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The New Security Diplomacy

Only by developing a new security concept and establishing a fair and reasonable new international order can world peace and security be fundamentally guaranteed.

China's National Defense in 2000, Information Office of the State Council, October 2000

Since the mid-1990s, China's global and regional security diplomacy has dramatically changed. Overall, China is pursuing positions on regional and global security matters that are far more consistent with broad international norms and practice than in the past. China's approach to regional and global security affairs has become more proactive, practical, and constructive, a pattern that looks likely to continue for years to come.

Through a combination of pragmatic security policies, growing economic clout, and increasingly deft diplomacy, China has established productive and increasingly solid relationships throughout Asia and around the globe, to include new partnerships in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America. These developments have unfolded at a time of strategic pre-occupation on the part of the United States since the early 2000s: military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq; the global counterterrorism campaign; and the economic downturn beginning in 2008. This, in turn, has opened even greater strategic space for China to expand its influence at both regional and global levels. As present trends continue in the regional and global security dynamic, China will likely eclipse Japan as the predominant Asian power in the western Pacific, solidify its role as the key player shaping regional diplomatic and political developments around Eurasia, and strengthen China-driven security relationships in the region and around the world.

In short, as a rising star in the constellation of great powers, China and its new security diplomacy present momentous opportunities and challenges for the international community, for the Asia-Pacific region, and for United States. On the one hand, China has increasingly embraced global and regional security policies that vastly improve its image and position within

the international system and that are more consistent with international norms, regional expectations, and U.S. interests. At the same time, fortified by this increased political, diplomatic, and military power in both global and regional security affairs, Beijing is in a better position to realize more self-interested security aims over the longer term (such as resolving the Taiwan question on its terms or asserting itself more forcefully as a regional political-military power), which could be disruptive to regional stability and could even lead to confrontation with regional powers. The strategic stakes of China's new security diplomacy and its outcome are very high. Far more attention and analysis are necessary to solidify the opportunities presented by China's new security diplomacy and to recognize and deflect its potential challenges.

Given these opportunities and challenges, it is critically important to analyze China's new security diplomacy and its implications. How has China's global and regional security diplomacy changed, why has it changed, and will this new approach last? What are the motivations and outcomes of this new approach at global and regional levels? In what key areas will these changes in Chinese security diplomacy most profoundly affect global and regional affairs and the interests of the world's major powers, including the United States? What are the opportunities and challenges presented by these developments for U.S. influence and security interests, both in Asia and globally, and for future U.S.-China relations? This book seeks to provide answers and policy responses to these questions.

Not a New Phenomenon

China's new security diplomacy can trace its roots to the early 1980s and a single consistent assumption about the nature of international politics and security—that the overall tendency of world affairs is toward peace and development, increased multipolarity and economic globalization, and a general easing of tensions. Despite dramatic shifts in the security environment internationally and for China since the 1980s, Beijing continues to pronounce an adherence to this supposition.

It is important to recognize that this outlook is not merely a result of post-September 11, 2001, changes in the international security environment, or the economic downturn suffered in the West in the late 2000s. Rather, while these developments opened new opportunities for China's evolving security diplomacy to succeed, that strategy has more fundamental antecedents. In that sense, today's Chinese security diplomacy is less tactical and ephemeral

than is sometimes assumed and needs to be taken more seriously and analyzed more carefully.

China's new security diplomacy is rooted in the strategic verdict determined by the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who, in 1982, concluded that the world was tending toward peace and development, the possibility of a world war was remote, and China could expect a stable international environment in which it could carry out its much-needed domestic development. Deng's pronouncement was a major reversal of the Maoist line of war and revolution and preparation "for an early war, a major war, and nuclear war," which during the first several decades of the People's Republic contributed to disastrous economic hardship, ideological struggle, and international isolation.

This broad strategic view was given further impetus in response to major challenges China began to face on foreign and domestic fronts in the late 1980s. The country first was forced to deal with the diplomatic isolation imposed by the West in the wake of the bloody suppression of the Tiananmen demonstrations in the spring of 1989. Later that year, China, as a Communist country, sensed all the more its isolation as one by one the Communist countries of Soviet-dominated Europe broke free from Moscow's orbit, ousted their Communist Party leadership, and established mostly pro-Western governments. Then in early 1991 China stood by while the United States led a UN-sanctioned coalition of countries to repel Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and decimate Iraq's armed forces (including vast quantities of Chinese weaponry) in an awesome display of high-tech firepower. In the next year, with great trepidation, China witnessed the collapse and break up of the Soviet Union.

Following the end of the bipolar, cold war world, Chinese leaders and strategic analysts were further troubled to find that, contrary to their expectations, the international security situation did not shift to a more multipolar balance of great powers. This commonly held outlook in China included the view that American power would steadily wane and foresaw an expanded role for multilateral institutions—in particular the United Nations—to govern relationships among states. Rather, over the course of the 1990s Chinese analysts became increasingly concerned with U.S. global primacy, even hegemony, and with its ability to mobilize powerful allied force to achieve its security goals. Of particular concern for Chinese strategists was whether the United States and its allies would use force against China or in a way detrimental to Chinese interests. This was especially worrisome to Beijing given the increasing pro-independence tendencies and intentions expressed on the

Taiwan political scene from the mid-1990s onward. Official Chinese pronouncements in the 1990s also stressed broader international problems, such as the need to establish a more “democratic international system” and “fair and rational new international political and economic order,” in order to narrow the political and economic gap between the developed and the developing world. They expressed strong concerns that “some countries” wrongly exercise “hegemony,” “power politics,” and policies of preemption, which infringe upon the sovereignty of smaller states and impose the will of the strong upon the weak.¹

At home, China faced increasing challenges as well. As China’s policies of *gaige kaifang* (reform and opening up) took hold, the country experienced increasingly difficult political, social, and economic growing pains. The Tiananmen demonstrations of 1989 were a wake-up call for the Chinese Communist Party regarding the need to maintain its power through a kind of grand bargain with the Chinese citizenry: keep the party in power in return for continuing economic growth and prosperity. But the spectacular economic progress of the 1990s, while helping defer overt political threats to the regime, also brought with it new social and economic challenges. Chinese leaders clearly recognized this dilemma and became increasingly concerned with addressing burgeoning domestic problems, including pervasive official corruption, widening income gaps between rich and poor, widespread layoffs and underemployment in the state sector, extensive environmental degradation, a fragile banking and financial sector, an ailing social welfare and public health system, and frequent localized disgruntlement and unrest. Managing these growing sociopolitical and socioeconomic challenges at home, while also maintaining political leadership and expanding the domestic economy, became priority number one for Beijing.

NEW SECURITY CONCEPTS

Following Deng’s strategic advice, and in response to the challenges on its foreign and domestic fronts over the 1990s, Beijing’s security diplomacy cohered into certain *tifa*, or authoritative formulations, emanating from Chinese officialdom and its strategists.² These include the notions of a “new security concept,” acting as a “responsible great power,” “China’s peaceful rise,” and a “harmonious world,” for example, all of which feed into some emergent “new thinking” about the country’s diplomacy within China’s strategic and political elites.³ The new security concept draws from principles formally advocated by the Chinese government since the 1950s, in particular the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which date back to the Bandung Conference of developing world nations in 1955.⁴ The Chinese have for decades

called on nations to observe these principles. However, in 1994–95 the Chinese began making high-profile appeals for the establishment of a “new” system for international order. For example, the November 1995 Chinese white paper on arms control states that with regard to security in the Asia-Pacific region, it is necessary to “establish a new mutual respect and friendly relationship between nations” based upon not only the five principles but also common economic development, peaceful settlement of disputes, and bilateral and multilateral dialogues and consultations. According to the white paper, all nations should “spare no effort to establish a new peaceful, stable, fair, and reasonable international political and economic order.”⁵

These early formulations cohered more distinctly into the idea of a new security concept by July 1998, when Beijing’s Information Office of the State Council issued a white paper:

The world is undergoing profound changes, which require the discard of the Cold War mentality and the development of a new security concept and a new international political, economic, and security order responsive to the needs of our times.

The core of the new security concept should be mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and cooperation. The UN Charter, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and other universally recognized principles governing international relations should serve as the political basis for safeguarding peace, while mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity [is] its economic guarantee. To conduct dialogue, consultation, and negotiation on an equal footing is the right way to solve disputes and safeguard peace.

Only by developing a new security concept and establishing a fair and reasonable new international order can world peace and security be fundamentally guaranteed.⁶

In a major foreign policy speech delivered in Geneva in March 1999, Chinese leader Jiang Zemin presented the core of the new security concept, and much of the thinking behind the concept is enshrined in the declaration at the Sixteenth Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2002.⁷

Noting that the first twenty years of the twenty-first century would be a window of “strategic opportunity” in which to pursue its goal of “comprehensively building a well-off society,” the document, echoing Deng Xiaoping of twenty years before, states that because a “new world war is unlikely in the foreseeable future,” one could realistically “expect a fairly long period of peace in the world and a favorable climate in the areas around China.” It continues, “We will continue to cement our friendly ties with neighbors and persist in

building good-neighborly relationships and partnerships with them. We will step up regional cooperation and raise our exchanges and cooperation with our surrounding countries to a new height.”⁸

Chinese politicians and strategists also began to speak of China as a *fuzeren de daguo* (responsible great power). This term emerged most openly in association with Beijing’s decision not to devalue its currency during the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, a decision that received widespread praise and appreciation from the region and around the world. Since then, the term has been used more broadly both to describe China’s changing diplomatic posture and as a longer term foreign policy goal to which China should aspire. Increasingly, the notion of a responsible major power points to a Chinese security diplomacy that is less victimized, less aggrieved, and less alienated and that more actively supports and operates within international norms and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and others.⁹

For example, from the early 2000s, and particularly from 2001, the Chinese approach to the new security concept and to its regional security strategy became less stridently reactive. This trend predates the global shifts brought on by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the United States but was accelerated by them, as the new strategic concern of terrorism overtook and sidetracked overt contentiousness between the United States and China. China’s entry into the World Trade Organization in December 2001 and a stable transition to the new, fourth-generation leadership in Beijing in 2002–03 further strengthened China’s more confident approach toward the international and regional security situation.

China’s defense white paper of 2002 expresses the view that “peace and development remain the themes of the present era,” that a new world war is “unlikely in the foreseeable future,” and that multipolarization and economic globalization continue apace, though “amid twists and turns.”¹⁰ The Asia-Pacific region is viewed with particular favor as the “most dynamic region economically with the greatest development potential in the world.” The white paper adds that “strengthening dialogue and cooperation, maintaining regional stability, and promoting common development have become the mainstream policy of the Asian countries.” References to “factors of instability,” “hegemonism,” and “power politics” are less prominent, while the emergence of “non-traditional security challenges,” particularly terrorism, is frequently mentioned as a problem China and the world must face together. Across the spectrum of China’s foreign policy elite, new calls emerged in 2001–03 for a more mature, constructive, and responsible great power diplomacy for

China. As Evan Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel found, this new approach seems to abandon China's long-held and reactive "victimhood" complex, puts the country's "century of shame" to one side, and identifies more closely with a "great power mentality" befitting China's larger and more secure position in regional and global affairs.¹¹

"PEACEFUL RISE" AND A "HARMONIOUS WORLD"

Consistent with Deng Xiaoping's grand strategy and the notion of a new security concept, in the early 2000s senior Chinese leaders and strategists, particularly those associated with China's fourth-generation leadership, began to speak of *Zhongguo de heping jueqi* (China's peaceful rise). The formulation, most closely associated with one of the Chinese leadership's senior advisers, Zheng Bijian, expresses both a confidence and an acknowledgement that China is a rising power but also asserts that China's emergence will not be disruptive.¹² The notion was most prominently asserted with the publication of a major article on China's peaceful rise by Zheng Bijian in the U.S. journal *Foreign Affairs* in the fall of 2005, which further confirmed this approach as the mainstream and dominant foreign policy line within Chinese leadership circles at the time. The approach gained even more solid footing and official blessing with the issuance in December 2005 of the Chinese government white paper *China's Peaceful Development Road*. China's effort to vigorously promote this concept is interesting on many levels and reveals much about China's evolving new security diplomacy.

First and foremost, promoting China's peaceful rise is intended to counter the long-standing concern about a rising China disrupting the global status quo, in a repeat of the rise of Weimar Germany in the late nineteenth century and of imperial Japan in the early twentieth century. Arguing that China's rise will not be a threat to stability is a pragmatic and much-awaited recognition by Beijing of the security dilemma posed by China's increasing weight in world affairs. Second, asserting a peaceful rise is intended to reassure neighbors of China's benign intentions to seek a win-win outcome in their foreign relations. This is especially important in terms of China's relations with key Asian neighbors and partners, such as in Southeast Asia. But even more important is the desire to put relations with the United States on more solid footing and deflect lingering U.S. concerns about China's emergence as a more powerful player.

Third, and often overlooked by outside analysts, Chinese strategists and commentators explicitly link the concept of a peaceful rise to China's domestic situation. The concept acknowledges that even while China is rising it

faces continuing difficult social and economic challenges at home. China's overall security strategy requires that it make "sober internal judgments" to ensure that domestic development is relatively smooth and stable so that China's overall security strategy can be successful.¹³

There has been some debate among scholars and strategists in China about the language and suitability of the term *peaceful rise*.¹⁴ Some Chinese analysts argue that use of the term *peaceful* could constrain options vis-à-vis Taiwan, where China continues to reserve the possibility of using force to resolve its claims of sovereignty over the island. Others advise against use of the term *rise*, both because it is not yet clear that China will continue to rise over the long term and because the term may unduly alarm neighbors, who fear a rising China. Hu Jintao, China's president, preferred to employ the phrase "China's peaceful development" in a speech to the Bo'ao Forum in April 2004; and Wen Jiabao spoke of China's "peaceful development path" before a convocation of Chinese diplomats in August 2004, though the overall thrust of these speeches was part and parcel of the overall peaceful rise formulation.¹⁵

By the mid- to late 2000s, the "peaceful rise" and "peaceful development" formulations gave way to yet another high-profile phrase in the official Chinese lexicon: the notion of seeking a "harmonious world." According to the official Chinese press, this formulation was first publicly mentioned by President Hu Jintao in a speech to the Moscow Institute of International Relations in May 2003. The concept was further developed and achieved prominent attention when it formed the centerpiece of Hu's speech at the United Nations' sixtieth anniversary in the fall 2005. The concept was given steadily greater official recognition over the course of 2006 and 2007 and became Hu Jintao's principal conceptual contribution to China's foreign and security policy. The concept of seeking a "harmonious world" is directly linked to Hu's call for China to develop a "harmonious society" at home, underscoring the interrelatedness between securing a stable external environment in order to realize stable development domestically. The various formulations noted here—peaceful rise, peaceful development, and harmonious world—differ principally as matters of terminology and not of substance. They are together consistent parts of the overall effort by China since the late-1990s to put forward a new security diplomacy that is more constructive and reassuring.¹⁶

THE "NEW THINKERS"

Parallel to the development of thinking at the official level on such ideas as the new security concept and China's peaceful rise, a number of academic scholars have come forward to provide further theoretical underpinning and analytical support for China's more pragmatic and proactive foreign and secu-

rity policy. In some cases, these scholars advocated an even more cooperative approach toward the West, and toward the United States in particular, than the official line. Dubbed “the new thinkers” by China analysts in the West, this group of scholars contended that it is in China’s strategic interests to establish cooperative and productive relationships with its neighbors, and particularly with major powers such as the United States and Japan, in spite of persistent bilateral difficulties. For example, these Chinese analysts argued the need to accept and to work with unipolar American power, giving these reasons:

- A truly multipolar world might be dangerous to Chinese interests.
- Support for multipolarity equates to confrontational thinking.
- China would be better served by multilateralism, pluralism, and globalization.
- Through a process of “national social learning,” China and the United States can achieve an accommodation with one another.
- American hegemony, properly exercised, benefits regional and global stability.
- Chinese interests are best served by finding an accommodation with the Western-dominated international community to develop common interests, norms, and institutions.¹⁷

Some thinkers in this camp, including in the Chinese Communist Party Central Party School, openly recognized the importance of the democracy issue in U.S.-China relations and argue that China should pursue democratization to defuse tensions with the United States and the West and to improve China’s overall security situation.¹⁸

More broadly, these new thinkers advocated a set of ideas that, if implemented, would help moderate Chinese foreign and security policy. For example, their work recognized that a security dilemma between China and its neighbors could arise as a result of China’s growing strength and that a negative regional reaction to China’s rising power would undermine efforts within China to promote a more positive foreign and security policy. These analysts also attached importance to the need for China to reassure its neighbors by exercising self-restraint and by promoting, joining, and actively participating in regional multilateral security mechanisms and initiatives that moderate state behavior, including that of China. With regard to the United States in particular, these analysts argued that the strong U.S. hegemonic presence in the region can play a positive role for Chinese security (as long as core interests of China, above all regarding Taiwan, are preserved).¹⁹

It is important to note, however, that the views of these new thinkers are not always accepted by policymakers, within academic circles, or by the broader public in China. For example, when such new thinkers as

Ma Licheng, a well-known reform-minded journalist with the *People's Daily*, and Shi Yinhong, a professor at Renmin University, advocated a more pragmatic and less emotional approach to Japan, it sparked a fierce anti-Japan backlash in intellectual circles and among the broader public in 2003–04, foretelling the anti-Japan riots in many Chinese cities in April 2005. In Shi's writings in defense of Ma, he argued that it is in China's long-term national interest to put the history issue aside and expand common ground with Japan as a way to balance against the strategic encroachment of the United States. These views on Japan, while forward-leaning, fell well out of mainstream thinking at the time but may be gaining greater traction.²⁰

Putting Principle into Practice

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, while not explicitly stated as such, China's strategic assumptions and principles began to gel more distinctly into recognizable goals. These fundamental goals provide the underlying motivations for China's new security diplomacy. First, the Chinese leadership generally seeks to maintain a stable international environment in order to defuse instabilities, especially around its periphery, so Beijing can focus on critical economic, political, and social challenges at home. The 2002 Chinese defense-white paper puts it clearly: "A developing China needs a peaceful international environment and a favorable climate in its periphery."²¹

Second, China's new security diplomacy obviously aims to augment China's wealth and influence, but in a way that tries to reassure its neighbors of its peaceful and mutually beneficial intent. Beijing has come to understand the security dilemma dynamic and wishes to avoid alarming its neighbors; instead it promotes the notion of a "harmonious world."

Third, the new security diplomacy seeks to counter, co-opt, or circumvent what it perceives as excessive American influence around the Chinese periphery, while avoiding overt confrontation with the United States, all with the aim of shaping its own security environment. According to Wang Jisi, China's leading analyst of U.S.-China relations, China must play a defensive role and does not want the United States to see it as a foe.²² In pursuing these goals, China puts the principles of its new security diplomacy into action.²³

This approach can be seen in Beijing's changing policies and practices in three of the most critical developments shaping global and regional security affairs: the changing role of alliances and the expansion of regional security mechanisms and confidence-building measures; the growing significance of nonproliferation and arms control; and more flexible approaches to sovereignty, intervention, and the use of force.

The first development is the changing role of alliances. With the end of the cold war, traditional alliance relationships have undergone profound change, while regional security mechanisms and confidence-building measures of various stripes have proliferated as countries have sought new arrangements to help secure stability, reduce uncertainty, and establish communication and confidence-building channels. These developments have unfolded in spite of (and at times because of) the unilateral predominance of the United States in world security affairs. The U.S. alliance system itself, while still robust, faces a new, challenging, and transformative future in Europe, in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, in South and Central Asia, and in the western Pacific. On the other hand, Asian nations have been active in establishing other types of security mechanisms, including not only the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization but also ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit.

The second major security concern relates to proliferation and arms control. Of particular concern is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, especially nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and related technologies. Since the late 1990s, India and Pakistan joined the nuclear club, North Korea declared its possession of nuclear weapons, and Iran raised international concerns about its nuclear ambitions. The exposure of A. Q. Khan's network of nuclear technology assistance further underscores the shadowy challenges for nonproliferation in the post-cold war era. The increasing possibility that nuclear devices and other weapons of mass destruction will be used by terrorist organizations dramatically raises the stakes for nonproliferation and arms control. At the same time, however, the international community has made important strides in solidifying norms of arms control and nonproliferation, particularly among the major powers, with the conclusion of several key agreements, including the Chemical Weapons Convention (1993), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (1996), and the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (1995). Nevertheless, numerous critical arms control issues remain unresolved today and continue to have an impact on international and regional security affairs, including the role of missile defenses, the powers of the International Atomic Energy Agency and other watchdog groups, the weaponization of outer space, and the conclusion of a fissile materials production cut-off treaty.

Third, the norms of sovereignty and intervention have changed significantly in recent years, as globalization and the transnational nature of world affairs have eroded borders. In the late 1990s, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan argued that traditional notions of state sovereignty were being challenged by forces of globalization and international cooperation and that states did not

have unlimited sovereignty in their domestic affairs if they are committing fundamental human rights abuses. U.S.-led forces, under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, intervened on humanitarian grounds against Yugoslavia in 1999 without UN authority. In response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the United States, Washington pushed an even more assertive principle of preemptive intervention to justify attacks against Afghanistan and Iraq. These developments are highly controversial, yet it is also clear that the emergence of all manner of transnational threats and challenges—from terrorism, to energy security, to health concerns—demands new thinking within the international community on issues of security.

The core chapters of this book examine China's new security diplomacy, both its positive and negative aspects, in each of these important areas of global and regional security and then consider the challenges and opportunities China's new security diplomacy presents to the world, and to the United States in particular.

Chapter 2 details how, as part of its new security diplomacy, Beijing has shed much of its traditionally skeptical, reluctant, and often contrarian approach toward regional security mechanisms and confidence-building measures to adopt more proactive and constructive policies. This chapter outlines these developments by examining China's more active role within such organizations as the ASEAN Regional Forum, in fostering and sustaining such organizations as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and ASEAN+3, in building a range of key bilateral "strategic partnerships," in playing a critical role in the six-party talks for Korean peninsula security, and in taking part in an unprecedented number of multilateral and bilateral security dialogues, military-to-military activities, and other confidence-building measures.

Chapter 3 describes and analyzes China's new security diplomacy toward issues of nonproliferation and arms control. For much of its history, the People's Republic of China was skeptical and openly defiant of international nonproliferation and arms control norms and generated serious concerns about its role as a proliferator of sensitive weapons and technologies. However, as detailed in chapter 3, since the mid-1990s to the late 1990s, and as part of its new security diplomacy, Beijing's approach toward nonproliferation and arms control has substantially changed, to include a leadership position on certain arms control and nonproliferation initiatives, dramatic reductions in its weapons exports, and the implementation of its commitments to stem the flow of destabilizing weapons and technologies. To be sure, many concerns remain about China's approach to nonproliferation and arms con-

trol. But China's new policies and practices on these issues represent some of the most striking aspects of China's new security diplomacy.

Chapter 4 examines China's new security diplomacy and its approach to questions of sovereignty and intervention. While it is true that Chinese leaders and strategists have strong views supporting traditional definitions of state sovereignty and opposing foreign interventionism, especially regarding the Taiwan question, nevertheless, Chinese views on sovereignty and intervention display signs of greater flexibility and pragmatism across a range of security-related questions. This chapter looks into the important policy changes in Beijing by contrasting its past and current approach to questions of sovereignty and intervention and by detailing Chinese policy and practice regarding peacekeeping and counterterrorism. While not as proactive or constructive as China's policies toward regional security mechanisms or non-proliferation, Beijing's changing approach to sovereignty and intervention merits closer scrutiny.

It is important to recognize that Beijing's changing views and policies in each of these aspects of international and regional security are motivated by its aim to achieve the three fundamental goals of its new security diplomacy: alleviate external tensions in order to address challenges on the domestic front, reassure neighbors about China's peaceful intentions, and find ways to quietly balance the United States. Because these three goals are so fundamentally important to China's long-term security and stability, the new security diplomacy is likely to be an enduring and increasingly irreversible aspect of China's grand strategy for years to come.

The U.S. Response

Few would disagree that, for better or for worse, China is one of the world's most important powers in economic, political, and military terms and is likely to become even more powerful and influential in the years ahead. Yet in spite of China's strategic importance, Beijing's new security diplomacy has only just begun to receive the sustained attention it deserves by strategists and policymakers in the United States. To the degree China's new security diplomacy has generated attention, it is too often in the negative sense, expressed in overly simplistic ways about China's threat to U.S. interests. But a more nuanced, coherent, and focused U.S. policy response is called for.

On the one hand, China's new security diplomacy presents a potentially difficult and sophisticated set of challenges. China's ability to challenge U.S. interests concerns not only issues related to Taiwan. The two countries face a

number of other unresolved security-related differences, including over missile defenses, nuclear nonproliferation, humanitarian intervention, the role of alliances, the pursuit of energy resources, and the American political-military presence in Asia. As Beijing's new security diplomacy results in a more powerful and influential China in Asia and around the globe, including stronger relations between China and many of America's friends and allies, the United States may be increasingly constrained in its ability to manage and shape outcomes on issues where the two countries continue to differ.

Chapter 5 goes into greater detail on this point, describing the potential challenges and uncertainties China's new security diplomacy presents to the international community, the Asian region, and the United States. The chapter describes how China's new security diplomacy may challenge U.S. interests in three broad areas: the role of alliances and regional security mechanisms, Chinese nuclear proliferation activities and U.S.-China differences over the bilateral and global arms control agenda, and China's approach to sovereignty and intervention.

On the other hand, the proactive, pragmatic, and productive aspects of China's new security diplomacy offer opportunities for constructive and cooperative Chinese policies consistent with U.S. interests. In some cases, the United States has sought to leverage such opportunities, as in efforts to cooperate with China to resolve the North Korean nuclear standoff. But far more can be done to work with China: many opportunities presented by China's new security diplomacy have largely been overlooked or too readily dismissed.

Chapter 6 lays out an ambitious but practicable and "opportunistic" agenda to take fuller advantage of China's new security diplomacy in ways that deepen positive aspects of China's approach, give China a greater stake in global and regional stability, defuse the potential for U.S.-China confrontation, and promote a more open, constructive, and responsible China in the future. These opportunities fall into three categories. First, regarding alliances and regional security mechanisms, the United States should intensify bilateral discussions on mutual regional security concerns, increase bilateral military-to-military relations, deepen U.S. and U.S.-China interaction within regional security mechanisms, strengthen coordination with regional allies on issues related to China, and realize a long-term, nonmilitary resolution to differences between China and Taiwan. Second, regarding nonproliferation and arms control, Washington should seize all opportunities to resolve persistent Chinese proliferation cases, work to improve China's own arms export control capability, establish a stable, long-term framework for bilateral strategic

nuclear relations, improve cooperation on global arms control issues, and expand upon past nonproliferation successes with China. Third, and finally, U.S. policy should leverage China's changing approach to questions of sovereignty and intervention by intensifying U.S.-China dialogue regarding objectionable and threatening regimes, reaching common ground in defining and addressing new transnational threats, and encouraging greater Chinese support and participation in peacekeeping and nation-building operations.

In short, the United States needs to sustain and deepen a more balanced, forward-looking, realistic, and strategic China policy, one that more clearly recognizes and meets the challenges and opportunities of China's new security diplomacy. Unfortunately, and to the detriment of U.S. interests, American China policy has been hamstrung from more effectively pursuing such an approach. Four important reasons stand out for this.

AN UNFAMILIAR SITUATION

First, the rise of China and its more proactive security diplomacy present an unfamiliar situation for policymakers in Washington, one for which there is little to no good parallel in living memory. In the recent past, when faced with challenges from rising powers, the American response could be relatively straightforward. In the cases of imperial Japan and Nazi Germany, for example, the necessary American response eventually became clear, culminating in unconditional surrender for those powers. In the face of the challenge of the Soviet Union, a long "twilight struggle" and policy of containment, contributing over time to the collapse of the regime and the eventual end of the cold war, were widely accepted to be the necessary American course. The challenge of an economically rising Japan in the 1980s was more easily moderated by the friendly and stable U.S.-Japan alliance and eventually by the changing economic fortunes of Japan and America.

China presents an altogether different and unfamiliar set of challenges. Unlike Nazi Germany, imperial Japan, and the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and "Japan, Inc." on the other, China cannot be so clearly distinguished as friend or foe. China is unlikely to seek aggressive territorial gains into areas of core American strategic interest, such as the heart of Europe, or seek to extend imperial dominion across vast areas of Pacific Asia, or attack American possessions to meet those aims. Beijing does not seek to spread Communist ideals, establish global networks of ideological client states, or foment revolution in the developing world. Chinese companies have been slow to invest aggressively in the United States, unlike the case with Japan. Moreover, unlike Japan of the 1980s and 1990s, the China market is vastly more open to

foreign direct investment, imports, and foreign ownership. And, unlike U.S.-Japan economic relations of the 1980s, the United States and China are more deeply interdependent financially. By September 2009 China was the largest holder of U.S. Treasury securities, with holdings of US\$798.9 billion, representing nearly 23 percent of all foreign holdings of such securities. In turn, Americans were more able to purchase Chinese goods, fueling a U.S. trade deficit with China that reached a record US\$268 billion in 2008, but which in turn helped tens of millions of Chinese rise out of poverty. The precariousness of the financial crisis that struck in mid-2008 only deepened the sense of interdependence between the two countries, particularly for the United States vis-à-vis China.²⁴

Unlike previous potential challenges to the United States, China's approach seems to be subtle and long term, seeking to avoid open confrontation while quietly pursuing its interests and aspirations for great-power status. Under these conditions, the American response will likewise require subtlety to manage the increasing complexities of U.S.-China relations, characterized by elements of both cooperation and competition.²⁵ This prospect becomes all the more difficult in the absence of relevant previous experience from which to draw.

POST-SEPTEMBER 11 PRIORITIES

Second, U.S. strategic priorities after September 11, 2001, hamper a more effective policy response to China's new security diplomacy. One factor is that the U.S. strategic focus is predominantly on Southwest Asia and the Middle East: the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the unstable governments in those countries, America's plummeting image among Muslims, and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Moreover, the post-September 11 environment has uncovered new tensions in U.S. relations with its allies, such as in the transatlantic relationship. China's new security diplomacy, by comparison—particularly as it has unfolded in Asia and Europe—has not garnered sufficient attention in Washington.

The September 11 effect also skews U.S. analysis of Chinese foreign policy, as American political leaders and strategic analysts understandably gauge other powers on the basis of their post-September 11 actions. However, it is mistaken to interpret China's new security diplomacy as driven predominantly by a counterterrorism agenda or as a tactical accommodation of American interests. It is neither. While the current global security environment opens opportunities for China to pursue its new security diplomacy, the strategy itself is rooted in decisions and actions taken well before September

11, 2001. Ignoring this point complicates Washington's ability to effectively recognize, interpret, and respond to the opportunities and challenges of China's new security diplomacy.

INTERNAL DIVISION

Third, an effective U.S. response to Beijing's new security diplomacy is seriously encumbered by the often divisive and politically charged nature of American views toward China. As an unfortunate result, American reactions to China's increasingly proactive global and regional security policies have been too often tentative, uncertain, and muddled, reflecting a persistent tension between two well-established camps.²⁶

One of these camps, the "engager-hedgers," is comparatively hopeful about the future of U.S.-China relations, emphasizing the common interests the two countries share—especially in the realms of economics, business, and trade—while recognizing the persistence of certain difficult issues. This camp recognizes the limits on Chinese power and that through political, economic, and security-related engagement with Beijing, it is possible to embed China more firmly in the international system while also generating greater social, economic, and political openness for China's domestic scene. The engager-hedgers point out that by and large U.S. and Chinese security interests have converged over the past two decades and that, in spite of lingering differences, the United States and China have an opportunity to open a new chapter in their relationship, based on a mutually recognized interest in combating transnational threats to global, regional, and domestic security.

This approach recognizes that the two sides still differ over critical issues and that as a result the United States should continue to hedge, pursuing a strategy of aiming for the best, but being prepared for the worst. But overall, such an approach sees the value in intensified, comprehensive, and sustained cooperation between the United States and China.

"China hawks," on the other hand, hold a darker view, envisioning an inevitable conflict between the two countries. Basing their claim in history and a realpolitik understanding of world affairs, some argue that a rising and revisionist China, eager to establish a more prominent place in regional and international affairs, will ultimately confront the established power of the United States, leading to conflict. Others would add that China, as an authoritarian state, is less accountable than the United States in its foreign policy and hence more prone to adventurism; because of this, it will seek to aggrandize its power and influence as a matter of course, even if only as a last-ditch means to maintain flagging party legitimacy at home. With a U.S.-China con-

flict not a matter of if but when, this view advocates a curtailment of interaction with Beijing, especially those ties that would strengthen China and make it a more formidable adversary in the future. It also calls for a more active effort to contain Chinese power and weaken its government, with the aim of establishing a more benign and friendly China.

Both of these approaches have valid points and concerns. But they both have serious flaws in their approach. Engager-hedgers tend to downplay some of the serious and persistent security-related differences between the United States and China and may place too much confidence on the positive effect of “engagement” on China. China hawks, however, are overly wedded to the inevitability of conflict and dismiss too quickly the positive and substantive convergence of U.S. and Chinese security interests in a number of key areas, such as combating terrorism, disarming a nuclear North Korea, ensuring a stable U.S.-China bilateral relationship, and maintaining stability and fostering prosperity across Eurasia. Most important, neither of these views adequately accounts for the proactive, productive, and pragmatic security diplomacy put forward by China. Perhaps worst of all, the two camps are often highly polarized, often undermining the possibility of a well-crafted, coherent, and sustained U.S. strategy toward China.

VOLATILE PAST RELATIONS

Fourth, these factors are made more complicated by the volatile nature of U.S.-China relations, which has kept Washington’s policy focus on the near-term ups and downs in U.S.-China relations rather than on strategic trends in Chinese security diplomacy. U.S.-China relations have swung from poor to good every couple of years since the mid-1990s. Relations seriously deteriorated in the wake of the visit of Taiwan’s president, Lee Teng-hui, to the United States and China’s subsequent show of force between July 1995 and March 1996, when China conducted missile tests into the waters adjacent to Taiwan and held large-scale military exercises opposite Taiwan. China’s coercive diplomacy culminated in missile firings into the waters north and south of Taiwan in the week just before the Taiwan presidential election of March 1996 and prompted the dispatch of two American aircraft carrier battle groups toward the Taiwan area.

U.S.-China relations went through a brief period of improved relations from late 1996 to late 1998, witnessing two important summits between Presidents Clinton and Jiang. But this period was followed by another serious downturn, with allegations of Chinese high-tech espionage and attempts to influence the U.S. presidential election. Relations further plummeted when,

owing to calamitous intelligence errors during Operation Allied Force against Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999, a U.S. B-2 bomber dropped five 2,000-pound precision-guided munitions onto the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three Chinese and injuring some twenty others.²⁷ In outrage, citizens across China took to the streets in demonstrations, which the government could channel but could not stop. The American embassy building in Beijing was besieged for days by rock-throwing protesters. U.S. consulate property in Chengdu was set afire. The Chinese media attacked the United States. At its harshest, the Communist Party mouthpiece, *People's Daily*, issued an article denouncing American "hegemony" and comparing the United States to Hitler's Germany.²⁸ Going into the 2000 presidential campaign, the challenger, George W. Bush, referred to China as a "strategic competitor," language repeatedly employed by some of his senior advisers once in the White House in early 2001. The April 1, 2001, collision between a Chinese fighter jet and an American EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft near Hainan Island and the resultant twelve-day standoff for the release of the American crew further fueled suspicions between the two sides.

Beginning in spring 2001, and especially in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the pendulum of U.S.-China relations took a dramatic, positive swing. Visits to China by State Department Director of Policy Planning Richard Haass and then by Secretary of State Colin Powell in mid-2001 helped the two sides overcome the EP-3 incident and put the bilateral relationship back on track. Chinese President Jiang Zemin, having watched the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on television in Beijing, was among the very first world leaders to telephone President George W. Bush to express condolences and solidarity. Over the year from October 2001 to October 2002, Presidents Bush and Jiang held three summits, twice in China (October 2001 and February 2002) and once at President Bush's home in Crawford, Texas (October 2002).

By the end of 2001 and in 2002, the two sides spoke of "constructive and cooperative" ties (the U.S. side added "candid" to the phrase). In September 2003 Secretary of State Powell declared that "U.S. relations with China are the best they have been since President Nixon's first visit." Quoting from the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, Secretary Powell stated that the United States welcomes "a strong, peaceful, and prosperous China. And we seek a constructive relationship with that China."²⁹ In a speech two months later, Secretary Powell reiterated U.S. support for a strong, peaceful, prosperous China, adding, "We welcome it. We do not feel threatened by it. We encourage it."³⁰ Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick remarked in

September 2005, “We now need to encourage China to become a responsible stakeholder in the international system. As a responsible stakeholder, China would be more than just a member—it would work with us to sustain the international system that has enabled its success.”³¹ Considering these extraordinary swings in U.S. policy toward China over just the past several years, with official American views shifting so dramatically from one extreme to another—from dire predictions of strategic competition to welcoming China’s rise to a “responsible stakeholder”—the United States has been slow to fully acknowledge, assess, and respond to China’s new security diplomacy.

Looking Ahead

Washington’s often incoherent response to China’s new security diplomacy cannot be sustained and, for the sake of U.S. interests, cannot continue. In the years ahead, the U.S. policy leadership must take a more careful and critical look at China’s new security diplomacy so as to develop a response that addresses both its opportunities and its challenges. There are signs that more reasoned, judicious, and coherent sets of understandings and policies are in the works for Washington’s China policy.³² Washington can and must chart a course in response to China’s new security diplomacy that defuses potential challenges; that reaps significant benefits for global stability, regional security, and improved U.S.-China relations; and that helps realize a more open and constructive China for the future. The following chapters are intended to help chart a course toward those critically important goals.