most leading social scientists in China do not write in English and most of their work has not been translated.

The day of China as an intellectual power should be welcomed. After all, as F. A. Hayek noted long ago, the growth of human civilization fundamentally depends upon the growth of human knowledge.

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Zhao Tingyang

All Under Heaven

Chinese history offers a rich repository of ideas waiting to be tapped for modern application. *Tianxia* – or, “all-under-heaven” – is one sterling example. Its origin lies in the 3000 year old Zhou Dynasty's founding dilemma: how to gain and preserve allegiance from a disparate collection of potentially more powerful states. Zhou leaders responded by designing a world system with great appeal to the people over whom they exercised dominion. Incorporating elements of geography, society and politics, the *Tianxia* system pioneered the notion of “world governance.”

As a political philosophy, *Tianxia* is strikingly different from the Westphalian system. Whereas the latter implies interstate competition with winners and losers, *Tianxia* seeks to maximize cooperation and minimize conflict. *Tianxia* gives priority to the development of global public interest, thus obviating the need for individual nation states to zealously pursue the interests of “their” people. At the heart of the philosophy is the idea that co-existence is the precondition for existence. That is, nothing exists in absence of a relationship with something else. Mutual benefit, then, is the overarching aim, with compatibility as the only way to reach common prosperity.

Tianxia envisions a far more comprehensive “world” system in which mankind can bet-

ter cope with the challenges of globalization. Where international organizations like the United Nations are inherently limited by state sovereignty, *Tianxia* posits a system of world control over common spaces and resources. Objects of international contention like energy, food, water, the environment and weapons of mass destruction would all fall within its purview. So far the world has lacked the unity to solve global problems. *Tianxia* represents the apotheosis of unity.

Alexander Wendt has identified three kinds of cultures in international politics: the Hobbesian worldview, which mainly sees adversarial relationships between states; Lockean culture, which substitutes competition for war; and a Kantian worldview advocating for alliances. None of these are satisfactory in the Chinese view. Admittedly, to apply *Tianxia* in its ancient form is far too visionary. In the end, even the Zhou Dynasty fell, perhaps a victim of its own idealism. And who is to underwrite *Tianxia* – a system that rejects the very notion of a “chosen state”? Though originally a Chinese concept, China itself would seek no more than to be apart of any such system that might spring from it.

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Robert J. Barnett

One China, Many Chinas

When we speak of the “China model” or an ascendant China, which China do we mean? Behind talk of the country's economic might or growing power projection, there is an underlying assumption that these are the extraordinary achievements of a single people, with a national psyche that appears to share certain beliefs, aspirations and limits to its collective tolerance. A fifth or more of the human population is seemingly grouped behind one set of values, so that the claim “the Chinese people feel this or that” now seems at least credible.

This perception of a popular consensus in

China thrills some and worries others. What is significant is the form it has recently assumed: it seems to have emerged largely without coercion from the Chinese government. The “angry youth” movement of March 2008, when thousands of Chinese people rallied to the defense of China’s handling of the Tibetan situation, seemed at first to have done little more than intimidate their critics and boycott French handbags. But the movement’s leaders included people living outside China, free to read and watch whatever they desire.

For the first time since the 1940s a single national Chinese identity is being constructed without reliance on the tools of crude authoritarianism. One could say that the current form of ‘soft’ Chinese authoritarianism is attracting many of those whom it cannot coerce. This suggests that we may be seeing in the China case a major international power achieving its principal objectives without loss to its economic, moral or intellectual capacity, and without introducing democracy.

But this is a fragile bargain. It could unravel in the face of any incident, leading to fragmentation or internal conflict. This vulnerability is partly the result of economic inequities, but also of larger structural fault-lines in the makeup of Chinese nationalism. There are many Chinas, not just one, and some of them may not be willing participants in the claims made on their behalf by a vociferous majority. This is obviously the case with most Tibetans, and almost certainly with Uyghurs and many Inner Mongolians too. It is striking that the nationalist movement on display this March involved millions of Chinese people defending the happiness and rights of the Tibetan people, without any Tibetans in China freely joining their ranks or, apparently, being asked for their opinions.

A similar exclusion might be taking place with ethnic Chinese who are supporters of Taiwanese independence, the disenfranchised in the countryside, the victims of land encroachment and pollution, or losers in the dash for wealth and market share.

Undoubtedly, something seminal has taken place in China behind the talk of resurrected national pride. But it represents an exclusive sector of the nation, one that dominates and speaks for others. It remains an over-centralized project that suppresses or ignores voices at its peripheries, whether in perspective or geographic. Until China is able to produce a form of nationalism that heeds and embraces the visions and aspirations of various peoples and communities within its territory, the nation will remain a nation of many Chinas, and a deeply vulnerable project.

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David Shambaugh

International Schizophrenia

China wrestles with a conflicted international identity – a kind of schizophrenic personality. On the one hand, it aspires to be, and possesses many of the attributes of, a great power. But Beijing seems to lack the confidence to *act* as a great power – particularly in concert with other great powers. Rather, China remains hesitant on the international and regional stage, taking baby steps towards being a confident global leader.

Part of China’s international uncertainty no doubt derives from the leadership’s domestic uncertainties – as the country is beset with multiple pressing challenges associated with an unprecedented modernization process, and a cautious leadership atop a transitional political system. When China’s leaders wake up and go to bed every day, it is events inside – not outside – their borders that preoccupy them.

Another reason for Beijing’s tentativeness likely derives from the Liberal values and norms that underpin most international institutions. Beijing professes it seeks a “democratic international order,” so as to constrain the hegemonic tendencies of the United States, but it does not share the Liberal premises of a democratic international system (although, as



G. John Ikenberry reminds us, China has benefited enormously from that system). It is difficult to be a “responsible stakeholder” (Robert Zoellick) in an international system with which one does not share the operating premises at home and was not “present at the creation” to shape the system in the first place. In some key areas – like nonproliferation and free trade – Beijing has embraced global norms, but on so many others its hesitancy is obvious. China’s continued preference for multipolarism over multilateralism (states over institutions), reflects its deeply ingrained Realism over a nascent Liberalism.

Failure to fully embrace Liberal norms and institutions does not mean that China cannot be a cooperative partner with others on a purely pragmatic case-by-case basis. We see this on North Korea, for example. But it does suggest that China will continue to act with hesitancy on the world stage. Yet, a partially engaged China is far better than a disengaged China. Selective multilateralism is better than the alternatives.

As China’s international persona remains a work-in-progress, foreigners must be aware of the diverse and dynamic domestic discourse

taking place within the international relations community in China, and should seek to strengthen and work with the multilateralist and Liberal voices.

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June Teufel Dreyer

The Next Superpower?

Unquestionably, China has arrived as a great power. Its large landmass and huge population would make it an important player in global affairs under any circumstances. However, power is measured in terms of military and economic clout as well, and on both criteria China’s progress over the past thirty years has been breathtakingly swift. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is the world’s third largest trading power and holder of its largest foreign exchange reserves. The Chinese economy is expected to grow by double-digit numbers again in 2008.

Militarily, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is the world’s largest, with a virtually unlimited supply of reserve manpower. Thanks to defense budgets that have expanded at even

Yang Moyin

Speak your Mind



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faster rates than economic growth rates, the PLA is receiving more technologically advanced weapons each year. Though not yet at the level of the Japanese military, the PLA does not face the constitutional constraints on exercising force that the Japanese do, and is therefore arguably Asia's most potent military.

Advancing to the next level, that of a superpower, will prove more difficult. Domestically, upward pressure on wages has persuaded many companies to relocate their factories to countries with lower labor costs. Rising prices of raw materials, especially energy and the appreciating value of the yuan may result in a substantial slowdown. The American recession is likely to shrink exports to the United States. The price of basic foodstuffs, such as rice and soybeans, has also risen dramatically. Meanwhile, the one-child policy notwithstanding, the population continues to grow,

necessitating the creation of more jobs for new entrants to the employment market. Like Alice in Wonderland, China must run faster just to stay even.

Militarily, the costs of moving further up the technology chain into state-of-the-art weapons will require a quantum leap in investment in research and development. Since the PRC faces no external enemy likely to invade, however, its increasingly assertive citizenry may question the wisdom of this, given it's the lacunae in basic social services as well as the continued deterioration of the environment. Angry minorities have also pressed their claims more forcefully, as have those improperly deprived of their land.

There is pushback abroad as well against perceived domination by the PRC. Recent protests by several African states against Beijing's desire to ship arms to the corrupt Zimbabwe

regime or South Korea's expulsion of Chinese students engaged in violent behavior during the passage of the Olympic torch, and the willingness to protest the PRC's behavior in Tibet and Sudan are evidence of this. China's image as a friendly giant who wants nothing more than trade and mutual prosperity is being tarnished.

China will likely come to be viewed as what it is: just another imperialist power. Its ambiguous capability but apparent motivation to rise to superpower status will ultimately also be conditioned by the attitude of United States. But the resolve of future U.S. presidents to follow George W. Bush's vow that America will not allow another power to become strong enough to challenge it remains to be seen.

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Pan Zhenqiang

Positioning

For all its impressive economic progress in the past several decades, there are still many uncertainties in China's future development. There is room for much confidence but China must also squarely face its deficiencies, challenges as well as threats.

China is rising in influence. Yet, in terms of both hard and soft power, the gap with Western powers is still immense and clear to see for anyone who wishes to look. Let us not forget that China remains a developing country, in a preliminary stage of socialist development, and still divided as well. In addition, China is yet to be fully admitted by an international community dominated by the West despite China's enormous effort to integrate. Within the international strategic realm, China is and will continue to be greatly constrained. China's ability to truly take independent action abroad whether in economic, security or military terms is actually very low.

Looking down the road, the actual, primary "threat" to China comes from within. Put another way, China's future depends on whether

it can grasp the favorable opportunities both at home and abroad and use them to improve ourselves and further our goals of development. This will be a long and complicated process. Chinese people must steel themselves for the long haul. The greatest risk of undermining this long-term process lies, in fact, in ourselves if we are too rash.

Thus, China must be on guard against being rash by all means. China once made outstanding contributions to world civilization. But, in modern times, it has been bullied by foreign powers, and is still to some degree being bullied. That seems to have led many of us to have an overzealous sentiment to change this state of affairs, eager to once again be a contributor to world peace and development. Since the founding of the new Republic in 1949, China has become victim of such a mentality on many occasions, saying and doing excessive things, ending up in debacles. These bitter lessons must not be forgotten. If it can do so, there is great hope for China.

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Dan Blumenthal

It's not "Just" the Economy Stupid

China's ascendance is one of the great economic stories of the last few decades. The country's leaders and its enterprising people have managed to bring millions out of poverty – a material and moral accomplishment that is the envy of poor countries the world over. Were China's leaders only focused on a better material life for their citizens, America should stand back, enjoy the cheap products coming from China, applaud a tremendous story of successful economic development, and, consistent with American values, hope for greater political liberalization.

But clearly China is after more. When every major power in the world was slashing its defense spending in the 1990s, China was doing the opposite. Over the past decade, it has continued its military build-up at a pace no one

Xue Jiye
Worldview



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predicted. The result: a combination of new Chinese capabilities *and* new ambitions. To wit, China has built a massive new naval base on Hainan island, indicating the desire for a navy that can contest the maritime dominance of the United States and its allies. It has added scores of new submarines to its fleet and commissioned several new classes of destroyers, armed with the world's most lethal, ship-killing cruise missiles. And by the decade's end it could have up to five nuclear subs armed with nuclear tipped ballistic missiles capable of hitting most of the United States. The neighbors are noticing. India is wondering how nuclear subs able to access the Indian Ocean are relevant to "detering Taiwan's independence," the stated driver of China's naval modernization.

The American security umbrella has allowed the region to focus on economic growth rather than military competition. The results speak for themselves: Asia is fast becoming the center of global economic growth. But China's military build-up is sparking a military competition in Asia that could distract the region

from its remarkable transformation. If China succeeds in diminishing American influence, who will keep the regional peace? Who will respond to humanitarian catastrophes (e.g. the Tsunami), who will help defeat terrorists (e.g. in the Philippines), who will stem proliferation (e.g. from North Korea)? Most of the region is not betting that China will attend to the region's well-being, which is why they prefer the oftentimes irritating leadership of America to being left to the tender mercies of the Chinese Communist Party.

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Shi Yinhong
Value-Added

A *peaceful* rise overwhelmingly relies on "soft power," broadly achieved by the tools of foreign trade, the economy, diplomacy, culture and even emigration. All are characterized by nonviolence, progressive accumulation, extensive permeability and so-called "win-win" effects. These are generally irresistible forces, and incur the least resistance. China's rise has been a peaceful rise.

The destination? A sustainable world power. China's peaceful rise is the building of the foundation for changing the nature of world politics. The utility of war as an instrument for achieving national interests is in rapid decline. The paradigm for conducting international relations is gradually transforming from territorial-military security competition to economic and soft-power influence. A state's performance in economic, cultural, and diplomatic terms is superceding military performance. Within this context, China's status as a global "trading state" could have enormous consequences for becoming a world power.

But China's current situation in soft power terms is far from sanguine. Why? Because this issue goes to the heart of the fundamental *value* requirement for a sustainable rise of China. The modern transnational set of values can be summarized as "economic growth," "liberty,"

“social justice,” and the newly born “environment protection.” The primary achievement China has made mainly falls within the category of economic growth. And China’s success in this regard has made an historic contribution to liberty through prosperity around the world. But this *value* itself is not really one of her own creation, while its success has been at the expense of other *values* such as “social justice” and “environment protection.”

China has firm confidence in the growth of her national strength through economic development and contributing to a shift in the world’s modus operandi of power relations. But it is still difficult to foretell what distinctly new *value* China will contribute to the nations of the world. The Chinese people comprehend that China must successfully meet this challenge if she is to realize her greatest aspirations and take her rightful place amongst the great nations of the world.

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Robert S. Ross

The Challenge of Nationalism

Rising nations develop greater military and economic powers which enable them to reshape the international order to improve their security. This is always a difficult process. The demands of a rising power for greater security necessarily challenge the security of the status quo power. Thus, U.S.-China competition and tension are assured. Nonetheless, war is not inevitable. The challenge for policy-makers is thus to preserve U.S.-China peace.

China’s ascendance has already reshaped the East Asian order. America’s inability to turn back North Korean development of nuclear weapons, South Korean opposition to U.S. coercive diplomacy against North Korea, and to greater U.S.-South Korean defense cooperation reflect the rise in Chinese influence throughout the Korean peninsula. Taiwan’s recent election of a leader who supports robust economic and cultural cooperation with Chi-

na and rejects Taiwan independence reflects Taiwan’s acknowledgement of Chinese power and the imperative of cross-Strait cooperation. Both Taiwan and South Korea understand that with the rise of Chinese power the American military can no longer protect them from the cost of war and that their security increasingly relies on cooperation with Chinese interests.

The United States is reconciled to the rise of China on the Korean Peninsula and across the Taiwan Strait. Since 1950, U.S. policy toward the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan conflict has focused on “peaceful resolution.” For the United States, the process was more important than the outcome. Because China has persuaded South Korea and Taiwan to accommodate China while expanding cooperative relations, the United States can reduce its military presence on the East Asian mainland and diminish the likelihood of great power war at no cost to U.S. security. East Asia’s Cold War great powers conflicts are finally ending.

With America’s determined retrenchment from the East Asian mainland to maritime East Asia, the East China Sea and the South

Wang Xiaojin

Redeemed



Wang Xiaojin is a freelance artist.



China Sea are like “moats” separating U.S. and Chinese forces, moderating great power conflict. However, as China’s rise continues, Beijing may pursue naval power that will challenge the American presence in maritime East Asia. Unlike the U.S. response to the growth of Chinese influence on mainland East Asia, it will be difficult for the United States to accommodate this stage of China’s rise. Since World War II, Washington has considered its strategic relationships with Japan and the Southeast Asian countries vital to the regional balance of power. In anticipation of China’s rise, since the mid-1990s the United States has significantly expanded its military deployments and alliance relationships throughout maritime East Asia. In this respect, Sino-American security competition in East Asia will persist.

The course of Chinese nationalism is likely to be a key factor in determining the outcome of that competition. Throughout history nationalism has propelled rising powers to pursue grandiose goals at an inordinate expense to both the nation and the international community. Should China’s leadership be similarly

swayed by nationalistic fervor and seek to bolster its domestic legitimacy through maritime expansion, the United States will resist forceful change of the regional order. In these circumstances, although the United States can easily maintain maritime supremacy, heightened U.S.-China political and military tension is likely. Thus far, the rise of China has been easy, but the greatest challenge may be just beginning.

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Kenneth Lieberthal *Unintended Consequences*

One of the most consequential dimensions of China’s path to development is its impact on global climate change. Both the scale of what is transpiring and the momentum behind its continuation hold stark implications.

In 2006-07 China added power generating capacity equal to those of the entire German or British power systems. But for China, coal

is necessarily by far the major source of power. The lack of available water means that most of that coal is burned unwashed. Since most plants recently built have an expected lifetime of 30-40 years – with the financing structured on that basis – they are not going to be written off soon out of concerns for global climate change.

Each year China adds 2 billion square meters to its building stock – 50 percent of the global total. This astonishing figure reflects rapid urbanization, bringing roughly 15 million people a year to China's burgeoning cities, which is expected to continue on a similar scale until about 2030. Most new buildings, though, are very energy-inefficient, even as China's demand for cement and steel materials has become the largest in the world. China has also become the world's second largest automotive market trailing only the United States.

China has entered a highly resource-intensive phase of development. Heavy industry plays a large role in China's economy, and the PRC's position in the international economy is encouraging additional energy and resource-intensive investment.

In short, China has recently become the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, and the forces propelling that trend are neither short term nor easily subject to policy-based changes. Rather, the momentum behind the China's growth in recent years is fundamental, resting on such elemental drivers as the largest-scale movement of people from rural to urban areas in human history.

The implications for China's future greenhouse gas emissions are grave. Beijing now recognizes that China will suffer enormous consequences from climate change, and it is reacting vigorously. But altering this baseline trajectory will take major international cooperation – including with the United States. Unfortunately, climate change will likely become the most consequential global issue growing out of China's enormous developmental success.

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Zha Daojiong *Getting Along*

As recent as twenty years ago, debates raged in China about the wisest path to take: reject or embrace all things Western. Now, the national psyche has discernibly calmed down. Experience, particularly that garnered over the past thirty years, has taught us that most of the problems *and* solutions China faces are its own by nature and require its own resources to address them. This should be seen as a source of internal strength and ought to reassure others about the benign nature of Chinese behaviors in Asia and beyond.

Among the many domestic challenges facing Chinese society, perhaps the most profound is a shortage of moral differentiation between “getting ahead” and “getting along.” A survival instinct remains at play in Chinese society. When this is the dominant paradigm for human interaction, there cannot be real harmony in society. Rather *trust*, as social capital, is critical to achieving this. But this social quality is lacking and, in many instances, critically so. Further reform of China's public institutions must contribute to an individual's sense of ease in relating to others in the society.

The second agenda is to build the people's relationship with their environment. The Chinese government has correctly identified harmony between people and nature to be a key goal of public policy. For that harmony to emerge, however, people must be prepared to moderate their desires for individual wealth. The gap between Chinese and Western lifestyle, whether true or imagined, has served as a motivating factor for China to succeed. But, China is not the West. China's ecological potential is too limited to entertain the possibility of achieving a lifestyle comparable to that in North America or Western Europe.

Having citizens of China “get along” with those of other nations is another important task. Through tourism, trade, event hosting, the internet and many other channels of communication, interaction between citizens of China and those of other countries is growing



exponentially. Out of this exchange emerges conflicting versions of China, its interests and how they relate to those of other nations. The government can no longer be the only credible spokesman. China's foreign policy agencies have the more challenging task of reflecting these complexities when projecting interests of the country to the rest of the world.

Numerous challenges continue to confront China. The core of public policy, however, must be aimed at addressing endogenous sources of growth and stability.

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John Hamre

Tail of the Ox or Head of the Rooster

Academic debates rage in the United States all the time, but they rarely matter in policy life. It is different in China. An authoritarian hierarchical government structure has trouble with new ideas. Lower level bureaucrats rarely want to challenge official orthodoxy. In order to foster idea development in China, the leadership has encouraged a vibrant debate in academic circles which intersect in interesting

ways with policy circles.

The current debate centers on the question of China's future on the world stage. Deng Xiaoping once admonished China's future rulers to avoid the lead role, even as China's power grew. But China is feeling very energetic these days, pumped up by the Beijing Olympics and the wave of national pride that will crest with this summer's Games. Suddenly the question has become: Is China now a world leader? Everyone is flocking to their doors telling them that they are. If so, what is their role in the world?

Robert Zoellick famously called on China to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system. The Chinese at first were confused by the speech. It contained positive and negative elements in their judgment. After considerable internal debate they concluded that it was a genuine offer by the Bush Administration to accept the inevitability of China's rise and make room on the world stage for this newly risen power.

China continues to highlight its prevailing poverty and weakness, yet its confidence in the future is strong and growing. In short, they are

convinced of the inevitability of Chinese power. What to make of this power is still, however, a matter of substantial debate in circles very close to the heart of that system.

So, as a Chinese scholar recently asked, is China going to be “the tail of the ox,” or “the head of the rooster?” On its road to global power status, will China join a game where the rules have largely been fixed by the United States, Japan, and the European powers? If so, China would only be “the tail of the ox.” Alternatively, China can seek a measured path of leadership in Asia and among lesser-developed nations – an established leader and thus “the head of the rooster.”

Americans have a hard time understanding the Chinese reaction to the riots in Tibet. In America and Europe, the Tibetan people are an oppressed minority seeking political breathing room. In the opinion of Chinese people and their government alike, the Tibetans have never had such good lives, and it is only a small band of separatists causing hate and discontent. The Chinese are brilliant at engendering an overwhelming consensus on matters like this.

This was to be expected, but more surprising is how the Tibet events have played in China's academic debates. The dominant sentiment is that the Western powers – led by America and Europe – will use events like Tibet to smack down China and deny its' standing on the international stage. The Tibet crisis has convinced many of these academics that the West is not ready to let China play a lead international role. Thus, Chinese academics and policy leaders are concluding it is better for China to be “the head of the rooster” than “the tail of the ox” for the time being.

This means that China will stay on the path of its current trajectory, continuing to strengthen its national powers by building up and transforming its economy. China will pursue a non-confrontational posture with the United States and the West. But China also will work aggressively to become the dominant leader in Asia and an inspirational leader in Af-

rica and South America.

Chinese leaders frequently harken back to Deng Xiaoping's famous statement that it will take 100 years to build a powerful China. But, Deng's “starting point for the 100 years was Deng's reforms in 1978. By this calendar, China would not become a world power for 70 more years. Now, the academics are saying the 100-year clock began with the Communist victory over the KMT in 1949. Accordingly, Chinese academics (and political leaders) are confident they have moved up the clock to superpower status by 30 years.

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Xiang Lanxin

Not in the West's Image

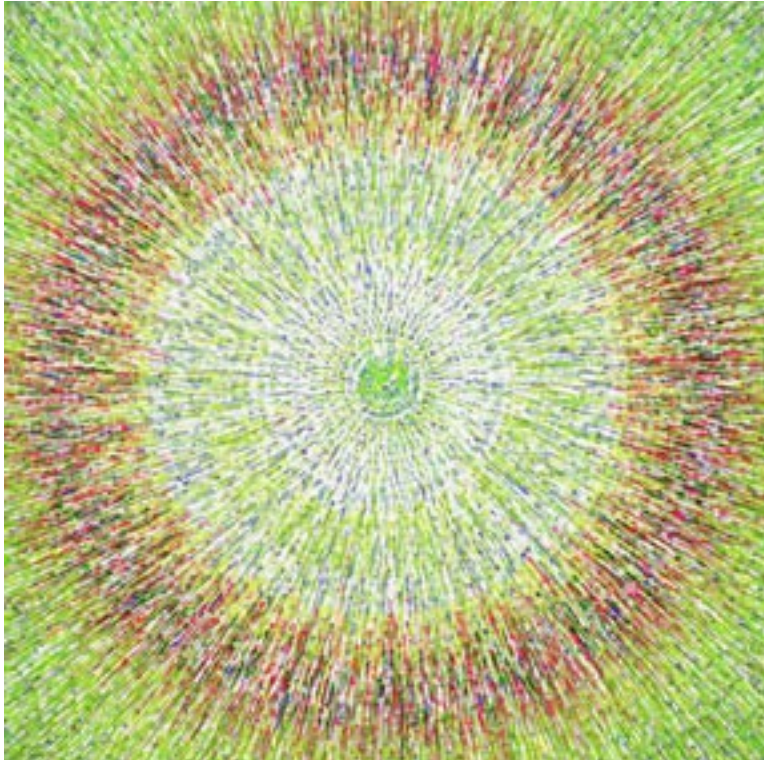
One must understand that China has never offered the world a normative model in the past and will never do so in the future. Chinese tradition stresses a style of governance that is contingent on a historical context. A model would mean a value system that clamours for universal status, but China has never believed in a “universal” principle of any kind. In fact, the word “universalism” cannot even be translated accurately into the Chinese language.

Western democracy in its post-Enlightenment form, while a pseudo-secular system, is still deeply rooted in Christian theology. The United States today holds the last defensive line of a political ideology buttressed by a theology that is generally characterized by a metaphysical interpretation of human history; that human beings have a design and purpose (teleology); and that man has a soul and in death it has a final destiny (eschatological faith). China has none of the above, notwithstanding the debate over whether Confucianism or Daoism is a “religion.”

In other words, the West believes democracy to be the preordained future for all nations. But that is a value judgment based on universalism. On the contrary, traditional Chinese political logic has remained the dominant force

Meng Luding

Yuan Rate



Meng Luding is a painter and professor and has a studio in Beijing.

in China. No dynasty could escape its embrace and the communist party will be no different. According to tradition, politics should be seen like the relationship between *water* and a *boat* where the “water” represents the people, and the “boat” the government. Water can allow the boat to float but can also overturn it. Thus, real political legitimacy in China is not *democratic legitimacy*, but *deeds legitimacy* – based on actual performance of the leadership. Most Western observers have missed this point.

A second issue with regard to a China model rests on the premise that China’s sudden rise as an economic superpower. Things such as the massive trade surpluses with the rest of the world or the embrace of free markets and globalization will change the nature of the international system. But this overlooks the fact that the Chinese have been there before. As China sees it, this is not a *rise*, but rather its

restoration to its historical position of global influence.

In fact, today’s restoration constitutes China’s third great encounter with the West, following the Jesuit missions of the 16th century and the Opium Wars of the 1800s. The current encounter – this time between equals – will produce much more than economic competition with the United States. As China’s economic strength grows, no one, not even the Chinese, can prevent China’s influence from spreading into politics, values and ideology. It is in those arenas that conflicts with the United States can arise, and unfortunately, it is precisely in those areas that misunderstandings between the two nations run rampant.

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A True “Middle-Way” Solution to Tibetan Unrest

Wang Lixiong

As a teenager, I was sent to the countryside of northeastern China to be “reeducated.” One day I drove the carriage to the commune to get food aid. In the Food Control Office, I found a bound collection of the newspaper *News Digest* (*cankaoxiaoxi*) and immediately grabbed a copy to read. In those days this was the only newspaper that had news from overseas. Though its news was still ideological, it was at least different from the standard party newspapers of the day. Among the news was an interview with the Dalai Lama by a foreign reporter. I have forgotten the specific content of the article, but an image remains in my head: a young and lanky Dalai Lama in his lonely exile, heatedly criticizing China to his visitor. I had heard of him before, but in the communist party literature, the word “Dalai” was just a synonym for the dark days of Tibet. The reason I remember this article was not due to any grandiose concept like the Tibet issue, but a rather trivial detail. As I was reading the article, an employee at the Food Control Office snatched the newspaper out of my hands claiming, self-importantly, that it was an “inside publication,” permitted only for those “ranked highly enough.” Neither he nor I could have guessed that one day that callow boy with rope belted around the waist and a whip gripped in hand, who was not “ranked highly enough,” would meet face to face with the Dalai Lama himself.

In the time that has passed since that day, Tibet has become interwoven with my destiny. When I first came to Tibet in the 1980s I was instantly drawn to the region, and have since visited over 20 times and stayed there nearly three years. It was there that I met my wife, Woesser, who is a Tibetan. Married into the Tibetan issue, I found I could not remove myself from the debate over the region’s future. I have devoted much of my subsequent life to re-

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China Security, Vol. 4 No. 2 Spring 2008, pp. 27-37
World Security Institute

searching and studying the topic, meeting with the Dalai Lama several times to discuss the problems and potential solutions to the Tibet question.

In light of my long study and many experiences, I was not surprised by the March riots. The current discontent bubbling to the surface in Tibet is the product of long-standing mismanagement based upon poorly formed policies in Beijing. At the same time, however, the Dalai Lama's alternative of a path to "high autonomy" has not been clearly thought out, leaving it with serious flaws. Tibet needs a new way forward which will ensure both the autonomy of the Tibetan people and the territorial sovereignty of China.

A Little Carrot, a Lot of Stick

Beijing's approach to Tibet can be generalized as a "carrot plus a big stick" policy. In the 1980s, Beijing implemented the "carrot" portion of the policy with huge increases in financial support to promote rapid economic growth in Tibet, hoping a combination of individual prosperity and secularization would lead Tibetans to solidarity with the rest of China. This policy was clarified by former secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) committee of the Tibetan Autonomous Region who had been in charge of Tibet for nearly a decade: "The CCP Central Committee and the State Council have mobilized the country's entire population to assist Tibet, helping Tibet speed up its development and the Tibetan nationality rid itself of poverty and become rich. This is the most realistic and concrete nationality policy of the CCP."¹ The past three decades have been a period in which Beijing has offered to the Tibetans the most substantial economic benefits in the history of the People's Republic of China.² Between 1994 and 2001, the central government financed 62 infrastructure projects, involving 4.86 billion RMB in direct investment. An additional 716 projects were financed and constructed with aid from 15 provinces, central ministries and commissions, involving a total investment of 3.16 billion RMB.³ At the Fourth Forum on Work in Tibet, held by the central authorities in 2001, it was decided to further strengthen the support for Tibet's development by investing 31.2 billion RMB in 117 projects during the *10th Five-Year Plan* period (2001-2005) with funds from the central government, coupled with a 37.9 billion RMB financial subsidy. According to government statistics, in close to 40 years since the Tibet Autonomous Region was founded, of Tibet's 87.586 billion RMB of financial expenditure, 94.9 percent came from central government subsidies.

In today's Tibet, almost every major project relies on Beijing's support. Without supplies and support from Beijing, progress, at least in Tibet's cities, would grind to a halt. Beijing's favorable treatment of Tibet has often made other regions envious. Tibetan businesses enjoy a preferential tax rate three percentage points lower than any other part of China, and farmers and herdsmen are exempt from taxes and administrative charges. In banking, Tibet long enjoyed a preferential interest rate on loans two percentage points lower than in any other place in China, as well as a low rate on insurance premiums.⁴ During the past two decades, favorable treatment enabled Tibet to achieve a yearly growth rate higher than 10 percent. The increase of incomes of urban residents, farmers and herdsmen was above the national average.⁵ It can be asserted that in terms of economic development and standard of living, today's Tibet has surpassed any previous period in its history.

Benefiting Whom?

Although most Tibetans admit that their standard of living has improved,⁶ the current

economic “carrot” has not been the peace offering that Beijing intended. In the process of economic growth and secularization, Tibetans living in cities have gradually been culturally and economically marginalized. While the government does not organize large-scale immigration, it nevertheless encourages it. This has resulted in a “Chinesization” of Tibet; the root cause of the conflict today.

In the past, immigrants to the Tibetan regions were relatively few. But now, the economies in cities like Lhasa are dominated by Han and Hui people from inland regions in China. Competing in the same market economy, Han Chinese have language, contact, capital and skill advantages and have naturally come to dominate the Tibetan business scene. For example, small stores on Barkhor Street, the most economically vibrant street in Lhasa, were once all owned by Tibetans. In the past few years, however, Han and Hui businesses have permeated the avenue, and today non-Tibetans run over 80 percent of the shops.⁷ Traditional trades such as making Tibetan clothing, furniture, food and even simple jobs such as driving pedicabs, are now primarily done by Han Chinese. Even Tibetan religious articles, such as hada and ghee, are now made by non-Tibetans. Though their living standards have improved, many Tibetans feel that most benefits brought from the new economy have been snatched up by outsiders. When opportunities arise, Tibetans will vent their frustrations, which may escalate into ethnic conflict. For instance, in the March 14 riots in Lhasa, many of those who smashed and looted on the street were unemployed youth.

Beyond Materialism

Contrary to Beijing’s expectation, the economic development and improvements in living standards have not won over the hearts of Tibetans. Rather, Tibetans have increasingly leaned toward the Dalai Lama who has not given them a penny. In recent years, Tibet has appeared calm and turmoil like that of the 1980s has rarely been seen in the streets. But below the surface, a quiet spirit of rebellion has simmered. The reciting of the Dalai Lama’s honorific titles could be heard constantly in the crowds along the pilgrimage circuits or among the worshipers in the temples. The daily prayer of most Tibetans was for the Dalai Lama’s well-being and longevity. To Tibetans, the Dalai Lama is not just an individual; he represents the Dalai genealogy and system that has sustained Tibet for more than five centuries. In the Tibetans’ perception of reincarnation, hostility toward one Dalai lama is not simply seen as hostility towards him, but is tantamount to hostility toward the entire Dalai genealogy, the entire Tibetan religious system, and the whole Tibetan nation. Under the weight of these spiritual forces, what difference can money make?

For a period in the 1980s, Beijing contemplated winning over the Dalai Lama himself. A special agency was set up to “win over the Dalai clique and overseas Tibetan compatriots and return them to the motherland.”⁸ The “win over and return” project, however, made no meaningful progress because the gap between the two sides was too wide to bridge. What Beijing promised the Dalai Lama was merely to restore his nominal titles as vice chairman of the National People’s Congress and vice chairman of the National Political Consultative Conference. He would have been confined to Beijing and could not have held any post in Tibet concurrently.⁹ What the Dalai Lama demanded was nothing less than a “high-degree of autonomy” in the greater Tibetan region. Pursuing objectives far apart, the two sides lacked a common ground for dialogue and no progress was made.

From 1987 to 1989 scores of riots erupted in Lhasa. Beijing began to realize that it had trapped itself in a vicious cycle: the Tibetans belong to a religious nation; the religion de-

mands its believers' unconditional obedience to the religious leader; and the exiled Dalai Lama is both the religious and political leader of Tibet. In Beijing's logic, Tibet's religious freedom would inevitably lead the Tibetans to worship the Dalai Lama and he would use his spiritual influence to incite opposition against Beijing. Understanding that it was impossible to return to the old policy of completely banning religion in Tibet, the Dalai Lama became the key target to breaking the cycle. In 1994, Beijing held the "Third Symposium on Tibet Work," marking the beginning of a hardline approach to its management of Tibet.¹⁰ With the economic "carrot" ineffective, Beijing applied the "stick." Thereafter the Dalai Lama was viewed as the "snake head" that had to be hit by the "stick" to control the "snake."

Beijing's logic in targeting the Dalai Lama was fundamentally flawed. Since the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan religion are inseparable, any anti-Dalai movement cannot be limited to political matters, and inevitably becomes an issue for the whole Tibetan religion. For instance, how can the Dalai Lama be "exposed and repudiated" while all the temples and most of the

Tibetan families enshrine and worship his image? Yet from 1996, orders were issued to confiscate and destroy all images of the Dalai Lama, and monks were forced to publicly denounce him. New regulations were decreed to limit monasteries' activities. For instance, temples could not be built without government permission, the size of monasterial staff was limited, contact between monasteries was prohibited, and religion could not be propagated outside the monasteries. The Chinese gov-

ernment's campaign did not stop at the monasteries. Every CCP member, cadre and state employee in Tibet was explicitly required not to practice religion. This meant that they had to regard the Dalai Lama as the enemy, and refrain from displaying his images or arranging shrines in their homes, inviting monks to recite scriptures and provide services, displaying any religious symbols, and sending their children to schools established by the Tibetan government in exile. Violators were threatened with being ousted from the party and dismissed from their state jobs. If the violator was a retiree, his or her pensions would be suspended, and, if a student, his or her opportunity to continue in school would be terminated.

It would be against the essence of religion to demand that religious followers love a temporal party or government more than their faith. Therefore, Beijing has undertaken an impossible task in trying to break the Tibetan political-religious cycle by bringing down the Dalai Lama, and their effort has only worked to intensify the Tibetans' hatred. During the "monastery rectification," many monks and nuns chose to be forced out of their monasteries rather than obey an order to slander the Dalai Lama in public. Any monks remaining in monasteries were forced to write reports on their thoughts and curse the Dalai Lama. According to their beliefs, cursing their teacher will bring them to hell. This only intensified the mood of dissatisfaction among the monks and priests. Yet Beijing failed to recognize the huge influence monks and priests have on ordinary Tibetans.

Economic benefits plus the "carrot" and "big stick" policy of high political pressure have superficially maintained peace in Tibet for the past 13 years. But, the recent Lhasa riots once again proved that this policy cannot solve the Tibet question, and under China's political system, the authorities have no other way to govern Tibet. Chinese policies thus far have failed to recognize that the power and influence of the Dalai Lama supercedes the power derived from the economic advantages the Chinese government has given to Tibetans.

For Tibetans, the power of the Dalai Lama supercedes that of the economic advantages brought by Chinese policies.

International Pressure?

No matter how much pressure the international community exerts, external forces cannot solve the Tibet issue. The standard for evaluating progress on the Tibet issue should not rest on how successful attempts at swaying the opinions of foreign actors and politicians are, but rather how much headway they have made within China. Using this criterion, we cannot say that the international community and the exile Tibetan government have been successful.

Pressure from the international community on China has not been clearly effective, and has often had negative effects. China is a large and increasingly powerful country, not easily swayed by foreign influence. The widespread sanctions after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, for example, did little to modify China's behavior. Due to China's increasing economic influence, few foreign governments would be willing to ruin their country's economic survival for the support of Tibet, and China knows it.

However, the Dalai Lama's success in the international community is not meaningless. Without a certain level of international pressure, the Chinese government would never believe in the need for change. The many economic benefits that the Tibetan regions receive can easily be seen as a result of the efforts of the

exiled Tibetans and other international pressures. The primary failure of external Tibetan activists has been a too narrow focus which only attempts to influence decision-makers in Beijing. The exiled government should instead broaden their perspective and recognize that China consists not only of the few people in the central government, but also includes a diverse group of classes and interest groups, many of which are dissatisfied with Beijing's policies.

On the Tibet question, the vast majority of the Han people accept the propaganda of the authorities without objection and stand together with the government. This signifies at least one thing: until now the work of exiled Tibet has not been careful to separate the ordinary Chinese people and the ruling communist regime. The exiled government may have gained support in the international community by condemning China as a whole entity, expressing the sufferings of Tibetans from a ethnic angle, and demanding that the Western community intervene based on the principle that human rights are more important than national sovereignty. But, in China, these tactics have only encouraged the Han people to further unite with the Chinese government on the question of Tibet.

The Middle Way

The Dalai Lama has advocated a "middle path based on mutual benefit" which would grant Tibetans a high level of autonomy, but with a promise that the region would remain part of China.¹¹ In his "Middle-Way Approach," Tibetan autonomy would be created under a "democratic system" based on Western representative democracy. The framework of the proposed government consists of a bicameral legislature: the House of the People (the highest lawmaking body), which is directly elected by the public; and the House of Regions, which is elected by regional assemblies, with an undetermined number of seats nominated by the executive branch.¹² The essence of the Dalai Lama's model is that the voting public has great direct influence over politicians, just as the Western style of democracy on which it is modeled.

The Dalai Lama has claimed that the Middle-Way Approach is a nonpartisan and moder-

ate position that safeguards the security and territorial integrity of the motherland for the Chinese.¹³ But the “middle way” has fallen on deaf ears precisely because Beijing does not trust the Dalai Lama’s intentions in Tibet. Even if the Dalai Lama does not seek full independence for Tibet, does his representative model of democracy create an inevitable path to independence? If this system cannot ensure that Tibet “remains inside China” the whole “middle way” loses the most basic precondition for feasibility.

A Stepping Stone to Independence

If Tibet implements the Dalai Lama’s method of democracy, the elections will surely result in the ascendance of leaders who champion Tibetan independence. This situation is created by the close link between the public and the autonomous government’s decision-makers. Members of the House of the People are directly elected by the voters and members of the House of Regions are elected by a council of regional leaders, who are elected by the people. This means that members of the legislature are highly vulnerable to the impulsive mood of voters. Those in the exile government who drafted this plan seem to believe that the legislature is a sufficient buffer of public irrationality which could withstand pressure to pursue an unwise course of action. Indeed, similar representative political systems in the West adequately serve this function. But the key difference is that in developed Western democracies, there is no common goal or object for hatred pushing the society to an excessive course of action. In a suddenly democratized Tibet, all of these factors exist in the extreme. Members of parliament would be defenseless against the force of the public, and left with no other choice than to follow the masses.

In a democratic election, each member of parliament faces a number of competitors looking to unseat him or her. The most expedient tactic for a challenger is to attack the incumbent. This strategy often works. The masses love heroes and are fond of seeing heroic deeds and lofty words. In the face of such competitions, members of parliament cannot avoid being spurred on to join a race to the extremes. On that racing course, whoever runs in front will be cheered on by the masses and will win the electoral prize. Thus, not only will members of parliament be unable to buffer public mood, they will often race down the road of radicalism for the purpose of consolidating their own positions. In this system, the chain of intensified conflict between Tibet and China is therefore bound to extend upwards.

Autonomy, Then What?

The Middle-Way Approach does not address a number of practical issues in Tibet. Revolution is a grand holiday for the people: during the revolution, people might exultantly celebrate, but problems usually occur the day after the revolution succeeds. Once Tibet truly becomes self-governing, there will no longer be anyone else managing its welfare and it will bear all of the responsibility. Currently, Tibet enjoys a relatively high level of modernization, but this is only maintained by subsidies from Beijing. In 1999, local fiscal revenues in the Tibet Autonomous Region stood at 457.31 million RMB, while the fiscal spending topped 5.3 billion RMB,¹⁴ and the deficit over 10 times the revenues was subsidized by Beijing. Should Tibet become independent and China cut off its subsidies, Tibet would be unable to maintain its modernization. Even with aid from the West, it would be impossible to compensate for this loss. Some may say that Tibet can still live without modernization. Although modernity and progress may not have convinced many Tibetans to support Beijing, how many of them are willing to see their standard of living significantly regress?

If Tibet achieves the “high autonomy” designed by the Dalai Lama, how can the interests of the “emancipated slaves,” “communist Tibetans” as well as Han Chinese and other ethnic minorities in the Tibetan regions be ensured? Currently in Tibet, there are still a large number of people called “liberated slaves.” Before 1959, they were at the bottom stratum of feudal serfdom. It was precisely the Communist Party that has helped them to get land and raise their economic and political positions. Will it require them to return their land to the former owners? Although the Dalai Lama has always emphasized that Tibet would not return to the old system, as long as he does not clarify what the new system is going to be, the status of “liberated serfs” in an autonomous Tibet remains questionable.

There is also the legacy that the Communist Party has left in Tibet to consider. Decades of Chinese rule have produced a large number of Tibetans who share common interests with the Communist Party. These people include officials in the Party, employees of state-owned businesses, retirees and other beneficiaries. If Tibet becomes self-governing and the Communist Party leaves the Tibetan society, how will the lives of these people change? Could their lifestyles or safety be guaranteed? How would a self-governing Tibet deal with the state-owned organizations left from the communist era? In what way can it assimilate more than 100,000 officials and employees who are mostly concentrated in the cities?

Once self-governance is achieved, the Dalai Lama suggests that people of the Han, Hui and other minorities who were not born inside Tibet should leave the region. Non-Tibetans who were born in Tibet would be allowed to remain in Tibet permanently. But if only those who were born inside Tibet have the right to permanently remain in Tibet, the number of such people will be miniscule. Even for those Han people who have lived in Tibet for many decades and whose residence is registered in Tibet, when they give birth, they usually go back to Han residence areas because they believe that the altitude of Tibet is not well-suited for Han mothers and babies. Thus, their children are mostly not born in Tibet, either. Would it be reasonable to demand all of the people who were born outside of Tibet to leave? Would it be practical? The right for permanent residence is not even the biggest problem. More important is whether the future Tibet would permit Han people to enter freely. Will Tibet turn into another Hong Kong, which can only be entered with a special pass? The policy has been easy to implement in tiny Hong Kong, since the Chinese were restricted from entering anyway (this still spurred the resentment of Han people in the inland, who said that unification was not like unification at all). But Tibet’s area is one fourth of the total area of China and Han people have traditionally been able to move freely there, but according to the “middle way,” they need to have a special pass to enter. This seems both unreasonable and impractical.

Although modernity may not have convinced many Tibetans to support Beijing, how many are willing to see their living standards significantly regress?

The Progressive Democracy Model

The realities in China and Tibet necessitate a new institutional arrangement to satisfy both parties’ preconditions. This new institutional arrangement should both guarantee China’s sovereignty and let Tibet achieve “high autonomy.” My suggestion is something I

have termed progressive democracy - multi-tier electoral system, which is based on a successive series of elections starting at the village level. The first stage of building a stable and autonomous Tibet begins with village elections. Each village elects a leader, then the elected village leaders proceed to elect the leader of the township, then the elected township leaders convene to elect a county leader, and so on. Step by step, from township to county, from county to region, the self-governance of Tibet can be gradually realized. When all the prefectures and cities in the Tibetan region form their autonomous committees through progressive democracy, the prefecture and city heads elected by the committees can form an all-Tibetan self-governing committee which includes the Tibetan regions in the four provinces, managing Tibet autonomously.

The basic building block of this model of democracy is the village-level election. However, these differ from the village elections already taking place in China, which are based on large, artificially created administrative units with populations between 3,000 and 4,000 people. By contrast, the "natural villages" in my model are organic, existing settlements, where populations are small enough that villagers know each other and share similar interests and needs. This model is well suited to Tibet because Tibetan society is already based on the long established local leadership of a "headman," a grassroots leader elected by tribes in nomadic areas.¹⁵

Tibet's geographical expanse and low population density create difficulties for the mobilization, electioneering and voting of large-scale elections, such as in those proposed by the Dalai Lama. If direct elections were held for the highest Tibetan offices, few voters would have adequate access to information about the candidates and issues while having even less incentive to cross high mountains to cast their vote. The progressive democracy model holds elections within a manageable scope. Farmers and herdsman scattered in rural areas and pasture land only elect village heads, without the need for travel or casting complicated votes. Votes can be cast by oral expression or raising hands, making training or illiteracy irrelevant. Regarding affairs within the scope of the election, no one is wiser than the local farmers and herdsmen themselves. Even without the use of newspapers or television, candidates can fully communicate with voters. Drawing from their personal experiences with the candidates, voters will not be deluded by empty talk or empty promises. They know about every one in detail and whom they should vote for. As long as the village elections are successful, elections at all levels above will follow naturally.

Preventing Independence

The progressive democratic model can both achieve high autonomy for Tibet on the basis of democracy and also ensure that Tibet does not set on a reckless path to independence. In the Dalai Lama's design of Tibet's future political framework, there is an interactive chain in which opinion leaders use the media to influence voters, who in turn elect the government, which causes a "plaza effect" to pursue national independence. This form of democracy, with fairly direct representation, would only exacerbate the situation because politicians would rely on inciting public sentiment to get votes. The progressive democracy model, on the contrary, weakens the link between the public and the members of parliament, insulating the leadership from irrational and emotional public desires. If Tibet adopts the progressive democracy model, the committee of regional governors could fully understand the disadvantages of independence and act in the best interest of Tibetans, regardless of public mood.

Creating a Pluralistic Society

The progressive democracy model can also stabilize heterogeneous groups in Tibet, particularly in regions where many ethnic minorities live together but remain concentrated in their small communities. First, self-governance may be implemented for people of the same ethnic minority in small areas, where minorities live to ensure that their lifestyle and culture are not marginalized by other groups. At a higher level, the people elected from different ethnic minority areas would form a joint administrative committee to achieve the common harmony of multiethnic minorities.

Furthermore, one of the first challenges facing a Tibetan government with high autonomy will be how to deal with the Party and government personnel, retired personnel and employees of state-owned enterprises and utility units supported by the central finance during the communist period. When two distinct camps compete in Western style democracies, the losing side is often disenfranchised in the resulting government. But since progressive democracy guarantees the representation of all village level groups, no one party possesses overwhelming advantages over another, thus ensuring that different camps can coexist in peace. Each group will have its immediate self-governing body which will protect constituents and implement their principles. Different self-governing bodies coordinate and exchange with one another at a higher level of progressive democracy. This structure promotes the co-existence and cooperation of heterogeneous groups until there is sufficient transitional time for antagonism to weaken and integration to begin.

Religion is unlikely to become politicized and will only serve as a moral background.

Reigning in Religious Influence

Tibet has a theocratic tradition stretching over several hundred years. Today, even in exile, the 14th Dalai Lama remains both a religious and political leader. Since religion in Tibet greatly affects secular affairs, many assume that any form of democracy would mean placing control in the hands of the lamas. Critics fear that even if the law forbids religious control of politics (as the Dalai Lama promises) and does not allow monks to take part in elections, many people will still vote according to the Dalai Lamas' instructions. The law cannot control people's thinking. If the public will is controlled by religion, then religion will inevitably become the controlling power in politics.

Therefore, how can the cultural role of religion in Tibet be preserved while preventing its domination of politics? This is yet another strength of progressive democracy. Since the public elections occur at the grassroots level, religion is unlikely to become a specific political instrument and will only serve as a general moral background. If the people were to directly vote for the upper leadership like Western representative democracies, living Buddha's could significantly sway the elections. But the combination of Tibet's population characteristics and the progressive democratic model would make this unlikely. Roughly 40 percent of the ethnic Tibetan population is nomadic, with herdsman and farmers comprising 80 percent of the Tibet Autonomous Region's 2.7 million inhabitants. In these extremely rural and often isolated conditions, local elections would hinge on village-level issues, with big-picture concepts such as religion rarely factoring into the small-scale choices at stake.

A Smooth Transition

The most important aspect of the successive multitier electoral system is that it nonviolently transforms the totalitarian system from the bottom up, and does not need to directly challenge the highest totalitarian authority from the very beginning. Thus the totalitarian powers are less likely to violently oppose it. In contrast, top-down movements for self-governance inevitably clash with the totalitarian powers at their inception – the stage where one must eliminate the other. In the successive multi-tier electoral system, only in the final stages – when the chiefs from all the regions in Tibet come together to elect the highest leader – would the system completely replace the totalitarian powers in Tibet. By that time, the current regime may no longer have the motivation or power to repress the new system. The advanced self-governance of Tibet could thus be accomplished completely without violence.

There is no doubt that obtaining permission for self-governance directly from the Chinese government requires only a few words from Beijing and would be the easiest road to self-governance. But when will Beijing speak those words? If it never opens its mouth, then must one wait forever, until Tibet is no longer Tibet, and Tibetans are no longer Tibetans? This kind of waiting, with one's destiny in someone else's hands, leaves little room for hope.

The final point of progressive democracy is that it can proceed without Beijing's approval. This path will not be easy and, it may be met with resistance or even persecution from Beijing; however, the progressive democracy system is not easy to disrupt. If authorities imprison the township leader, electing a replacement is easy. The small-scale and informal nature of the local elections make it possible to quickly fill a vacant office. If authorities appoint their own township leader, the village heads would still only recognize the leader they elected themselves. Though the township leader appointed by the authorities could use the office and the seal of the township, if the village heads do not obey him, he would be nothing more than an empty title. If authorities arrest the second elected township leader, then the village heads continue with a nonviolent method and elect a third township leader. There is no violence in the process, just a willingness to "fill-up the prisons" and endless elections. Thus, autonomy is only dependent on the courage and patience of Tibetans and will persist as long as they are willing to stay the course. The hurdles may be very high in the beginning, but the challenges will become increasingly surmountable, and at the finish line, an autonomous Tibet may emerge with little resistance. 🍌

Notes

¹ Chen Kuiyuan's speech at the fifth conference of the responsible party members of the Sixth People's Congress and Political Consultative Council of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, May 14, 1997.

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³ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet," Published in May 2004, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/celt/eng/xwdt/t125488.htm>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *The Tibetan Autonomous Region's Tibet Statistics Yearbook 2007*, published by the Center of Tibet Information.

⁶ Wang Lixiong, "Dalai Lama Is the Key to the "Tibetan Question," July 2000, <http://www.csuchen.de/html/68/t-308268.html>.

⁷ Zhang Hong, "2006, Events in the Train-line of Qing-Tibet," *China Today*, Issue 9, 2006.

⁸ The Center of Tibet Information, "1983's Events of CCP in Tibet," <http://www.tibetinform.com.cn/>

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⁹ “CCP Secretary-General Hu Yaobang’s conversation with the Dalai Lama’s brother Gyalo Dondrup in Beijing, July 1981,” *Briefings on Tibet*, compiled by the Propaganda Department of the CCP Committee of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (July 1985), 32.

¹⁰ The United Front work Department of CCP, “Description of Third Symposium on Tibet Work,” July 1994, <http://www.zytzb.org.cn/zytzbwz/theory/lishi/lishi110.htm>.

¹¹ “The Middle-Way Approach: A Framework for Resolving the Issue of Tibet,” Issued by the Department of Information and International Relations, Exiled Central Tibetan Administration, updated 2006, <http://www.tibet.net/en/diir/sino/std/imwa.html>.

¹² “Dalai Lama Statement - Constitution for the Future of Tibet,” published by Exiled Central Tibetan Administration, February 1992, <http://www.freetibet.org/about/dalai4>.

¹³ “Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to All Tibetans,” published by the office of Dalai Lama, Apr. 5, 2008, <http://www.dalailama.com/news.222.htm>.

¹⁴ *The Tibetan Autonomous Region’s Tibet Statistics Yearbook 2000*, published by the Center of Tibet Information.

¹⁵ The headman system was officially abolished under Mao, but returned in the 1980s and has since been tolerated by the government.

Independence in Disguise

Zhou Yuan

On April 25, *Xinhua News* reported that the Chinese government would resume discussions with the Dalai Lama, in response to the former Tibetan leader's repeated requests for talks. *Xinhua* stated that it has been the government's policy to leave an open door for dialogue with the Dalai Lama, adding that "it is hoped that through contact and consultation, the Dalai side will take credible moves to stop activities aimed at splitting China, stop plotting and inciting violence, and stop disrupting and sabotaging the Beijing Olympic Games so as to create conditions for talks." According to news reports, the Dalai Lama's private representatives arrived in Shenzhen on May 3rd and commenced meetings with central government officials.¹ Both in China and abroad, this news has generated intrigue and speculation as to what the result of these talks will be.

I am not in a position to comment on the progress of these talks, but as a scholar who has long conducted research on the modern and contemporary history of Tibet, I am fairly clear about the differences between the Chinese government's and the Dalai Lama's positions. Here, I am willing to make a brief introduction of these differences so that readers may then make their own judgments about the prospect of reconciliation between Beijing and the Dalai Lama.

China is historically a united multiethnic country. Although the Han Chinese population makes up more than 90 percent of the total population, China also includes relatively small populations of 55 other ethnic groups. In order to protect the equal and autonomous rights of these groups, the Chinese government allowed regional ethnic autonomy as a basic policy for solving ethnic issues and a fundamental political system for the implementation of the people's democracy. Regional ethnic autonomy means that under the unified leadership of

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China Security, Vol. 4 No. 2 Spring 2008, pp. 38-45
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the state, self-governing organs are established in areas where ethnic minorities live in compact communities, so that the people can administer the local affairs of their own ethnic groups. The regional ethnic autonomy system is included in the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* and is a key piece in the foundation of the country's political system.

The Tibet Autonomous Region is one of the five autonomous regions in China where regional ethnic autonomy is exercised at the provincial level. Although the primary inhabitants of the Tibet Autonomous Region are Tibetans, there are a dozen other ethnic groups besides the Tibetans – Han, Hui, Moinba, Lhoba, Naxi, Nu, Drung and others have lived in the region for generations. Since regional ethnic autonomy was implemented in Tibet in 1965, people of all ethnic nationalities in the region have actively participated in the administration of local and state affairs and exercised the rights of self-government bestowed under Chinese law. Meanwhile, Tibetan society has modernized by leaps and bounds, greatly enhancing their material, cultural and political lives.²

Yet the Dalai clique wantonly denigrate the new socialist Tibet in total disregard of the fact that the Tibetan people have become their own masters and enjoyed economic and social benefits for over 40 years. The Dalai Lama instead promotes his “Middle-Way Approach,” which he says seeks “high autonomy” for Tibet, not independence.³ He has repeatedly stated that the Middle-Way Approach is the best way to solve “the Tibet question” within the framework of the Chinese constitution, saying that such an approach would achieve “a lasting solution of peace.”⁴

However, the Dalai Lama's so-called “high autonomy” is essentially independence in a disguised form. The extent of his “autonomy” is not limited to the Tibet Autonomous Region, but also includes areas where Tibetans live in the four provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan, amounting to roughly one-fourth of China's total land area. To achieve their goal, the Dalai clique hopes to mobilize foreigners to mount pressure on the Chinese government, forcing it to concede to their plan. Then, once conditions at home and abroad are ripe, they will attempt to establish an independent “Greater Tibet State.” Simply put, although the Dalai Lama's words have changed, he has never truly given up his goal of splitting Tibet from China. The call for “high autonomy” is merely a strategy to achieve Tibet independence in two steps rather than one.⁵

Twisting the Truth

The Dalai Lama's “high autonomy” can be found in his *Five-Point Plan* (1987) and *Seven-Point Plan* (1988), which he presented to members of the U.S. Congress and the European Parliament respectively. One of the core principles of the Dalai Lama's proposal is to implement “true autonomy” or “high autonomy” in the “greater Tibet region.” Under the Dalai Lama's proposed government, Tibet would have administrative, financial, legislative and judicial independence. A foreign affairs office would be created to handle nonpolitical activities with foreign countries in order for non-militarization and the policy of neutrality to be gradually realized in this vast region within the territory of China. Thus, the Dalai Lama's plan fully negates and thoroughly changes the current regional ethnic autonomy system and creates an independent Tibet, thinly disguised as “high autonomy.”⁶

He continues to distort history by denying that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times and that Tibet is an inseparable part of China's territory. For example, in his 1987 *Five-Point Plan* the Dalai Lama claimed that “when the People's Liberation Army entered Tibet in

The Dalai Lama's Five-Point Plan (1987)

1. The whole of Tibet should be transformed into a demilitarized zone of peace and non-violence, keeping with Tibet's historical role as a peaceful and neutral Buddhist nation and buffer state separating the continent's great powers.
2. The population transfer of Chinese into Tibet, which the government in Peking pursues in order to force a "final solution" to the Tibetan problem by reducing the Tibetan population to an insignificant and disenfranchised minority in Tibet itself, must be stopped.
3. Fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms must be respected in Tibet. The Tibetan people must once again be free to develop culturally, intellectually, economically and spiritually and to exercise basic democratic freedoms.
4. Serious efforts must be made to restore the natural environment in Tibet. China should abandon its use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.
5. Negotiations on the future status of Tibet and the relationship between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples should be started in earnest.

1949, Tibet was a fully independent country."⁷ In annual remarks commemorating Tibet's so-called "anti-suppression uprising," he stated that "the snow-covered Tibet has been under Chinese occupation for over half a century," and "it is an undeniable fact that for over 2,000 years, Tibet has long existed individually as a unique whole."⁸ He has also argued that "Chinese leaders have strongly opposed my past stance and my views about Tibetan history. They want me to change my own stance. But, no one can change truth and fact."⁹ Samdhong Rinpoche, the "prime minister" of the "Tibet government in exile" claimed that "after 50 years, the colonial nature of Chinese rule in Tibet remains the same."¹⁰ The Dalai Lama's adherence to his version of a historically independent Tibet and his pledge that he does not currently seek independence are tactics used for creating conditions for a fully sovereign Tibet.

What should be remembered is that the system which the Dalai Lama attacks is precisely the system whose preparations he once supported and took part in. In the early 1950s, when the Tibet Autonomous Region was being established, the central government held full consultations with the Dalai Lama and the upper classes in Tibet. When the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region was formed in 1956, the Dalai Lama served as its chairperson.¹¹ At the founding conference, he made the opening speech, saying: "The establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region symbolizes that the work in Tibet has entered a brand-new stage."¹² In his report to the conference, he further said: "The establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region is not only timely and necessary" but "we wholeheartedly support the policies of the Communist Party of China

The Dalai Lama's Seven-Point Plan (1988)

1. The whole of Tibet should become a self-governing democratic political entity founded in association with the People's Republic of China.
2. The Chinese government could remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy but the Tibetan government should develop and maintain relations through its own Foreign Affairs Bureau in the fields of religion, commerce, education, culture, tourism, science, sports and other nonpolitical activities.
3. The Government of Tibet should be founded on a constitution of basic law that provides for a democratic system of government entrusted with the tasks of ensuring economic equality, social justice and protection of the environment.
4. The Government of Tibet would fully adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights including the rights to speech, assembly and religion. Because religion constitutes the source of Tibet's national identity, it would be the special duty of the Government to safeguard and develop its practice.
5. The Government of Tibet should be comprised of a popularly elected chief executive, a bicameral legislative branch and an independent judicial system, with its seats in Lhasa.
6. The Government of Tibet would pass strict laws to protect wildlife and plant life. The exploitation of natural resources would be carefully regulated. The manufacture, testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other armaments must be prohibited, as well as the use of nuclear power and other technologies which produce hazardous waste.
7. A regional peace conference to ensure Tibet becomes a genuine sanctuary of peace through demilitarization. Until such a peace conference can be convened, and demilitarization and neutralization achieved, China could have the right to maintain a restricted number of military installations in Tibet, solely for defense purposes.

and the central people's government to implement regional ethnic autonomy, ethnic equality, solidarity and protect religious freedom."¹³ The Dalai Lama's current attacks on the regional ethnic autonomy system in Tibet not only contradict the actual situation in Tibet but also the words which he solemnly vowed in the 1950s.

What many Westerners do not know is that Dalai Lama's Tibet was a system of feudal serfdom and theocracy. In Old Tibet, the slave owners, who accounted for less than 5 percent of the total population, exploited and suppressed the other 95 percent of the population.¹⁴ The Dalai Lama and his family were slave owners in Tibet, possessing large tracts of land and large numbers of slaves.¹⁵ To this day, the Dalai Lama and the slave owners who have fled with him have never repented for the evils which they committed in the past. On the contrary, they use every means available to beautify Old Tibet, causing Westerners to wrongly think that

Tibet under the Dalai Lama was a paradise in which “the light of Buddha shines everywhere, everyone is equal and all the people are happy.”¹⁶ In 1959, the reactionary upper class elements in Tibet blatantly started armed riots to keep the feudal serfdom system “unchanged forever.”¹⁷ After the riots failed, the Dalai Lama and his followers fled abroad and set up a “government in exile,” headed by the Dalai Lama and other fled slave owners. How can those who are familiar with history believe that these despotic and dictatorial slave owners who cruelly deprived and suppressed millions of people are the best spokespersons for the interests of Tibetan people? The packaging of their “democratic politic” is merely a scam in which they “cry wine but sell vinegar,” preying on the sympathy of Westerners.

The Dalai Lama defected from China at the age of 24, spending most of his life overseas. Living in exile and depending on others has made him a skilled politician catering to Western culture and mentality. To win sympathy and support from the Western world, he has deftly packaged his political intentions. In the 1988 *Seven-Point Proposal*, the Dalai Lama said that the future “government of Tibet should be seated in Lhasa, and Tibet should have a democratically elected executive and establish a two-chamber legislature and an independent judicial system.”¹⁸ In 1992, the Dalai clique released *Guidelines for Future Tibet’s Polity and Basic Features of its Constitution*. In it, the Dalai clique pointed out: “The Chinese tyranny withdraws from Tibet, and there will be a transitional period after Tibet resumes freedom before a new constitution is released and a new legitimate government is formed in accordance with the new constitution.”¹⁹ It also set forth provisions for the formation and powers of an interim president, the makeup of the constitutional convention, and the basic principles of the future constitution. This is a very “Western” and fashionable packaging of the “high autonomy” scheme.

More than Tibet

Another core content of the Middle-Way Approach is that the “high autonomy” pursued by the Dalai clique is not limited to today’s Tibet Autonomous Region (which has an area of roughly 1.2 million km²) but expands to all Tibetan-inhabited regions including the whole of Qinghai province and parts of Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan, equaling an area of no less than 2.4 million km², or one-fourth of China’s total land area.

There is no historical basis whatsoever for the notion of “Greater Tibet.” In as early as the 13th century, the central government of the Yuan Dynasty exercised direct administrative jurisdiction over Tibet. Over the generations and dynasties since then, China’s administrative

division, including Tibet, has been decided by the central government. The Tibetan local government has never administered any other region inhabited by Tibetans except Tibet. Even in the Qing Dynasty, the large areas in the northeast part of the current Tibet Autonomous Region were directly administered by the minister for Tibet of the central government. There were also places outside

what is now the Tibet Autonomous Region where Tibetans lived alongside other ethnic minorities, which were respectively administered by the local governments in Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and Gansu provinces. After the People’s Republic of China was founded, the Chinese government took careful consideration of these historical customs and traditions when determining the administrative divisions of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The Dalai Lama is a skilled politician catering to Western culture and mentality.

“Greater Tibet” does not accord to the reality of ethnic distribution in China. The Dalai Lama’s “Greater Tibet,” especially the zones on the edges of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau have historically been the stage for frequent migration and exchanges of various ethnic nationalities. Over a long historical process, various ethnicities have settled in both large, mixed inhabitations and concentrated settlements in smaller areas. Thus, these areas are not solely Tibetan, as there are close relationships and interdependence among Tibetan, Han, Mongolian, Qiang, Hui, Shala and Naxi nationalities.

In the *Five-Point Plan*, the Dalai Lama wrote that “it is imperative that the population transfer is stopped and Chinese settlers return to China.”²⁰ In a 1996 speech, Samdhong Rinpoche also claimed that the autonomy which Tibet has long desired is to ensure most Chinese withdraw from Tibet and return to China – their number is now three times that of local Tibetans.”²¹ This implies that once the Dalai Lama’s “high autonomy” is achieved, millions of people of other ethnic minorities will be forced to leave the homeland which they have inhabited and lived for generations, and become “refugees” who cannot return to their homes. The few “Chinese” lucky enough to remain will also become “emigrants,” depending on others for a living.

On top of the great calamity that the Dalai Lama’s proposed expansion and reorganization of Tibet would cause, he also proposes a “non-militarization” of the region which would negate China’s sovereignty. In the *Five-Point Plan*, the Dalai Lama said that he wants to change Tibet into a “zone of peace” and make it a “buffering state” between China and India. He openly said that “only a withdrawal of Chinese troops could start a genuine process of reconciliation,”²² adding that Tibet should become “a genuine sanctuary of peace through demilitarization.”²³ But the right to garrison is an important part and symbol of a country’s sovereignty and is inextricably linked to its right to self defense. That the Dalai Lama’s demands for the Chinese army to withdraw from Tibet implies that he not only wants the Chinese government to give up sovereign jurisdiction over the region, but that he would also create conditions for separatists to wantonly stage Tibetan independence activities.

Once the Dalai Lama’s “high autonomy” is achieved, millions of people of other ethnic minorities will be forced to leave their homeland.

Failed Negotiation

Since 1979, the Dalai Lama has sent his private representatives on twenty successive delegations to China. Relevant people within the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China have held in-depth talks with close relatives of the Dalai Lama, including his eldest and second eldest brothers, sister-in-law and sister over particular issues of their concern. Since 2002, the Dalai Lama’s representatives have been in contact with the head of the relevant department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China six times.”²⁴ Thus, from 1979 to the present, there has been a long series of contact and talks between the China and the Dalai Lama’s sides. So why has no “substantive progress” been made?

While the Chinese government has, from time to time, reexamined the question of how to treat the Dalai Lama, it has maintained a consistent and clear policy. Though the Dalai Lama and his clique have repeatedly tried to split China and impede the development and progress of Tibet, the Chinese government has nevertheless repeatedly said that “as long as the Dalai

Lama gives up his separatist proposition and recognizes that Tibet is an inseparable part of China, the central government will be willing to hold talks with the Dalai Lama at any time, warmly welcome the Dalai Lama to return to the motherland as early as possible...²⁵ If there is any bottom line for the Chinese government on the question of talks with the Dalai Lama, this is it.

Many outsiders are perplexed as to why the Chinese government has participated in talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama, but has not held formal talks with the Dalai Lama himself. They believe that the intentions of Middle-Way Approach are good and trust the Dalai Lama's pledge that he only seeks "high autonomy," which seemingly is not so different from Beijing's position. However, it is clear that the Middle-Way Approach is actually not substantively different from the independence which the Dalai Lama openly demanded before. The so-called "high autonomy" is no more than a surrogate for independence in disguised form.

The Chinese government officially responded to the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach through a white paper released by the Information Office of the State Council in 1992. The central government naturally rejected the proposal, solemnly declaring that China's sovereignty over Tibet could not be denied and that "there could be no independence, nor semi-independence nor independence in disguise."²⁶ The possibility cannot be excluded that he may one day give up his separatist proposition and recognize that Tibet is an inseparable part of China and return to the motherland, though it will be difficult to free himself from the diehard independence elements among his supporters. However, if the Dalai Lama will not truly give up his stance of Tibet independence, including the Middle-Way Approach, the prospects for the latest talks between the two sides do not look promising. 🌐

Notes

¹ "China's central government officials meet with Dalai Lama's private representatives," *Xinhua News*, May 5, 2008, http://china.youth.cn/news/events/200805/t20080505_698524.htm.

² In the White Paper *Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet* issued in 2004, the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China made a comprehensive and accurate introduction to the full political self-governing rights, the full independent rights over social and economic development and entitlement to the inheritance and development of traditional culture and to religious freedom of the people of all nationalities in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

³ "Since 1974, I have consistently held the position of a middle path based on mutual benefit. The so-called middle path is that all Tibetans implement true ethnic regional autonomy under unified administration and thus truly achieve self-power and manage their own affairs by themselves. Except for foreign affairs and national defense, let Tibetan leaders and Tibetan cadres shoulder the responsibilities from managing the affairs of Tibet." Excerpt from a letter published by the Dalai Lama published to Tibetan compatriots in Dharamsala, India. April 6, 2008.

⁴ "Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to All Tibetans," published by the office of Dalai Lama, April 5, 2008.

⁵ Zhou Yuan "Tibet: Traditional Culture, Modernization and Others," in *Cultural Self-Consciousness and Social Development – proceedings of the World Forum on the Chinese Culture of the Twenty-First Century*, (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 2003).

⁶ In a 2004 article entitled "Solve the Tibet Question Beyond Hope and Imagination," Dhondup Tsering, editor of the Dalai Clique's Tibet Magazine, admitted "activists who propose independence think that the 'Five-Point Plan for Tibet' and the 'Strasbourg Proposal' [Seven-Point Plan] are a kind of betrayal, because they have not carefully read the meaning behind the lines. If there is a real environment like that, its effect

will be no different from true independence.”

⁷ Dalai Lama, “Five-Point Plan, Address to the U.S. Congressional Human Right’s Caucus,” Sept. 21, 1987, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.121.htm>.

⁸ Dalai Lama, “Statement on the 42nd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day,” Mar. 10, 2001, <http://www.dalailama.com/march10/42thMarch10.html>.

⁹ Dalai Lama, “Statement on the 31st Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day,” Mar. 10, 1990, <http://www.dalailama.com/march10/31stMarch10.html>.

¹⁰ Samdhong, “Height of Darkness: Chinese Colonialism on the World’s Roof,” Dec. 10, 2001, <http://www.tibet.net/en/diir/pubs/wp/hod01/content.html>.

¹¹ Zhaxi, “Going to Tibet with the Central Government Delegation on Two Occasions,” *China Tibet Magazine*, December 2005, http://tibet.cn/en/news/tin/t20051209_77258.htm.

¹² Wang Yong, “Regional Ethnic Autonomy, the Institutional Guarantee of Tibetan Development,” *Tibet Daily*, May 5, 2008.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, “Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet,” May 2004, Beijing, http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-05/24/content_1487560.htm.

¹⁵ The Information Office of the State Council of People’s Republic of China, “Tibet - Its Ownership And Human Rights Situation,” September 1992, Beijing, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/index.htm>.

¹⁶ Zhou Yuan, “The Book Review about Demise of the Lamaist State,” *Tibetan Studies*, Issue 3, 2002.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Dalai Lama, “Strasbourg Proposal 1988, Address to the Members of the European Parliament,” June 15, 1988, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.96.htm>.

¹⁹ “Guidelines for Future Tibet’s Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution,” released by the Department of Information and International Relations of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, February 1992, <http://www.freetibet.org/about/dalai4>.

²⁰ Dalai Lama, “Five-point Plan, Address to the U.S. Congressional Human Right’s Caucus,” Sept. 21, 1987, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.121.htm>.

²¹ Reported by the private TV network *zee News*, Chandigarh, India on May 2, 2006. Speech by Samdhong at the journalist reception.

²² “Five-point Plan, Address to the U.S. Congressional Human Right’s Caucus,” Sept. 21, 1987, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.121.htm>.

²³ “Strasbourg Proposal 1988, Address to the Members of the European Parliament,” June 15, 1988, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.96.htm>.

²⁴ “Introductory Information to the Background of the Contacts which the Central Government of China has Made with the Dalai Side.” *China News Agency*, Apr. 24, 2008.

²⁵ The Information Office of the State Council of People’s Republic of China, “Tibet - Its Ownership And Human Rights Situation,” September 1992, Beijing, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/index.htm>, 1992.

²⁶ Ibid.

Olympic Security Collaboration

Drew Thompson

“Without security guarantees there cannot be a successful Olympic Games, and without security guarantees the national image will be lost.”

- President Hu Jintao

“The absence of a terrorist incident and serious criminal activity will be an.. important measure of the success of these Games.”

- Interpol Secretary-General Ronald Noble

Hosting the 2008 Olympics provides China with an opportunity to demonstrate its unprecedented progress. With that opportunity, however, also comes risk, including increased threats to security. The international spotlight that accompanies the Olympics makes it a high-profile target for domestic and international terrorists, as well as political activists both from China and abroad. China has made immense efforts to ensure that the Olympics are safe and secure, including extensive investments in infrastructure, planning and international cooperation. As the Games rapidly approach, security experts in China and abroad are making last minute preparations and undoubtedly asking themselves whether these investments and preparations are adequate.

Internationally, there is broad confidence that the Olympics will be safe, and any credible threats will be identified and mitigated through the collaborative efforts of the world's intelligence and police communities. However, China and the United States view security threats very differently, posing potential problems for U.S.-China security cooperation for

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China Security, Vol. 4 No. 2 Spring 2008, pp. 46-58
World Security Institute

the Games. Most glaring is the differing interpretation and identification of the nature of security threats. Chinese security priorities include preventing unauthorized political expression and nonviolent demonstrations as well as violent threats, while U.S. security experts are bound by law and custom to tolerate nonviolent expression and focus on threats to persons and property. Likewise, Chinese officials place a greater emphasis on establishing agreed principles (such as reciprocity) to create a basis for cooperation, while their U.S. counterparts prefer well defined, practical measures that focus on problems and solutions. These different perspectives and resulting approaches potentially limit the effectiveness of collaboration, particularly in terms of the perceived value of U.S. support to Chinese partners.

Chinese organizers bear the ultimate responsibility for the success of the Games, including ensuring its security. The U.S. government, however, also has a deep stake in keeping the Olympics incident-free. U.S. multinational corporations are major sponsors of the Games and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and have genuine commercial interests that the U.S. government is committed to protect. In addition, U.S. Olympic athletes and visiting American journalists and tourists represent a national interest, regardless of their non-governmental status. Importantly, President George Bush has committed to attend the Games, making him perhaps the highest profile security target at the highest profile event of the decade.

The U.S. government's extensive experience collaborating with international organizers of major events shapes their expectations for the Beijing Olympics. The U.S. approach is traditionally comprehensive, extending far beyond a security umbrella around facilities. In 2004, almost 20 U.S. government agencies worked closely with Greek authorities in preparation for the first summer games following the terrorist attacks of 2001. A budget of over US\$35 million for security went to equipment and training for Greek security officials as well as U.S.-Greek military exercises.¹ Planning efforts historically begin early, and include tabletop decision-making simulations as well as responder exercises and dress rehearsals. U.S. security specialists have come to expect a high level of coordination with event organizers and their security services.

China, however, has proven to be a unique case. While international architects designed the great stadiums, the security apparatus and strategy are unmistakably domestic, reflecting a desire on the part of organizers to preserve sovereignty and maintain complete control. An emphasis on self-reliance causes some in the international community to feel that their role is confined. This perception is furthered by extensive Chinese investment in resources that play to its own strengths, including mobilizing large numbers of personnel. This "People's War" approach is particularly reassuring to Chinese leaders, but it does not necessarily match the expectations of U.S. security experts.

While China is a rising economic power, its global reach is limited, along with its experience confronting worldwide security threats. The Olympics is a target for both international terrorists and domestic organizations, such as the East Turkistan Liberation Movement, arguing for closer collaboration and shared efforts to ensure a safe and secure Olympics. The U.S. government's offers of support to China are genuinely intended to fill perceived gaps in Chinese capabilities, not only in the provision of hardware and technology, but also in the sharing of information. Extensive experience in providing security for major events, including three summer and three winter Olympics, coupled with important national interests,

makes U.S. attention to Chinese Olympic security preparations more than a passive concern.

Potential Security Threats

No matter the extent of preparations, the security risks at the Olympics are ever-present. Internationally sponsored terrorism is a distinct threat garnering significant attention from U.S. security experts. Chinese planners are particularly focused on the threat of domestic terrorism and disturbances by those seeking to disrupt the Games. The potential for domestic terrorism extends beyond the well-studied separatist groups and sects such as *Falungong*. Discontented Chinese citizens might resort to violence over a variety of issues, either in Beijing or elsewhere in the country. In the past, mentally unstable or despondent persons have obtained explosives in rural areas and detonated bombs over personal grudges.² Likewise, arson attacks and self-immolation incidents have occurred. Other domestic disturbances could take place, including mass protests over local issues, such as factory layoffs, improper land seizures or corruption. Violent consequences can generally be avoided through proper management by local authorities. Hooliganism and mob violence are not uncommon at sporting events around the world, including China, and must be considered threats in planning scenarios.

On another level, an important consequence of rising Chinese nationalism is a reduced tolerance amongst many citizens for perceived slights or affronts to national dignity. A seemingly trivial incident, such as a “bad call” by a referee, a low score by a judge, or a Chinese star injured by an opposing athlete could spark demonstrations and potential violence against property or individuals.³ Growing nationalism and the perception of “victimization” can contribute to the escalation of a minor event to a dangerous flashpoint. International protests, such as the torch relay spectacles in London and Paris, reinforce negative perceptions of the international community’s attitudes towards China, while domestic rhetoric furthers nationalistic sentiments and contributes to cultural isolation or xenophobia. Nationalism injects some uncertainty about how both the population and leadership will react. If officials are perceived to support nationalist public sentiments or contribute to politicizing a sporting incident, it will likely limit the government’s options to defuse the situation for fear of appearing weak or compromising on vaguely defined principles, such as “national dignity.”

International Cooperation

China’s domestic security challenges stem from complex social, economic and political factors that have less to do with the international security environment than the dramatic transformations that have taken place within the country since 1979. This context has shaped Chinese organizers’ thinking about security threats as opposed to the more traditional threats – that are primarily international in nature – and which form the basis of the U.S. event security doctrine. Therefore, in the eyes of Chinese planners, international experts provide specific, though limited, value through collaboration and information sharing.

Since the Games will attract heads of state, senior executives of multinational corporations, other VIPs and athletes, Olympic security preparation requires extensive international coordination. Organizers have therefore actively engaged security organs and governments from around the world, holding regular conferences and consultations, beginning in earnest

in 2006.⁴ The Olympic security command center has created a coordinating committee open to countries participating in the Olympics and built on the security-focused relationships with the 73 countries that have embassies in Beijing.⁵ Additionally, the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) works closely with the IOC and is believed to have hired security consultants and advisors, though this aspect of BOCOG's work is not widely reported.⁶

Interpol's close working relationship with Chinese authorities predates Olympic preparations, with its Beijing branch, known as the National Central Bureau, located within the Ministry of Public Security's international cooperation department.⁷ Interpol has agreed to provide access to its databases and deploy a "Major Event Support Team" in Beijing prior to the opening ceremony. Interpol's "MIND/FIND"⁸ database includes key information on high-risk individuals including names, fingerprints, photos and more.⁹ The Chinese organizers particularly value access to international intelligence, reflecting a potential gap in their intelligence and assessment capabilities.

In addition to Interpol, China has worked closely with multilateral organizations for Olympic security preparations. In 2005, China signed a declaration with ASEAN countries plus Japan and South Korea to boost cooperation for the Olympics.¹⁰ In 2007, six member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)¹¹ staged a joint anti-terror military exercise in Russia, followed by further exercises in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and Russia's Chelyabinsk.¹² Furthermore, the SCO member states agreed to share security intelligence related to the Olympics.¹³

Let the Preparations Begin

The Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau was appointed the lead organization for security preparations. In December 2004, the Olympic Security Coordination Group (*xietiao xiaozu*) was formally established and made responsible for all security organization, coordination, command and control. The committee also leads coordination with other domestic and foreign security entities as well as private organizations. Twenty central government ministries and municipal government departments were unified under this committee. Beijing has spent lavishly on security work, though budgets and specific details are considered secret. One official stated in 2007 that the budget was \$300 million, a fraction of what was spent at the Athens games. However, this figure does not take into account the massive security spending that has taken place on other budgets, or the relative difference in purchasing power in China.¹⁴ Whatever the original estimates were, it is also likely that security costs have increased dramatically in 2008, particularly in light of several events, including a bus hijacking incident in Xian with Australian tourists aboard, alleged terrorism incidents involving Xinjiang separatists, as well as intense protests around the world along the Olympic torch relay.

Olympic security will be carried out by a network that is referred to as the "4+1 security force," comprising the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), People's Liberation Army (PLA), People's Armed Police, private security companies (*Bao'an*) and volunteers. While the MPS is the core organization responsible for the most visible aspects of security as well as coordinating the efforts of other departments, it is the MPS along with the other three security branches that together form the security backbone for the Games. Generally, the army is responsible for conventional military situations, such as preventing and responding to a ter-

rorist attack, providing airborne security and logistical support for a response to a major incident. A stated mission of the PLA is to prevent politically motivated disturbances which might be instigated by various groups, including *Falungong*, East Turkestan Liberation Movement or other terrorist groups. According to a government press report, the PLA is also responsible for preventing “disruptions by organizations wanting to pressure the Chinese government during the Games.”¹⁵ However, it is unclear how the PLA is trained or equipped to identify and engage organizations “wanting to pressure” the Chinese government.

Organizers’ reliance on large numbers of professional and volunteer security personnel reflects China’s traditional strengths and ability to bring overwhelming numbers to address any challenge. According to estimates made by the BOCOG, at least 92,500 people are needed to provide direct security, including 40,000 police, 27,500 armed police, 10,000 security guards and 5,000 security volunteers. Up to 150,000 other professional security personnel will be deployed to maintain order in the city, with over 290,000 volunteers patrolling the city limits of Beijing.¹⁶ This saturation security strategy does not rely heavily on international cooperation or coordination, and to some extent international experts bring little to the table when it comes to Chinese capabilities to set up security campaigns and community policing.

Beyond the formal “4+1” formula for security arrangements at the Games, massive resources throughout the country will play an important supporting role in ensuring security. China maintains a robust network of *Weihuwending* offices in every government bureau and department, which are responsible for intelligence collection, prevention and responding to civil unrest incidents that include “group incidents” (*qunti shijian*) and “demonstrations” (*shiwei*). The public is also expected to assist in community-based policing and keeping an eye out for possible signs of disturbance. Beijing has a long history of neighborhood committees, often staffed by female retirees who wear red armbands and act as community managers and informants. While the destruction of the *hutong* communities in Beijing has changed the social landscape, neighborhood-based community leaders and the real estate management companies who service apartment blocks will be on constant lookout for suspicious activities.

Communities and the police have undertaken several key programs to “crack down” on crime, including “Project Moat” and “Action for a Safe Olympiad.”¹⁷ These community-focused policing strategies include stepped up patrols and inspections, emphasizing crime prevention as well as control.¹⁸ As part of this campaign, Beijing has tightened the inspection

of “temporary residence permits” among migrants and foreigners, including restricting the issuance of multiple entry visas. Surveillance and supervision over “suspicious troubled persons” has also increased. Since Jan. 22, 2008, over 3,300 local, community-based police (officers assigned to *paichusuo* precincts) have contacted families, carefully checking for potential problems. Inspections of rental housing have increased, as have detentions of petitioners.¹⁹

Supervision of drug users and petty criminals, such as pick pockets, has also been heightened. Beginning in August 2007, officers from the judiciary have been mobilized to support the police. Legal workers and local law enforcement have contributed to city-wide efforts to increase intelligence about activities at the community level. Parolees have been required to make weekly reports to supervisors while caseworkers are assigned to maintain

It is likely Beijing will spend far more on security than the official \$300 million stated in 2007.

daily contact with persons under supervision in the community. Daily patrols are conducted to further ensure that disputes or grievances do not cause public disturbances, including protests in front of hospitals, factories and other facilities in addition to Olympic venues.²⁰

These indigenous, low-tech efforts are back-stopped by significant investment in high-tech and innovative capabilities, including helicopter units, extensive closed circuit TV systems and specialized units such as canine teams.²¹ In the event that preventative measures fail and a dangerous situation develops, Beijing authorities are not without options to resolve certain tactical situations. There are two main tactical police units in Beijing that can be called on to deal with specific scenarios, the "Snow Leopard Commando Unit" (SLCU) and Beijing Police SWAT. The SLCU, under the Beijing Armed Police Corps Secret Detachment, was established in December 2002 with more than 400 officers aged 18 to 30 years old (with an average age of 24).²² Larger than most SWAT teams in the United States, they also have the capability to handle nuclear-chemical-biological incidents and bomb disposal.²³

These and other units have received extensive training, including participation in numerous exercises and dress rehearsals. However, little is known about the decision-making processes at the very top of the command chain. There is scant information available regarding "tabletop" simulation exercises involving senior leaders, or non-government actors. Tabletop exercises are realistic role-playing games to simulate decision-making processes in response to defined scenarios. Because it is not practical for senior officials to participate, junior or retired officials play the role of senior officials, who explore responses to crises presented by referees. The lessons learned in these sessions are conveyed to senior leaders and used to develop policy and build experience in anticipation of future events. It appears the PLA has engaged in simulations to model situations, such as a Taiwan crisis. However, tabletop exercises are not known to be employed by civilian leadership or think tanks in China, though one tabletop exercise conducted in Beijing involved Chinese officials and U.S. non-governmental experts.²⁴ The lack of experience employing the tabletop exercise method has possibly contributed to the Chinese government's poor track record of crisis management and does not bode well for ensuring security at the Olympics. To date, there have been no reports of international cooperation or participation in tabletop simulations for the Olympics. This is certainly a potential area for collaboration where U.S. experts have considerable expertise. Command and control exercises conducted by military and police commanders have been staged, with first responders and government work units providing public services such as hospice care. While these exercises contribute to the training of personnel, they also provide an opportunity to showcase newly acquired hardware and systems. An element of showmanship in some exercises, such as the use of motorized paragliders in staged hostage rescue demonstrations indicates that the distinction between actual training and public relations is blurred.²⁵ However, the overall impression of Chinese security preparations is one of significant financial outlay and tremendous commitment of personnel.

Gaps and Limitations

It is evident that there are clear differences between the Chinese and U.S. approaches to security.²⁶ Overall, China is perceived to be a good environment for ensuring Olympic security, particularly compared to recent Olympic host nations with open borders, close proximity to fragile states or conflict zones and a history of terrorist events. Greece, Italy and the United States all fall into the latter category, with domestic terrorists presenting profound

challenges for security at major events. U.S. security officials expressed concerns about Greek Olympic security preparations in 2004, later attributing its relatively trouble-free Games to a combination of hard work, but also a little luck. The postmortem report on the 1996 Atlanta Olympics security is defined by the bombing which occurred at a gathering place that planners created to provide unrestricted access to the public. This illustrates the dilemma in finding a balance between public access and security. China faces this dilemma on different terms, as there is less call for individual freedoms and access over security.

The United States and international security experts have publicly expressed confidence in Beijing's security preparations. While attending a conference in Hong Kong, the director of Interpol commented favorably on preparations, as did U.S. FBI Director Robert Mueller in January 2008.²⁷ Clearly, U.S.-China security cooperation is happening, with only a fraction publicly reported. Naturally, a degree of engagement involves security precautions necessary for President Bush's appearance at the Games.

The FBI and State Department Diplomatic Security bureau have ample experience working with Olympic host nations at previous Olympics and compare their experience with China by those yardsticks. The FBI deployed between two and three hundred agents to Athens, and over 1,000 agents to Atlanta. The FBI has expressed its interest to share its expertise, offering to deploy 100 agents to

China, though the response has not been positive. One of the FBI's strategic objectives in providing China with support for the Olympics is to further overall cooperative ties with China for the long term. The base for U.S.-China cooperation was significantly furthered in 2002, when the FBI opened a liaison office in Beijing (known as the "Legal Attaché") to facilitate communication with the MPS. Later, the MPS also posted officers in Washington. The exchange of information between the two sides has since developed to the FBI's satisfaction and they have worked closely on major cases, building a basis for ongoing cooperation.²⁸ The two countries have publicly vowed

to strengthen collaboration in law enforcement, anti-terrorism and international crime, including achieving other long-term goals such as a bilateral extradition treaty.²⁹

Security cooperation for the Olympics is not limited to the FBI, State Department and Secret Service. U.S. scientific experts have reportedly made two trips to Beijing to address nuclear material safety with Chinese counterparts. This program is secret for obvious reasons, but we can assume that the agenda includes surveying and monitoring radioactive materials, and, if needed, enhancing security measures or removing materials that pose risk. The U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Agency (NNSA) provided similar support to Greek authorities through the Sandia National Laboratory.³⁰ The U.S. government has offered to donate scientific equipment to China that would help detect radiological or biological attacks.

There are concerns about differences between U.S. and Chinese approaches to security, due largely to different interpretations of what constitutes a security threat. China considers any action that might "harm China's reputation" as a security threat, while U.S. officials limit their taxonomy to "sticks and stones" threats. U.S. security principles seek to manage nonviolent demonstrations rather than subduing or preventing them altogether, so long as property is protected and the security of the public is not endangered. Additionally, U.S.

Differences between U.S. and Chinese approaches to security are due largely to different interpretations of what constitutes a security threat.

observers feel that Chinese security experts have a limited “worldview” that underestimates international threats. This observation was borne out in the response to the Olympic Torch relay in Paris and London, where Chinese organizers were unprepared for demonstrations that became disruptions. The differing definitions of security was illustrated when U.S. security officials were faced with Chinese requests to employ more comprehensive measures to prevent protestors from mobilizing and demonstrating in San Francisco during the Olympic torch run. Reluctant to stifle protests, U.S. organizers were unable to accede to many Chinese requests which inadequately conveyed the “hard security” threat presented by peaceful protesters. However, following the Paris and London legs of the relay, the prospect of physical harm was elevated, confronting San Francisco authorities who were unable to prevent large protests from coalescing, forcing the decision to avoid them altogether by changing the relay route at the last minute.

While peaceful protests in China are not considered a direct security threat to U.S. interests, the Chinese leadership takes a different view. This divergent perspective is reflected in public perceptions of China in the West that interpret crackdowns against protesters as violating Western norms of human rights. Consequently, any mishandling of peaceful demonstrations, which could cause peaceful incidents to spiral out of control, would most likely have a negative affect on U.S.-China relations. In the event that unrest is dealt with poorly, U.S. and European leaders might feel the need to respond with rhetoric, potentially raising tensions further by offending the Chinese public and officials’ highly developed sense of sovereignty.

These disparities run much deeper than respective approaches to crowd control. In terms of U.S.-China cooperation for Olympic security preparations, there is a perception that Chinese officials place more emphasis on “face” and “sovereignty” than actual functional objectives. U.S. officials generally feel such principles should take a back seat to close, practical cooperation. U.S. experts have warned that China’s unwillingness to engage international agencies more closely exposes them to unnecessary risk.

Different perceptions of security threats are also evidenced by the offers of international support accepted by Beijing. U.S. experts value their accrued experience, which they are using to tempt their Chinese counterparts to cooperate more closely. For example, the FBI is offering access to a classified database of first-hand investigations of global contemporary terrorist incidents. This database, as well as the seasoned agents, demonstrates the depth of the FBI’s reach.³¹ FBI investigators have been sent to study terrorist incidents around the world since the 1970s. While the FBI cannot extend unrestricted access to U.S. databases, offers to provide supervised access are genuine. Yet, China’s response to these offers has been lukewarm. U.S. and European security agencies have a culture of cooperation which stands in contrast to the level of engagement with China. The example of Scotland Yard being invited by Pakistan to investigate Benazir Bhutto’s assassination is an example of cooperation that could serve as a model for China. According to one expert, “China will be *the* case study if they fail, and it will be entirely their own doing. They want to prove they can do it themselves, so they will have sole responsibility.”³²

Perhaps most disconcerting is the fact that some of China’s security preparations are less

There is a perception that Chinese officials place more emphasis on “face” and “sovereignty” than actual functional objectives.

substantive than they appear on paper. For instance, the official website for the Olympic Security Command Center gives the impression of a propaganda exercise rather than a serious effort to provide information.³³ As of the end of March 2008, much of it had not been updated since mid-2007.³⁴ On close examination, the extent of preparations is not clear. Likewise, there are concerns that many exercises and drills are overly scripted and it appears that organizing officials are most concerned about demonstrating “success” to superiors. This robs organizers and participants the opportunity to learn from and develop the ability to think critically and make rapid decisions at tactical levels.

Another U.S. concern is that China is focused on different threats than the rest of the international community, primarily in relation to Chinese domestic groups. This results in a very parochial focus in security preparations. For instance, there is an over-emphasis on

*China's maladroit press
management could become a
security challenge.*

the East Turkistan terrorist threat, and more recently, Tibetan “splittists.” This reflects a lack of realization of “all the other threats out there that want to take a whack at the VIPs from around the world.”³⁵ Moreover, there is suspicion that Chinese security officials have overstated the threat posed by Xinjiang separatists because of a lack of evidence.³⁶ Furthermore, Chinese statements demonstrate

a high degree of politicization of the international threat environment. One reported comment even framed “Taiwan secessionists” as an Olympic security threat.³⁷

Tian Yixiang, director of the PLA Command Team for Beijing Olympic Security Work, told military attaches from 54 countries that, “preventing and fighting terrorist activities are our top priority.” He emphasized that the command team will also keep a close eye on East Turkistan separatist forces, Taiwan secessionists and Tibet “independence” activists and “will use all available resources to ensure the security of the Games.”³⁸ Comments such as these diminish international confidence that Chinese security officials have a clear picture of the international security environment.

A focus on domestic challenges brings a high degree of confidence that China will be able to control indigenous security threats, although there is equal awareness that the Chinese internal security apparatus has limits. Civil unrest regularly spirals out of control and domestic attacks such as hijackings and bombings have occurred, which raises concerns about individuals rather than organized groups with political agendas. The Chinese senior leadership has a poor track record of information and crisis management, with a frequent delay between recognition and reaction. However, despite concerns about the speed of Chinese responses to crises, it is acknowledged that once a problem reaches the politburo level, the Chinese government can commit vast resources, particularly human resources, to a particular problem and handle it well.³⁹ While the time lag is a concern, the Olympics are short, and there is an expectation that most crises can be effectively managed (or even covered up) during the highest profile period.

U.S. and Chinese security officials also take widely different approaches to media management. The relationship between the Chinese government and the international media has steadily deteriorated since the spring of 2007 coverage of Chinese product safety challenges. International media generally feel that they have been treated with contempt by Chinese authorities and have responded by increasingly negative coverage of China. This has led to accusations by Chinese officials that Western media is “biased,” and the creation of what the Foreign Correspondents Club of China terms a “hostile environment.”⁴⁰ China’s

lack of adroitness in managing the press is a potential detriment to holding a “successful” Olympic Games, and could even become a security challenge under Chinese definitions of threat. Information management within China is very different from how media is managed elsewhere. However, during the Olympics it will be hard to distinctly separate the two. Officials within BOCOG responsible for communications are more experienced (and comfortable) with the Chinese system of propaganda management than external communications disciplines. U.S. security officials highlight their experience in information management and media liaison and have offered to collaborate with Chinese authorities.

China’s tactical and technical security preparations are generally perceived to be sufficient by U.S. observers. However, concerns remain. For example, while U.S. experts have a high regard for China’s tactical police units, there are distinct differences in terms of what skills are most important. While Chinese units are superbly armed and equipped, they are comparably young and inexperienced. According to the *Beijing Review*, the average age of the “Snow Leopard Commando Unit” is 24. U.S. SWAT teams are generally much older, averaging around 35 to 40 years of age.⁴¹ While Chinese SWAT members are clearly athletic and described by one U.S. expert as “real war-fighters,” they do not have the years of policing experience U.S. counterparts have before joining elite units. In the eyes of the United States, experience is a critical qualification, as evidenced by one expert who worries “about a 22 year old guy who thinks he is superhuman making a decision.” The U.S. experience has determined that tactical decision-making cannot realistically take place in the rear by veteran officers or political leaders. Likewise, while training is important, athletic skills and hand-to-hand combat moves are rarely a factor in determining a positive outcome from an incident. These differences contribute to unease amongst U.S. observers. Without more extensive collaboration and substantive cooperation, a general lack of appreciation and understanding of Chinese preparations will persist.

China is the first non-NATO, non-U.S. military ally to hold an Olympics since 1980. Since then, U.S. military involvement, including pre-Games joint military exercises and paramilitary training between the U.S. and host countries, has taken place. Knowing that cooperation occurs with both military and civilian agencies brings assurance on the part of U.S. authorities. However, for the Beijing Olympics, U.S.-China preparations have not included a military component. The U.S. Department of Defense has stated that China has declined offers for military support prior to the Games.⁴² It is unclear if China’s unwillingness to accept support from the U.S. military will have an affect on Olympic security, particularly because China’s geostrategic situation and location is very different from Sydney, Athens and Torino. For example, China has relatively secure borders and strict visa requirements for foreign visitors, while Greece and Italy are Schengen Agreement countries with lenient entry policies. Moreover, the cool relationship between U.S. and Chinese militaries as well as the U.S. legal restrictions that constrain U.S.-China military cooperation contribute to mutual misperceptions.

Opportunities Abound

Overall, China has made extensive investments and preparations for ensuring security at the Beijing Games. The adequacy of those preparations will ultimately be judged by the absence of terrorist events, or a rapid and humane response to any adverse man-made, technical or natural disaster that occurs. Even though fundamental differences in security

approaches and strategy exist between the Chinese organizers and U.S. security experts, numerous opportunities exist to improve cooperation and increase the likelihood that the Games go trouble free.

The most significant opportunities would require Chinese organizers to capitalize on outside human resources as well as material support. While China has welcomed the “hardware” contributions, making use of international offers to provide experienced manpower should be seriously considered. Absorbing personnel from others ensures that China can fully utilize experience in crisis management, including gaining access to restricted databases and critical knowledge. Additionally, U.S. government experts can assist in liaison with international media and broader information management.

U.S. government and non-government experts can collaborate with Chinese officials to improve decision-making and crisis management performance by increasing capacity to conduct scenario simulations. While Chinese political leaders have previously participated in U.S.-designed simulations on economic security crises, the concept of tabletop simulations has not yet gained wide acceptance as a critical planning tool within China. Furthermore, working more closely with Chinese counterparts would improve understanding of Chinese decision-making principles and organizational practices. Potential simulation themes for joint tabletop exercises could include a security threat to future major events such as the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, an infectious disease outbreak, or more ambitiously perhaps, a military issue, such as a collision at sea between U.S. and Chinese navy vessels. Closer Sino-U.S. cooperation through joint simulation exercises between political leaders would have the added benefit of reducing the risk of miscalculation, building confidence and mutual understanding to better handle future crises beyond the Olympics.

Successful management of the Games will contribute to meeting the Chinese leadership’s objective of showcasing China’s economic development to the world. The quality of security preparations and the absence of a major incident will be a vital component. Guaranteeing security will entail close international collaboration and deliberate approaches to global and domestic threats. Increased cooperation will not only influence how authorities manage peaceful demonstrations but importantly shape perceptions of China. International understanding of Chinese protocols intended to manage demonstrations deftly and with political acuity is vital, particularly since political sensitivities are not purchased with hardware packages.

The stakes for China are particularly high. The Chinese leadership seeks to gain its legitimacy from domestic public perception, which is shaped by government management of the economy and security environment. Moreover, international reaction to the Games will likely influence Chinese public opinion towards the rest of the world, affecting future Chinese and U.S. foreign policies. Negative sentiments driven by both international and domestic opinions shaped by the tenor of the Games could present undesirable outcomes for China’s future international relations. However, a successfully managed Olympics will ensure China’s continued willingness to open its markets to the outside world and follow a progressive, constructive foreign policy. Even though some U.S. experts engaging the Chinese may feel that the level of collaboration with Chinese counterparts does not compare favorably with previous event organizers, there are no indications that the Beijing Games will not be safe. A positive Beijing Games outcome would ultimately benefit all global citizens in keeping with the Olympic spirit. 🌍

Notes

- ¹ United States Government Accountability Office Report to Congressional Requesters, "Olympic Security - U.S. Support to Athens Games Provides Lessons for Future Olympics," May 2005, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05547.pdf>.
- ² "Lone-wolf" bombings are a periodic occurrence, with some attracting broad media attention. Often, authorities describe the bomber as a mentally unstable person, a disaffected petitioner or a jilted lover carrying a grudge. Well-publicized cases include the 2008 hijacking of 10 Australian tourists on a bus in Xian and a suicide bombing in Tiananmen Square in 2000. In 2003, a man claiming to have a bomb took hostages in the Beijing office of Reuters during the National People's Congress to protest government corruption. See "Bomb blast in Tiananmen Square," *BBC*, Feb. 15, 2000; "Beijing police arrest 'bomber'," *BBC*, Mar. 12, 2003; "Mayor says Xi'an safe for tourists after hostage incident," *Xinhua*, Mar. 9, 2008.
- ³ See, for e.g., "Chinese riot after Japan win final," *CNN*, Aug. 8, 2004; "Chinese football fans riot over penalty," *BBC*, Mar. 25, 2002.
- ⁴ "Olympic security planning 'on track,'" *China Daily*, Feb. 11, 2007.
- ⁵ "News Release on Security Work for Olympic Venue Construction," *BOCOG*, Apr. 20, 2007.
- ⁶ Interviews, Beijing. See also, "Beijing playing it safe ahead of Games," *China Daily*, Mar. 30, 2007.
- ⁷ Interview, Washington, DC.
- ⁸ MIND/FIND is a database of passports, identity cards and visas reported as stolen or lost by countries all over the world known as the stolen and lost travel documents (SLTD) database operated by Interpol. MIND – Mobile Interpol Network Database (off-line, accessed locally); FIND – Fixed Interpol Network Database (on-line, real time access to Interpol General Secretariat).
- ⁹ "INTERPOL sends assistant group to support Beijing Olympic security," *Chongqing Municipal Government*, Sept. 11, 2007. See also, Interpol, "International Conference on Security Cooperation for 2008 Beijing Olympic Games," September 2007.
- ¹⁰ "ASEAN+3 capital city police seek teamwork," *People's Daily*, Aug. 17, 2005.
- ¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "2008 Beijing Olympic international cooperation conference led to Joint Declaration," <http://www.nyconsulate.prchina.org/chn/xw/t361412.htm>.
- ¹² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "SCO to stage joint anti-terror military exercise in 2007," June 26, 2006. See also, "Peace Mission 2007 and the S.C.O. Summit," *Power and Interest News Report*, Aug. 10, 2007.
- ¹³ "SCO vows to make Games a success," *China Daily*, Aug. 23, 2007.
- ¹⁴ "Beijing Olympic security plan to be tried out in 2007," *People's Daily*, Mar. 11, 2007. See also, "The Soaring Cost of Security," *Finance World*, Mar. 27, 2008.
- ¹⁵ "Chinese military preparing for Beijing Olympic security," *Xinhua*, June 29, 2007.
- ¹⁶ Sina.com/blogdetailingOlympicvolunteerprocesses, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4b8bd14501008i10s.html.
- ¹⁷ "Safe Olympic Action, Olympic security in real battle period," *Sina.com Sports Page*, Feb. 29, 2008.
- ¹⁸ "It is the entire society's duty to safeguard the Olympic Games," *BOCOG*, Mar. 5, 2007.
- ¹⁹ Guangqin Zhang, "Do not let one suspect get away, huge crowd strategy (or human wave tactics) for the Olympic Games," *Phoenix Weekly*, Feb. 29, 2008.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ "Ready for the show," *China Daily*, Mar. 7, 2007.
- ²² "Armed force safeguard the Olympic Games," *Changjiang Daily*, Nov. 13, 2007. See also, "People's Armed Police Beijing General Corps," *Sinodefense.com*, Apr. 14, 2008.
- ²³ "Chinese Armed Police evaluates special weapons in Sino-Russia Drill," *china-military.blogspot.com*. See also, "China's Answer to Bond," *Beijing Review*, Jan. 13, 2008.
- ²⁴ Michael D. Swaine, Tousheng Zhang and Danielle F. S. Cohen, *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies And Analysis*, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006.) See also, Michael Swaine, "Taiwan's Defense Reforms and Military Modernization Program: Objective, Achievements, and Obstacles," Book chapter in *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.--Taiwan--China Crisis* By Nancy Bernkopf (Tucker, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).
- ²⁵ "Successful harbour installation security exercise," *Xinhua*, Nov. 1, 2007. See also, "Rescue and anti-terrorism drill in Nanjing," *China Daily*, June 14, 2007.
- ²⁶ Except where noted, this section is derived largely from interviews with specialists conducted in Washington, DC in 2008.

²⁷ "Interpol satisfied with Olympics security preparations," *The Straits Times*, Mar. 5, 2008.

²⁸ Interviews. Washington, DC. See also, "The U.S. sends experts from FBI to support Beijing Olympic security," *World News*, Feb. 6 2008.

²⁹ Interviews. See also, "FBI helps nation combat terrorism," *China Daily*, June 14, 2007.

³⁰ Sue Bailey and Jim Bronskill, "U.S. nuclear experts help clear Olympic sites in top-secret Beijing visits," *The Canadian Press*, Mar. 5, 2008.

³¹ Such as the findings from an FBI investigation of the terrorist siege of the NordOst Theater in Moscow in 2002, which includes the experience of observers who consulted with Russian counterparts during the siege.

³² Seeking to assuage concerns, U.S. security agencies, including national laboratories, FBI, State Department and Secret Service are not looking to promote their involvement and "steal thunder" from the Chinese government. Officials are certain the Chinese government will get credit for successful and problem-free events, so there should be no concern that the USG will claim credit or otherwise seek to undermine Chinese government efforts. The USG offices do need to demonstrate that they are involved in preparations and justify resources, so preparations will not be absolutely secret, but public messaging would be subdued, and interactions with congress would be limited because the budgets are relatively small and U.S. authorities do not want to violate existing U.S. regulations prohibiting security cooperation with China. Numerous U.S. laws prevent U.S. officials from providing military or security aid to China, though the interpretation of these laws are shifting perceptively to allow for greater cooperation on issues such as terrorism.

³³ The website for the Security Command Center is <http://www.bjayab.cn/webapp/ayabweb/chinesegb/index.do>.

³⁴ Some subsections (such as "International Exchange") only contain as many articles in the section as are needed to fill the corresponding section on the front page of the website. See, Security Command Center, <http://www.bjayab.cn/>.

³⁵ Interview with security expert in Beijing.

³⁶ Daniel Schearf, "U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation Seeks Further Cooperation with China," *Voice of America*, June 13, 2007.

³⁷ "PLA helps ensure security for Games," *China Daily*, June 29, 2007.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ It can be argued that authorities responded quickly to the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008, contrasted with the January 2008 snow storms. However, critics have pointed out that officials underestimated the magnitude of the earthquake's devastation and did not call up enough troops or equipment to adequately meet the needs.

⁴⁰ "The Final Countdown: 100 Days Ahead of the Beijing Olympics, Foreign Correspondents Club of China Concerned about Deteriorating Reporting Conditions," *Foreign Correspondents Club of China*, Apr. 30, 2008.

⁴¹ Interviews. To qualify for the FBI Hostage Rescue Team ("HRT") a Special Agent must have a minimum of two years experience, and at least three years of law enforcement or military tactical experience. The minimum age to be a special agent is 23 and the average age is 28. For an example of a metropolitan police SWAT team, the average age of the Columbus Ohio SWAT unit is 48. See: James J. Scanlon, "The Columbus Ohio Police S.W.A.T. Platoon 29th Anniversary," self published.

⁴² Shirley A. Kan, "U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, Oct. 10, 2007.

Protest and Policing: Challenges for the Beijing Olympics

Chen Yali

The Olympic torch relay and the surrounding controversy have given Beijing a taste of what is to come with the Olympics. The real challenges still looming ahead for the Chinese government range from terrorist attacks, disruptions to the Games caused by security breakdowns, to a showdown between peaceful protestors and Chinese police.

As a rising global power, China for the first time invites a challenge under its own nose. The Olympic host will be fighting a war on two fronts, a battle to maintain adequate security and a battle for its international image. The cost of failure on either front will greatly impact the country's future on the international stage for decades to come. The failure of the former will constitute a short-term threat to China's security and demonstrate China's incapability of dealing with increasing global security threats. The failure of the latter would be even more catastrophic in the long run for China. A strong image does not easily fade away in people's memory – the iconic photograph of a man standing down tanks in Tiananmen Square, for example. How Beijing handles mass protests is the key to winning or losing this image war. A tainted image can develop into international political and economic resistance against an increasingly extroverted China which is “going out” to the world.

China has good reason to worry about mass protests occurring during the Olympic Games. Potential sources of contention include: *Falungong* practitioners; Xinjiang Uighur or Tibet pro-independence forces; reform-minded intellectuals seeking greater democracy and freedom of expression; workers fighting for unpaid paychecks; under-compensated farmers deprived of farmlands; and impoverished urban residents who have suffered greatly from the drastic food price inflation that began late last year. Although the government has drawn

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China Security, Vol. 4 No. 2 Spring 2008, pp. 59-71
World Security Institute

particular attention to the threat from Uighur separatists and radical Tibetans, the possibility of mass protests at the Olympic Games is potentially much larger than terrorist attacks, and could be more damaging to China's strategic future if mishandled.

Evolution of Mass Protests in China

Mass protests in China have sharply increased in number and scale since the mid-1990s.¹ On record, while there were 8,709 mass protests across the country in 1993, this number exploded to over 87,000 in 2005,² involving more than eight million people.³ Among the six major protests that took place in October 2004 alone, for example, three protests involved about 10,000 people each, two involved 30,000-50,000 people and the one that took place in Hanyuan, Sichuan Province involved an alleged 100,000-150,000 people.⁴

While most protests are peaceful, the level of violence and the intensity of confrontation have been on the rise. An increasing number of protesters use extremely confrontational methods such as blocking and vandalizing government agencies and police stations, taking hostages and even committing public suicides to draw attention to their cause.⁵ Protesters have learned from past precedents that the government gives more attention in the wake of violent protests, often solving the problems faster and giving the protesters better compensation.⁶

It can be argued that the degree of violence in mass protests is proportionate to the level of trust protesters have in the government.⁷ Before the mid-1990s, when protestors (mainly farmers) still largely trusted the integrity of the government at the local level, they primarily expressed their grievances and defended their interests through peaceful methods. Since then, mass protests have become more organized and increasingly cross-regional. In 1998, hundreds of farmers in the Ningxiang County of Hunan Province established an organization to mobilize local farmers to fight against heavy taxes and government corruption. At least four other townships among the 12 governed by Ningxiang have such self-initiated organizations. When the police tried to arrest the organization's leader in Daolin on Jan. 8, 1999, more than 3,000 farmers tried to prevent the arrest, leading to hundreds of arrests and one death. The protests in Ningxiang allegedly involved 100,000 farmers, making it one of the biggest mass protests of the 1990s.

Although a majority of mass protests are caused by economic interests, political tones are emerging as organizers and participants, through their long and difficult struggles, find the root of their problems in political institutions. Farmers have sought to legalize self-initiated farmers' associations, which remain largely secret groups, in order to defend their interests together in a legal way.⁸ Workers also raised voices about establishing an independent workers' union and their own party to represent their interests. Those who made political requests were struck hard with severe punishments. Therefore, protesters today tend to self-censor their political demands and ask for more tangible solutions such as reduced taxes, compensation for lost pensions, the removal of certain local leaders, or the dispatch of auditing task forces to evaluate bankrupt firms' assets. However, in an increasingly networked society where communications are easily, cheaply and quickly made, it is only a matter of time before people who share the same economic problem join together and voice their political requests. The first instance of this appeared in December 2007 when China's state security authority was caught off-guard by Internet statements made by separate groups of farmers in the Heilongjiang, Jiangsu and Shaanxi provinces and in the port city of Tianjin calling for

China currently has 123 million Internet users, 20 percent of whom frequent chat rooms or Internet forums; 7 million Chinese have their own active blogs, with an audience of 75 million.⁹ According to China's Ministry of Information Industry (MII), there were over 574 million mobile subscribers as of the end of March 2008. Subscriptions grew by 1.66 percent per month, 19.55 percent on the year, and the total number of subscribers at the end of March accounted for 41.6 percent of the country's population. The average Chinese mobile subscriber sent 3.32 messages per day, totaling 58.61 billion SMS sent during the month of March.¹⁰

private land ownership. These Internet declarations were organized at a national level by a secret group comprised of journalists, academics, intellectuals and political activists who spent two years lobbying for thousands of farmers' support for this claim.¹¹

Attempts at controlling protests by authorities have been complicated by the increased use of modern communication technology such as cell phone messaging or SMS, e-mail, chat room postings and interactive Internet messaging. These communications can help organize large-scale mass protests in a short period of time without being detected by the government. The 1996 *Falungong* protest is one notable case of SMS-spread demonstrations. The nationwide 2005 anti-Japan demonstrations were also organized largely through SMS, while the 2008 anti-Carrefour/France protest was touched off by a post on a popular website. Although the government is capable of checking cell phone and e-mail messages and blocking or screening them, doing so requires enormous human energy, particularly to sift through codes and hidden languages.¹²

According to open-source literature, Chinese police and scholars have identified strengthening human intelligence and infiltration of certain organizations as solutions to counter the above problem. However, modern communication technology can create creatures of its own which are even more difficult for authorities to comprehend and control. Since 2003, China has seen the emergence and growth of "flash mobs," a term used to describe a group of protesters without a tangible organizational structure or even an agenda that can gather together rapidly at one location at the same time and engage in a behavior for no logical reason, with no clear leader. For example, in March 2004, 100 people gathered one evening and marched for eight hours; in April 2004, 400 people gathered in a sports stadium in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province raised a can of Coke and chanted a meaningless slogan; in August 2004, 100 individuals gathered in Chengdu, Sichuan province, put on red shirts at 3pm, clapped together and shouted "I don't like it," and then left. Although flash mobs in China are so far politically harmless, their potential for gathering tens of thousands of people in major cities without warning could conceivably be used for political goals.¹³

Due to China's pay-as-you-go cell phone system, cell numbers are not linked to a permanent address or credit card. Therefore, anonymity is easy to achieve through this method, which leaves protest organizers unidentified and in some cases untraceable. Because no organizers can be identified, the government authority has no one to negotiate with and thus has no useful leverage to defuse protesting crowds. Like a kidnapper not asking for ransom, such mass protests are hard to divert and control once they are set off.

Policing Against Mass Protests

The most notable change in police thinking and tactics against mass protests is the transition from resolute crackdown by force towards “softened handling,” which stresses prevention, early-warning and the defusing of conflicts through more non-confrontational methods. The methods used by the police to handle mass protests have grown in sophistication, stressing the exercise of greater restraint and sensitivity when directly confronting protesters while increasing intelligence collection, monitoring and psychological intimidation to prevent protest from happening.

Combined with the changing tactics of the police is a gradual recognition of the legitimacy of mass protests. The Chinese Constitution guarantees citizens’ rights to gather, protest and demonstrate, while the *Law of Assembly, Procession and Demonstration*, passed in October 1989, lays out procedures on how to hold protests. In reality, however, it is still a highly restricted activity. Authorities rarely approve any mass gathering, protest or demonstration.¹⁴

Not approving mass protests, however, only drives people to hold mass protests without completing legal procedures. For a long period after the 1989 student movement, the mantra “stability overrides everything!” became the reply to any aspiration for mass protests. Police in the 1990s used highly coercive tactics to crack down on protests, resulting in bigger and more violent confrontations between protesters and police. However, relentless police force was violently resisted and in some cases overpowered by protesters. The fatal Hunan Daolin protest,¹⁵ the largest protest in the 1990s, was one of such cases. The Daolin protest deeply worried the central government, resulting in the dispatch of task forces to investigate the reasons behind mass protests and the best way to solve the problem.¹⁶

These efforts resulted in the issuing of the *Regulations on Police Handling Mass Protests* in 2000, a document that remains classified. From the partial content revealed through quotations by various researchers from the police community, the document emphasized a much

Existing regulations are vague and leave too much room for police interpretation.

gentler approach for police to handle mass protests. The regulations cautioned police to defuse rather than create problems and calm rather than instigate conflicts. They also devised principles of the “three cautions” to guide the police in handling mass protests: restraint in police deployment and the use of weapons. Besides detaining or dispersing crowds

who block the gates of party and government agencies or transportation junctures, the police were encouraged to talk through and verbally persuade crowds, arrest as few as possible, only penalize protesters in a gradual way that doesn’t instigate new confrontations, and release those arrested within 24 hours.¹⁷

The regulations, however, are vague, leaving too much room for police interpretation. For example, what actions should the authorities take if protesters use lethal weapons to harm policemen? Despite the principle of a restrained use of weapons in the document, the escalation of the use of force in the Guangdong Dongzhou Incident in December 2005 sharply deviated from previous government tactics against mass protests. After uprising farmers and fishermen in Dongzhou attacked anti-riot police officers with gasoline bombs and explosive charges, police opened fire with pistols and automatic rifles, resulting in 10-20 villager deaths.¹⁸

Despite the much gentler regulations, mass protests are still on the rise, as is the number of policemen and protesters killed or injured in these incidents. Specific statistics on police deaths and injuries are not available in open sources, but according to basic data published by the Public Security Bureau in 2006, since 1995, an average of 400 policemen were killed on duty and thousands were injured each year nationwide. Every day, on average nine policemen were violently assaulted.¹⁹ Although not all assaults against police were committed during mass protests, the Ministry of Public Security explained the rise of violent assaults against police as often caused by poor governance by local governments. The Ministry of Public Security argues that the local governments endanger officers by using them as a shield against an unsatisfied public, resulting in mass grievances against police.²⁰

On the other hand, it is hard to come to the conclusion that the 2000 regulations completely failed. Chinese society has been plagued by all kinds of social conflicts resulting from a widening income gap, government corruption, farmland deprivation, a lack of a social security system, resource shortages, environmental crises and large resettlements due to national energy projects, to only list a few. China discourages disadvantaged groups to organize and represent themselves in political institutions. The justice system leans heavily towards the powerful and more recently, the rich, as local governments often work and profit together. There are simply too many grievances and problems to solve. This could be seen from the explosion of letters and office visits, a traditional way for Chinese citizens to complain about their local governments to designated offices embedded in the justice system. Between 1978 and 1982, the Chinese court received 83,700 letters and visits of complaints; while during the four years of 1998-2002, such letters and visits increased 500 times to reach over 42 million.²¹

Guidelines urge the police to use “persuasion, education” and other “democratic ways” to solve conflicts.

The central government issued the *Guideline on Actively Preventing and Appropriately Handling Mass Protests* in 2004. Compared to the regulations from 2000 issued by the Ministry of Public Security, the 2004 guideline is an improvement in urging a preventive approach and non-confrontational methods for protests.

The guideline, also not fully publicized in open sources, urges the police to use “persuasion, education” and other “democratic ways” to solve conflicts, though there is no explicit interpretation about what exactly “democratic ways” mean. It instructs the police not to arrest people on site or go into villages to arrest people and for the first time emphasizes the use of legal force in defusing the protest. The guideline clearly defines mass protests as “internal conflicts of the people” and highlights the role of the police as protectors of public order and individual safety, a much more neutral role than previously prescribed.

Police responsibility in handling mass protests is explained in greater detail as the following:

collecting, researching and evaluating information of mass protests and sources of instability; preventing, defusing protests in a timely fashion; safeguarding public order and transportation flow on the site of the mass protest; protecting government and party agencies and individual safety; collecting evidence of crimes committed in mass protests; using force by law to control the situation and strike criminals and hostile elements in mass protests.²²

The 2004 guideline drives local governments and police authorities to dig into the problems that plague their community and eliminate the source of protests before they break

out. Preventive measures are emphasized that include reining in government corruption and correcting the violations of the legitimate rights of the protesters including police abuse and information gathering. In reality, some local governments even provide material incentives for potential protesters not to resort to protests. Zhao Dingxin documented how the local government in Wuhan, Hubei Province established the "Stability Fund" which they use to mollify persistent protesters.²³ Partly as a preventive policing strategy and partly to prepare for Beijing Olympics, two years ago, China's public security authority put in place a system which allocates more responsibility to the local police in order to understand and prevent protests. This system links the evaluation of a police officer's performance and personal promotion with his or her ability to prevent protests from happening, especially in Beijing during the Olympic Games.

On one hand, the local police are motivated to understand the problems of the community they are accountable for and strengthen disciplining of police corruption and abuse. The relationship between local policemen and the public has deteriorated compared to the 1970s and 1980s. Though the majority of police officers have college level degrees and above²⁴ and police professionalism has greatly improved, local police officers increasingly become "desk officers," who do not interact with the communities they police. The responsibility system forces local police officers to go deep into the community to understand what and where problems are and preempt them at the local level, instead of having Beijing deal with them directly.

On the other hand, this responsibility system has driven local police to preempt protests before they actually happen. Officers, therefore, try to eliminate any source of incitement and strike harder on the ringleaders and organizers of protests. This has greatly intensified the conflicts and forced many protesters into a "deep freeze" before the Olympic Games, but may also potentially trigger a wave of delayed, but much greater and more violent protests in the days to come.

Digital Policing

Measures of psychological intimidation are taken to actively remind people of the presence of police surveillance and counter the fact that protesters are becoming more anonymous by hiding themselves behind the technology of SMS or the virtual world of the Internet. If potential protesters are made aware and constantly reminded that they are being watched, they might censor themselves and alter their behaviors. Monitoring cameras and real-time Internet police patrol serve as such critical reminders.

Although it is true that these electronic eyes can help fight crimes as officially adver-

By mid 2007, Beijing already had 260,000 cameras. On the landmark Chang'an Avenue, there is a camera almost every hundred feet. However, Beijing, eyeing the 14:1 ratio of people to camera in London (2 million residents in inner London, 7 million in the Greater London region), will potentially need far more electronic eyes (16 million residents in the city of Beijing city and 6 million residents in the outskirts). Major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen established plans to install 250,000-300,000 cameras. Even small cities will install 20,000 to 80,000 cameras, and units are also planned for townships and villages.²⁵

tised, a look at where they are supposed to be installed reveals their function of looking out for protests. According to the planning, monitoring cameras shall be installed not only in high-crime streets, but also religious sites, Internet cafes, government and Communist Party agencies at all levels, schools, hotels, major crossroads, major avenues, public squares, exits of residential areas, transportation stations and hospitals, all of which are either protest-prone areas or places which might be frequented by protest participants.

With the help of these “electronic eyes” to monitor crowd flow, the police could quickly block major roads leading to protest sites and prevent more people from joining protests. These cameras can also help identify anonymous organizers and participants, a way to deter them from participation in the first place.

A new form of Internet police patrol is also in full swing. Since September 2007, an Internet police force has begun to patrol websites and chat rooms in China. Internet users are made aware of the virtual police patrol by cartoon-like policemen, taking the shape of real-life police images, some on foot, some riding motorcycles and others driving cars, which roll out onto their screens every 30-45 minutes when they open major websites and small websites with posting functions. About 9.6 million websites in Beijing have a “call-police” button to facilitate the Internet users to provide leads of Internet crimes and “harmful information” directly to Internet police. As a result of these two measures, Internet policemen in Beijing have increased active cases of internet violations by four times.²⁶

What Approach for the Olympics?

Hosting an internationally exposed event like the Olympic Games (attended by 30,000 foreign journalists) will undoubtedly influence Beijing’s policing of mass protests in August 2008. Given the momentum of change in the recent decade, it is more likely Beijing will open the gate and allow “manageable” protests to take place in designated locations during the Games. The key to making protests “manageable” for Beijing is to limit the sources of the most massive and volatile protest groups, that is, rural laborers, students, and in this case, foreigners in Beijing. According to the plan, protesters from outside of Beijing will already have been “taken care of” by police at the local level.

At a minimum, and as a routine procedure whenever there is a large international event in Beijing, the police will launch a “cleaning house” campaign, suspending construction work and tightening up temporary residency permits, to drive out these rural laborers, one of the biggest sources of mass protests in Beijing. According to a study done by State Council researchers in 2005, less than half of China’s rural laborers got their paychecks on time. According to official statistics, from January to October in 2005, Beijing’s urban construction authority received 134 cases of group complaint visits, more than a third of which were rural laborers asking for overdue paychecks. There were more than 160 cases of mass protests by rural laborers from January to November of 2005 in the Chaoyang District (the Central Business District) alone, with 7,850 people involved.²⁷

The “cleaning house” campaign normally includes measures to temporarily restrict non-Beijing residents from coming to Beijing. In previous cases, trains and buses were diverted from reaching Beijing as the final destination. College students without Beijing residency have already been instructed to leave Beijing once the summer vacation starts in July,²⁸ thus eliminating another source of volatile protests.

Since August 2007, the police have launched a clampdown since August 2007 on foreign-

Policing Protests: An Unsettled Debate

The best approach for resolving mass protests in China is hotly debated among police, scholars and legal experts. Traditionally, the government's instinctive reaction to mass protests was to crack down, and hard. However, given the precipitous increase of protests in the 1990s, this tactic was discredited, and led to an exploration of softer, more conciliatory methods. Yet with no unanimity in the field, unpersuaded hardliners have rekindled the debate on handling mass protests. They complain that too many police officers set goals of finding "peaceful solutions" to protests, and charge that lenience towards protesters and organizers "has caused mass protests to occur repeatedly."¹

Despite the emphasis of the 2000 regulations and the 2004 guidelines on softer approaches in policing, they are merely approaches. Concrete circumstances are complicated and different local police authorities vary in opinion and action in the front line of fire. Further, with both the regulations and guidelines not fully publicized, the outside world cannot provide meaningful oversight. It seems that debates and conflicting trends will continue to play out in the foreseeable future in China.

Overwhelming vs. Proportionate Force

Hardliners believe that maximum police presence, armored with heavy anti-riot equipment, is necessary to intimidate protesters and create a climate of fear, which should, in theory, actually avoid the use of force and bloodshed.² Opponents argue that this approach wastes resources and is not effective. In one case, there were 6,000 policemen and only 2,000 protesters, which "evidently violates the principle of proportionality."³ Moreover, when a maximum number of officers are deployed, the force is frequently augmented with different units from neighboring counties or cities, which complicates coordination and the chain of command. In dealing with an angry mob, sometimes using all available personnel is still not enough.⁴

Active control vs. Peaceful control

Those who argue for force and active control of mass protestors believe that police should occupy an advantageous geographic position (i.e. high ground, transportation junctures), isolate protestors from outside contact, control parade paths and access, separate protest parades into small groups, use arrests and other forms of violence to control crowds, and seize protest leaders at the appropriate time. When crowds refuse to yield to officers' requests, force should be used to dispel protesters. Police will block three sides of a crowd and march to press the crowd to flow in one direction; police will then penetrate with anti-riot weapons like tear gas, and break the crowd so backup forces can flood in to separate the crowd or arrest the ringleaders.⁵ Instead of playing the role of "firefighters" by passively responding to protests, police should actively guide, stop, intercept, circle, separate, penetrate, dispel and dismantle crowds.

"Peaceful control" advocates believe that the anxiety and excitement of policemen will incite protesters and trigger escalation. Therefore, policemen should try to remain calm, patient and composed. Intimidations such as screaming sirens, the deployment of fully-armored riot police and provocation should be avoided. Moreover, police should chiefly maintain public order on-site and play the role of neutral protectors between protesters and those they protest against. This will help protesters understand that police are not the enemy but protectors of their legitimate rights of expression. Those advocating a softer approach emphasize avoiding the use of force even when protesters are confrontational and advocate prohibiting police from carrying lethal weapons on-site.⁶

Prevention vs. Tolerance

Hardliners believe that mass protests not only cause grave economic loss and injuries to human life, but also directly damage China's political reputation and international image. Mass protests pose severe security challenges

as China increasingly holds large-scale political, economic, cultural, sports and religious gatherings – particularly the Olympics and the World Expo in 2010. They believe that mass protests should be stamped out using any means possible.

Softliners think mass protests are an effective way for China to channel public resentment during a transitional period when the country's disadvantaged groups suffer from social injustice. They believe police should “presume innocence” when interacting with pro-

testers and protect rights from infringement before the protests are determined as “internal conflicts of the people” or not. This group also thinks that frequent mass protests do not necessarily mean instability, but could be a way to relieve social pressure and accumulated grievances of the public. By allowing protests, police can know in advance and more easily control the time, location and routes of the protest rather than get caught by surprise. Further, if protests are allowed, protesters are likely to be more rational and less confrontational.

Notes

¹ “Mass Protests Shall be Put Off Resolutely,” *Xinhua News*, Dec. 9, 2006.

² Huang Fenglin and Chen Lili, “The Measures to Handle Crisis of Mass Protests,” *Journal of Hubei Police Academy*, No. 2, March 2006.

³ Fan Ming, “Comparable Studies of Mass Protests in China and the West,” *Journal of Chinese People's Public Security University*, Issue 1, 2003.

⁴ Wang Gengen and Zhao Ning, “Ideas and Approaches on Dealing with Mass Protests in Megalopolis in View of Rule of Law,” *Journal of Shanghai Police Academy*, Vol. 16, No. 5,

October 2006.

⁵ Huang Fenglin and Chen Lili, “The Measures to Handle Crisis of Mass Protests,” *Journal of Hubei Police Academy*, No. 2, March 2006.

⁶ “Main Characteristics, Causes and Countermeasures of the Government of Mass Protests During the Transitions,” Task force report of the Chinese Public Administration, Chinese Public Administration, No. 5, 2002.

ers overextending their visas and the under-the-table visa industry which has opened the border to foreigners seeking informal jobs,²⁹ a possible source of foreign students, activists and NGO workers. Beijing has suspended handing out multiple-entry business visas until mid-October and has been denying visas to certain foreigners.³⁰ Unless foreign protesters manage to stage protests with Chinese protesters, they will be easily outnumbered and encircled.

As protesters are restricted to a manageable size, Beijing is more likely to deploy a maximum police force on any protest site as soon as it detects such a protest through either human intelligence or “electronic eyes.” The head Olympic security czar, Ma Zhenchuan, vowed to fight a “People's War” during the Olympics, deploying an unprecedented group of security forces to protect the Games. About 92,500 people in Beijing alone are reported to be directly involved in safeguarding the Olympics, including 40,000 policemen, 27,500 armed police, 10,000 security guards and 15,000 volunteers. Estimates of the amount of people Beijing will use to prevent protests, by an outside observer, is 20 times that of the official figure.

Given the trend of protest policing in past years and the highly exposed nature of the Olympics, Beijing will be much more prone to using peaceful methods to control mass protests during the Games. The danger here is that the latest incident in Tibet may have taught the wrong lesson to the Chinese police, driving them to overreact to peaceful protests, in order to compensate for the weakness that many believe they demonstrated in Tibet. Chinese police rightly showed a high level of sensitivity and restraint towards peaceful protesters in Lhasa in the beginning of mass protests. Their mistake was failing to uphold public order and not resolutely striking those who were harming other innocent civilians. Nonetheless, there

is an unknown factor here when Western protestors and/or Chinese minority protestors unite to lobby for the independence of Tibet or Xinjiang. Even if the plan is to have the police exercise great restraint, the Chinese public, fully inflamed by the anger about the obstructions of the torch relay, will pressure the government to “do something.”

For Beijing, the biggest potential headache will be dealing with foreign protestors. Traditionally, the Chinese police have had difficulties dealing with foreigners and subjecting them to Chinese laws and regulations because of language barriers, the lack of punitive means, potential diplomatic pressure and the risk of turning any individual incident into front-page news in international media. Foreigners who held “illegal” protests in the past were often treated with arrest and deportation, such as the 40 foreign *Falungong* followers who were deported after their protest in Tiananmen Square in 2002, the biggest foreigner protest on record. However, these incidents in the past were small in scale, easy to identify, and most importantly, not observed by tens of thousands of foreign reporters.

Foreigners are required to follow the same procedures as outlined in the demonstration law to apply for the permission of the Chinese police authority to organize protests. To attend protests and demonstrations organized by Chinese nationals, they will have to obtain approval from the police. However, some cities including Qingdao, one of the Olympic host cities, have local regulations on demonstrations, which rule out any possibility of “non-residents” to “initiate, organize and attend protests and demonstrations.” Other cities like Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province, have regulations forbidding people to hold protests that “fan up ethnic separation” or “infringe on unification, integrity of sovereignty and territory.”

Chinese policemen will find themselves short of effective methods to quell foreign peaceful protestors, especially when the world media focus their cameras on them. If foreign protests do not disrupt the games, it is more likely that the authorities will have to tolerate them through a peaceful containment strategy rather than defuse them with force and arrests on site.

Other potential complications could arise from precedents set during the recent confrontation between overseas Chinese and Western anti-China protestors. Conspiracy theorists believe the Chinese government is using nongovernmental force, Chinese citizens either abetted or morally encouraged by the government, to counter nongovernmental forces hostile to China in foreign countries. This coincided with Chinese government officials’ reiteration that all protests, by Chinese citizens or foreigners, must go through procedures devised by Chinese law and if not, “the police will handle them.”³¹ If there is any dint of truth to this conspiracy theory, it is an extremely dangerous game for Beijing to play. Not only is there a chance that this will be exposed (causing grave consequences), but even if the Chinese public intervenes in protests completely spontaneously, conflicts could still flare up in an unpredictable way and China could risk tarnishing its international image for many years to come.

Proceed with Caution

As China prepares to deal with mass protests under the glare of the Olympic spotlight, it should focus on transparency, tolerance and moderation. Beijing should begin by making regulations clear and explaining procedures for lawful protest, instead of relying on vague guidelines and waiting for an incident to occur. This will enable the police to predict and

actively manage what lies ahead instead of waiting in the dark for incidents to happen at unpredictable times and locations.

China should particularly observe the following principles when dealing with protests:

Humanitarianism

Holding a protest-free Olympics is not the purpose of the Games. The true purpose is to demonstrate China's social, political and economic progress to the outside world. It will be understandable if China sets certain limits to ensure that the Games proceed without disturbance, containing protests to a degree that they don't flare up and expand into something larger. However, Beijing should understand that it will win the battle but lose the war if peaceful protests are suppressed with unnecessary force.

Police officers should be calm, respect protesters and play a neutral role in maintaining public order. The police should also demonstrate a high degree of humanitarianism to help injured or sick protesters and even provide food and water to build trust with them. The government should send in representatives to talk to the leading protesters about their demands and solutions. Some protesters might try to provoke the police to use unnecessary force. Police officers should be clearly instructed to exercise great restraint. They should wear individual IDs which can be easily read and remembered by the protesters, to make policemen aware that they will be held accountable if they refuse to follow central orders. In extended protests, police officers should rotate gradually and regularly to prevent exhaustion and anger from spiraling into confrontation.

Beware of Nationalism

One worrisome signal from the repeated obstruction of the international torch relay and the violent confrontations between pro-Tibet and pro-China protesters is that it could happen again during the Olympic Games. China will lose greatly if its citizens, still angry over recent Western protests, physically confront protesters and create an image of a "hostile" or "violent China" in the international media. Political civility and cool-headedness are required of both the Chinese government and its people if they wish not to see a negative international image of China for the long term. The police should protect protesters regardless of whether or not the protest is approved by the Chinese police authority.

Expect surprises

No matter how the police prepare, anything can happen during the Olympics. Athletes could protest on site, something the police can do little about. Innocent-looking spectators could lift their coats and reveal T-shirts with slogans supportive of *Falungong* or Tibetan independence. Audience members inside the stadiums could call out slogans in unison that are hard to trace even with hundreds of cameras around. At a certain point, the police will just have to let the games play out by themselves.

The Olympic Games will be the first time China displays to the world how it deals with mass protests. Whatever China does, it will have to prepare for criticism and negative reporting. However, the Games will be a good opportunity for China to not only show the prosperity and prestige of a rising power, but to demonstrate to the world that, though it cannot transform overnight, it is trying hard to change for the better. 🌍

Notes

¹ The term “mass protest” (*quntixing shijian*) includes demonstrations, protests, marches, sit-ins, strikes, group petitions, rallies, seizures or assaults against government and party agencies or important buildings, traffic-blocking, mobbing, riots, vandalizing and inter-ethnic strife because of unemployment, unfair treatment of farmers, resettlement, human rights, government corruptions, organized crimes and rumors.

² Yu Jianrong, “Social Conflict in Rural China”, *China Security*, Vol. 3 No. 2, Spring 2007.

³ Wang Xinxian, Center for China Studies, National Chengchi University, see http://ics.nccu.edu.tw/document/newsletter/13_03.pdf.

⁴ In the Hanyuan Incident of October 2004, which took place in Sichuan Province, an alleged 100,000 - 150,000 Hanyuan residents, displaced because of the construction of power stations and not properly compensated by a corrupt local government, initiated mass protests to seek redress.

⁵ Yu Debao, “Characteristics and Causes of Current Mass Protests,” *China Party and Government Officials Forum*, June 2006.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Zhang Yi, “Understanding Confidence Crisis in Rural Mass Protests,” *China Rural Studies*, see <http://www.sannong.gov.cn/njlt/gnwz/200503300577.htm>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Zheng Dabin, Feng Haidong and Feng Feihu, “Characteristics of Internet Mass Protests and Countermeasures Government Shall Take,” *Internet Construction*, Mar. 6, 2007.

¹⁰ Adam Hwang, “China Mobile Phone User Base Tops 574 million in March 2008,” *DigiTimes*, May 5, 2008, <http://www.intomobile.com/2008/05/05/china-mobile-phone-user-base-hits-574-million-in-march-2008.html>.

¹¹ Jamil Anderlini, “Losing the Countryside: a Restive Peasantry calls on Beijing for Land Rights,” *Financial Times*, Feb. 19, 2008.

¹² Personal interview with anonymous contact from Ministry of Public Security.

¹³ Li Suming, “Flash Mob Action and Mass Incidents”, *Study of Public Security*, Issue No. 6, 2005.

¹⁴ Zhang Yuejin, “Legal Management of Illegal Gathering, Protest and Demonstration Activities,” *Journal of Jiangsu Police Officer College*, Vol. 17, No. 1, September 2003; Wang Gengen and Zhao Ning, “Concepts and Progress of Handling Mass Protests in Major Cities by Law,” *Journal of Shanghai Police College*, Vol. 16, No. 5, October 2006.

¹⁵ During the Hunan Daolin Incident, an ambulance wasn’t deployed when the police fired tear gas. However, one tear gas explosion was delayed because of a quality problem, resulting in one severe injury and later death from massive blood loss. Yang Hongguang, “Handling of Mass Security Incidents,” *Journal of Hunan Public Security Advanced College*, Vol. 1, No. 9, 2002.

¹⁶ Wan Chuan, “A Review of the Study of Mass Events and a Look to the Future,” *Journal of Beijing People’s Police College*, Issue 2, March 2005.

¹⁷ Wang Junsheng, “Correctly Understand ‘Three Restraints’ To Handle Mass Protests Wisely,” *Study of Public Security*, Issue 3, 2005.

¹⁸ Edward Cody, “Chinese Police Kill Villagers During Two-Day Land Protest,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 9, 2005.

¹⁹ Website of Ministry of Public Security, Feb 23, 2006, <http://www.tibet.net/en/diir/pubs/wp/hod01/content.html>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Jiang Lishan, “Conflicts Rising,” China Elections Website, see <http://www.chinaelections.com/News-Info.asp?NewsID-95319>.

²² Wei Xinwen and Gao Feng, “Dilemma and Solution of Handling Mass Protests,” *Central Party School News*, Issue 1, 2007.

²³ Zhao Dingxin, “Populism, New Direction of China’s Confrontational Politics,” *Leaders*, Issue 2, 2007.

²⁴ For example, college graduates occupy 89 percent of Taizhou policemen and university graduates 34 percent, while the figure was only 56 percent and 10 percent five years ago. Shao Xianfu, “Proposals for Building New-Type Police PR Relationship,” *Taizhou Social Science*, Issue 1, 2007.

²⁵ Ding Zhaowei, “How many monitoring cameras does a city need?” *China Public Security*, Issue 9, 2007.

²⁶ Internet policemen in Beijing received 10,893 cases in four months, among which 5,311 cases were illegal messages, 4,647 Internet frauds, 400 pornographies, 221 virus attacks, and 291 harmful messages.

"Chinese Internet Police on High Alert," *Outlook News Weekly*, Feb 22, 2008.

²⁷ "Chinese Worker's Union Seeking Changes," *Outlook Oriental Weekly*, Sept. 6, 2006.

²⁸ Personal interviews with college students.

²⁹ Mary Hennock and Melinda Liu, "This Watch Won't End," *Newsweek*, Feb. 18, 2008.

³⁰ "China acknowledges tightened visa procedures ahead of Olympics," *Associated Press*, May 6, 2008.

³¹ Jonathan Watts, "China takes tough line on Olympics protests," *The Guardian*, Nov. 2, 2007; Shi Shan,

"Protests and Demonstrations Need to Be Approved in Advance," *RFA*, Mar. 14, 2008.

Situation Report

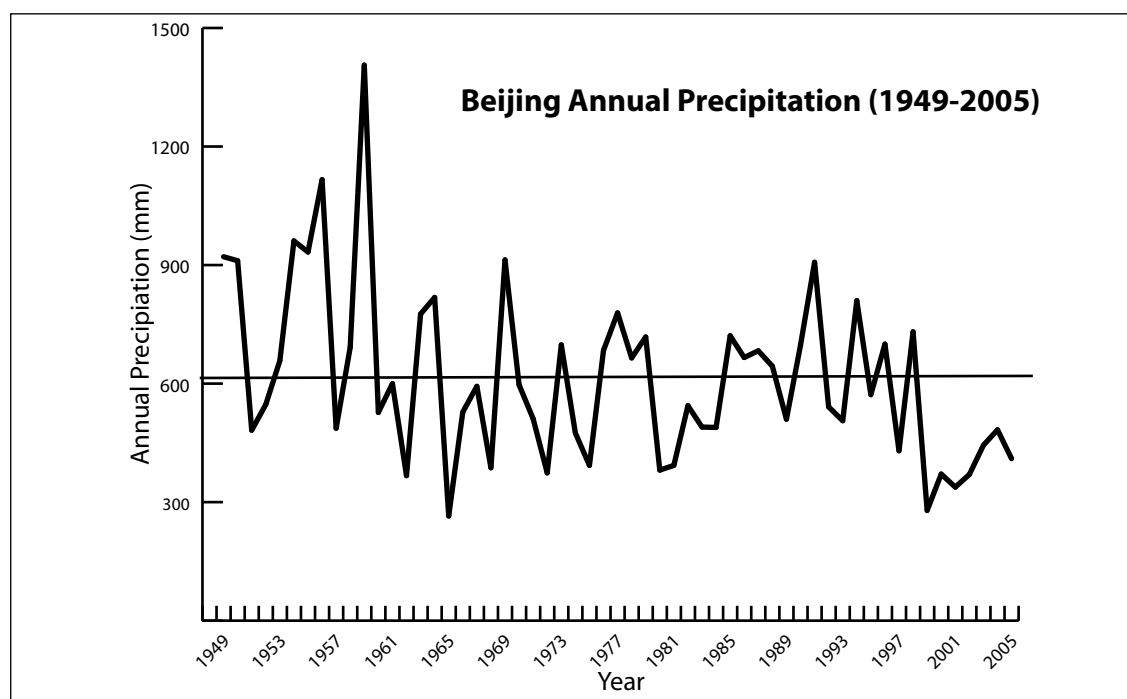
Quenching Olympic Thirst

After years of drought and frenetic urban development, Beijing faces a severe water crisis. According to official data, the municipality has access to a mere 300 m³ of renewable fresh water per capita, which is about one-eighth of the national average. And preparations for the 2008 Olympics have only exacerbated the city's water problems. With resource exploitation exceeding sustainable limits, city leaders are utilizing new measures to quench the Olympic thirst.

Beijing's river system is part of the Hai River basin, which supports an estimated 10 percent of the country's population, yet only about 1.5 percent of national water resources, leaves the city with acute water sourcing problems. Local freshwater availability is dictated by the sub-humid continental monsoon climate, rendering the region vulnerable to both droughts and floods. Natural fluctuations in annual precipitation have been the norm for Beijing. However, since 1999 Beijing has had annual precipitations of less than 400 mm, leaving the city to cope with the

compounded effects of years of drought.

In years with average rainfall conditions, a normal renewable water supply is about 4.1 billion m³, made up of about 40 percent surface water and the rest groundwater. But in 2001, for example, the city only received 1.92 billion m³ of freshwater supply, which left it far short of the 3.8 billion m³ of water consumed that year. Continual droughts have led the city to rely increasingly on groundwater sources. The result has been a significant sinking of the groundwater table, which sunk by 12 meters from 1980 to 2002,





creating empty aquifers stretching across an area of 2,200 km².

Beijing's two main reservoirs, Guanting and Miyun, are the primary water supply for Beijing residents. Natural inflows into the reservoirs have seen dramatic and alarming reductions. In particular, the Miyun reservoir has reached critically low levels – dropping from 4.1 billion m³ in 1980 to less than 600 million m³ in 2002 – and has only remained functional by yearly diversions from Hebei and Shanxi provinces.

The Urban Water System

Beijing's water system was largely developed in the mid-20th century, when the government initiated a plan to transform the former imperial city into a modern showcase for socialist China. Water management was expected to comply with ambitious development efforts that included industrialization and highly productive agriculture – thus irrigation. As part of these efforts, in the 1950s the government built the large Guanting (1952-1954) and Miyun (1958-1960) reservoirs, located just north of the city.

For years the government approached water scarcity as a technical issue, opting for engineering solutions to increase supply. Chinese leaders long contemplated a South-North Water Transfer Project (*nanshui beidiao*), but it was not until 2001 that the government, prompted by

the latest water crisis and the challenge to secure water supply for the 2008 Olympic Games, gave the green light to the costliest water project in the country's history.

Construction of the so-called “middle route” began in 2003 and if it proceeds smoothly, the first water deliveries from the Yangzi river area are expected to reach Beijing by 2010. The “middle route” is expected to divert up to 14 billion m³ of water to the north. But given the thirst for water all over the North China Plain, experts generally agree that Beijing cannot expect more than one or two billion m³ per year. This amount, roughly equal to 30 to 50 percent of present consumption, will likely bring some relief to exhausted aquifers, but it is clearly insufficient to solve Beijing's long-term water needs.

In the meantime, Beijing has looked to other expedients to help ease its water crisis. In spring 2008, the government completed a 200 km water connection from the city of Shijiazhuang in Hebei province. It has also earmarked 22 billion RMB (US\$3.2 billion) for smaller water transfer projects and compensations to neighboring provinces. Some compensation is also paid to local peasants living in the catchment areas of important rivers for “ecological services.” In December 2006, the Beijing municipality and Hebei province signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Hebei to



deliver 410 million m³ of water “in case of an emergency.” Interestingly, in early 2008, Chinese and international media reported that deliveries of Shijiazhuang water were scheduled for April through August, revealing that the Olympics have been marked an “emergency,” occupying an important position in the city’s water procurement strategy.

For many years, demand-oriented supply management drove Beijing’s policies, with little institutional impetus to encourage efficient and environmentally friendly water use. Moreover, economic strategy primarily concentrated on the development of the “productive sector.” Neglected investment in “unproductive” urban infrastructure has resulted in poor urban drainage, insufficient wastewater treatment facilities, and enormous water losses due to old, leaky pipes. Experts estimate that up to 30 percent of the freshwater supply is lost to poor-conditioned pipes.

Further, until the 1990s, the city treated less than 10 percent of its wastewater. Only in recent years, and in partial response to the impending Olympics has substantial investment been allocated to wastewater treatment plants. At present, about 60 percent of residential wastewater undergoes treatment in one of the

city’s 17 plants, making Beijing the nation’s leader in advanced wastewater treatment. However, the standards are still far below cities in the developed world.

The Beijing Water Authority

Responsibilities for administering urban water management in Beijing have traditionally been shared by multiple government agencies, with some responsible for water conservation, afforestation and watershed management; others for rural development, irrigation and the exploration of groundwater; some for urban drinking water supply; and still others for drainage, wastewater treatment and water quality. A strict division of labor and interests between different departments on the one hand, and a lack of clarity and sharing on the other has complicated matters.

To overcome these institutional challenges, the Beijing municipal government established the “Beijing Water Authority.” Under this umbrella institution, departments responsible for water conservation and flood control (formerly under the Beijing Water Bureau), drinking water supply (the Beijing Water Works Company) and drainage and wastewater treatment (formerly under the

Beijing Construction Bureau) have been merged. Practice will prove if the new institution will be able to transcend former bureaucratic and administrative borders to achieve the goal of streamlined water management. Aside from state-run programs, the government has taken steps to open parts of the water sector (such as water works and treatment facilities) to national as well as international market-oriented enterprises.

Protection

Since the 1980s the Beijing municipal government has developed substantial legislation aimed at protecting the city's water resources. The city has pioneered national skeleton laws such as the *Law for the Prevention of Water Pollution and Treatment of Polluted Water* (1984, revised 1996 and 2008) and the *Water Law* (1988, revised 2002) which emphasizes the sustainable utilization of water resources in the city's long-term development plans.

Beijing was the first city to issue provisions to protect the watershed of a drinking water reservoir through the *Regulation for the Protection of the Miyun Reservoir, Huairou Reservoir, and Jingmi Canal* (1985, revised 1995). Very strict regulations apply for the protection of the critically threatened Miyun reservoir. Local authorities have banned certain polluting activities from defined protection zones in an effort to limit tourism and industrial development. However, regulations issued by the Beijing municipality so far do not apply to the 70 percent of the Miyun catchment area that lies outside the boundaries



of its jurisdiction.

Using market logic for demand management since about 1990, the municipal government began gradually raising the price of water. Today, water prices are nine times higher than 1990. However, since 2004, price regulating authorities have been reluctant to make increases on the 3.7 RMB per m³ rates. This includes the comparatively small share of 0.9 RMB for waste water treatment. A drastic increase is expected once the costly South-North Water Transfer Project is completed. To date, water fees have not had a significant impact on consumption, thus failing to effectively communicate the dire need for more conscientious water consumption habits. Moreover, it is questionable if present water prices meaningfully reflect the true costs of production and waste water treatment or if subsidized water services remain under-financed for technical modernization and maintenance as well as ecological compensation and watershed protection programs.

Conclusion

The traditional supply-oriented approach to water resource management in Beijing has resulted in increasing costs for the development of additional supplies, conflicts with neighboring provinces and increasing compensation costs. Further, environmental problems have been exacerbated, including depleted groundwater levels and a degraded water supply.

A shift to an urban development policy oriented towards the sustainable use of regional water resources will require that greater awareness of regional water scarcity be included in all spheres of urban development. The government has taken steps in the right direction by setting up the Beijing Water Authority to improve coordination between relevant departments, and in its efforts to improve demand management. That said, given the Olympics, doubts remain as to whether the gravity of the crisis has truly registered with the city's policy-makers.

This report was prepared by Eva Sternfeld, former director of research at China's State Environment Protection Administration (SEPA) Center for Environmental Education and Communication.

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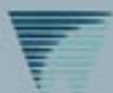
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ISSN 1935-5564