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### 1NC - China Security K

#### China threat discourse actively influences policy

Pan 12 [Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, 1-30-2012, "Knowledge, desire and power in global politics: Western representations of China's rise," ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305354138\_Knowledge\_desire\_and\_power\_in\_global\_politics\_Western\_representations\_of\_China's\_rise, accessed 3-30-2021]LHSBC

The previous chapter examined how the knowledge of the China threat is linked to power. But its implications in power relations are not confined to the domestic sphere; they permeate also through the realms of international relations and foreign policy. In fact, the ‘China threat’ paradigm is instrumental to the making of the ‘containment’ policy towards China. Here, I use ‘containment’ as shorthand for a range of US policy measures directed at China in military, economic, political and moral realms. Their common aim is, with various degrees of pressure and coercion, to deter or ‘dissuade’ China from expanding its power beyond certain limits. Of course, this China containment strategy cannot be likened to the American Cold War containment policy towards the Soviet Union; much has changed between then and now.9∂ Indeed, given its obvious Cold War connotation, ‘containment’ has lost its potency as a policy label among scholars or policy-makers alike; instead, people prefer to call American China policy ‘hedging’, ‘principled engagement’, ‘congagement’, ‘balancing’, ‘management’ or ‘deterrence’. Whether or not ‘containment’ is the right word should not detain us here. The point is that so long as it is more or less the same ‘threat’ perception and institutions that continue to be behind the making of US China policy, it would be erroneous to believe that US policy has made a clear break with the past. ∂ If containment continues to be part and parcel of US China policy, what does it have to do with the ‘China threat’ paradigm? It is one thing to say that there is a link between theory and ideas on the one hand and practice and foreign policy on the other, but it is quite a challenge to empirically demonstrate such a link. Gordon Craig once observed that ‘To establish the relationship between ideas and foreign policy is always a difficult task, and it is no accident that it has attracted so few historians’.∂ The result, of course, has been a vicious cycle—with little scholarly interest in this matter, we end up knowing still less about the connection. Furthermore, for various reasons, both scholars and practitioners tend to play down the existence of such a connection. In the case of scholars, they often lament that their ideas are underappreciated by practitioners, whereas the latter tend to brush aside ideas coming from the ivory tower as nothing more than arm-chair commentaries. Either way, the common perception is that there has been a yawning gap between the ivory tower and the corridor of power.11 While such a gap may well exist in certain individual circumstances or in relation to particular policy or theoretical issues, overall this does not overturn the proposition that∂ policy necessarily operates through ideas or theories. As will be demonstrated below, without the knowledge support of the ‘China threat’ paradigm, containment will not be able to function as an effective policy. First, the threat paradigm helps define (or at least renew) the purpose of containment as a policy. Bernard Schaffer tells us that policy has three dimensions of meaning: purposes; the review of information and the determination of appropriate action; and the securing and commitment of resources in its implementation.12∂ We are familiar with the second and third dimensions of policy, but no policy can exist without the first, namely, a certain purpose (or purposes). In fact, functioning like a fulcrum, the articulation of a relevant purpose is often the very first—sometimes also the most difficult—step in a policy-making process. For instance, as far as US strategic planners are concerned, the main challenge lies not in implementing a policy of military build-up, but in justifying or identifying a legitimate public purpose for that policy. Likewise, for weapons manufacturers, promoting arms sales is not an overly complicated task; but in order to translate it into official policy, they require a rationale, or more specifically, a legitimate target against which their arms should be deployed. In both cases, identifying a purpose or target is crucial to policy-making. ∂ Thanks to a China threat ‘out there’, a new purpose can be injected into US foreign policy. It provides a rationale for a policy that would otherwise struggle to justify its contemporary relevance. This constitutive effect on US China policy can be likened to the way in which the discourse of terrorism justified and legitimised the US-led ‘War on Terror’. For a start, the terrorist threat immediately gave George W. Bush a hitherto elusive sense of certainty about his mission and policy direction. As reported in the New York Times, not until the ‘September 11’ tragedy did the President begin to feel ‘sure about what he should be doing’.∂ While the rise of terrorism has enabled the US to preoccupy itself with the ‘War on Terror’ for more than a decade, at least for a particular section of the US foreign policy establishment, a more lasting purpose for US foreign and security policy requires the China threat.∂ Second, the threat paradigm contributes to policy-making by spelling out some specific policy options. From the beginning, the representation of China as a danger is not merely an intellectual question about ‘what is China?’; it is always concerned with the practical question of ‘what to do about it?’ For example, in their book The Coming Conflict with China, Bernstein and Munro devote a whole chapter to the issue of how to manage China’s rise. Among their policy recommendations are maintaining a strong US military presence in Asia, strengthening Japan, continuing arms sales to Taiwan, and restricting China’s nuclear weapons arsenal.∂ Similarly, in the last pages of The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, Mearsheimer believes that an appropriate China policy is not what he calls the ‘misguided’ engagement strategy,∂ but containment to ‘slow the rise of China’. 15 Charles Krauthammer, a prominent neoconservative proponent of the China threat argument, not only advocated explicitly for containing China in his 1996 Time magazine article, but also detailed how this can best be done. Taking ‘a rising and threatening China’ as a pregiven fact, he insisted that ‘any rational policy’ towards the country should be predicated on various containment strategies such as strengthening regional alliances (with Japan, Vietnam, India, and Russia) to box in China, standing by Chinese dissidents, denying Beijing the right to host the Olympics, and keeping China from joining the WTO on its own terms. Speaking with a sense of urgency, he urged that this containment policy ‘begin early in its career’.16 Feeling the same sense of urgency, Peter Navarro, in his book The Coming China Wars, warns consumers, corporate executives, and policy-makers of gathering storm clouds on the horizon. He then offers a range of policy prescriptions on ‘How to fight—and win!—the coming China wars’ (the title of his book’s final chapter).17 These require, for example, that the US ‘adopt a “zero-tolerance” policy toward intellectual property theft’, ‘condemn China’s actions in the strongest of terms, and if China’s abuses of power continue, seek to strip China of its permanent veto’ in the United Nations. What those policy prescriptions have in common, he adds, is that ‘they require the economic and political will to stand up to China, along with the military might to back up the prescriptions’.18 If the military and economic threat of China entails military and economic containment, the image of China as a brutal, authoritarian state helps lay the foundation for moral and ideological sanction. Advising on how to deal with ‘hostile regimes’ in general, Kagan and Kristol offer a rich recipe of regime change: Tactics for pursuing a strategy of regime change would vary according to circumstances. aIn some cases, the best policy might be support for rebel groups, along the lines of the Reagan Doctrine as it was applied in Nicaragua and elsewhere. In other cases, it might mean support for dissidents by either overt and covert means, and/or economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation…. But the purpose of American foreign policy ought to be clear. When it comes to dealing with tyrannical regimes, especially those with the power to do us or our allies harm, the United States should seek not coexistence but transformation.19 Counting China as one of those ‘tyrannical regimes’, they urge that the US and the West make it harder for the Chinese regime to resolve its contradictions, thereby hastening its collapse.20 Of course, policy prescriptions from the China threat literature are not necessarily actual official policies, but through the influence of mainstream media and policy consultancy, the line between them is often easily crossed. ∂ To start with, many China threat advocates, some of them prominent neocons, are high-profile media-savvy commentators. As Bacevich observes, apart from the neocon-dominated op-ed pages of the Wall Street Journal, each of the three leading general-interest daily newspapers in the US—the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, and the Washington Post—has at least one regular neoconservative commentator: Max Boot and David Brooks respectively for the first two newspapers, and Charles Krauthammer and Robert Kagan for the third.21 The Weekly Standard, a key neoconservative publication and one of the most reliable sources of the China threat analysis, boasts that its writers ‘are in great demand on nationally broadcast political programs for their ideas and opinions. Frequent appearances on television testify not only to our influence in Washington but to our relevance on the national political scene’.22 That probably is no overstatement. In July 2008, at the first sign that the Bush administration might fail to follow through a previously announced lucrative arms sales deal to Taiwan, no fewer than four China experts—Dan Blumenthal from the AEI, Aaron Friedberg from Princeton University, Randall Schriver from Armitage International, and Ashley Tellis from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace—joined forces to persuade the administration to go ahead with that deal. In their co-authored article published in the Wall Street Journal, they demanded that ‘Bush should keep his word on Taiwan’. 23 In addition to media activism, many China threat analysts exert their influence through consultancy work. Michael Pillsbury, a well-known China hawk, falls into this category. Having worked at RAND and taught at several American universities, Pillsbury is regarded by the Wall Street Journal as ‘a persistent force in shaping official American perceptions’ of China, even though he appears on no public Defense Department roster. Less than three months later, Washington announced that more than $6 billion worth of sales in advanced weapons to Taiwan would go ahead. Although it is hard to measure and quantify the extent of their policy influence, it would be inconceivable that the opinion of those analysts, all of whom had served in Asia policy positions in the Bush administration, had made no policy impact. 24 Supported by his long-time mentor Andrew Marshall, head of the Pentagon’s Office of Net Assessment, Pillsbury authored two books: Chinese Views of Future Warfare (1997) and China Debates the Future Security Environment (2000), which earn him a great deal of fame in China policy-making circles. As a Washington Monthly article notes, it was in part based on Pillsbury’s work that the Pentagon’s 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review famously identified China as the nation with ‘the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States’.25 Moreover, some passages of the Pentagon’s 2006 annual report on China’s military power ‘appear to be lifted directly out of Pillsbury’s writings, including warnings of “asymmetric programs” in the works’.∂ In fact, not just passages but entire policy packages are finding their way into Washington. Take, for example, China experts’ frequent call for strengthening an alliance system surrounding China. On the ground, this is precisely what has been unfolding. At the centre of this alliance build-up and realignment is the beefed-up defence cooperation between the US and Japan. After Obama came to office, Japan’s prime minister was his first Oval Office visitor from abroad and Japan was the destination of Mrs Clinton’s first overseas trip as the Secretary of State. 27 More substantial cooperation includes their joint development of a missile defence system, the relocation of US First Army Corps command headquarters from America’s west coast to Camp Zama, south of Tokyo, as well as the shift of the command operations of the Thirteenth Air Force, now in Guam, to Yokota airbase near Tokyo.28 In this way, Japan has emerged as Washington’s closest global strategic partner and its most robust partner against China.29 In the words of Chalmers Johnson, a long-time China and Japan watcher, Japan has been turned into the ‘control tower’ of US-enforced security in Asia.30 US military relations with the Philippines have been the closest since the end of the Cold War. Military cooperation with the Indonesian military has intensified, with the ‘unstated reason’ being, in the words of Indonesia’s Defense Minister, ‘to balance the rising power of China’. 31 In Singapore, which already plays host to visiting US aircraft carriers, Fallon revealed in his March 2005 testimony that the US was actively seeking opportunities for expanded access to Singaporean facilities. And with India, Fallon noted growing US ties with the Indian Integrated Defence Staff and the Indian Armed Services.32 In March 2006, George W. Bush made a historic visit to India, during which the two countries struck a nuclear deal, despite the fact that India was not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Obama’s 2010 visit to India and his call for India’s permanent membership on the UN Security Council, according to commentators, both carry implications for China.33 In late 2011, a centre-piece of Obama’s visit to Australia was his announcement that Australia’s northern city Darwin will host the rotational deployments of 2500 US marines, a move drawing Australia ever deeper into what defence expert Hugh White calls ‘a more unified military coalition to confront China’s growing maritime power’.34 As well as strengthening bilateral ties with Japan and Australia, the US has upgraded the trilateral strategic dialogues among Washington, Tokyo and Canberra from a bureaucratic to a ministerial level. An Australian scholar describes this new triple alliance as a ‘little NATO’ against China.35 When America’s steps to strengthen military ties with Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and several central Asian countries are taken into account, the ‘strategic net’ woven by the US to ‘persuade China to keep its ambitions within reason’ becomes even more palpable. 36 Containing China is certainly∂ not the only motive behind such bilateral military cooperation, but many commentators have no doubt that it is ‘a central element’, a view confirmed by US diplomats.37 Commenting on those US efforts to create and strengthen alliances in the region, Samuel Berger concedes that ‘continued rapprochement with India and effervescent US-Japan relations, both fully justified, now are pursued with more than a whiff of Chinese encirclement’.38 Certainly, ‘China threat’ experts cannot be given all the credit for these policy moves. For their part, many policy-makers themselves are concerned with a similar question of what to do about the China threat, an image which has now been internalised inside the Beltway. According to Atlantic Monthly contributing editor Robert Kaplan, this concern by practitioners often translates into the policy issue of ‘how we would fight China’. Richard Bush and Michael O’Hanlon argue that what is revealed in Kaplan’s 2005 Atlantic Monthly article is noteworthy. While dismissing the article as ‘a combination of false advertising and misplaced analogies’, they nonetheless point out that: Kaplan’s article should have been taken seriously given the principal source of his information: the officers in the Pacific Command, an arm of the Department of Defense. It should be very significant that the individuals in command of America’s front lines in the Pacific apparently believe there is a cold war [with China] in our future. For like their bosses in the Pentagon, they have some power to act on their perceptions of the trajectory of Chinese military power. 39 Bush’s and O’Hanlon’s concern is well founded. In response to a perceived Chinese military threat, a series of US policy reviews, military build-up, and strategic realignment have been under way for years. For example, acting upon the assumption of Beijing’s growing threat vis-à-vis Taiwan, by July 2004 Defense Secretary Rumsfeld had authorised the National Defense University, as a matter of urgency, to conduct nine war-game scenarios focusing on cross-strait relations, one of which was suggestively code-named ‘Dragon’s Thunder’.40 Importantly, war games are not just that, mere games; they are often unmistakable signs of war plans in the making. According to William Arkin, an NBC News military analyst and Washington Post online columnist, the US has already built ‘a new full fledged war plan for China’. Codenamed ‘Operations Plan (OPLAN) 5077’, it is the first new conventional war plan since the end of the Cold War and ‘one of only three completed and full-fledged war plans of the US military… with assigned forces and more detailed annexes and appendices’.41 The significance of such war plans, argues Arkin, is that once drafted, they will be tested through military exercises and refined through more intelligence to improve targeting and warning. 42 Such a process, initially growing out of a strategic concern, can soon take on a life of its own in the defence policy domain.43 The recent US military build-up in the western Pacific clearly testifies to this process. In the above-mentioned article ‘How We Would Fight China’, Kaplan reveals that the US has begun to triple its long-term deployment of nuclear submarines in Guam from three to ten, as well as to prepare the island to receive B-1 and B-2 long-range bombers. Indeed, at any given time, Guam’s Andersen Airbase is home to some 100 000 bombs and missiles as well as 66 million gallons of jet fuel, making it the biggest strategic ‘gas-andgo’ airbase in the world.44 There is little secret who the main target of this massive military build-up in Guam is. James Thomas, Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary for Plans, told the conservative Washington Times that ‘the deployments of bomber elements to Guam on a more routine basis’ are essentially the China part of a broad hedging strategy.45 As reported in the Atlantic Monthly, both the bomber deployments and American nuclear upgrades have been linked to the China threat perception held by US military top brass. 46 Admiral William Fallon, formerly the US Pacific Command, once lamented that his bosses still seemed to be fighting the Cold War, as though China were the Soviet Union of old.47

#### That becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy

Pan 12 [Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, 1-30-2012, "Knowledge, desire and power in global politics: Western representations of China's rise," ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305354138\_Knowledge\_desire\_and\_power\_in\_global\_politics\_Western\_representations\_of\_China's\_rise, accessed 3-30-2021]LHSBC

* Bracketed for ableist language

US Containment and Chinese Foreign Policy Response The impact of US containment goes beyond the public and intellectual realms and extends to the official domain of Chinese foreign policy-making. The relationship with the US, according to Hu Jintao, is the ‘central thread in China’s foreign policy strategy’. 102 China’s New Rulers: The Secret Files, published in 2002, reveals chilling views of leading Chinese Politburo Standing Committee members about US motives towards China. Alarmed by US military deployments in China’s neighbouring countries, Hu Jintao believed that the Americans ‘have extended outposts and placed pressure points on us from the east, south, and west. This makes a great change in our geopolitical environment’. For both Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and then Vice President Zeng Qinghong, Washington’s China strategy is to ‘engage and contain’. That is to say, how the US acts vis-à-vis China must have been a key consideration in the making of Chinese foreign policy. 103 In his study of China’s new nationalism, Peter Hays Gries rightly notes the extensive influence of US China policy on Chinese worldviews. He questions the conventional wisdom in the US that treats China and Chinese nationalism in isolation from its international environment and ignores the role of China’s interlocutors in shaping Chinese foreign behaviour. In today’s terminology, it amounted to a hedging strategy. 104 Influenced by this wisdom, Rumsfeld famously asked at a regional security conference in June 2005: ‘Since no nation threatens China, one must wonder: Why this growing [Chinese] investment [in defence]?’ As the Defense Secretary of a country whose military budget was bigger than almost those of the rest of the world combined, it is remarkable that Rumsfeld managed to keep a straight face while posing that question. To Will Hutton, his remarks showed ‘disingenuousness of the highest order’.105 The fact that Beijing’s image of the US had not always been so bleak further testifies to the contingency and responsiveness, rather than the fixity and pregivenness, of Chinese official views. In China’s 1998 White Paper on National Defense, the US was mentioned ten times, almost each time in positive terms. Presumably, that reflected a secure and confident Chinese leadership after Chinese President Jiang Zemin’s historic meetings with Bill Clinton in 1997 and 1998 as well as their agreement to establish a ‘constructive strategic partnership’. Two years later, China’s third white paper mentioned the US 13 times, and all but two of the references were negative.106 What happened in the interval, among other things, was the US accusation of Chinese espionage and the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. The Chinese leadership was so shocked by the Embassy bombing that even Jiang Zemin became convinced, as Clinton recounted in his memoir My Life, that this incident was caused by a deliberate act of rigging the bombing target maps by those from the Pentagon or CIA who opposed Clinton’s engagement with China.107 To many observers, US China policy is little more than hedging, rebalancing, or contingency planning, rather than sinister containment; the problem, it seems, lies with Chinese overreaction or hypersensitivity, which may have resulted from a siege mentality or distorted Chinese representations of the US. 108 There may be some elements of truth in this explanation. Yet, it is worth noting that the Chinese are not alone in showing such ‘hypersensitivity’. When then National Interest editor Owen Harries passed through Hong Kong after the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy, he ‘did not meet a person there—either Chinese or Western—who accepted the accident thesis’.109 Even James Sasser, the US ambassador to China at the time of the NATO bombing, later told a Chinese journalist that he would not take the bombing as an accident ‘if he were a Chinese’.110 Meanwhile, many Western scholars readily acknowledge that the American injunction to prevent the emergence of a new peer competitor ‘can apply only to China’, as no other possible adversary is able to fit the bill. 111 A 2003 RAND report on the future roles of US nuclear arsenal admits that US nuclear posture and strategy appears best suited for a pre-emptive counterforce capability against China (and Russia). Otherwise, the report says that ‘the numbers and the operating procedures simply do not add up’.112 What is particularly troubling is that many US policy-makers seem little troubled by the Chinese reaction. In the lead up to a planned joint navy exercise between the US and South Korea in the Yellow Sea in 2010, China protested strongly against such an exercise. Shen Dingli of Fudan University asks rhetorically: ‘When the US ponders the idea of deploying its nuclear aircraft carrier in the Yellow Sea, very close to China, shouldn’t China have the same feeling as the US did when the Soviet Union deployed missiles in Cuba?’ 113 Probably not unaware of such a Chinese concern, Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell remained adamant. ‘Those [exercise] determinations’, said Morrell, ‘are made by us, and us alone. Where we

exercise, when we exercise, with whom and how, using what assets and so forth are determinations that are made by the United States Navy, by the Department of Defense, by the United States Government’. 114 Evincing a tone of unilateral arrogance, his unspoken statement is that Beijing might not like it, but there was little it could do. In thinking along this line, the spokesman merely followed a well-established US tradition. Two decades ago, dismissing concerns over China’s anger at the US decision to sell highperformance fighters to Taiwan, US Senator Lloyd Bentsen asked, ‘What, after all, can Beijing do? Threaten to terminate its $20 billion-a-year trade surplus with us?’115 Bentsen might have a point here. Despite or because of China’s rapid rise, its economy continues to be heavily dependent on overseas, especially American, markets. And with its ‘Peaceful Development’ mantra, ample evidence exists of Beijing’s desire to avoid confrontation with the world’s hegemon.116 Even so, the popular assumption among some ‘China threat’ advocates that China has few options but to ‘turn the other cheek’ is not only selfcontradictory, but also self-deceptive and dangerous. Granted that the US hedging strategy is mere contingency planning, it is still not immune from the dynamics of mutual responsiveness. As Robert Axelrod remarks with regard to the hedging rules in a Prisoner’s Dilemma situation, these maximizing rules did not take into account that their own behavior would lead the other player to change. In deciding whether to carry an umbrella, we do not have to worry that the clouds will take our behavior into account…. Non-zerosum games, such as the Prisoner’s Dilemma, are not like this. Unlike the clouds, the other player can respond to your own choices.117 As noted above, Chinese responses at both public and official levels are already under way. Given a sustained US hedging, it should come as no surprise if China (especially its military) comes up with its own hedging strategy of sort. 118 For instance, Chinese military modernisation, though dubbed an ‘RMA with Chinese Characteristics’, has drawn much inspiration from post-Cold War revolution in military affairs (RMA) led by the US.119 In an attempt to bring China’s three military services into the age of joint operation, China’s ‘informationisation’ effort outlined in its 2004 Defence White Paper simply ‘replicates the US emphasis on satellite and airborne sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles, and information warfare’.120 According to David Lampton, Chinese military development in recent decades has been primarily a story of reaction, not initiation.121 Commenting on the much-mentioned Taiwan Strait missile exercises conducted by the PLA in the summer and fall of 1995 and again in March 1996, Harries wrote that ‘Ill-judged, ugly, and dangerous as was the Chinese intimidation, it was a reaction’. 122 That reaction came after America’s decision to allow Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui to visit the US, where Lee delivered a triumphalist speech on the merit of the ‘Taiwan Experience’ and appealed for wider international recognition for the island. Later, alarmed by the US show of force through its two aircraft carrier battle groups during the 1996 missile crisis, Chinese strategic planners allegedly told Helmut Sonnenfeldt, one of Henry Kissinger’s close associates, that they were rereading the early works of George Kennan, the architect of the containment policy towards the Soviet Union. Fearful that the United States was embarking on a similar course of action against China, they wanted to learn from Kennan ‘how it had started and evolved’.123 In July 2004, the US conducted an exercise codenamed ‘Operation Summer Pulse 2004’, in which it unprecedentedly assembled seven aircraft carrier strike groups (CSGs) simultaneously in five regional theatres, all with a clear intention to make an impression on China that Washington was serious about defending Taiwan. That US objective certainly succeeded, but to an unexpected effect. After the US exercise, one Chinese military source quickly concluded that all this ‘leaves China with no choice but to start and end the war [over Taiwan] with lightning speed’. 124 Disturbed by that unprecedented show of force, Beijing reacted, also unprecedentedly, by appointing two top anti-aircraft carrier warfare officers to head the PLA General Staff Department. Commenting on such unusual appointments, an article in the Journal of Electronic Defense maintains that ‘Summer Pulse 04’s surge of seven carrier groups must have really rattled the Chinese high command’. 125 In addition to responding directly to US China strategy, Chinese foreign policy is also shaped by it in an indirect manner. This is evident in China’s response to enormous domestic pressure from popular nationalists and hardline realists. Even as Beijing is aware of the danger of extreme nationalism, at the same time it has become increasingly captive and vulnerable to public opinion, especially in times of international crisis when the response from the regime is closely monitored and tied to regime legitimacy. In this context, Chinese foreign policy-making becomes increasingly a ‘two-level game’, argues Gries, ‘with Chinese diplomats keeping one eye on domestic nationalists, even as they negotiate with their foreign counterparts’. Seven years later when China finally carried out sea-trials of its first aircraft carrier, few analysts would remember or care to draw the connection between China’s determination to develop its own blue navy (and area-denial capabilities) and those earlier encounters with the US. But remembering such contexts is essential to understanding the full picture of China’s recent assertiveness. 126 Just as the perception of a ‘China threat’ in the American public has profound implications for US China policy, Chinese perceptions of US containment can likewise exert considerable influence on Beijing’s foreign behaviour. During the 2001 spy plane incident, the Chinese government found its room for manoeuvre severely constrained by strong public indignation. Explaining to the Americans why Beijing could not let the US plane go without receiving an apology, an unnamed senior PLA officer pointed directly to the pressure of populist nationalism: should Beijing bow to US demand, ‘the Chinese masses would immediately regard the government as being too soft, as the leaving plane could even spy on China on its return trip’.127 A special assistant to US ambassador to China Joseph Prueher later confirmed that during the negotiation in Beijing, American diplomats ‘saw a Chinese government acutely sensitive to Chinese public opinion’.128 And as noted above, Chinese public opinion in turn has been in part shaped by US China policy.

THE ‘CHINA THREAT’ PARADIGM AS A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY If changing Chinese public opinion and Beijing’s growing assertiveness in foreign policy are better understood in the context of mutual responsiveness, then threatening as they may appear, they at least partly reflect the selffulfilling effect of the China threat theory as practice. That is, they are to some extent socially constructed by Western representations of the China threat. At this juncture, we may return to the question raised earlier—What’s the cost of having an enemy? The cost, simply put, is that perceiving China as a threat and acting upon that perception help bring that feared China threat closer to reality. Though not an objective description of China, the ‘China threat’ paradigm is no mere fantasy, as it has the constitutive power to make its prediction come true. If this China paradigm ends up bearing some resemblance to Chinese reality, it is because the reality is itself partly constituted by it. With US strategic planners continuing to operate on the basis of the China threat, this self-fulfilling process has persisted to the present day. For example, in July 2010, when China objected to the joint USSouth Korean navy exercise in the Yellow Sea to no avail, it announced that its navy would conduct live fire drills in the East China Sea for the duration of the US-South Korean manoeuvres. 129 Meanwhile, a Global Times (a Chinese daily tabloid affiliated with the official People’s Daily) editorial opines that ‘Whatever harm the US military manoeuvre may have inflicted upon the mind of the Chinese, the United States will have to pay for it, sooner or later’.130 All such Chinese ‘belligerence’ seems to have provided fresh evidence to the ‘China threat’ paradigm, whose image of China has now been vindicated.131 Without acknowledging their own role in the production of the ‘China threat’, ‘China threat’ analysts thus play a key part in a spiral model of tit-for-tat in Sino-US relations. Mindful of this danger, some cool-headed observers have warned that a US attempt to build a missile defence shield could be reciprocated by China deploying more missiles.132 Even the highly classified US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) report Foreign Responses to U.S. National Missile Defense Deployment has hinted at this possibility. 133 In early 2006, Mike Moore, contributing editor of The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, predicted that if the US continues to weaponise space by deploying a comprehensive space-control system, ‘China will surely respond’.134 And respond it did. In early 2007, it launched a ballistic missile to destroy an inoperational weather satellite in orbit. That test immediately caused a stir in the international press, even though it came after Washington’s repeated refusal to negotiate with China and Russia over their proposed ban on space weapons and the use of force against satellites. A Financial Times article noted that ‘What is surprising about the Chinese test is that anyone was surprised’.135 In a similar vein but commenting on the broader pattern of US strategy on China over the years, Lampton notes that ‘Washington cannot simply seek to strengthen ties with India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and central Asian states as an explicit offset to rising Chinese power and then be surprised when Beijing plays the same game’.136 Nevertheless, such surprise is commonplace in the China watching community, reflecting an intellectual [ignorance] blindness to the self-fulfilling nature of one of its time-honoured paradigms. This blindness, in turn, allows the justification of more containment or hedging. In this way, the ‘China threat’ paradigm is not only self-fulfilling in practice, but also self-productive and self-perpetuating as a powerful mode of representation. One might take comfort in the fact that neither Beijing nor Washington actually wants a direct military confrontation. But that is beside the point, for the lack of aggressive intention alone is no proven safe barrier to war. As in the cases of the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the outbreak of war does not necessarily require the intention to go to war.137 Mutual suspicion, as US President Theodore Roosevelt once observed of the Kaiser and the English, is often all that is needed to set in motion a downward spiral. 138 And thanks to the ‘China threat’ paradigm and its mirror image and practice from China, mutual suspicion and distrust has not been in short supply. 139 It is worth adding that my treatment of Chinese nationalism and realpolitik thinking is not to downplay their potentially dangerous consequences, much less to justify them. Quite the contrary, for all the apparent legitimacy of reciprocal counter-violence or counter-hedging, Chinese mimicry is dangerous, as it would feed into this tit-for-tat vicious cycle and play its part in the escalation of a security dilemma between the US and China. Thus, to emphasise Chinese responsiveness is not to deny Chinese agency or exonerate its responsibility. While the general nature of Chinese foreign policy may be responsive with regard to the US, its ‘contents’ are not simply passive, innocent mimicry of US thinking and behaviour, but inevitably come with some ‘Chinese characteristics’. That said, those ‘Chinese characteristics’ notwithstanding, there is no pregiven China threat both unresponsive to and immune from any external stimulus. To argue otherwise is to deny an important dimension of Chinese agency, namely, their response-ability. By examining the self-fulfilling tendency of the ‘China threat’ paradigm, we can better understand that Sino-American relations, like international relations in general, are mutually responsive and constitutive. Thus, both China and the US should be held accountable to the bilateral relationship of their mutual making. To the extent that this ‘China threat’ knowledge often denies such mutuality, and by extension, US responsibility in the rise of the China threat, it is all the more imperative to lay bare its intrinsic link with power practice.

#### China bashing feeds into the alt-right’s agenda of Sinophobia

Powers 20 (Martin Powers has written three books examining the theory and practice of administration in China. Two of these won the Levenson Prize for best book in pre-1900 Chinese Studies. Formerly Sally Michelson Davidson Professor and Director of the Center for Chinese Studies, he is currently Professor Emeritus at the University of Michigan. When is China-Bashing Racist? 8-29-20. <https://www.juancole.com/2020/08/china-bashing-racist.html> //shree)

On the left, there is widespread agreement that Trump’s immigration policies are informed by white supremacist doctrines. His travel ban on Middle Eastern nations was racially charged, not to mention restricting aid to Puerto Ricans ravaged by a hurricane. Combined with the utter absence of sympathy for families of murdered Americans, it would appear that race connects the dots in this administration’s policy puzzle, yet Trump-team’s hysterical China-bashing is often accepted as a legitimate response to an existential threat. Can we be certain that race plays no part in that drama?

Many recognize crude name-calling, like “Kung-flu,” as racist, but apart from that, a common give-away is contempt for outstanding performance by members of supposedly inferior groups. Kamala Harris is too “ambitious” (for a woman of color), and a former waitress like AOC has no business in the Senate.

What these remarks really entail is that Kamala’s formidable intelligence, and AOC’s rapier wit, are an affront to those who regard women and people of color as inferior. As sociologist Herbert Blumer put it, the group to which each belongs “is not keeping to its place but threatens to claim the opportunities and privileges from which it has been excluded.”

As it happens Blumer was talking about Asians, who are just as likely to arouse indignation should they step out of place. If high-performance women are smeared as “ambitious,” high-performance China is labeled “aggressive,” because it has no business achieving things we were meant to achieve.

A respected, liberal statesperson recently wrote: “China has aggressively pushed the message that it responded decisively and responsibly to the mounting death toll while the United States dithered.” In other words, China had the effrontery to state the facts, facts that undermine U.S. claims for cultural superiority. How could the Chinese government show greater concern for its people when we are a Democracy, and they are Communists?

The administration regularly insinuates that Chinese are “untrustworthy,” even though America lied about Three-Mile Island, WMD’s, Abu Ghraib, and mass surveillance, and we elected a leader who has lied more than 20,000 times. Even so statements from China are routinely dismissed without fact-checking, for no other reason than that a Chinese person said it. Could race be a factor here?

We fail to recognize racism directed at China or its people because certain code words allow a speaker to rationalize bigotry as due to something other than race. In recent months the most common codes for China include “aggressive,” “Communist,” “totalitarian,” and “Hong Kong.” The mere mention of any of these can justify open hostility toward all things Chinese.

“Communist” is the current term for the centuries-old “Despotic Oriental” meme. During the Cold War, those of us in Chinese Studies were taught that the Chinese emperor had absolute authority over all aspects of government and people’s lives, except that this turns out to be false. Unlike European monarchs, China’s emperor had little to say about who was appointed to office, and even less to say about any individual’s chosen religion, artistic taste, or choice of job.

Despite the facts, the Despotic Oriental theme returns zombie-like in essays on contemporary China, where we learn that all enterprises are state-owned and controlled by an all-powerful, “totalitarian” center determining every aspect of people’s lives. Admittedly, many Chinese firms are state-owned, but according to the Economist, the reality of private “Chinese entrepreneurship is broad as well as deep.”

Back in 2014 the media began reporting that Huawei phones were spying on their users. In response Huawei, which is employee-owned, has repeatedly requested hard evidence to back those claims. They are still waiting.

Then Edward Snowden released documents showing that “while U.S. government officials openly suspected [meaning “accused”] Huawei of collaborating with Chinese intelligence, the NSA was covertly infiltrating the company’s servers.” More recently it appears that U.S. anxiety around China’s 5G technology might have more to do with the fact that, on Huawei phones, the U.S. “will no longer be able to require ‘back doors’ that the NSA can use to spy on us all.”

When it comes to China, the press might even repeat cringeworthy sentiments as if they were perfectly sound: “The Trump administration has long alleged TikTok may pose a national security threat, in large part due to its Chinese ownership.” We are meant to assume that ownership by a Chinese person is sufficient cause for concern, ignoring the fact that Trump has a personal grudge against TikTok, since it was credited with reducing the turnout in Tulsa. But let’s imagine if the Washington Post were to write: “The administration has always regarded Company X with suspicion, in large part due to its Black ownership.” Would we accept that argument as well?

Since pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong began tossing petrol bombs into the underground last year, the word “Hong Kong” has become a magic bullet justifying multiple actions against the PRC. As the July issue of the Economist wrote “Any remaining illusions that China’s leaders respect rule of law when it really matters have been shattered by events in Hong Kong.” Those events, however, were not specified.

There is good reason to believe that, during clashes between Hong Kong police and protesters, egregious acts of brutality took place, and all such acts should be condemned, whether they occur in Hong Kong, Portland, Kenosha, or anywhere else.

What isn’t clear is, how did the author of that article convince herself that the U.S. still retains the standing to stand for “rule of law”? Can s/he have forgotten Trump’s impeachment trial where crucial evidence and witnesses were barred from court, and where jurors declared their decision before reviewing any evidence?

That spectacle, together with the administration’s criminally negligent handling of the pandemic, has inspired a spate of essays in the Washington Post, The Guardian, Slate, and elsewhere on the demise of American leadership. Granted, all those essays were critical of specific Chinese policies, but they agreed on the expiration of any grounds for American exceptionalism.

Perhaps most poignant was Mishra Pankaj’s essay showing why the U.S. and Britain are no longer qualified to “claim moral superiority over China, Russia and Iran. The early winners of modern history now seem to be its biggest losers, with their delegitimised political systems, grotesquely distorted economies and shattered social contracts.”

China Racism Hurts Americans

Knee-jerk assumptions about collectivist Orientals may have contributed to the mask wars and a good many lives lost. From experience, authorities in China determined that extensive use of masks, testing, and tracing could help to reduce the spread of the disease, but in March, media outlets suggested that Asians wear masks because they are fundamentally different from individualistic Westerners, for whom “facial expression is very important.” The idea that Asians might wear masks out of concern for others was not considered.

As recently as April American medical scientists remained skeptical of China’s methods, concluding that ordinary masks were basically useless because they did not block a high percentage of airborne pathogens. Claims like these only helped to bolster Trump’s culture wars, further sabotaging sane pandemic policy based on China’s earlier practice. Eventually of course, experts here conceded that less-than-perfect masks, testing, and tracing in fact offered our best chance to control the pandemic, but in the meantime how many Americans died needlessly?

#### That outweighs and turns war.

Nixon ‘11

(Rob, Rachel Carson Professor of English, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor, pgs. 2-3)

Three primary concerns animate this book, chief among them my conviction that we urgently need to rethink-politically, imaginatively, and theoretically-what I call "slow violence." By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility. We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales. In so doing, we also need to engage the representational, narrative, and strategic challenges posed by the relative invisibility of slow violence. Climate change, the thawing cryosphere, toxic drift, biomagnification, deforestation, the radioactive aftermaths of wars, acidifying oceans, and a host of other slowly unfolding environmental catastrophes present formidable representational obstacles that can hinder our efforts to mobilize and act decisively. The long dyings-the staggered and staggeringly discounted casualties, both human and ecological that result from war's toxic aftermaths or climate change-are underrepresented in strategic planning as well as in human memory. Had Summers advocated invading Africa with weapons of mass destruction, his proposal would have fallen under conventional definitions of violence and been perceived as a military or even an imperial invasion. Advocating invading countries with mass forms of slow-motion toxicity, however, requires rethinking our accepted assumptions of violence to include slow violence. Such a rethinking requires that we complicate conventional assumptions about violence as a highly visible act that is newsworthy because it is event focused, time bound, and body bound. We need to account for how the temporal dispersion of slow violence affects the way we perceive and respond to a variety of social afflictions-from domestic abuse to posttraumatic stress and, in particular, environmental calamities. A major challenge is representational: how to devise arresting stories, images, and symbols adequate to the pervasive but elusive violence of delayed effects. Crucially, slow violence is often not just attritional but also exponential, operating as a major threat multiplier; it can fuel long-term, proliferating conflicts in situations where the conditions for sustaining life become increasingly but gradually degraded.

#### Even representations of catastrophic nuclear war neurologically re-wires debaters into anxiety politics.

Lybarger 18 – Jeremy Lybarger, American Psychological Association, March 2018, ("The threat of nuclear war", American Psychological Association: Monitor on Psychology, Vol 49, No. 3, Available online at https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/03/nuclear-war, Accessed 9-4-2020)

On Jan. 13, Hawai’ians received a terrifying text: "Ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawai'i. Seek immediate shelter. This is not a drill." The alert was triggered accidentally, but chaos reigned for nearly 38 minutes until a correction was issued. The state’s governor later reported that ­children sought refuge in manholes, stores closed and denied shelter to terrified customers and cars drove at high speed. Three days later, Japan’s public broadcaster, NHK, mistakenly sent a similar alert warning that North Korea had just fired a missile. A correction was issued in five minutes. The mishaps further intensified the anxiety of many Americans who were already alarmed by the elevated tensions between the United States and North Korea. Last November, North Korea tested a missile that experts believe can strike anywhere in the U.S. mainland. The rhetoric between the two nations has escalated as well. Last September, Pyongyang threatened to reduce the United States to "ashes and darkness," while President Donald Trump has promised to deliver "fire and fury" to Kim Jong-un’s regime. Such nuclear brinksmanship hasn’t been seen since the twilight of the Cold War. For the first time in at least a generation, Americans are confronting not only the possibility of a nuclear attack, but also a 24/7 news cycle transfixed by that possibility. Last August, a CBS poll found that 72 percent of Americans are uneasy about a possible conflict with North Korea. That same month, the Chicago ­Council on Global Affairs reported that 75 percent of Americans consider North Korea’s nuclear program a top threat. In perhaps the most dramatic example of simmering panic, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists set the Doomsday Clock, which symbolizes the likelihood of global catastrophe, to two minutes to midnight in January. The last time it was this close was in 1953. While no one knows what the future holds, people’s fears are very real—and the threat appears to be cropping up more often in psychologists' offices. Although there are no hard numbers to report, anecdotally psychologists say they are seeing more anxiety over a possible nuclear showdown. 'Clinically significant anxiety' People were particularly uneasy in Hawai’i, even before the false alarm. Last December, the state tested its nuclear warning siren system for the first time since the Cold War. The Hawai’ian Islands are about 4,600 miles from North Korea. A nuclear missile would make landfall in 20 minutes and kill an estimated 18,000 civilians. Molly Bahr, a licensed therapist in Honolulu, says that never in her 10-year career has she seen such an increase in the “frequency and intensity of fear and clinically significant anxiety,” even among clients who haven’t previously experienced such symptoms. Unlike during the nuclear scares of the 1950s, ’60s and ’80s, today’s anxiety ricochets nonstop between cable news, social media and online forums. In an age of breaking news alerts on smartphones, simply being an informed citizen means volunteering oneself for continuous stress. Graham Davey, PhD, an emeritus professor of psychology at the University of Sussex in England who specializes in anxiety disorders, notes that contemporary news consumers are experiencing ­trauma-like symptoms because of their exposure to broadcasts and breaking news. “One of the effects that we’ve researched is that exposure to negative news causally influences your own personal worries by making you catastrophize them more,” Davey says. (In a 1997 study, Davey and his colleagues found that people exposed to negative news reported feeling sadder and more anxious after, and they also tended to obsess over their own worries more.) Internalizing negative news is especially prevalent in the United States, where APA’s 2017 Stress in America survey found that 95 percent of Americans follow the news regularly. One in five Americans, or 20 percent, report that they check their social media constantly, a significant increase over 2016. More than half of those surveyed said that the news causes stress. Nobody knows the potential long-term psychiatric effects of nuclear anxiety. Clinical studies on the matter are scarce, and because America hasn’t grappled with a serious nuclear adversary in decades, the pathology of this anxiety has yet to be fully documented. Davey suggests that the anxiety is temporary and tied to negative news reports, but when the news is overwhelmingly negative, as many patients feel it is today, anxiety is a chronic response. Advising patients Laura Brown, PhD, a psychologist in Seattle, was 10 during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. She believed then that her hometown of Cleveland was a target, so she practiced a prayer ritual and wrote imploring letters to President John F. Kennedy. “I still remember how frightened I was and how frightened the adults were,” Brown says today. “I was fearful that the world could end at any moment.” More than a half-century later, Brown once again lives in a city that she believes could be in the crosshairs of a rogue regime. Seattle, one of the most populated metro areas on the West Coast, has strategic value as a nuclear target. It’s near the Whidbey Island and Kitsap naval bases and the Joint Base Lewis-McChord (formerly Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base). In addition, Boeing Aviation operates several facilities in the area. “I’ve never experienced so much discussion from people who are feeling anxious and fearful,” Brown says. She advises clients to reduce their time online and read news when they’re less likely to feel vulnerable: midafternoon, for example, instead of just before bedtime. These strategies are the starting point for recommendations of psychologists now counseling an unprecedented influx of patients worried that America is careening toward disaster.

#### The alternative rejects the aff’s represetations in favor of self-watching: a process of self-reflection that makes aware the contradictions and orientalism of the china threat paradigm within academic discourse

Pan 12 [Chengxin Pan, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University, 1-30-2012, "Knowledge, desire and power in global politics: Western representations of China's rise," ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305354138\_Knowledge\_desire\_and\_power\_in\_global\_politics\_Western\_representations\_of\_China's\_rise, accessed 3-30-2021]LHSBC

One message from this study is that it is no longer adequate for us to be merely ‘China’ specialists who are otherwise blissfully ‘ignorant of the world beyond China’.9 Self-watching, I suggest, requires at once discarding this positivist self- (un)consciousness and cultivating a critically reflective, philosophising mind. ‘The philosophizing mind’, wrote Collingwood, ‘never simply thinks about an object, it always, while thinking about any object, thinks also about its own thought about that object’. China watching needs autoethnography or ‘self-watching’ to consciously make itself part of its own object of critical analysis whereby the necessary but often missing comparative context can help us put China in perspective. All research, to be sure, must already contain some level of reflectivity, be it about methods of inquiry, hypothesis testing, empirical evidence, data collection, or clarity of expression. And the Western representations of China’s rise, predicated on some particular ways of Western selfimagination, are necessarily self-reflective in that sense. And yet, such narrow technical reflectivity or narcissistic posturing is not what I mean by ‘self-watching’. In fact, the unconscious Western self-imagination as the modern knowing subject (who sets itself apart from the world and refuses to critically look at itself) is the very antithesis of self-watching. 10 This position is similar to that of ‘ironists’. According to Richard Rorty, ironists are ‘never quite able to take themselves seriously because always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change, always aware of the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies, and thus of their selves’.11 In the concluding chapter of his Scratches on Our Minds, Harold Isaacs seemed to have endorsed such ‘ironist’ approaches to China studies: ‘we have to examine, each of us, how we register and house our observations, how we come to our judgments, how we enlarge our observations, how we describe them, and what purposes they serve for us’.12 Back in 1972, John Fairbank put such reflection in practice by suggesting that America’s ColdWar attitude towards China was based less on reason than on fear, a fear inspired not by China but by America’s experience with Nazi and Stalinist totalitarian regimes. 13 These examples clearly show the possibility of reflective China watching, but alas, as noted from the beginning, such reflectivity is hardly visible in today’s ‘China’s rise’ literature. Indeed, without the trace of a single author, the two dominant China paradigms hinge onto a ubiquitous collective psyche and emotion that is often difficult to see, let alone to criticise from within.∂ Yet it is imperative that such self-criticism should occur, which entails problematising China watchers’ own thought, vocabularies and taken-forgranted self-identity as disinterested rational observers. It requires us to pause and look into ourselves to examine, for example, why we constantly fear China, rather than taking that fear as given: ‘We are wary of China because we are wary of China’. Self-watching demands an ironist awareness of the contingency, instability, and provinciality of mainstream China knowledge, its intertextual and emotional link to the fears and fantasies in the Western self-imagination, the political economy of its production, and the attendant normative, ethical and practical consequences both for dealing with China and for serving the power and special interests at home. Put it differently, it requires a deconstructive move of intellectual decolonisation of the latent (neo)colonial desire and mindset that, despite the formal end of colonialism decades ago, continues to actively operate in Orientalism knowledge and China watching, facilitated by its various scientific, theoretical, and pedagogical guises. In this context, self-reflection cannot be confined to individual China watchers or even the China watching community. Never a purely personal pursuit or even a disciplinary matter, China knowledge is always inextricably linked with the general dynamism of Western knowledge, desire and power in global politics. Its self-reflection should thus extend to the shared collective self of the West, its assumed identity and associated foreign policy (China policy in particular). If China can be seen as a being-in-the-world, these issues are part and parcel of the world in which China finds itself and relates to others. But until now they have largely escaped the attention of China watchers. Maybe it is because these are primarily the business of scholars of Western/American culture, history and foreign relations, rather than that of China scholars. After all, there is a need for division of labour in social sciences. True, for various reasons it is unrealistic to expect China scholars to be at the same time experts on those ‘non-China’ issues. Nevertheless, since China watchers both rely on and contribute to their collective Western self-imagination in their understanding of China, it is crucial that they look at their collective Western self in the mirror. Take the negative image of China’s brutal Soviet-style sports system for example. Every now and then, such an image will be reliably brought up to reinforce China’s Otherness more generally. But if the ways American young talents are trained are put under the same spotlight, the difference between the US and China is no longer as vast as it appears. 14 In doing so, the previous China image is no longer as defensible as it seems. In brief, the broader point here is that the same China may take on quite different meanings when we are willing to subject ourselves to similar scrutiny. We may better appreciate why China looks the way it does when we are more self-conscious of the various lenses, paradigms, and fore-meanings through which we do China watching. Conversely, we cannot fully comprehend why the Chinese behave in a certain way until we pay attention to what we have done (to them), past and present. Such self-knowledge on the part of the West is essential to a better grasp of China. Without the former, China knowledge is incomplete and suspect. Yet, to many, self-reflection is at best a luxurious distraction. At worst it amounts to navel-gazing and could turn into ‘a prolix and self-indulgent discourse that is divorced from the real world’. 15 Such concern is hardly justified, however. The imagined Western self is integral to the real world, and critical self-reflection also helps reconnect China watching to the ‘real’ world of power relations to which it always belongs. By making one better aware of this connection, it helps open up space for emancipatory knowledge. As Mannheim notes: The criterion of such self-illumination is that not only the object but we ourselves fall squarely within our field of vision. We become visible to ourselves, not just vaguely as a knowing subject as such but in a certain role hitherto hidden from us, in a situation hitherto impenetrable to us, and with motivations of which we have not hitherto been aware. In such a moment the inner connection between our role, our motivations, and our type and manner of experiencing the world suddenly draws upon us. Hence the paradox underlying these experiences, namely the opportunity for relative emancipation from social determination, increases proportionately with insight into this determination. 16 Still, there may be a lingering fear that excessive reflectivity could undo much of the hard-won China knowledge. But again to quote Mannheim, ‘the extension of our knowledge of the world is closely related to increasing personal self-knowledge and self-control of the knowing personality’.17 Even when that does expose our lack of knowledge about China, all is not lost. Such revelation is not a sign of ignorance, but an essential building block in the edifice of China knowledge. Confucius told us that ‘To say that you know when you do know and say that you do not know when you do not know— that is [the way to acquire] knowledge’. 18 Thus, the knowing subject can emancipate itself from its delusion about its own being; 19 the real meaning of ignorance is that one claims to know when one does not or cannot know.

## Case

### 1NC – Harker

#### They’ve portrayed china as having a broad strategy to undermine US primacy AND conveniently omitted china is responding to US UUV’s – READ YELLOW

Johnson 20 — (James Johnson, James holds a PhD in Politics and International Relations from the University of Leicester. He is the author of The US-China Military & Defense Relationship During the Obama Presidency, 4-16-20,<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03071847.2020.1752026?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=rusi20>, accessed 12-7-2020, HKR-AR)

Combining speed, persistence, scope, coordination and battlefield mass, AWS will offer states attractive asymmetric options to project military power within contested anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) zones.77 Enhanced by sophisticated machine-learning neural networks,78 China’s manned and unmanned drone teaming operations could potentially impede future US freedom of navigation operations in the South China Seas.79 Were China to infuse its cruise missiles and hypersonic glide capabilities with AI and autonomy, close-range encounters in the Taiwan Strait, and the East and South China Seas would become more complex, accident-prone and destabilising – at both a conventional and nuclear level.80 China is reportedly developing and deploying UUVs to bolster its underwater monitoring and antisubmarine capabilities, as part of a broader goal to establish an ‘underwater Great Wall’ to challenge US undersea military primacy.81 US AI-enhanced UUVs could, for example, potentially threaten both China’s nuclear ballistic and non-nuclear attack submarines.82 Thus, even if US UUVs were programmed only to threaten China’s non-nuclear (or non-strategic) attack submarine fleets, Chinese commanders might nonetheless fear that China’s nascent and relatively noisy and small (compared with US and Russian SSBNs) sea-based nuclear deterrent could be neutralised more easily.83

#### They’ve also portrayed china as an unethical actor that will never stop trying to undercut US dominance and think the US is inherently superior because it’s not authoritarian and instead grounded in liberal democratic norms

James Johnson 18 (Assistant Professor in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University and a Non-Resident Fellow with the United States Military Academy at West Point. Previously, Johnson was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, USA. He holds a Ph.D. in Politics & International Relations from the University of Leicester, where he was an Honorary Visiting Fellow with the School of History & International Relations from 2017 to 2020), The Conversation, June 20 2018, https://theconversation.com/china-and-the-us-are-racing-to-develop-ai-weapons-97427

It seems that China – like Russia – has relatively few moral, legal or ethical qualms in deploying lethal autonomous weapons. Recent reports suggest that China has already begun to incorporate AI technologies into its next generation conventional missiles and missile defence intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems to enhance their precision and legality. The US will likely be much more constrained in the development of these technologies. The Pentagon’s reticence to incorporate AI into existing weaponry is grounded in liberal democratic norms governing the use of military force, and in a concern to avoid what the Pentagon has called the Terminator conundrum – the prospect that military robots could one day decide independently whether or not to take a human life. That said, propelled by the rapid pace of technological trends in AI – and the aggressive pursuit of these capabilities by rival powers – the US’s current commitment to keeping humans in charge could waver. If the present trajectory holds, China will soon challenge the US’s lead in several emerging military-technological strategic fields. That is likely to accelerate the Pentagon’s efforts to innovate offsetting initiatives and concepts – and in turn, make it harder to keep this disruptive high-tech arms race in check.

#### This evidence proves chinese arms racing is only in response to aggressive US foreign policy – proves a root cause only the alt can solve – READ YELLOW

Zhang 20 — (Jiayu Zhang, Writer at The International Affairs Review, “China’s Military Employment of Artificial Intelligence and Its Security Implications, 8-16-20, https://iar-gwu.org/print-archive/blog-post-title-four-xgtap, accessed 12-8-2020, HKR-AR)

China has long been concerned about false negatives from its early warning systems, which may result in failures to detect nuclear attacks.72 To some extent, such concerns are rooted in China’s assumptions about its own early warning deficiencies and its own inability to counter a stealthy and prompt precision strike from the United States.73 Regarding China’s employment of nuclear weapons, military-technology considerations stressing the plausible U.S. conventional military operation against Chinese nuclear capabilities are the reasons behind China’s use of limited nuclear escalation.74 As a result, if China gains greater situational awareness and can strengthen its nuclear retaliatory capabilities by applying AI technology to its C4ISR and early- warning systems, some of its insecurities about a “bolt-out-of-the-blue” strike may be mitigated, which will stabilize the nuclear risk.75Yet China’s insecurities are not simply a question of technology. The key factors are China’s perception of U.S. nuclear posture and its assumption of U.S. intent. In this sense, China’s use of AI and autonomy for nuclear offense and defense could take on destabilizing qualities. For Beijing, the prospect of the United States resuming a forward-deployed, tactical nuclear posture exacerbates its sense of encirclement. The issuance of the 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review worsens the context. China views the documents’ focus on ballistic missile defense and conventional prompt global strike as preemptive and destabilizing.76 Additionally, the proposal for the enlargement of the U.S. arsenal of low-yield submarine-launched ballistic and cruise missiles and the concept of using nuclear coercion to preemptively de-escalate a conventional conflict like Taiwan scenario further elicit Chinese concerns over U.S. intent. AI and autonomous technology offer Beijing the potential to respond to such a posture. China could deploy swarms to track and intercept U.S. dual- capable platforms. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, an escalatory scenario could develop. While the PLA’s deployment of advanced AI-enabled early warning systems and automation-enabled launch-on-fire missiles may mitigate China’s fear of false negatives, it may intensify U.S. concerns about false positives,such as a nuclear war caused by accidental fire or false detection.

### 1NC – DD

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#### Also Negative on evidence ethics – they stopped right after “nonnuclear attack submarines” and omitted the last part of the paragraph which says China’s uncertainty about US drones also triggers instability

#### This evidence proves chinese arms racing is only in response to aggressive US foreign policy – proves a root cause only the alt can solve – READ YELLOW

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### 1NC – Complexity

#### It’s impossible to predict policy outcomes in the context of china –

#### 1 – SCS tensions. Even media coverage can escalate conflicts.

Garlick 16 – Jan Masaryk Centre for International Studies, Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics, Prague, Czech Republic, (“Not So Simple: Complexity Theory and the Rise of China”, China Report (2016), Available online at DOI: 10.1177/0009445516661884, Accessed 09-14-2020)

To illustrate non-linearity in relation to China’s rise and IRs, it manifests itself, for instance, in the case of the interlinkages between Chinese and US military activity in the South China Sea, international media coverage of this activity, and international and domestic reactions to the coverage. Depending on a number of factors (including also Chinese domestic media coverage, Chinese public opinion and reactions of neighbouring states) tensions may escalate or subside in a somewhat unpredictable fashion. For instance, international media coverage of two incidents in late 2015 and early 2016—namely, a US Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) near Chinese-occupied Subi Reef in October 2015 (Blanchard and Shalal 2015) and the placement by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) of a missile battery on Woody Island in February 2016 (Tiezzi 2016)—was greater than might have been expected (given that neither of these incidents drastically altered the already tense situation in the South China Sea), perhaps due to a lack of other news to cover at the time. This, in turn, led to an escalation of tensions which might not necessarily have been anticipated before these incidents were reported. Two similar incidents which occurred in May 2016—that is, another US FONOP (Graham 2016) and the Chinese interception of a US surveillance aircraft (Ali and Rajagopalan 2016)—were not given such extensive coverage (probably because the media were occupied with US election coverage and other news). This signified that tensions, although already present, were not further stoked to the same extent as with the previous incidents. The difficulty of predicting both specific Chinese and US actions and the intensity of international reaction to incidents in the South China Sea means that instances of rise and fall in tensions are similarly unpredictable, and, thus, non-linear. The pos- sibility of further escalations arising as a result of these sporadic peaks and troughs in tensions means that outcomes in the South China Sea are also non-linear, and hence difficult or impossible to predict. Thus, particular foreign policy actions (in this case specific US or Chinese actions such as FONOPs, the deployment of an anti-aircraft battery on Woody Island and the interception of an aircraft), when applied in a particular set of circumstances or at a particular moment in time, can produce difficult to predict and random-looking real-world results of varying intensities which do not correspond exactly to the force or intent of the original action. The non-linear effect may then continue to develop in unexpected and potentially alarming ways which are out of all proportion to the original input. Another South China Sea example which illustrates this is the very different intensities of international reactions to the collision of a Chinese fighter with a US surveillance aircraft near Hainan Island in 2001, which resulted in a major diplomatic incident (Ellison 2001; Zhang 2001), and the aforementioned Chinese interception of a US plane in May 2016, which did not. Attention or lack of atten- tion in the international media can, thus, be a major factor in producing non-linear outcomes in terms of the degree of intensity of interstate tensions and the extent to which military escalation or diplomatic activity may thereafter occur.

#### 2 – History of China’s rise.

Garlick 16 – Jan Masaryk Centre for International Studies, Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics, Prague, Czech Republic, (“Not So Simple: Complexity Theory and the Rise of China”, China Report (2016), Available online at DOI: 10.1177/0009445516661884, Accessed 09-14-2020)

In the case of China, a series of events including the complex consequences of the 2008 global financial crisis, the 2009 ‘pivot to Asia’ policy announced by the US (Campbell and Andrews 2013), and China’s own emerging macro-economic weakness (including, in particular, massive industrial overcapacity) has pushed China into a surprising turn westwards in the direction of Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa. The resulting switch of (chiefly geo-economic) focus has led to a cluster of connected new government-led initiatives such as the Belt and Road initiative (launched in 2013), the 16+1 grouping of China plus 16 Central and Eastern European countries (launched in Warsaw in 2012), the $40 billion Silk Road Fund (launched in 2014), and the $100 billion AIIB (proposed in 2013 and launched in 2015). This unanticipated shift (or ‘pivot’) westwards in response to changing geopolitical and geo-economic factors is an emergent property of China’s rise and its relationship with the hegemonic USA, because it could not have been foreseen prior to 2009 that China would transfer such a large part of its foreign policy focus away from the Asia-Pacific region. It is also consistent with Kavalski’s conclusion that ‘the emergent properties of complex systems are often surprising, because it is difficult to anticipate the full consequences of even simple forms of interaction’ (Kavalski 2007: 439). Thus, although the concept of emergence may seem ‘vague and imprecise’ (Mitchell 2009: xii) to some scholars, it arguably refers to an important property of complexity, namely that the interactions of a large number of individual phenomena within a system affect system-level outcomes in unexpected ways.

### 1NC – Realism

#### Inaccurate theory---developed for the wrong era and is haunted by worst-case anxieties that misdiagnose why states act

Daniel Bessner 18, Ph.D. in History from Duke University, Assistant Professor in American Foreign Policy in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington, 10-22-2018, "Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century", http://bostonreview.net/war-security/daniel-bessner-foreign-policy-twenty-first-century

However, there are significant problems with Mearsheimer’s ontology—and, indeed, with the ontology of realism in general. To understand why this is so, we must examine realism’s midcentury origins. Realism was developed in the 1940s and 1950s by a cohort of German émigrés scarred by the international relations of the 1930s, a decade in which two great powers—Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan—launched a devastating world war that killed and maimed tens of millions. It is not surprising that in response to the horrors of World War II—and the inability of the League of Nations to prevent it—thinkers such as Morgenthau, John Herz, Hans Speier, and Arnold Wolfers developed a theory of international politics that was incredibly pessimistic about the possibilities of international cooperation and which considered great power wars endemic features of geopolitics. These beliefs formed the core of realism and remain at the center of its philosophy.

 These convictions are problematic, however, because they reify a peculiar historical moment as ontological reality. As Mearsheimer succinctly puts it, “realism is a timeless theory” that is true throughout all eras of history. But as the historian Nicolas Guilhot has shown, this belief “places limits upon the kind of political goals that one can pursue and . . . makes it difficult if not impossible to pursue positive or transformative goals.” Thus Mearsheimer maintains that human beings will never be able to create a world state capable of transcending international anarchy and are instead doomed to fight war after war until one, presumably, finally wipes out the entire species. There is a reason that Mearsheimer’s most famous book is titled The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.

 From a historical perspective, though, Mearsheimer’s pessimism appears unwarranted. If anything, the broad sweep of human history evinces a trend toward ever-larger political units that encompass wider and wider geographic and cultural spaces. Human beings, in other words, have repeatedly built new solidarities that at one time appeared impossible. Why would this process stop at the nation-state, a political form that is only 225 years old? Even if one believes a world state is an unrealistic fantasy, why is it impossible to create novel political constellations based on mutual respect and cooperation? Simply put, I am not convinced that Mearsheimer is correct to claim that human beings are congenitally unable to build regional, continental, and, perhaps, global political communities that, eventually, transcend war. While this process will no doubt be difficult and painful, there is no reason to believe it is impossible—unless you think it always is, and will forever be, the 1930s.

 Realism’s midcentury origins also lead Mearsheimer to emphasize worst-case scenarios. This is clear in his anxiety over China’s rise, which he considers a threat to U.S. hegemony, and hence to the U.S. national interest. Beyond the fact that it seems to me profoundly unrealistic to believe Americans will indefinitely support a U.S. military presence in East Asia, it is unclear why, exactly, the emergence of another great power far from our shores threatens the United States. Indeed, a negotiated security transition in East Asia (the United States maintains approximately 375,000 personnel in its Indo-Pacific Command) would free up funds that could be used to bolster the social safety net and address domestic income inequality, two of the most pressing issues of our time. It could also make China a true stakeholder in maintaining international peace. Furthermore, there are historical reasons to be wary of worst-case scenarios. During the Cold War, the mistaken belief that the Soviet Union was necessarily an existential enemy bent on the United States’s destruction engendered costly arms races, prevented the sort of honest negotiations that could have ended the U.S.-Soviet struggle in the 1950s, and encouraged Americans to create a massive global basing system (currently about 800 bases in dozens of countries). More recently, the fear of another 9/11 led to the fruitless “War on Terror” and its many violations of civil liberties that Mearsheimer rightly deplores. This is all to say that we must not allow worst-case scenarios to determine U.S. foreign policy. In the entirety of its existence, one could argue that the United States’s survival has been urgently threatened by external forces only twice—during the War of 1812 and during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Our average condition is one of safety,and it is from this base that we must develop our grand strategy.

 Mearsheimer’s—and many realists’—obsession with worst-case scenarios emerges from the assumption that “most states, most of the time, follow balance-of-power logic.” This is simply not true. As manifold historians have demonstrated, decision-makers pursue policies for a diversity of reasons, whether they be ideological, economic, developmentalist, racial, gendered, or, perhaps most importantly, political.

To take a famous example, Lyndon B. Johnson escalated the Vietnam War not only—or even mostly—because of the “domino theory,” but because he was anxious about his political future. In retrospect, even the Cold War—the balance-of-power struggle par excellence—seems to have been mostly about the ideological fight between capitalism and communism. Ironically, Mearsheimer himself has recognized the limits of the balance of power as an explanans of state behavior, co-writing a book about the pernicious effects of the “Israel lobby” on U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, in The Great Delusion he admits that an important way to combat liberal hegemony “is to build a counter-elite that can make the case” for a heterodox approach to world affairs. By Mearsheimer’s own admission, then, the balance of power often does not explain U.S. international relations. A central category of realist thinking about geopolitics is thus undercut, which implies that the pessimism of realism might be unwarranted.

#### If true, negative on presumption – realism dictates certainty over security engenders restraint – oceans and nukes check

Glaser 11 [Charles Glaser, 4-1-2011, "Will China'S Rise Lead To War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism," Council On Foreign Relations, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25800459?seq=1, accessed 4-1-2021]LHSBC

The possibility of variation in the intensity of the security dilemma has dramatic implications for structural realist theory, making its predictions less consistently bleak than often assumed. When the security dilemma is severe, competition will indeed be intense and war more likely. These are the classic behaviors predicted by realist pessimism. But when the security dilemma is mild, a structural realist will see that the international system creates opportunities for restraint and peace. Properly understood, moreover, the security dilemma suggests that a state will be more secure when its adversary is more secure?because insecurity can pressure an adversary to adopt competitive and threatening policies. This dynamic creates incentives for restraint and cooperation. If an adversary can be per suaded that all one wants is security (as opposed to domination), the adversary may itself relax. What does all this imply about the rise of China? At the broadest level, the news is good. Current international conditions should enable both the United States and China to protect their vital in terests without posing large threats to each other. Nuclear weapons make it relatively easy for major powers to maintain highly effective deterrent forces. Even if Chinese power were to greatly exceed U.S. power somewhere down the road, the United States would still be able to maintain nuclear forces that could survive any Chinese attack and threaten massive damage in retaliation. Large-scale conventional attacks by China against the U.S. homeland, mean while, are virtually impossible because the United States and China are separated by the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, across which it would be difficult to attack. No foreseeable increase in Chinas power would be large enough to overcome these twin advantages of defense for the United States. The same defensive advantages, moreover, apply to China as well. Although China is currently much weaker than the United States militarily, it will soon be able to build a nuclear force that meets its requirements for deterrence. And China should not find the United States' massive conven tional capabilities especially threatening, because the bulk of U.S. forces, logistics, and support lie across the Pacific.

### 1NC – De Araujo

#### Zero warrant – simply asserts realism true and then also asserts that it’s the only explainer of conflict –

### 1NC – Fisher

#### Fisher cites old examples, asserts that those were “because of war,” and doesn’t warrant realism – also saying great power politics governs some instances of the system doesn’t disavow the importance of non-state actors and volatility

### 1NC – Thayer

#### Wrong – other factors, complexity, and different unit selections

Bell and MacDonald, 01 (Duncan, Paul, Center for International Studies doctoral candidate, Cambridge University and Columbia University Department of Political Science doctoral candidate,. "Start the Evolution Without Us," International Security 26.1, Project Muse)

Thayer advocates the adoption of sociobiological reasoning to augment the traditional realist account of human behavior because sociobiology "offers a firm intellectual foundation" (p. 126) and a "sound scientific substructure" (p. 127) for understanding the ulimate causes of egoistic and dominating behavior by human beings. He implies that sociobiology, which can be broadly defined as the application of evolutionary theory to explain the genetic foundations of an organism's social behavior, is generally accepted as an unproblematic approach within the scientific community and that the extrapolation of findings from sociobiological theories into the realm of human behavior is also widely regarded as legitimate. Neither of these claims can be upheld: The science of sociobiology is the subject of great controversy within biology as well as other cognate disciplines. Indeed, given the torrent of scientific criticism since the publication of Edward 0. Wilson's Sociobiology: The New Synthesis, Thayer's failure to mention the ethically and scientifically contested nature of sociobiology is surprising. Some advocates of sociobiology portray their opponents as motivated primarily by political correctness. We believe, however, that there are serious ethical issues at stake in the attempt to reduce complex social and political behavior to essential elements of human genetics. When accepted uncritically, sociobiological claims contain the potential to be utilized in the naturalization of behaviors that are variable and in the justification of discriminatory sociopolitical orders. For this reason, sociobiological theories should be held to a high standard of intellectual and analytical scrutiny before they are adopted as scientific fact, or be avoided altogether. Given these concerns, international relations theorists should seriously consider the methodological criticisms leveled against sociobiology. We briefly highlight three of the most salient of these criticisms. First, the universality of the sociobiological project-and specifically its applicability to the study of human behavior-is extremely controversial. Thayer downplays the serious disagreements by claiming that the study of humans is central to the sociobiological project (p. 130). In contrast, one commentator has noted that "most 'sociobiologists' . . . are quite uninterested in humans."6 In particular, many biologists themselves dispute the applicability of sociobiological approaches to humans because of the central role of culture, language, and self-reflexivity in determining human behavior.7 Although advocates of human sociobiology acknowledge the dual influences of culture and genetics in shaping human behavior, no consensus exists on how to explain the complex interplay between these factors. Second, sociobiological explanations of human behavior are often unacceptably functionalist. Sociobiologists take a particular form of human behavior and account for it with reference to evolutionary fitness. Different sociobiologists explain behaviors rang- ing from selfishness to altruism and from monogamy to rape based on the claim that they confer a selective advantage to the individuals or groups who practice them. The quality of sociobiological explanations and the models used to demonstrate them vary tremendously, but such arguments generally fall into the trap of what Rich- ard Lewontin and Stephen Jay Gould call "adaptationism," the attempt to understand all the physiological and behavioral traits of an organism as evolutionary adaptations. Individual traits may in fact be the result of a complex web of design and development in the organism's growth. The effects of individual genes may not be discernable in isolation from their interaction with other genetic traits and environmental factors. Traits may be nonadaptive and the product of allometry-the relative and incidental growth of a part of an organism in relation to the whole bundle of traits that constitute an organism. Thus a particular behavior may be "a consequence of adaptations rather than an adaptation in its own right."9 The complexity and unpredictability of interactions between individual selection pressures and particular traits create intractable problems for researchers attempting to isolate the genetic foundations of behavior within variegated environmental and cultural contexts. In other words, even if we develop an account of how any given behavior is functional with reference to evolutionary fitness, we are a long way from being able to conclude that evolutionary mechanisms actually gave rise to that behavior. In this way, sociobiological accounts easily degenerate into examples of the post hoc, ergo propter hoc fallacy generally associated with other versions of functionalist explanations in the social sciences. This problem of isolating particular genetic traits is compounded within human populations, which are not generally divided into isolated, distinguishable gene pools and which, as mentioned above, attribute a large role to culture in determining socially acceptable and legitimate behavior." Third, sociobiologists themselves disagree over the unit of selection that should be emphasized during evolution-whether it be the gene, the individual, or the group.12 Because different sociobiological studies examine selection at different analytical levels, they frequently produce different and contradictory hypotheses about what behaviors should maximize fitness. Sociobiologists have not systematically examined how different units of selection interact analytically, and they disagree as to what level exerts the greatest degree of influence on evolution. For example, Maynard Smith argues that if fitness is exercised at an aggregate level, then group-level selection pressures must be sufficiently stringent and rapid so that incentives to maximize individual fitness will not supersede those of the group.13 Empirically assessing the relative degree and frequency of group selection pressures vis-a-vis individual or genetic factors is extraordinarily complex, however, and in the messy world of human political and cultural interaction, this task is practically impossible. This controversy is further muddied by disagreement over how to operationalize the theoretical concept of the gene. Many biologists dispute the notion that particular genes can be understood in isolation, and emphasize the importance of the interactions between genes in a complete, interconnected genome as well as to the environment in which they are embedded.'4 Similarly, others criticize the fact that many sociobiologists do not actually link particular behavior with an individual gene, but rather rely on population genetics and statistical analysis to identify "hypothetical" genes that correlate with particular behaviors. These critics correctly view the highly stylized, formal results of sociobiology as suspect, because they are never able to control for all possible exoge- nous variables and they minimize the importance of controlled experimentation. In sum, numerous evolutionary biologists, anthropologists, and psychologists who, although extremely sympathetic to the scientific study of humans, regard socio- biology as simplistic and misleadingly erroneous.16 For this reason, sociobiology provides an unstable set of foundations on which to construct a rigorously scientific approach to the study of world politics, for its scientific status remains essentially contested.

# 2NR

## Overview

### 2NR – OV

#### Our thesis is that the 1AC’s representation of China as an existential threat feeds into a securitization paradigm that justifies the United States’ escalatory nuclear postures and maximum containment policy because the superior US is needed to hedge against china

#### Multiple impacts

#### 1 – It results in the US putting nuclear weapons on launch on warning, hair trigger alert, pre-delegation, automation destabilize the nuclear balance and make nuclear accidents and war likely which turns case

#### 2 – Self-fulfilling prophecy and Security dilemma – incentivizes policymakers to increase US navy presence in the SCS, deploy more troops in Okinawa, Seoul, Hawaii, Guam, and develop new tech which then incentivizes China to counterbalance through arms race hypersonics, precision guided munitions, tactical nuclear weapons, bioweapons, battleships to counter the American threat which infinitely spirals and causes war – second pan 12 evidence

#### 3 – Sinophobia – China bashing is straight out of the alt-right’s agenda – depictions of china as totalitarian and aggressive are lumped together with Chinese folk leading to widespread anti-asian violence

### 2NR – Nixon

#### Sinophobia violence outweighs – Nixon says the constant forefronting of existential impacts makes you psychologically biased towards large, immediate quantifiable impacts –

#### For example, anti-asian violence was papered over until the Georgia shootings which was an immediate and quantifiable impact but then it was too little too late

## Alt

### 2NR – Alt

#### The alternative is self-watching – a continual process of self-reflection that understands the underlying assumptions surrounding china threat discourse – moreover, it injects this mindset into the political, academic, and media spheres thereby shaping political representations and their policy

#### Solves the links and root cause because it forces a realization that US fear of China is based in irrational fear and not rational reason AND that Chinese foreign policy is based on reacting to US aggression which encourages de-escalation

### 2NR – Perm do both

#### 1 – links are disadvantages to the permutation – affirmative forecloses self-watching when they say the US is better than China both ethically and democratically AND they conveniently omit the ways US drives counterbalancing

#### 2 – It severs from their representations – that’s a voter because it lets the 1AR delink everything which moots 1NC ground and makes it impossible for us to win

#### 3 – Cooption DA – Foreign policy discourse within the establishment always gets coopted – Trump dragged the country rightwards – Biden is now pursuing containment and even extreme progressives like AOC call out China for Hong Kong – proves try or die for the alt – only acting externally to the modern political paradigm can create new modes of thought

#### 4 – Footnoting DA – they include self-watching as a convenient footnote, apologize for this one instance, and then continue later – only complete rejection creates an incentive to no longer propagate such discourse

### 2NR – Pluralism/Particularism Perm

#### 1 – They have zero cards justifying existential threat representations in the context of Chinese LAWs

#### 2 – Link work we did above should prove why the particular instance of the aff is problematic

### 2NR – Double Bind

#### 1 – Not a drop in the bucket ­– aff’s discourse propagates

#### 2 – Severance – severs from doing the alt in the instance of the aff – that’s a voter because it lets the 1AR delink everything which moots 1NC ground and makes it impossible for us to win

#### 3 – Intrinsicness – adds doing the alt in other instances besides versus the aff – voter because adding infinite planks to perms spikes out of all negative ground

### 2NR – AT: Cooption

#### 1 – No link – we’ve made an argument about how policymakers should shift their epistemological frames

#### 2 – Foreign policy discourse within the establishment always gets coopted – Trump dragged the country rightwards – Biden is now pursuing containment and even extreme progressives like AOC call out China for Hong Kong – only acting externally the alternative

## Complexity

### 2NR – Chinese Complexity

#### It’s impossible to linearly predict China’s actions

#### 1 – Tensions and China’s response are impossible to predict because of other events – our evidence points to two accidents in the SCS – only one of those took on destabilizing qualities and it was because the Chinese news cycles weren’t covering other events

#### 2 – Economy – prior to 2008 recession, China’s expansionism wasn’t oriented westward but after the 08 economic collapse China had a surprise recalibration in foreign policy

### 2NR – Data Predictions (Harker)

#### 1 – Even if this card is right, The Aff doesn’t use a data driven approach

#### 2 – Even if you can predict whether events will happen, it’s impossible to map whether your policy will always have the desired affect

#### 3 – Yes you can make some predictions – i.e. – BUT they haven’t justified those predictions in the context of china

#### 4 – Even if your predictions can get better, over time more factors get added to the IR sphere meaning your scholarship will never keep up – IR is centuries old and they have zero examples of how their theory solved conflict

## Reps

### 2NR – Threats real

#### Even if threats are real, there’s zero chance those threat representations lead to good consequences – our argument is that it’s best to downplay it to prevent even further spiraling escalation

### 2NR – Reps don’t shape reality

#### Yes reps shape reality – all policies require a broader purpose in order for them to be justified to the American public – prefer the pan 12 ev on specificity – When Bush wanted to halt arms sales to Taiwan thinktanks were able to flip his decision – the China threat paradigm has influence through the media, thinktanks, consultants and policymakers themselves

## IR

### 2NR – We have Chinese authors

#### Reductionist – we’re not saying you need to have chinese authors but rather you can’t say china is a comparatively worse threat that we need to take down

### 2NR – Realism

#### 1 – Neg on presumption – proves zero solvency on the case page because China will circumvent the –

#### 2 – Presumption again – one of realism’s core assumptions is that we can never know the intentions of other states – means it’s impossible to predict whether Xi will truly continue his policy of modernization

#### 3 – Core assumption wrong – tragedy of great power politics requires that states not know each other’s intentions – through self-watching, we can understand that the broader intention behind china’s reactions are reactive.

#### 4 – Specificity – prefer specific analysis – Pan cites internal Chinese internal documents over time and charts that Chinese perception of the US is shaped by their action like

#### 5 – Negative argument – realism says that offensive capabilities drive adversaries to counterbalance because of security concerns – our argument is that the aff’s representations drive the most extreme and destablizing forms of balancing

## Framework

### Ov

#### If they win they get to weigh the aff, we get links to their epistemology because it would otherwise sanitize racial slurs, mis gendering, and other problematic discourses because case outweighs

#### Our interpretation is that the affirmative is an object of research and the aff needs to win its research model is ethical prior to weighing the consequences of the aff – prefer because the representations are lexically prior – the way we construct China as a threat within discourse actively influences the policy decisions we make – Pan 12

### AT Fairness

#### 1 – It’s only an internal link, not an impact – no one plays games solely for the sake of being fair

#### 2 – Structural unfairness non-uq’s – cutting cards, more coaches, going to camp, getting faster etc.

#### 3 – They chose advantage areas and had infinite prep to do so, they should defend them

#### 4 – They can weigh their research model – the entirety of the aff was about why china is a big bad threat

#### 5– Valuing competition bad – pushes people out of the activity because they’re taught to cut cards until 2AM and be jerks for the sake of perceptual dominance – independently causes valorization of debaters just for their own competitive merit even when they commit heinous violence outside of the round.

#### 6 – also critical literature has bee6around before the judge was born and normalized into every learning institution proven by the endless slew of camp lectures which means they should have some prep

### AT Clash

#### 1 – Restrict debate down to a 5 second plan text – interrogating the rest of the 1AC allows for a broader more nuanced debate

#### 2 – They should be prepared

#### [that was above] OR

#### [They chose advantage areas and had infinite prep to do so, they should defend them – also critical literature has been around before the judge was born and normalized into every learning institution proven by the endless slew of camp lectures which means they should have some prep]

### 2NR – Scenario Planning

#### 1 – No link – debate isn’t scenario planning – scenario planning is when the military assigns people roles and then carries out a real-time simulation where each person individually acts the role they’ve been –Moreover, Scenario planning is charting problems, laying out potential paths of actions, and identifying potential uncertainties which the aff isn’t – they dogmatically pick the biggest baddest problem and only one solution while asserting that it’ll work 100% of the time

## 2NR – Theory

### 2NR ­– Utopian fiat – Policy

#### Counter interpretation: The negative may fiat their alternative.

#### 1 – Logical opportunity cost – the role of the negative is to prove the aff is a– any limitation is arbitrary –  the alternative is an opportunity cost to the affirmative’s epistemology. Logic outweighs – necessary internal link fo

#### 2 – Reciprocity – Aff is a “utopian” vision of policies that haven’t happened and fiats perfect compliance across the board – they’ll say the state is a brightline but that still relies on imagining individuals like the president,and congress men and women change their minds

#### 3 – Turn ground – aff’s representation should be able to impact turn the alt – it’s just china threat rhetoric bad

#### 4 – Not abusive – we don’t fiat that self-watching works which means you can still read “self-watching bad”

## 2NR – Case

### 2NR – AT: Thayer

#### Thayer is wrong – socialbiology is flawed and actual biologists disagree –

#### 1 – culture, language, and self-reflexivity are all other factors that can influence human’s behaviors over time

#### 2 – complexity – human behavior is incredibly complex and unpredictable over time – it’s impossible to isolate

#### 3 –

### 2NR – Defense

#### No total war – their existential reps rely upon a Trumpian

Christensen 21 [Thomas J. Christensen, THOMAS J. CHRISTENSEN is Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University., 3-24-2021, "There Will Not Be a New Cold War," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-03-24/there-will-not-be-new-cold-war, accessed 3-28-2021]LHSBC

All this may now be changing as Washington’s political circles grow more hawkish. Especially since President Donald Trump took office in 2017, many U.S. commentators have been predicting a new Cold War between the United States and China. They cite as evidence not only the intensifying military competition in the Indo-Pacific (which is not really new) but also more novel phenomena: the U.S.-Chinese trade war and calls for broad-scale economic decoupling; Washington’s placement of Huawei and many other Chinese companies and institutions on the Commerce Department’s so-called export control entities list and the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control list, which together prevent U.S. firms and institutions from engaging in business activities with those Chinese entities without a license; the December 2017 National Security Strategy lumping China and Russia together as adversaries; and the Trump administration’s sweeping description of China’s international economic policies as “predatory.” COVID-19 has hardly helped the bilateral relationship. Rather than cooperating to tackle a common problem, the United States and China have battled over who is to blame for the pandemic and which political system is more capable of responding to it.

In the second half of 2020, in various speeches, government documents, articles, and tweets, the Trump administration basically declared a cold war on China. China’s behavior, it argued, was designed to overthrow the existing liberal international order and replace it with Chinese hegemony. Trump administration officials portrayed China as an existential threat to the United States and the basic freedoms that Washington has traditionally defended. As was the case with the Soviet Union, they argued, the only credible long-term solution was for the United States to lead a global alliance of like-minded states to weaken China abroad and to foster fundamental political change within China.

Critics of such a policy might say that the United States is creating a self-fulfilling prophecy: by declaring a cold war, Washington is unnecessarily creating one. But nothing akin to the U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Chinese Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s is in the offing, regardless of what strategies the United States itself adopts. The Cold War was a complex set of relationships involving many countries. No single power, no matter how mighty, can create a cold war on its own.

NOT A COLD WAR

U.S.-Chinese strategic competition, which is real and carries dangers, lacks three essential and interrelated elements of the United States’ Cold War with the Soviet Union and its allies: the United States and China are not involved in a global ideological struggle for the hearts and minds of third parties; today’s highly globalized world is not and cannot easily be divided into starkly separated economic blocs; and the United States and China are not leading opposing alliance systems such as those that fought bloody proxy wars in the mid-twentieth century in Korea and Vietnam and created nuclear crises in places such as Berlin and Cuba. Without any one of these three factors, the U.S.-Soviet Cold War would have been much less violent and dangerous than it actually was. So although China’s rise carries real challenges for the United States, its allies, and its partners, the threat should not be misconstrued. The voices calling for a cold war containment strategy toward China misunderstand the nature of the China challenge and therefore prescribe responses that will only weaken the United States.

If Washington unilaterally adopts an anachronistic cold war stance toward China, the United States will alienate allies that are too economically dependent on China to adopt entirely hostile policies. Although these allies share many of Washington’s legitimate concerns about Beijing’s policies, most U.S. allies and partners do not view China as an existential threat to their own regimes’ survival. If President Joe Biden maintains something akin to the Trump administration’s cold war posture toward China, the United States would only weaken itself by undercutting the greatest competitive advantage the United States holds over China: alliances and security partnerships with over 60 countries, many of which are the most technologically advanced states in the world. Compare this with China’s rogues’ gallery of partners: North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe come to mind.

One might argue that the real difference between the Cold War and contemporary U.S.-Chinese strategic competition is China’s limited global power in comparison to the reach of the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s. The United States’ lead over China in overall national power around the world is still substantial. This, however, can provide Americans only limited comfort. As early as 2001, I argued that China was developing major asymmetric coercive threats to U.S. forces and to U.S. bases in East Asia, a region of geostrategic significance. China is much more powerful in the region than it was then and is already much more powerful than any single U.S. ally in Asia.

No single power, no matter how mighty, can create a cold war on its own.

The maritime disputes between China and Japan, Taiwan, and several Southeast Asian states (including the U.S. ally the Philippines) pose the greatest risks of involving the United States and China in direct conflict. Fortunately, as Oystein Tunsjo recently [argued](https://cup.columbia.edu/book/the-return-of-bipolarity-in-world-politics/9780231176545), crises and even conflicts over such maritime disputes, though dangerous, should be much more manageable than conventional U.S.-Soviet conflict on land in central Europe would have been during the Cold War. States cannot easily seize and maintain control of maritime territory. Moreover, with the important exception of Taiwan, disputed islands, rocks, and reefs near China are not tempting targets for invasion.

Beyond power differentials and geography, three other factors render contemporary U.S.-Chinese strategic competition less dangerous than the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. If the United States and China were both leading opposing and economically independent alliance blocs based on fundamentally opposing ideologies, the U.S.-Chinese strategic competition would quickly move on to land and could easily spread from East Asia to all corners of the globe. Even if China were unable to project its own military power to challenge the United States in far-flung areas of the world, it could supply, train, and support ideologically compatible, pro-Beijing proxies that could then attack U.S. allies and partners in those regions. In other words, the current regional U.S.-Chinese rivalry in East Asia could go global. It would look much more like the Cold War, since local conflicts between U.S. and Chinese proxies would be backstopped by U.S. and Chinese nuclear weapons and long-range conventional strike weapons.

Fortunately, this is all still in the realm of political science fiction. There is little evidence that China is trying to spread an ideology around the world or that its relations with other countries are based on an ideological litmus test. Some observers made a lot out of President Xi Jinping’s statement at the 19th Party Congress in November 2017, when he argued that China’s path could be an alternative to the so-called Washington consensus. “The path, the theory, the system, and the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics have kept developing, blazing a new trail for other developing countries to achieve modernization. It offers a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence,” said Xi. His statement seems aimed more at justifying the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) form of rule and economic policies than calling to export a “China model” abroad.

Xi’s subsequent statements after the Party Congress support this interpretation. The December 2017 Dialogue with World Political Parties, hosted by Beijing, included representatives of 300 political parties from 120 countries. At the Dialogue, Xi denied that China was exporting an ideological model, stating, “We do not ‘import (shuru)’ foreign models, nor do we ‘export (shuchu)’ the Chinese model; we cannot demand other countries to reproduce (fuzhi) the Chinese way of doing things.” This dialogue would have been a prime occasion for Xi to evangelize the China model. In fact, the CCP in the reform era has consistently added the term “with Chinese characteristics” to its description of Beijing’s brand of so-called socialism, which relies on market pricing for growth and suffers from much higher inequality than most avowedly capitalist states, including the United States. It is difficult to export a model if its own advocates say that it requires deep roots in Chinese history and culture.

CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS?

Beijing is authoritarian and often frighteningly repressive at home, constructing mass “reeducation” camps in Xinjiang and repressing Tibetans, dissident political voices, journalists, and human rights defenders. Unlike Russia, however, which actively attempts to undermine democracy in eastern Europe and beyond, China seems agnostic about other countries’ domestic structures. Instead, Beijing appears much more concerned with those countries’ postures toward the CCP’s rule at home, Chinese sovereignty disputes, and economic cooperation with China, in that order of importance. A RAND report cleverly refutes the Trump administration’s lumping together of Russia and China: “Russia Is a Rogue, Not a Peer; China Is a Peer, Not a Rogue.” A former Chinese diplomat stationed in Russia, Shi Ze, summed up the difference between Moscow and Beijing this way: “China and Russia have different attitudes. Russia wants to break the current international order….Russia thinks it is the victim of the current international system, in which its economy and its society do not develop. But China benefits from the current international system. We want to improve and modify it, not to break it.”

Like Moscow, though, Beijing has adopted illiberal methods to influence opinion around the world. Laura Rosenberger, a highly experienced U.S. government official, has argued [in these pages](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-04-13/making-cyberspace-safe-democracy) that Beijing has adopted Russian-style Internet attacks to undermine confidence in democracy. Her article focuses on examples of disinformation campaigns in Hong Kong, but her lessons almost certainly apply to Taiwan as well. China’s behavior in these regions that it claims as its own, however, does not appear representative of Beijing’s policies abroad. China’s influence operations in foreign countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and even the United States have also been cited as examples of ideological revisionism. While concerning, these are fundamentally different from the attacks on democracy in Hong Kong and Taiwan. During the COVID-19 crisis, Beijing’s “Wolf Warrior” diplomats and media outlets lashed out at foreign governments and commentators that criticized China’s initial handling of the crisis and decried its lack of transparency and free speech. The same holds for foreign criticism of Beijing’s repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang or suppression of dissent by Chinese intellectuals, lawyers, journalists, and human rights activists. But rather than trying to undermine those nations’ liberal democracies, Beijing has focused its efforts on changing those countries’ attitudes and policies toward CCP rule and preventing governments from supporting other disputants in Beijing’s many sovereignty disputes, including in the Taiwan Strait.

A Stanford University Hoover Institution report is perhaps the most prominent critique of China’s attempts to influence foreign countries. Even this report, however, argues that Beijing’s goals are largely meant to protect CCP rule from external criticism, rather than to export China’s authoritarian model abroad. China’s approach does not target foreign democracies themselves and is a far cry from Mao’s or Stalin’s support of communist revolution abroad.

Beijing’s attempts to gain influence are still a serious problem for free societies, even if they are not the basis for a new Cold War. By using money to influence elections and media coverage and by pressuring academics and students to adopt positions acceptable to Beijing on the topics mentioned above, the CCP is harming important institutions in free societies, even if it is not undermining the foundation of liberal democracy writ large. That harm is potentially serious enough to warrant the vigilance not only of governments but of academic leaders and journalists.

China’s approach is a far cry from Mao’s or Stalin’s support of communist revolution abroad.

Elizabeth Economy notes that local Chinese governments hold classes for foreigners in government effectiveness. Some of the pupils are academics and experts, and others are government officials from neighboring states. China also conducts classes in governance and economic development in authoritarian environments such as those in Cambodia and Sudan. This practice might come closest to CCP authoritarian evangelism. But it would be much more concerning and likely to create a cold war environment if China were training pro-authoritarian parties and groups in otherwise democratic countries about how to seize authoritarian control of their states and destroy democracy. This would resemble Soviet and Chinese communist support of international communist organizations in the early Cold War. Current Chinese education programs seem primarily to be an effort at public diplomacy, showing the world that the Chinese governance model works and is legitimate despite criticism from the United States and other democracies about China’s lack of civil liberties and democratic elections.

Until Trump took office, the United States arguably had a more ideologically fueled foreign policy than China. This tendency is likely to return with the Biden administration. The United States supported democratization and backed pro-reform “color revolutions” in North Africa, the Middle East, central Europe, and Central Asia. Trump, however, largely abandoned this traditional bipartisan form of ideological revisionism under the banner “America first.” Trump also abandoned liberal institutional reform efforts such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and even attacked existing multilateral economic agreements that the United States created, such as the World Trade Organization. Finally, Trump seemed comfortable dealing with foreign dictators and was as likely to criticize liberal democracies as authoritarian states. Trump’s tenure therefore pushed the United States and China even further from the ideological Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s. China did not export its ideology as it did in the Mao era, and the United States no longer exported its own in the Trump era.

The closest thing to an ideologically driven effort by the Trump administration in East Asia was the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” campaign with four of the leading regional democracies: the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. This so-called Quad or Security Diamond was Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s brainchild and could hypothetically create a geographic and political arc of sorts around China. The four countries’ security cooperation is improving but still falls far short of a cold war–style multilateral alliance, especially when considering the inclusion of traditionally nonaligned India and all Quad members’ strong economic ties with China itself. Other important U.S. democratic allies in Asia, including South Korea and the Philippines, seem to want nothing to do with a multilateral security effort aimed at China, especially an ideological one. Moreover, actual or potential U.S. regional partners, such as postcoup Thailand and communist Vietnam, do not qualify for an ideologically oriented alliance and do not want to choose between the United States and China.

ENDING THE OWN GOALS

Biden’s approach to China is appropriately rooted in rebuilding frayed relations with U.S. allies and partners. Many of these actors share U.S. concerns about China’s assertive behavior abroad and its unfair economic practices at home. The Biden administration’s focus on coalition building is wise, but it would be a mistake to try to base alliances and partnerships solely on shared ideology or to press allies and partners to choose between the United States and China.

Chinese experts are confident that Beijing can prevent an encircling cold war alliance from forming in the Indo-Pacific. They point out that China, not the United States, is the biggest economic partner for many of the United States’ most important allies in the Asia-Pacific, including Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Yang Jiemian, the brother of China’s top diplomat Yang Jiechi, argues that a cold war would break the transnational production chain and be too costly for U.S. allies in Europe and Asia that negotiate with China independently of the United States.

Despite tensions over sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea, the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are also economically dependent on China. Chinese analysts recognize that these states are poor candidates for a U.S.-led, anti-China coalition. Experts also note that Japan and South Korea are suspicious of each other. These tensions are aggravated by the bitter history of Japanese imperialism in East Asia and also by how contemporary political actors have manipulated, hidden, and resurrected those historical memories for electoral political advantage.

The Trump administration created two new sources of friction with allies: trade disputes initiated by the United States against its longtime allies—Japan, Korea, and the European Union; and particularly contentious and often public disputes regarding burden sharing within U.S. alliances. In the case of Japan, U.S. tariffs on both China and Japan in 2018 led to a significant warming of Japanese-Chinese relations. U.S. tariffs on Japan hurt Tokyo’s interests, as did the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. What is less widely recognized, though, is that Japanese companies, like American ones, have been hurt by U.S. tariffs on China because so many Japanese and American firms finish their manufacturing in China or sell parts into supply chains that have China as their endpoint and the United States as a major target market. In October 2018, Abe was the first Japanese prime minister to travel to China in several years. Overall diplomatic and economic relations between the two most powerful countries in Asia seem to be warming. What holds for Japan also holds for Korea, which saw a drop in its exports of semiconductors, a key Korean industry, after the U.S.-Chinese trade conflict began.

The Biden team recognizes that alliances and partnerships are the United States’ greatest strength in competition with China. Avoiding the Trump administration’s own goals of weakening those relationships would be wise and should prove relatively easy. It would be a mistake, however, for Washington to assume that U.S. partners and allies want to side with the United States against China on many issues or that they might assist Washington in slowing Chinese economic growth or limiting Chinese international influence as the U.S.-led alliance system did toward the Soviets during the Cold War.

It would also be a mistake to center U.S. alliance policy or multilateral diplomacy on an ideological struggle with Beijing. Many important potential U.S. partners, such as Vietnam or Thailand, are not like-minded states, and many liberal states that are potential U.S. partners, such as India and South Korea, do not want to base their strategic cooperation with the United States on a zero-sum approach toward Beijing. The same can be said for many states within the European Union. The EU shares a number of U.S. concerns about China’s abrasive diplomacy and assertiveness in the decade following the financial crisis of 2008. The EU is in the process of developing ways to better protect member states from intellectual property theft and espionage. In a March 2019 security paper, the European Commission even called China a “systemic rival promoting alternative forms of governance.” But the same European Commission strategy paper emphasized the need for cooperation and economic integration with Beijing and even a “strategic partnership.” And in late December 2020, the EU concluded a broad bilateral investment treaty that should link European economies even closer to China in the future. This is hardly a cold war.

THE LIMITS OF CHINESE INFLUENCE

The prospect of a cold war alliance on the other side of the U.S.-Chinese divide is even weaker. China has formal alliance relations only with North Korea and a strong security partnership with Pakistan. China has enjoyed especially close relations with a few members of ASEAN, particularly Laos and Cambodia. Still, these relations have mostly prevented ASEAN from taking a unified position against China in the South China Sea disputes. They haven’t bolstered China’s ability to project power abroad or to counter the U.S.-led alliance system in East Asia. One possible exception is Cambodia, where China has obtained special port rights that could facilitate a persistent Chinese navy presence there. Even there, however, Cambodian postcolonial nationalism has pushed back against such an outcome.

Through China’s major Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013, Beijing will likely gain special relationships with more Asian and African states, and Beijing’s global influence will grow accordingly. But those special relationships are much more likely to serve Beijing by preventing such countries from adopting policies that counter China’s interests, not by encouraging those countries to join an allied effort to harm the interests of the United States and its allies. This reality can still pose challenges for the diplomatic efforts of the United States and its allies. For example, Greece, a NATO member, blocked an EU human rights complaint against China after the Chinese shipping giant COSCO invested heavily in the Greek port of Piraeus as part of the BRI. Still, even here, Beijing seemed to be exploiting its special relationship to defend its political system at home, not to turn Greece into an offensive platform against NATO’s security interests.

From the United States’ perspective, China’s most important security relationship is with Russia, another great power with considerable military wherewithal. That cooperative relationship includes joint military exercises, arms sales, and diplomatic cooperation at the United Nations to block U.S. and allied efforts to pressure or overthrow leaders such as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. But the Sino-Russian relationship does not reach the level of a true alliance. It is hard to imagine direct Chinese involvement in Russia’s struggles with Georgia or Ukraine or in any future conflict in the Baltics. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine that the Russian military would insert itself directly in a conflict across the Taiwan Strait or other East Asian maritime disputes. In fact, Russia sells sophisticated weapons systems to Vietnam and India, rivals in China’s sovereignty conflicts.

The strongest force for bringing Russia and China closer together is their shared aversion to previous U.S. administrations’ pursuit of regime change and so-called color revolutions in areas ruled by repressive regimes. China has not attempted to undermine democracies in the way that Russia has, but it often joins Moscow in international forums to oppose the efforts of the United States and other liberal democracies to pressure countries over domestic governance failures and humanitarian crimes. Chinese-Russian cooperation on such issues has been strongest in Syria, as the two states vetoed multiple draft resolutions critical of the Assad regime and in Venezuela, where the United States has called for the overthrow of President Nicolás Maduro’s regime.

China is indeed famous for its investments in resources and infrastructure in the most democratically deficient parts of the world. Equally important, China exports its surveillance technologies (such as high-resolution cameras and facial recognition software) for profit, potentially bolstering some of the world’s most repressive governments. Especially if the United States jettisons “America first” and returns to its traditional posture of fostering democracy abroad during the Biden administration, this practice will be of serious concern. Still, China sells such equipment to any willing buyer, regardless of regime type, so it would be an exaggeration to say that this export policy is designed to spread authoritarianism and undermine democracy. China also does significantly more business with the advanced economies of the world, including many liberal democracies allied or aligned with the United States in Asia and Europe. In fact, according to the 2016 China Statistical Yearbook, the United States and seven of its allies made up eight of China’s top ten trading partners. Given that CCP legitimacy at home requires economic performance, it would be foolhardy for Beijing to alienate the advanced liberal democracies that supply valuable inputs for Chinese manufacturers, assist China in its technological development, and provide final markets for manufactured goods produced in China. Although Beijing and Russia will continue to resist U.S. attempts to support color revolutions, only Russia, which is much less integrated with global production chains, will likely support the spread of illiberal forms of government abroad.

A CAUTIONARY TALE

Globalization, interdependence, and transnational production are, of course, two-way streets, and many advanced economies with liberal ideologies depend on China for their own economic well-being. China is the largest trading partner of important U.S. allies and is also a major target of their foreign direct investment. And while many of these actors have been nervous about China’s turn away from a more reassuring and moderate foreign security and economic policy since the financial crisis of 2008, they do not yet share Washington’s increasingly frequent portrayal of China as a major security or ideological threat. This is why calls to seek cold war–style decoupling from the Chinese economy is not only unrealistic but unwise. The United States’ network of over 60 global allies and security partners includes many of the most advanced, high-tech economies in the world, including Australia, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. This U.S.-led security network is what gives the United States the power projection necessary to be a truly global superpower. China’s lack of a similar network limits its power projection greatly. Many U.S. partners would likely side with the United States if a rising China were to become aggressive and expansionist.

Chinese elites almost certainly know this. That is one of the many reasons that a rising China has remained relatively restrained. China has not been in a shooting conflict since 1988 and has not been in a full-scale war since 1979. Deterrence works and is likely to continue to work under the right set of military and diplomatic conditions. Absent an unexpected turn by China toward aggressive military adventures, no U.S. ally would sign on to a U.S.-led cold war containment policy toward China. The Trump administration itself lacked full consensus on the purpose of policy initiatives such as the U.S.-Chinese trade war. Was the plan to create leverage to open up the Chinese economy further and thereby create deeper U.S.-Chinese integration? U.S. allies who face market closure, state subsidies, and international property rights violations might welcome this plan. But if U.S. tariffs and other restrictions were simply designed to slow Chinese economic growth, a position much more akin to a cold war strategy, then the United States would quickly lose allied support.

A consensus formed during the Trump administration, however, that in certain high-tech areas such as 5G communications, it would be best for the United States and its allies to forgo deep integration with certain Chinese providers, such as Huawei. Here, the Trump administration had strong domestic backing in both parties for a policy that would prevent the United States and its key security partners from relying on Chinese systems. Moreover, the race to set the initial standards for 5G around the world has enormous implications for future business transactions, the next generation of industries built on artificial intelligence (AI), and the development of future automated weapons systems.

Until Trump took office, the United States arguably had a more ideologically fueled foreign policy than China.

In these limited but important sectors of the economy, competition with China very well might look like a zero-sum, U.S.-Chinese cold war long into the future. The high-tech arena might resemble the military arena since the arms embargo was created in 1989, with the United States trying to do as much as possible to limit Chinese progress in 5G and AI. But even the bilateral struggle between China and the United States over 5G illustrates the low likelihood that the world will become divided into cleanly split economic blocs. Even though most U.S. friends and allies understand the security risks of having a Chinese firm such as Huawei deeply embedded in their communications infrastructure, the United States struggled to get close allies such as the United Kingdom and Germany on board to fully forgo the purchase of Huawei products and services. The United States’ ability to convince like-minded states to exclude Chinese products would quickly decrease if U.S. efforts expanded from boycotting a narrow set of relevant telecommunications technologies clearly linked to national security to boycotting a much broader set of technologies. Any attempt simply to harm the Chinese economy or encourage others to decouple their economies from China’s would fail in the twenty-first century.

A similar cautionary tale could be told about the U.S. government’s treatment of almost all Chinese foreign economic activities, including infrastructure investment, as “predatory,” as the 2018 National Defense Strategy summary stated. Such a sweeping condemnation rings hollow in East Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia, where the World Bank has identified more significant infrastructure needs than can be fulfilled even by the massive Belt and Road Initiative. Rather than complaining about Chinese loans, the United States and its allies should be competing with China in economic diplomacy. The Trump administration was wise to create and secure congressional funding (through the BUILD Act) for the $60 billion International Development Finance Corporation. By portraying U.S. money as good and all Chinese money as predatory, however, the United States risks competing poorly with China in that arena. Most countries will still welcome Chinese investments and expansive know-how in infrastructure construction and do not appreciate being labeled dupes by the United States.

Similarly, Washington argues that China is practicing “debt trap” diplomacy by creating unsustainable levels of debt in target countries. That claim, though, is likely to fall on deaf ears in Asia. The sole major example of a direct debt-equity swap was for a 99-year Chinese lease on the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota. This remains the exception rather than the rule. Even in that case, it is doubtful that Beijing’s initial efforts were primarily designed to create debt distress that could be exploited later. Moreover, unless someone is willing to fund new projects through outright grants rather than loans—and neither EU states nor the United States seem willing to do so—any new projects are going to involve an increase in the target country’s overall debt, regardless of the source of the new loans. And since market incentives alone are not drawing European and U.S. banks to invest in Asian infrastructure, China is often the only game in town. The United States’ closest Asian ally, Japan, understands this reality better than the United States. Japan has not only stepped up its own infrastructure aid and investment in Asia but also expressed a willingness to partner with China’s BRI efforts in places such as India.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

China’s vital position in the global production chain and the lack of struggle for ideological supremacy between authoritarianism and liberal democracy mean that the rise of a new Cold War is unlikely. Two factors would need to change to produce something akin to the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. If China were to start a conscious campaign to bolster authoritarianism and undermine democracies around the world, then U.S. and Chinese allies would quickly begin butting up against each other. If Beijing were to swap out parts of the global production chain with Chinese rather than foreign producers and rely less on global markets, then China might be more willing to accept the cost of an ideological struggle. Such an outcome could also occur if countries other than China overreact to the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic and fall prey to an antiglobalization nationalism that reverses the global economic trends tying China and every other major economy into the transnational production chain.

The United States and its many international partners should also be studying the results of Beijing’s recent so-called dual circulation economic model. At least rhetorically, this approach aims to privilege domestic consumption and manufacturing over international linkages, although it clearly leaves significant room for the latter as well. Running in the other direction is China’s recent greater opening of its financial sector to U.S. investment banks and the December 2020 PRC-EU Bilateral Investment Treaty.

If policymakers and scholars are concerned about a new Cold War, they should study China’s integration with and decoupling from a highly globalized economy. They should also study developments in Chinese foreign policy toward international conflicts and civil wars in which liberal political forces are pitted against authoritarian ones. Until China breaks sharply from its recent past on both scores, a U.S.-Chinese cold war will not occur.