
China in International Society: Is ‘Peaceful Rise’ Possible?[†]

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Introduction

This article reviews China’s position in international society over the past couple of centuries, and against that background assesses the prospects for China’s strategy of ‘peaceful rise’. I stick to the label ‘peaceful rise’ because it is a more accurate statement of the issues than the more anodyne and diplomatic ‘peaceful development’ which has recently replaced it in official Chinese discourse.¹ I understand ‘peaceful rise’ to mean that a growing power is able to make both absolute and relative gains in both its material and its status positions, in relation to the other powers in the international system, and to do so without precipitating major hostilities between itself and either its neighbours or other major powers. Peaceful rise involves a two-way process in which the rising power accommodates itself to rules and structures of international society, while at the same time other powers accommodate some changes in those rules and structures by way of adjusting to the new disposition of power and status. I am not going to question whether China will rise or not, though this is done by some.² Instead, I take China’s continued rise as given, and explore whether its peaceful rise is possible within contemporary international society.

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¹ Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, ‘The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of “Peaceful Rise”’, *The China Quarterly*, No. 190, 2007, pp. 291–310.

² Yue Jianjong, ‘Peaceful Rise of China: Myth or Reality?’ *International Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 4, 2008, pp. 439–56.

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The next section reviews the English school literature on China and international society, covering the pre-European era, the encounter with Western international society, and the ups and downs of China's relationship with international society during the 20th century. Section 3 pauses to take stock of the situation now, 30 years into China's policy of 'reform and opening up', and its re-engagement with international society on the basis of 'peaceful rise'. Here the argument is that China is at a turning point bigger than any since the late 1970s, and that some of the policies that have worked quite successfully for the past 30 years will not work for the next thirty. Continuing with 'peaceful rise' is going to get more difficult. Section 4 looks ahead focusing on three international political and strategic challenges for China: its relationship with the United States, its relationship with Japan, and its relationship with international society. These three relationships are in some ways distinct, but they connect in important ways across the regional (East Asian) and global levels of international society. All of them centrally affect the prospects for 'peaceful rise'. My perspective is that while all three of these relationships pose challenges for China, they also offer opportunities. My argument is that seizing these opportunities requires leadership from China. If this is not provided then these opportunities will remain problems, and the likelihood of 'peaceful rise' will diminish.

I am not an expert in China's politics and foreign policy, and I do not speak or read Chinese. My main contribution thus comes from viewing China's position in the world through the theoretical lens of the English school, and its principal idea of *international society*. Alongside this there will also be a measure of Realist power political analysis and an attempt to show how this relates to international society. By *international society* I mean acceptance of the deep rules of the game that states share with each other sufficiently to form a kind of social order. Hedley Bull labelled this 'the anarchical society',³ and its most visible manifestation is in the *primary institutions* that evolve to constitute both the players and the game of international relations,⁴ and to define what behaviour is and is not seen as legitimate.⁵ These organic institutions—such as sovereignty, non-intervention, territoriality, nationalism, international law, diplomacy, great power management, the equality of peoples—are composed of principles, norms and rules that underpin deep and durable practices. They are distinct from the more familiar *secondary institutions* (such as regimes and intergovernmental organisations) which are recent, instrumental, mainly state-designed expressions of the underlying social structure of modern international relations. Primary institutions form the social structure of international society, which

³ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

⁴ Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 161–270.

⁵ Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

is dynamic and always evolving, albeit usually slowly and with a great deal of continuity. Contestation over primary institutions—think of colonialism, slavery, sovereignty, non-intervention, human rights—is itself one of the driving forces behind the evolution of international society. Such contestation also defines the shape and strength (or weakness) of international society during any given era. One can find international society in these terms at both the global and regional levels, and this distinction plays significantly throughout the argument.

The English school approach gives an alternative picture to those of both Realism (power politics), liberalism (secondary institutions) and Marxism (class conflict) in understanding what the structure of international relations is and how it works. In my view, the English school's focus on international society provides a more open, balanced and nuanced view of the peaceful rise question than any of the alternatives. While being sensitive to the dynamics of power, it avoids the deterministic, materialist assumption of conflict that come with Realism and Marxism, and enables one to question statements such as Halliday's that 'There is no such thing, in any country or in international relations, as a peaceful road to modernity'.⁶ By looking at the deeper social structures, it also avoids the utopian tendencies of liberalism to put too much weight on both secondary institutions and economic interdependence. International social structure is complicated, uneven, contested and always evolving. This makes the English school view less simple and clear than polarity. But in relation to a deep question like the rise of China the apparent clarity of polarity is a false gain. A more nuanced and historically rooted social structural view gives better insight into how China relates to international society both globally and regionally, and enables a clearer view of how those levels relate to each other. As I will show below, there is also an existing English school literature on China on which to build.

By using these tools I hope to provide both an outsider's perspective on peaceful rise, and a way of framing the issues that might connect to the discourses within China. The rise of China is too important an issue for all of us for it to be understood through either oversimplified theoretical framings or nationalistic self-understandings. Peaceful rise cannot be accomplished by China alone, but only by China and the rest of international society working together to create the necessary conditions. It is useful then, to start by reviewing the history of how the relationship between China and international society has unfolded.

⁶ Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 2. See also John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

Looking Back

The English school literature on China and international society covers four periods: (i) the Sino-centric international society in East Asia before the Western presence became overwhelming; (ii) the period from the middle of the 19th to the middle of the 20th centuries when China was trying to adapt to, and gain status within, Western international society; (iii) the revolutionary period when China was largely alienated from, and oppositional to, Western international society; and (iv) the period since the late 1970s when China rejoined what was a more globalised, but still Western-led, international society. This story involves both China's attempts to reform and adapt itself internally, and evolutions of international society resulting from both changes within the West and the process of globalisation.

For the first period, there is a small literature that looks at the Sino-centric international society in East Asia before the Western presence became dominant.⁷ Like most Western international relations literature dealing with Chinese history, Watson puts disproportionate emphasis on the warring states period (770–221 BC) during which China was a self-contained international system along the anarchic lines more typical of European history. Watson and Zhang investigate the institutions of international society during the warring states period, seeing sovereignty, diplomacy, balance of power and elements of international law (rituals), though Watson also sees a tendency to bandwagon rather than balance.⁸ Less attention has been given to the much longer imperial period during which China was a superpower unipole at the centre of a suzerain system, though this is now beginning to attract more analysis. Watson sees mainly imperial centralisation and so not much of international society. Zhang sees the tribute system as the key institution of imperial China's East Asian international society, and shows how this was completely destroyed by the Western intrusion into East Asia. Suzuki looks in more detail at the social nature of the Confucian order, at the contestations for 'middle-kingdom' status within it, and at its eventual destruction by the West and a rising Japan.⁹ Within China an effort is emerging to promote some of the principles from this Confucian order as a more collectivist, harmonious alternative to the conflictual individualism of most Western international relations thinking.¹⁰ Much more should be

⁷ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 85–93; Zhang Yongjin, 'System, Empire and State in Chinese International Relations', in Michael Cox et al., eds., *Empires, Systems and States: Great Transformations in International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 43–63; Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan's Encounter with European International Society* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 34–55.

⁸ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, p. 88.

⁹ Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*, pp. 34–55, 148–76.

¹⁰ Song Xinning, 'Building International Relations Theory with Chinese Characteristics', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 10, No. 26, 2001, p. 70; Yan Xuetong, 'The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 10, No. 26, 2001, pp. 37–8;

done to fill in this historical story, and develop both the imperial and warring states parts of it for purposes of enriching the literature on comparative international society. But for the purpose of this article, the key point is that the encounter with the West destroyed the Sino-centric international society and required China for the first time in its history to come to terms with an alien and externally imposed international order. China was pushed from being an empire to being a state, and from constituting the core to being part of the periphery.

The literature then focuses on the details of China's encounter with Western international society from the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th: the 'century of humiliation' in Chinese perspective.¹¹ At the beginning of this period China was no longer able to withstand the military pressure of the West. It was increasingly both internally fractured, and reduced to quasi-colonial status, first by Western powers and Russia, and then by Japan (whose acceptance of, and adaptation to, both modernity and Western international society was faster and more successful than China's). But by the middle of the 20th century, even though still embroiled in a massive civil war, China had joined Western international society on equal terms, and by being given a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, even gained formal great power status, albeit at that point more honorary than reflective of its actual capability. The First and Second World Wars—a kind of civil war within the West attended by much barbaric behaviour—weakens the 'standard of civilisation'¹² and facilitated China's integration. This literature argues for various dates ranging from 1911 (the Republic), through 1920 (membership of the League of Nations) to 1943 (end of extraterritoriality) by which China might be deemed to have

Yan Xuetong, 'Xun Zi's Thoughts on International Politics and Their Implications', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2008, pp. 135–65; Zhao Tingyang, 'Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept 'All-Under-Heaven' (Tian-xia)', *Social Identities*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2006, pp. 29–41; Li Mingjiang, 'China Debates Soft Power', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2008, p. 292. See also William A. Callahan, 'Remembering the Future—Utopia, Empire, and Harmony in 21st Century International Theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2004, pp. 569–601 and William A. Callahan, 'Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-hegemonic or a New Hegemony?', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2008, pp. 749–61.

¹¹ Gerritt W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 136–63; Gerritt W. Gong, 'China's Entry into International Society', in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 171–83; Zhang Yongjin, 'China's Entry Into International Society: Beyond the Standard of "Civilization"', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17 No. 1, 1991, pp. 3–16; Zhang Yongjin, *China in International Society since 1949* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*, esp. pp. 56–113.

¹² David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 158–69.

overcome its second class status and gained full entry into international society.

The literature on this second period looks at China's attempts to come to terms with the 'standard of civilisation' set by the West, and the divisions within China over whether to do that simply by trying to regain power or by undertaking deeper modernising reforms.¹³ It also looks at the shifting, and eventual abandonment, of that standard within the West. The key work on the standard of civilisation is Gong¹⁴ which argues that the expansion of European international society required changes of identity concept, starting with 'Christendom', then to 'European culture' (to bring in the Americas and other European offshoots during the decolonisation of settler states in the Americas during the nineteenth century¹⁵), and finally to the 'standard of civilisation' in late 19th century, when non-Western powers began to qualify for entry.¹⁶ These changes reflected a mix of cultural arrogance towards other cultures (comparable to similar Islamo-centric and Sino-centric attitudes), and the necessities of interaction among equals which required certain standards of effective government, particularly the ability to meet reciprocal obligations in law.¹⁷ It was also the case that international society was itself continuing to evolve during the 19th century, most notably by the rise of nationalism and the market as new institutions.¹⁸

Gong notes the clash of civilisations explicit in the 'standard of civilisation', and how it created a pressure for conformity with Western values and practices which posed a demanding cultural challenge to the non-West, much of which had to go against its own cultural traditions in order to pursue entry. As Suzuki argues, Western international society was two-faced, presenting a more orderly and equal character amongst its (Western) members, but treating outsiders unequally and coercively.¹⁹ This left an ongoing legacy of problems for the legitimacy of international law, still seen by some as reflecting imperial Western values.²⁰ Gong notes how the European need for access (trade, proselytising, travel) was what drove the functional aspects of the 'standard of civilisation' (to protect the life, liberty and property of Europeans in other countries) and therefore the demand for extraterritoriality and unequal relations where the locals could not or would not

¹³ Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*.

¹⁴ Gerritt W.Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*.

¹⁵ See also Adam Watson, 'New States in the Americas', in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 127–41.

¹⁶ Gerritt W.Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, pp. 4–6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 64–93.

¹⁸ James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society?*

¹⁹ Shogo Suzuki, 'Japan's Socialization into Janus-Faced European International Society', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2005, pp. 137–64; Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*.

²⁰ Gerritt W.Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, pp. 7–21.

provide these.²¹ Decolonisation put an end both to colonialism as an institution of international society²² and to the standard of civilisation. With the right of independence and sovereign equality becoming almost unconditional,²³ the dismantling of the Western empires did not really confront the question of conditions of entry in anything like the same way as the earlier encounters had done. Gong makes the interesting observation, subsequently taken up by several others, that the contemporary Western demand for human rights with its concerns about life, liberty and property is quite similar to the 'standard of civilisation', and might be understood as the contemporary continuation, or rebirth, of it.²⁴

The third period covers China's revolutionary phase under Mao Zedong, which might be seen as the antithesis of peaceful rise. This period is relatively neglected in the literature on international society, or at least is subsumed under other topics (Cold War, revolution). With the communist victory in China in 1949, China abandoned its previous policy of integrating with international society and took sides against the West in the Cold War. The Cold War can itself be understood as a major conflict between the West and the Communist bloc over the future shape of international society. During this period, Western international society was undergoing a major transformation with decolonisation and the response to Nazism bringing an end to the 'standard of civilisation'. As well as putting itself into opposition to Western international society, Communist China was substantially cut out of its machinery, both because China's seat at the United Nations was given to the defeated Nationalist government in Taiwan, and because many governments gave the diplomatic recognition for China to the regime in Taipei. The main work is by Zhang, who sets out in detail China's encounter with Western international society post Second World War.²⁵ He argues that after 1949 there was a two-decade period of 'alienation' (not isolation) under Mao, in which US containment of China and China's rejection of the West played into each other. But even during this period, China developed extensive political and economic links, paving the way for restoration of both diplomatic relations with the West, and its UN seat in 1971. Halliday notes China's initial self-subordination to the Soviet Union in external policy, and even after the split with Moscow, its relative lack of interest in trying to export its model or create an Asian fifth communist international.²⁶ China's influence on the left was more by the power of ideas

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–53.

²² Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Kalevi J. Holsti, *Taming the Sovereigns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²³ See also Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, p. 296.

²⁴ Gerritt W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, pp. 90–3.

²⁵ Zhang Yongjin, *China in International Society since 1949*.

²⁶ Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, pp. 110–16.

and example, than by the cultivation of allies and supporters. That said, both Halliday and Armstrong²⁷ note China's support for revolutionary movements in the third world, and after the split with the Soviet Union there was more ideological competition. From 1970 China took up the state-based discourse of international society and downgraded the class-based discourse of its radical years, and subsequently, with the 'four modernisations' policy, also abandoned economic self-reliance. China's return to engagement with international society was strongly driven by domestic reactions against the extreme radicalism of the Cultural Revolution years during the mid-to-late 1960s, which not only impoverished the country, but also exposed it to serious security threats.²⁸

This reaction underpins the final period, which goes from the 1970s, especially the late 1970s, to the present. Here the key theme has been 'reform and opening up' with China's internal reforms driving a transformation in its relationship with international society. 'Reform and opening up' remains the dominant idea in Chinese politics.²⁹ In effect, China abandoned much of its revolutionary resistance to the West (and, notably, did so more than a decade before the end of the Cold War), and, in a sense, picked up its pre-1949 project of integrating itself with international society on the basis of domestic reforms. But the parallel is not exact. In the post-1970s phase, China has been operating from a position of greater strength than was the case pre-1949, and so internal reforms now drive changes in external policy rather than being driven mainly by external pressure as earlier. The economic and political routes into international society have also become more open than they were before decolonisation. Both China and international society have moved on. China put its own economic development as top priority, and deduced from that the need for stability in its international relations both regionally and globally.³⁰ Towards this end, there was an impressively quick shift from Mao's policy of revolutionary rise, deeply antagonistic to the Western-dominated *status quo*, to Deng's policy of peaceful rise within the *status quo*. Zhang sees China from the late 1970s as steadily adapting to international society, and integrating with it, playing the diplomatic apprentice rather than the revolutionary in intergovernmental organisations from 1971 on, and mainly engaging economically.³¹ Not until the 1980s were China's domestic affairs settled enough to allow it to engage politically with international society on a non-revolutionist basis.³²

²⁷ David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, pp. 176–84.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 182–4; Song Xinning, 'Building International Relations Theory with Chinese Characteristics', p. 62; Yan Xuetong, 'The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes', p. 35.

²⁹ Jeffrey W. Legro, 'What China Will Want: The Future Intentions of a Rising Power', *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2007, pp. 505–34.

³⁰ Zhang Yongjin, *China in International Society since 1949*, pp. 102–25, 194–243.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 73–91.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 91–125.

But China was chasing a moving target, and in danger of becoming alienated again as postmodern developments at the global level such as human rights and 'good governance' created a new 'standard of civilisation', putting pressure on its quite successful adoption of Westphalian standards and institutions.³³ Just as in the first round of China's encounter with Western international society, China did not accept the need to Westernise itself completely, but sought to find a stable and workable blend of modernising reforms and 'Chinese characteristics'.

This general perspective is supported by other analysts who also see both a sharp turnaround in China's relationship with international society during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and ongoing tensions between China's adaptations and the evolution of international society.³⁴ Qin argues that the change was driven by internal developments in China during the late 1970s and early 1980s in which the country underwent a quite profound change of national identity, strategic culture and definition of its security interests, all of which have transformed its relationship with international society. The central change was giving development of the national economy first priority, because this pushed the country away from its earlier revolutionist attitude towards international society, and towards a more *status quo* position marked by participation in many international institutions, and acceptance of most of the prevailing rules and norms governing both the regional and global economic and political orders. Giving priority to development meant that China needed to transform its security interests from the military-political-territorial ones that dominated earlier decades and stressed struggle and zero-sum conflict, into more cooperative, 'comprehensive security' ones emphasising the maintenance of stability and participation in the global political economy. Beeson adds that comprehensive security also includes a strong linkage between economic growth and the regime security concerns of the Chinese Communist Party about itself.³⁵ Although Qin acknowledges that old military-political-territorial issues, most importantly Taiwan, have the potential to upset the developments of the past 30 years, he thinks that otherwise China is becoming mainly a *status*

³³ Rosemary Foot, 'Chinese Strategies in a US-hegemonic Global Order: Accommodating and Hedging', *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1, 2006, pp. 77–94.

³⁴ Wu Xinbo, 'China: Nation Security Practice for a Modernizing and Ascending Power', in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 115–56; Rosemary Foot, 'Chinese Power and the Idea of a Responsible State', *The China Journal*, No. 45, 2001, pp. 1–19; Qin Yaqing, 'Nation Identity, Strategic Culture and Security Interests: Three Hypotheses on the Interaction between China and International Society', *SIIS Journal*, No. 2, 2003, <http://irchina.org/en/xueren/china/view.asp?id=863>. (accessed 4 December 2008); Qin Yaqing, 'China's Security Strategy with a Special Focus on East Asia', transcript of a talk and discussion for the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 7 July 2004 <http://www.spf.org/e/report/040707.html>. (accessed 4 December 2008).

³⁵ Mark Beeson, 'Hegemonic Transition in East Asia? The Dynamics of Chinese and American Power', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2009, pp. 95–112.

quo power, increasingly accepting international society not just on instrumental grounds, but also on ideational ones.

It is clear and uncontested that there has been a major transformation in the relationship between China and international society since the late 1970s, and that domestic changes in China are the major explanation for this. It is also clear that this transformation has been successfully done in many ways. At the regional level, China is now widely regarded as a 'good citizen' by most of its Southeast Asian neighbours, and, after a hesitant start, has integrated well into the regional intergovernmental organisations that have grown around Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).³⁶ It has good relations with both Koreas, and recently even relations with Taiwan are improving. Political and societal relations with Japan remain difficult (on which more later) despite close economic ties, and are the major blot on the regional picture. With many of its neighbours China shares several important values: a rather traditional Westphalian view of sovereignty and non-intervention, a priority to regime security, a desire to preserve distinctive cultural values, and a commitment to joint development through trade and investment. More broadly, there is a view that East Asia not just takes a stronger view of sovereignty and non-intervention than the global level, but that much of it shares a Confucian culture, and is more inclined to hierarchy and bandwagoning than to balance of power.³⁷ All this suggests that a distinctive East Asian regional international society is already partly in existence.

At the global level the picture is more mixed. China has made major strides in pursuit of economic integration into the Western-led world economy, most notably its membership of the World Trade Organization. It has made some contributions to peacekeeping³⁸ and non-proliferation, but politically its position has been relatively marginal. Although accorded great power status, as the only ideologically committed non-democracy amongst the leading states it is uncomfortable with many aspects of the Western-dominated political order. It tends to be fairly passive in the

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

³⁷ John King Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1968); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996); David Kang, 'Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks', *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2003, pp. 57–85; David Kang, 'Hierarchy, Balancing and Empirical Puzzles in Asian International Relations', *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2003–4, pp. 165–80; David Kang, 'Why China's Rise Will Be Peaceful: Hierarchy and Stability in the East Asian Region', *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2005, pp. 551–4. For a critique, see Amitav Acharya, 'Will Asia's Past be its Future?', *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2003–4, pp. 149–64.

³⁸ Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, 'China's Expanding Peacekeeping Role: Its Significance and the Policy Implications', *SIPRI Policy Brief*, 2009, <http://books.sipri.org/files/misc/SIPRIPB0902.pdf> (accessed 13 March 2009); Shogo Suzuki, 'Chinese Soft Power, Insecurity Studies, Myopia and Fantasy', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 2009, pp. 779–93.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and concerned mainly to protect its domestic interests. It is defensive about human rights and democracy and intervention, and up to a point, also about environmental issues. It has experienced political setbacks, most obviously in the reactions to the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989, and to the question of Tibet generally. There are also some specific areas of international cooperation, such as space science, from which China has been largely excluded, and it has a prickly relationship with the United States underlined by much rhetoric against hegemony.³⁹ So while there has been substantial progress on the global level, it is not as impressive as that on the regional level. China is not considered a 'good citizen' globally to anything like the same extent as it is regionally, and it rightly worries about its weakness in 'soft power'.⁴⁰

That said, China's rise over the past 30 years certainly looks peaceful compared to that of most other recent great power *arrivistes*. The records of Germany, Japan and the USSR weigh heavily in favour of Halliday's and Mearesheimer's dictums about the impossibility of peaceful rise. All three challenged their rank within international society, and the USSR, and more arguably Germany, also challenged the *status quo* about the fundamental rules of the game.⁴¹ All three gave first priority to building up military strength as quickly as possible, and then invaded and occupied their neighbours as part of bids for global superpower status. Ironically, the most obvious comparator for China's peaceful rise, although one would not want to push the parallel too far, is the United States. Like China, the rising United States sought to engage with the world economically while remaining aloof from high politics and the balance of power. Like China the rising United States also adopted a policy of military restraint, favouring economic development over the pursuit of world class military power. And like China, the United States resisted taking on leadership responsibilities until global events forced it to.

Summing up, one can conclude that over the past 30 years, China has done a pretty good job of pursuing peaceful rise. It started from the weak position inherited from both the century of humiliation, and the oppositional revolutionism of the Mao period. It began to detach itself from the doomed Soviet project 30 years before its failure, and achieved a domestic policy U-turn away from revolutionism more than a decade before the end of the Cold War. Despite all the obvious criticisms that might be mentioned, in the larger perspective China's leaders have played a difficult hand quite well. They have achieved transformations in China's internal economy that have generated huge increases in wealth and power. They have done this while for the most part maintaining internal stability and without (yet)

³⁹ Wu Xinbo, 'China'.

⁴⁰ Li Mingjiang, 'China Debates Soft Power'.

⁴¹ David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, pp. 112–57, 163–4.

raising really serious security fears among either their neighbours or the other great powers. There are to be sure concerns about China's rise in several countries, especially the United States. But these do not yet dominate their policies towards China, and there is nothing like the arms racing and expectation of war that accompanied other rising powers. In other words, since the late 1970s China seems to have broken away from a trajectory that initially looked set to repeat the turbulent rise of Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union, and steered a new course much more in harmony with the surrounding international society. That said, China has also been lucky in two big aspects of its international environment. First, the implosion of the Soviet Union eased its security position, and empowered China within both East and South Asia. Second, China's rise over the past 30 years has coincided with a period of relative stability, openness and prosperity in the world economy (notwithstanding various local economic crises during the 1980s and 1990s) which greatly facilitated its policy of export-led growth.

Where We Are Now

The question now is whether current conditions are such as to suggest that China's peaceful rise will be able to continue along the lines set over the past three decades, or do they suggest different challenges requiring different policies? The first task in addressing this question is to assess how best to characterise the present relationship between China and international society. Is Qin correct to suggest that China is increasingly a *status quo* power that accepts the rules of the game not just for instrumental calculations of self-interest, but ideationally, because it accepts the values as valid? Certainly this seems to be a popular position among not just Chinese writers but some US ones as well.⁴² From there we need to look at the condition of international society itself, and how its ongoing evolution is changing the game in which China is playing.

Qin offers three positions in relation to international society: *revisionist*, *detached* and *status quo*.⁴³ He also uses Wendt's excellent scheme for differentiating what holds societies together: coercion (forced conformity of behaviour), calculation (instrumental self-interest), or belief (ideational acceptance).⁴⁴ It is clear that China is no longer *detached* (indifferent) to

⁴² Pan Zhongqi, 'China's Changing Image of and Engagement in World Order', in Sujian Guo and Jean-Marc F. Blanchard, eds., *Harmonious World and China's New Foreign Policy* (New York/Lexington: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), pp. 39–63. Feng Huiyun, 'Is China a Revisionist Power?' *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2008, pp. 313–34; Alastair Iain Johnston 'Is China a Status Quo Power?', *International Security*, Vol. 27, No.4, 2003, pp. 5–56.

⁴³ Qin Yaqing, 'Nation Identity, Strategic Culture and Security Interests'; Qin Yaqing, 'China's Security Strategy'.

⁴⁴ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

international society, which leaves the choice between *revisionist* and *status quo*. One can get a more nuanced picture by further differentiating the *revisionist* category into *revolutionary*, *orthodox* and *reformist*.⁴⁵ Within an English school framing this differentiation makes clearer that two different factors are in play in the *revisionist* category: first, whether a country is happy with its status or rank in international society, and second, whether it accepts or contests the institutions that compose international society. What does China's current position in global international society look like using these criteria?

A *status quo* power is happy with both its status/rank and with the institutions of international society, which it accepts on an ideational level. I doubt that this is fully the case for China. Since the country is rising, it is almost by definition not satisfied with its status/rank and will seek to improve this in line with its rising wealth and power. While it has a permanent seat on the UNSC, it is not a member of the G8. It also seems clear that China is not entirely happy with all of the institutions of Western-dominated international society. It gives strong support to the pluralist institutions of coexistence: sovereignty, non-intervention, nationalism, territoriality, anti-hegemonism/balance of power, diplomacy, international law. But it is strongly opposed to the liberal political solidarist values of human rights and democracy, and up to a point also environmentalism. Other than opposing unipolarity and hegemonism, where it stands on the idea of multipolar great power management is unclear. Even though it is keen to increase its power status, China does not seem to want to assert its own claims to a leadership role, talking instead generally about greater democratisation of international society at all levels of power.⁴⁶ The nature of China's support for the market is also an interesting question. To put it bluntly, can a Communist government *ever* support the market ideationally, or *must* its support necessarily be not more than calculated? As Legro presciently noted, a really severe and sustained global economic crisis like the one we are now in may well expose whether China's commitment to the market, and 'reform and opening up', is instrumental or ideational.⁴⁷

A *revolutionary revisionist* rejects on ideational grounds the primary institutions of international society. It wants either to drop out ('detach' in Qin's terminology) or become a new vanguard, contesting the main normative content of international society, and seeking to overthrow both the status order and the form of international society. China was clearly in this category during the Mao period, but is clearly not now.

⁴⁵ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear* (Hemel Hempstead: Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 237–46.

⁴⁶ Hu Jintao, 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity', speech to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN's 60th Session, 15 September 2005, pp. 1–5. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zjyh/t213091.htm> (accessed 19 January 2009).

⁴⁷ Jeffrey W. Legro, 'What China Will Want', pp. 3, 5.

An *orthodox revisionist* is generally happy with the institutional structure and ideational content of international society, but unlike a *status quo* power is unhappy with its status within that. In some ways this fits China's position. Status is clearly one of China's key concerns, and it does accept many of the main institutions of international society. The doubt arises because, as noted above, China still contests, or is ambiguous about, some institutions.

A *reformist revisionist* accepts some of the institutions of international society for a mixture of calculated and instrumental reasons. But it resists, and wants to reform, others, and possibly also wants to change its status. This sounds like the best description of China's position in contemporary international society. China accepts on an ideational basis the pluralist, coexistence institutions. It accepts at least instrumentally the market, resists the more politically liberal institutions, and wants to increase its status/rank. In line with its resistance to democracy, China is uncomfortable with the predominantly Western world society/global civil society, with which it does not deal well (most obviously in relation to Tibet), and which as Clark argues is a key driver of the normative deepening of international society (democracy, human rights, environment).⁴⁸

Thinking of China as a *reformist revisionist* in international society helps to put in perspective what the questions will be about the prospects for China's peaceful rise during the next 30 years. It also helps to underline the argument that several important factors suggest that the present looks like being another of the substantial turning points that have marked China's engagement with Western-dominated international society, and one that is transforming the game that China will have to play if it is to sustain its peaceful rise. This is potentially a very big topic by itself, and I will only briefly outline four major factors. Even just these four suggest that the natural evolution inherent to international society will be pushed hard during the coming decades. The faster international society evolves the more difficult it becomes to do the kind of positional *status quo/revisionist* classification attempted above. That classification depends on there being a reasonably stable (i.e. evolving slowly) and reasonably consensual international society on a global scale, and if those conditions break down, then one has to think in the plural about international societies.

The first and most obvious factor is China itself, and its position within international society. China's rise has already been sufficiently successful to change its position. From being a poor, backward economy and a politico-military annex to the Soviet project, China is now regularly talked about in its own right as already being one of the engines of the world economy, and as a great power that might soon reach superpower standing. It has regained something of the power and status that it lost during the

⁴⁸ Ian Clark, *International Legitimacy and World Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

19th century, and others are now reacting to it as one of the big powers in the system. China can no longer pretend to be a marginal power acting as an apprentice in world politics. Its actions will now get more attention, both positive and negative, simply because they are the actions of a great power and have consequences well beyond China's borders. As the saying goes, 'with great power comes great responsibility'. The history of international relations is not short of stories about the negative consequences of great powers failing to take up their responsibilities, most obviously the United States during the interwar period. Rising power by itself changes China's position and raises the pressure on it to take a more leading role.⁴⁹ Given that China has largely avoided asserting itself, this change in external perception alone means that its next 30 years cannot look like its past thirty.

The second factor is the crisis in the world economy since 2008 caused by the implosion of an over-extended financial sector and the consequent drying up of credit. This crisis will almost certainly have a major and sustained impact on China's strategy of export-led growth. The advanced capitalist economies will no longer be able to sustain anything like their previous levels of imports from China. And if the United States decides to inflate away (aka 'quantitative easing') the enormous debt its government has built up in the bond markets, of which China is the biggest holder, that would pull away one of the props that has stabilised US–China relations. If China is to keep up the levels of economic growth seen as necessary to maintain its socio-political stability, then it will have to find rapid and sustainable ways of expanding its domestic market. The relatively benign economic conditions that facilitated China's reform and opening up from the late 1970s appear to have come to an end, as has the ideological framing of the 'Washington consensus' within which China's opening up took place. It is far from clear either how long the present crisis will last, or what the restructured world economy will look like after it. Along with everybody else, China will have to adapt to this restructuring, and how it does so could be affected by the fact that its main political allies are of low economic interest to it, while its main economic partners, especially the United States and Japan, are, if not quite political enemies, still far from being friends. And as Legro points out, much of the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party hangs on maintaining the growth that has so far been generated by reform and opening up.⁵⁰

The third factor is the growing planetary environmental crisis, roughly coinciding with the peaking of human numbers, which is unfolding during

⁴⁹ Bates Gill and Michael Schiffer, 'A Rising China's Rising Responsibilities', Working Paper, The Stanley Foundation, 2008, p. 19, <http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/articles.cfm?ID=531> (accessed 6 August 2009).

⁵⁰ Jeffrey W. Legro, 'What China Will Want'.

this century. Environmental change is a kind of wild card in international relations. It could quickly and deeply change the nature of the game, but it is difficult to tell precisely when and how this will happen. The environmental crisis will be more durable, and could easily be far more transformational, than the economic crisis. Climate change, pollution, sea-level rise and the collapse of the oceans as a food resource, will all have major effects on the human political economy both globally and locally. China already has its own environmental problems (e.g. pollution, water shortage, flooding, epidemics), and it will not escape the global ones. If environmental changes come quickly and strongly (e.g. sea-level rises of several metres, and/or a runaway greenhouse effect) it is not difficult to imagine that they would transform the rules of the game of international society. What is more difficult to discern is the direction of that transformation, which could be either towards much higher levels of international cooperation, and even global governance, in pursuit of environmental stability, or towards much higher levels of conflict. The point here is that either way, the conditions for China's peaceful rise would be transformed.

The fourth factor is the crisis of US leadership in international society, raising the question whether international society is headed for a period of weaker and more divided leadership. This crisis derives as much from decline in the legitimacy of US leadership under the Bush administration as from any decline in its material power, and there is a lesson here for rising great powers about the importance of legitimacy in international society to great power status. Material capability is only one aspect of great power standing. The nature of this crisis is not at this point very clear. It could be that the Obama administration is substantially able to restore the legitimacy of US leadership. Or it could be that the Bush administration has so damaged the credibility of the liberal project, and so weakened the United States politically and economically, that US global leadership is no longer possible regardless of how well Obama does. Obama inherits such a weak and damaged position that it is difficult to see any restoration of a unipolar order, and therefore some decentralisation of leadership in international society seems inevitable.⁵¹ It is not clear how China will respond to this. It seems to have little desire to assert leadership itself, and given its shortage of soft power,⁵² insufficient global legitimacy to do so even if it wanted to. But it also seems ambivalent about the crisis in US leadership. One strand of Chinese discourse emphasises anti-hegemony and the need for a more multipolar international society, which suggests that China would be pleased by a weaker United States. Another strand emphasises international stability as the key requirement for China's ongoing development, which suggests

⁵¹ Barry Buzan, 'A Leader Without Followers? The United States in World Politics after Bush', *International Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 5, 2008, pp. 554–70.

⁵² Li Mingjiang, 'China Debates Soft Power'.

that it would like to keep US leadership in place at least for the time being as a prop for its ongoing domestic development. This contradiction was easy to sustain when both the United States and the world economy were strong, but will be more difficult when both are weaker. China may well have a more explicit leadership role thrust upon it whether it wants it or not, and needs to make up its mind what it stands for.

These four factors, both singly and together suggest that there is little prospect of the next 30 years of China's peaceful rise looking anything like the past thirty. The international order that China has committed itself to joining, and particularly the economic order, is in trouble, and cannot carry on as it has been. The rise of China is in some ways part of that trouble, though mainly by accelerating the exposure of inbuilt structural constraints in terms of the environmental and financial limits of global capitalism. In some ways like Japan, China has played a supporter role, most obviously by propping up US debt in return for trade access. It has linked its own internal reform and development to an increasing opening up to the rules and structures of the global economy. Yet within 'reform and opening up' there is also a notable tendency within China to take a very self-centred view of its own development. This culturally referenced perspective is perhaps best symbolised for outsiders by the often-heard phrase 'Chinese characteristics', with its suggestion of an inward-looking type of national exceptionalism. Unlike the universalist pretensions of American liberalism, 'Chinese characteristics' points to a culturally unique way of doing things that is not necessarily relevant to those outside Chinese culture. This inward-looking perspective is also embodied in the arguments that China's main contribution to world order is simply to develop itself and rise peacefully.⁵³

These arguments, along with more quietly stated ones about not wanting to be seen as a challenger to the United States,⁵⁴ are used to excuse China's low-profile approach to the responsibilities of great power management. In effect, China is saying that its own problems of development are sufficiently huge that they absorb all of its capacity to manage, and that because China is so large a part of humankind, successful management of its own development will be of benefit of all. There are certainly significant elements of the truth in this view, as seen in the positive responses to such things as China lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, the benign effect of cheap Chinese exports on inflation in the West, and the idea that China has become one of the locomotives of the world economy. But that is not the whole story. The less benign side is reflected in the views that China's

⁵³ Yan Xuetong, 'The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes', p. 38; Hu Jintao 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity', p. 4.

⁵⁴ Yan Xuetong, 'The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes', pp. 36–7; Zhu Wenli, 'International Political Economy from a Chinese Angle', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 10, No. 26, 2001, pp. 45–54.

development contributes to global warming, drives resource depletion and high commodity prices, supports repressive regimes in the third world, comes at the expense of human rights, and creates an undemocratic great power that could turn nationalist and nasty. The tendency within China to take a benign self-view has some echoes of the 'Middle Kingdom' cast of mind, although this time without so much rejection of foreign ideas. Ironically, in cultivating it China makes itself look like the United States, which is also famous for the self-righteousness of its view that what the United States does must be right for the world because America is good, and represents the future of humankind. In taking this view, however, the United States can at least draw on a universalist liberal ideology that might in principle be applicable to the rest of the world. China does not have this kind of soft power (more on this below) or universalist ideology. Consequently, it is much less well placed than the United States to get its benign self-view accepted abroad. As the recent experience of the United States under the Bush administration demonstrated, great powers have a lot to lose when their self-perception gets badly out of line with how they are seen by other actors in the international system.

Looking Ahead

If the argument is accepted that 'more of the same' is not going to be a workable approach to the continuation of China's peaceful rise, then what are the challenges and opportunities for China's foreign policy? The economic and environmental questions raised above open large agendas with many uncertainties, and I am not going to discuss them further here. Instead I focus on the three key international political and strategic challenges for China mentioned in the introduction: its relationship with the United States, its relationship with Japan, and its relationship with international society.

Relations with the USA

This is a familiar and ongoing problem whose basic characteristics do not change much. There are three main elements that define the tensions in play. First, that China has depended on the US-led international order to provide the stability that it needs for its development. Second, that China wants to avoid being drawn into conflict with the United States as earlier non-democratic rising powers have been. And third, that China resents, and up to a point opposes, US hegemony and the unipolar power structure. The danger is that as China rises it will become less dependent on the United States, and more opposed to its leadership, and that the United States will feel more threatened by its increasing power and revisionism. The possible benign outcome is that as China rises it will become

increasingly integrated into international society, be more of a *status quo* responsible great power, and not be seen as threatening by the United States. Which of these scenarios wins out depends partly on how China evolves domestically: does the operation of the market lead towards more pluralist, or even democratic, politics in China, as some hope and others fear, or do the stresses of rapid development and global economic downturn produce a period of ultra-nationalism, as probably nearly all fear? It also depends on internal developments in the United States as to whether China is constructed as a partner or a challenger. These two elements play into each other, but neither is wholly dependent on the other.

Part of the problem is that Realists, who are influential in the policy thinking of both countries, take the view that China's rise will *inevitably* lead at a minimum to rivalry and tension, and at a maximum to a major confrontation like those that attended the rise of Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ As suggested not only by US policy discourse, but also by the durable 'China threat' literature⁵⁶ there is certainly a quite strong constituency in the United States that almost wants to cast China in the role of 'peer competitor' in order to restore the clarity of purpose to US foreign policy which has been hard to find since the end of the Cold War. If this constituency wins out in the United States, then it will be difficult for China to rise peacefully. It is therefore imperative that China do as little as it can to feed this constituency in the United States, and as much as it can to support the alternative lobby which seeks to strengthen the global political and economic order by bringing China into the world economy and international society. Even if the 'China threat' view does win out in the United States, it is still imperative for China to do its utmost to rise peacefully. If the Realists are correct, and the United States *must* feel threatened because

⁵⁵ Yan Xuetong, 'The Rise of China and its Power Status', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2006, p. 7.

⁵⁶ Richard Betts, 'Wealth, Power and Instability', *East Asia and the US After the Cold War*, *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1993, pp. 34–77; Aaron L. Friedberg, 'Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia', *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1993, pp. 5–33; Paul Dibb, 'Towards a New Balance of Power in Asia', *Adelphi* 295 (London: IISS, 1995); Denny Roy, 'Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security', *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1994, pp. 149–68; Denny Roy, 'Rising China and U.S. Interests: Inevitable vs. Contingent Hazards', *Orbis*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 2003, pp. 125–37; Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro, 'China I: The Coming Conflict with America', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 2, 1997, pp. 18–32; Robert S. Ross, 'The Geography of Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-first Century', *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1999, pp. 81–118; Robert Ross, 'Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia', *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2006, pp. 355–95; Adam Ward, 'China and America: Trouble Ahead?', *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2003, pp. 35–56; Peter Hays Gries, 'China Eyes the Hegemon', *Orbis*, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2005, pp. 401–12; Thomas J. Christensen, 'Posing Problems Without Catching Up: China's Rise and the Challenges for US Security Policy', *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2001, pp. 5–40; Thomas J. Christensen, 'Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy toward East Asia', *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2006, pp. 81–126.

China's rise, whether peaceful or not, inevitably puts into question the US's status as the sole superpower, there is nevertheless quite a good chance that no other major powers would feel threatened by a peacefully rising China. Those many voices currently in opposition to US hegemony, and speaking of the need for a more multipolar world order, might well welcome China's rise, though China will have to work harder to reassure near neighbours than those further away.

If China is relatively benign in the sense of not using violence against its neighbours, and staying broadly within the rules of the global economic order, Europe will not care much about its rise, and will not feel threatened by it. Russia is a more complicated case, because it is one of China's neighbours, and has worries about Chinese designs on the sparsely populated territories of the Russian far east. Yet the two countries have developed a quite stable strategic partnership,⁵⁷ have many useful economic complementarities, share an interest in non-intervention and regime security, and Russia may well want to continue to align with China against the United States. India is also a complicated case, having to balance a growing economic relationship with China against some lingering territorial disputes and a desire not to be overshadowed in status terms by China. Unless China turns nasty and threatening, India will probably try to continue to play the United States and China against each other as it does now, leaving the main economic and political costs of balancing China to the United States.⁵⁸ There is even a possibility that Japan, China's nearest neighbour, might not, though this is probably the most difficult case (more on this later). If, because its rise cannot avoid threatening US sole-superpower status, China cannot reassure the United States, then the next best scenario for China is to ensure that *only* the United States be opposed to China, not the West as a whole or other the great powers. If the United States was alone in opposing China's rise there would be much less danger of any return to the highly confrontational bipolarity of the Cold War. A constrained version of peaceful rise might still be possible.

The US–China relationship operates at two levels: regional (East Asia), where the United States is an intervening power; and global, where the question is about the overall structure of power and institutions. These two levels are linked, and their linkage raises a big and difficult question about the nature of China's dependence on the United States for stability.

⁵⁷ Peter Ferdinand, 'Sunset, Sunrise: China and Russia Construct a New Relationship', *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 5, 2007, pp. 841–67; Thomas Wilkins, 'Russo-Chinese Strategic Partnership: A New Form of Security Cooperation?', *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2008, p. 358.

⁵⁸ Barry Buzan, *The United States and the Great Powers* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), pp. 107–31; Simon Bromley, *American Power and the Prospects for International Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), p. 151; David Scott, 'Sino-Indian Security Predicaments for the Twenty-First Century', *Asian Security*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2008, pp. 244–70.

Does the US presence in East Asia mainly underpin the regional order by providing public goods and keeping a lid on local conflicts and rivalries, especially in Northeast Asia, as some think?⁵⁹ Or does it weaken the regional order by exacerbating divisions and disrupting what otherwise might be a self-stabilising hierarchic order in East Asia, as others argue?⁶⁰ Or is the truth less determined either way, and more contingent on the specific behaviours of China and the United States?⁶¹ If the US presence contributes to regional stability, then it adds to China's dependence on the US-led international order. If the US presence weakens the regional order, then its main purpose is to constrain the rise of China by constructing a kind of containment of it at the regional level. Short of the United States conducting the experiment of withdrawing from East Asia to see what happens, it is extremely difficult to know which of these interpretations is closest to the truth. But the question certainly underlines that the stakes between the United States and China in East Asia are very high, and points again to the importance of Sino-Japanese relations in the overall picture of China's rise.

Regardless of whether the US presence in East Asia stabilises or weakens the regional order, the logic of peaceful rise suggests powerfully that China needs to cultivate good relations with its neighbours. As noted above, it has done that pretty successfully with ASEAN and the two Koreas, and has begun to do so with Taiwan. As almost all writers on the region agree, Taiwan is a potentially very dangerous flashpoint, where careless moves by any of the parties could blow apart the regional (and possibly global) orders. It is absolutely imperative that China does its utmost to keep Taiwan within its policy of peaceful rise and to avoid a military clash over it. The gain to China of taking Taiwan by force would be dwarfed by the immense loss to its political, and possibly economic, position regionally and globally. If the Taiwan problem were settled by force, the peaceful rise policy would be dead.

⁵⁹ Michael Mastanduno, 'Incomplete Hegemony: The United States and Security Order in Asia', in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 141–70; David Shambaugh, 'China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order', *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2004, pp. 64–99; Evelyn Goh, 'Hierarchy and the Role of the United States in the East Asian Security Order', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2008, pp. 353–77.

⁶⁰ Muthiah Alagappa, 'Preface', and 'Managing Asian Security: Competition, Cooperation and Evolutionary Change', in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order*, pp. ix–xv, 571–606; David Kang, 'Getting Asia Wrong'; David Kang, 'Hierarchy, Balancing and Empirical Puzzles'; David Kang, 'Why China's Rise Will Be Peaceful'; Mark Beeson, 'American Hegemony and Regionalism: The Rise of East Asia and the end of the Asia Pacific', *Geopolitics*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2006, pp. 541–60.

⁶¹ Amitav Acharya, 'Will Asia's Past Be Its Future?'

Relations with Japan

From the point of view of both China's peaceful rise and international high politics generally, China's relationship with Japan is perhaps the most important in the world. Yet it has been neglected by both countries, and there is a strong consensus among analysts of this topic that the relationship is bad and tending to get worse, with both sides in different ways to blame.⁶² While Japan and China interweave their economies ever more closely, their political relationship is little more than correct, and at a deeper level the relationship between their societies remains poisoned by history and is deteriorating. Political leadership has not done much to address this problem, and both have at times contributed to making it worse. Attitudes at the public level in both countries are becoming more estranged and hostile, raising the danger that they will soon be locked into a downward spiral in which each reaction is reciprocated in ways that make the rift deeper and wider and harder to resolve. The consequences of allowing this situation to continue are negative for both countries, but because Japan is the lynchpin of the US position in Asia, they are extremely negative for China's peaceful rise.

A key great power relationship poisoned by history is by definition problematic for both peaceful rise and the development of international society. In the case of China and Japan, there is also an adverse strategic consequence, which should be apparent even to the most hardline of Chinese Realists, that the bad relationship between China and Japan is an enormous gift to the United States, for which 'China threat' advocates in Washington are profoundly grateful. That Japan feels threatened by China underpins not just the recent strengthenings of the US–Japan alliance, but also the legitimacy of the whole US military and political position in Northeast Asia. It leaves the United States as the ringholder between China and Japan,

⁶² Rex Li, 'Partners or Rivals? Chinese Perceptions of Japan's Security Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1999, pp. 1–25; Reinhard Driete, 'US Impact on Japan-China Security Relations', *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 2000, pp. 449–62; Gilbert Rozman, 'China's Changing Images of Japan 1989–2001: the Struggle to Balance Partnership and Rivalry', *International Relations of the Asia Pacific*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2002, pp. 95–129; Michael Yahuda, 'The Limits of Economic Interdependence: Sino-Japanese Relations', unpublished m/s, 2002, p. 13; James Reilly, 'China's History Activists and The War Of Resistance Against Japan: History in the Making', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2004, pp. 276–94; Peter Hays Gries, 'China's 'New Thinking' on Japan', *China Quarterly*, No. 184, 2005, pp. 831–50; Denny Roy, 'The Sources and Limits of Sino-Japanese Tensions', *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 2005, pp. 191–214; Tamamoto Masaru, 'How Japan Imagines China and Sees Itself', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 2005, pp. 55–62; June Teufel Dreyer, 'Sino-Japanese Rivalry and Its Implications for Developing Nations', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2006, pp. 538–57; Foot Rosemary, 'Chinese Strategies in a US-hegemonic Global Order'; Mike M. Mochizuki, 'Japan's Shifting Strategy Toward the Rise of China', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3/4, 2007, pp. 739–76; He Yanan 'Ripe for Cooperation or Rivalry? Commerce, Realpolitik, and War Memory in Contemporary Sino-Japanese Relations', *Asian Security*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2008, pp. 162–97.

and, from a Realist perspective, with no interest in seeing their relationship improve. The bad relationship with Japan is the outstanding contradiction to the possibility of China rising peacefully within its region, and casts doubt on the whole rhetoric of peaceful rise/development. If China cannot get on with its neighbouring great power, that also undermines its calls for a harmonious multipolar international system. For hardline Chinese Realists who think that China must eventually take up rivalry with the United States, the bad relationship with Japan cannot be other than a strategic disaster. By constructing a near enemy in the same camp as the far one, it not only contradicts the long-term game of China positioning itself in relation to the United States, but also gives the United States substantial leverage within China's home region.

Chinese nationalists sometimes talk about the history issue as if it was chiselled in stone and beyond hope of change. But as has been demonstrated in many times and places, the political use of history is to a very considerable extent what people choose to make of it. The fact that the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party is partly vested in its role in the struggle against Japanese imperialism does not help matters. The Party bears some responsibility for reproducing a sense of Chinese national identity which has an anti-Japanese element built into it. But given the heroic changes already accomplished by the Party, this should not rule out a more pragmatic attitude when the costs are so high and the stakes so big. The use of history to sustain hostile attitudes towards Japan is a political choice not an immutable fact. An opportunity therefore exists for China to cultivate a better social and political relationship with Japan, but to realise this opportunity China will have to start by reconsidering how it constructs its own identity, and specifically how it has reconstructed it since the early 1990s in the Patriotic Education Campaign.⁶³ If history can be set aside, or even better resolved, then China and Japan can build on the extensive economic links between them, and their shared preference for a stable regional and global order. China and Japan share an economically driven desire for regional and global stability. There is probably less difference between them on how the state should relate to the economy than between either and the United States. Yet their neglect of their own relationship blocks the path to making more of these synergies. If China took the lead in improving relations with Japan, that could begin to weaken the US position in East Asia and in the longer run globally. Since such a move would be accomplished mainly in the sphere of socio-political identity, it would be difficult for the United States to counter. As things stand, the United States can easily sell the China threat image to Japan. That would become much more difficult if China was able

⁶³ Wang Zheng, 'National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 2008, pp. 783–806.

to change the construction of its own identity to downplay rather than cultivate its historical conflicts with Japan from the 1890s to 1945. The sole superpower status of the United States rests as much on its social relations (that two other great powers, Japan and the EU, broadly accept US leadership) as it does on US material capability. Japan thus occupies a pivotal position not just regionally, but also globally.⁶⁴

In strategic terms, there is a very significant interplay between global status and the place of the power concerned in its region.⁶⁵ The easiest route to superpower status is to be free of regional entanglement. The United States and Britain have both had success with this strategy. If geographical placement precludes that option, as it did for Germany and does for China, then the other route is to dominate the region either by conquest (as Japan, Germany and the Soviet Union tried to do) or by the achievement of consensual regional order where power is mediated by international institutions. Conquest of one's region is now neither fashionable nor legal, and in modern times has tended to be short-lived. Creating a consensual regional order as the United States and the EU have done is more in keeping with the style of contemporary great power, which is less about military coercion, and more about demonstrating the capability to form and hold coalitions, to create and manage regimes and intergovernmental organisations, and more deeply to create international societies (globally or regionally). In the absence of world wars, or the threat of them, recognition and acceptance by others of the legitimacy of their leadership role in international society has become the hallmark of superpower status.

The problems of not achieving consensual hegemony over one's region are demonstrated by India and explain why it is not treated as a great power. Russia's desperation to control its region even by force is because without such control it will have difficulty hanging onto its shaky great power status. One of the critical points in the whole debate about China's future as a great-, or even a superpower, is therefore whether it will be able to establish some form of consensual relationship with its region. Accomplishment of that would give it a platform for superpower status. Falling into balance of power relations with Japan, India and Southeast Asia would largely confine its sphere to Asia. This is why the China-Japan relationship matters so much for China at both the regional and global levels. It is almost the defining problem for China's peaceful rise. Yet as things stand now, by allowing its relationship with Japan to fester, China strengthens the US position in East Asia, undermines its prospects for peaceful rise in its region, compromises its role in international society, and weakens its bid for global power status. If peaceful rise is taken seriously, then both by strategic logic and the logic of

⁶⁴ Barry Buzan, *The United States and the Great Powers*, pp. 134–40.

⁶⁵ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

international society, maintaining bad relations with Japan is a major error for China.

Relations with International Society

The question here is not about China's relationship with any particular state, but its relationship to the social structure of international society as a whole, both regionally and globally. This question picks up from the discussion above about China becoming a *status quo* power, and my argument that it could more accurately be characterised as a *reformist revisionist* one. One problem in thinking about this question is the absence of a fully articulated discourse that tells both the Chinese people and the rest of the world what kind of international society China would like to see and be part of. Shi has argued that China doesn't have 'a system of clear and coherent long-term fundamental national objectives, diplomatic philosophy and long-term or secular grand strategy', and that this is 'the No. 1 cognitive and policy difficulty for the current China in her international affairs.'⁶⁶ Although China has implicitly begun to articulate a partial vision of international society, Shi's critique still has some force: as Suzuki points out, it is far from clear how the various elements of Chinese foreign policy form a coherent set or reflect a political vision.⁶⁷

Another problem is that it is not clear what kind of understanding China has of international society at the global level. Without knowing that, it is difficult to see how China is trying to place itself in this game. At some risk of oversimplifying, there are two general interpretations of what global level international society is:

- (1) What might be called the *globalisation view*, which sees international society as fairly evenly, if thinly, spread at the global level. Here the assumption is that the global level will tend to get stronger in relation to the regional one, and international society become more homogenised as a result of the operation of global economic, cultural and political forces (aka capitalism). This view sees either a triumph of liberal Western hegemony, or a kind of compromise in which some non-Western elements are woven into the Western framing.
- (2) What might be called the *postcolonial view*, which sees international society as an uneven core-periphery structure in which the West still has a privileged, but partly contested, hegemonic role, and non-Western regions are in varying degrees subordinate to Western power and values. Here the assumption is that as the Western vanguard

⁶⁶ Shi Yihong, 'The Rising China: Essential Disposition, Secular Grand Strategy, and Current Prime Problems', 2001, <http://www.spfusa.org/Program/av2001/feb1202.pdf> (accessed October 31, 2008)

⁶⁷ Shogo Suzuki, 'Chinese Soft Power'.

declines relative to the rise of non-Western powers, the global level of international society will weaken. Anti-hegemonism will add to this weakening, and reinforce a relative strengthening of regional international societies as non-Western cultures seek to reassert their own values and resist (at least some of) those coming from the Western core.

These two views underpin big differences in how the regional and global levels of international society relate to each other. They require China to think much more carefully than it appears to have done so far about the relationship between the regional and the global levels. Does China want to pursue a mainly globalisation strategy, aiming to reform the global level of international society so that it gets a more comfortable fit with its domestic arrangements? Or does it seek mainly to insulate itself from a postcolonial global level international society by creating a stronger regional society in East Asia that is more in line with its own domestic values? As argued above, China shares a number of values with many of its neighbours that already provide the foundations for a distinctive regional international society in East Asia. Some elements of China's foreign policy discourse lean towards the globalisation view, most obviously those that stress the need for stability, and which take an almost liberal view of transformed international relations in which interdependence makes peaceful rise possible and eliminates much of the security dilemma for a rising power. Parts of China's diplomatic rhetoric about 'harmonious world', 'harmonious coexistence' and 'mutually beneficial cooperation to achieve common prosperity',⁶⁸ and being a responsible major power, seem to take a globalisation view. Other elements lean towards the postcolonial view, most obviously those that stress anti-hegemonism, strong sovereignty and non-intervention, regime security, and the defence of Chinese culture and 'characteristics'.⁶⁹ But these two understandings of international society are so different politically, and with such different implications for the relationship between the regional and global levels, that it is hard to see how they can both be held at the same time. They offer different visions both of what is and what should be.

From speeches such as that given by President Hu it is possible to infer a basic outline of China's vision of international society.⁷⁰ This vision is almost entirely focused on the global level, and feels close to what Ramo

⁶⁸ Hu Jintao, 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity'.

⁶⁹ Zhu Wenli, 'International Political Economy', pp. 47–9; Hu Jintao, 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity'; Li Mingjiang, 'China Debates Soft Power', p. 302.

⁷⁰ Hu Jintao, 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity'.

labelled ‘the Beijing Consensus’.⁷¹ To the extent that it stresses a harmonious and peaceful world in which mutual development is the key, and China’s rise should not be seen as threatening because the old power politics is a thing of the past, this vision reflects a globalisation view of international society. Yet the vision is at the same time deeply pluralist, harking back to something like a classical, minimalist, state-centric, view of international society. It puts very strong emphasis on a strict interpretation of sovereign equality and non-intervention. It emphasises the distinctiveness of both cultures and civilisations, and social systems and paths of development, and supports the desirability of preserving both.⁷² In between these two strands it is against hegemony, in favour of multilateralism, and for a larger role for developing countries in world politics. While being against hegemony, it appears to be silent on whether or not great powers should have a privileged management role in a multipolar system. To the extent that the harmonious world discourse represents an attempt to package China’s world view, it certainly suggests that China has begun to take on board what Watson labelled *raison de système*—the belief that it pays to make the system work.⁷³ But that said, the unresolved tensions within this view might do as much to feed ‘China threat’ thinking amongst outsiders as to ameliorate them. China still needs to find a way of presenting its view of itself and its position within international society to the rest of the world. Harmonious world is a start, but it is not coherent enough to support the continuation of peaceful rise.

In English school terms, this vision represents a novel, perhaps unique, model. Its pluralist side looks almost classically Westphalian, with a strong emphasis on the logic of coexistence amongst culturally and politically distinct states and peoples, and a deep adherence to sovereign equality and non-intervention as the way to preserve cultural and political diversity. There is clearly no desire for cultural or political convergence, yet the desire for diversity is unusually combined with a rejection of classical power-political, conflictual, views of the international system. Alongside this is a rather liberal, market-based, view of mutual development and interdependence in the economic sector. In most Western thinking, this combination of nationalist politics and liberal economics would be either undesirable (because it fails to link together the economic and political sides of the liberal agenda in a positive view of cultural and political convergence), or impossible (because the operation of the global market is too powerful

⁷¹ Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2004), p. 74. The term ‘Beijing Consensus’ was not coined by the Chinese and is not part of their rhetoric. As Shogo Suzuki, ‘Chinese Soft Power’, pp. 787–8, notes, the Chinese do not yet have a clear enough view of their own process of development to be able to package and sell it in this way.

⁷² See also Zhu Wenli, ‘International Political Economy’, pp. 47–9.

⁷³ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, p. 14.

to coexist with big cultural and political differences and one or the other has to give way). It is easy to see the political attraction of this combination to China. It allows China to remain both non-Western and non-democratic, while at the same time allowing it to rise peacefully on the back of the global market and interdependence. But can such a mixture be stable, and would such a seemingly contradictory *raison de système* be plausible or acceptable to others?

The contradictions in the Chinese view play to those non-Chinese of a Realist disposition who fear that a risen China will play ruthless power politics once it has the capability, a fear that plays equally strongly at the global and regional levels. In other words, for Realist-minded outsiders it is easy to read China's vision as simply wanting to take the advantages of participating in the global economy in order to increase its power and wealth, without paying the cost of social and political convergence. In liberal perspective, it is only the social and political convergence (liberal democratic peace) that makes the interdependence of the global market acceptable in political and security terms. A rising non-democratic power thus threatens the stability of the international society on which its rise depends. That the system has become more peaceful depends on it having become culturally and politically more homogenous along liberal democratic lines. Thus how it can be both politically and culturally diverse, and economically integrated, is at best hard to grasp, and at worst impossible and suggestive of an attempt to deceive. Political pluralism and economic globalisation cannot be comfortably mixed. From this perspective, China's rise is dangerous unless China becomes more politically liberal, and its current vision of international society will therefore not work, as some hope,⁷⁴ to counter the 'China threat' theory. The stridently anti-democratic, authoritarian/paternalistic, tone of some of the prominent 'harmony' literature in China does not help to assuage these fears.⁷⁵

The policy of peaceful rise/development is necessarily transitional. However genuinely they are held, the rhetorics of 'harmonious society' and 'harmonious world' do not remove the worries of outsiders about what a risen China would be like and how it would behave. The rhetoric of harmony lacks specificity, and too easily covers a ruthlessly pragmatic policy in which non-intervention allows dealings with any government or leadership no matter how repressive or illegitimate. It is precisely here that the potential lies for an ominous disjuncture between the rather benign way in which China perceives its own rise within the international system, and how that rise is seen by others. In a strictly economic logic, President Hu might be correct to argue that: 'China's development, instead of hurting or

⁷⁴ Li Mingjiang, 'China Debates Soft Power', pp. 300–301.

⁷⁵ Zhao Tingyang, 'Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept', pp. 31–2. See also William A. Callahan, 'Chinese Visions of World Order'.

threatening anyone, can only serve peace, stability and common prosperity in the world.⁷⁶ As China grows economically, it will raise the prosperity of the global economy and increase the sum of human knowledge and technology.⁷⁷ But in the rest of the world the economic side of the argument cannot be separated from the political side. This benign self-view seems to be strongly embedded in Chinese thinking, and any who question it risk being accused of being anti-Chinese and opposed to China's rise.⁷⁸

This rather strident defensiveness underestimates China's obligation to explain to itself and the rest of the world the silences and contradictions in its vision of international society. For outside observers, whether from a Realist, liberal or English school perspective, there are reasonable grounds to have concerns about the rise of China. Part of any workable peaceful rise strategy must therefore be for China to speak to those concerns and ameliorate them. Prickly defensiveness itself contributes to the suspicions about what China will do once it has risen. Anti-Chinese sentiments account for only a tiny portion of the concern about China's rise. Realists are obliged to be concerned about the rise of *any* power, whether China or some other, so Chinese Realist analysts should have no difficulty in understanding why other powers have that concern about China. Liberals and the English school are not worried about the rise of China in itself, but about the political nature of the China that rises. If China is to succeed at peaceful rise, it needs to avoid emulating the self-centred complacency of the United States that others cannot fail to perceive it as benign. It needs to make more effort to see itself as others see it. As Ramo argues, 'If China wants to... achieve Peaceful Rise, it is crucially important that it get other nations to buy into the world view it proposes.'⁷⁹ This whole question of how China understands international society, and conceives of its own place within it now and in the future, is in urgent need of clarification if peaceful rise is to succeed. Addressing that question should, in my view, be the first priority of those seeking to develop a 'Chinese School' of International Relations.

Conclusions

Using an English school approach enables an analysis of China's prospects for peaceful rise that not only puts the issues into historical perspective,

⁷⁶ Hu Jintao, 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity', p. 4.

⁷⁷ Yan Xuetong, 'Xun Zi's Thoughts on International Politics and Their Implications', p. 38.

⁷⁸ Yan Xuetong, 'The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes', p. 28; William A. Callahan, 'How to Understand China: the Dangers and Opportunities of Being a Rising Power', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 2005, pp. 701–14.

⁷⁹ Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus*, p. 28.

but also combines the key elements of material power and social structure. The major conclusion from this study is, contra Halliday and Mearsheimer, that peaceful rise is possible. But achieving it during the next three decades will be much more difficult than it has been during the past three. To carry on with the successful rise of the last 30 years China needs to think hard both about itself and about the international society in which it is now a major player. This process will inevitably create some tensions, but given that China cannot repeat its experience of the past 30 years such tensions are an unavoidable price of its rise. China has choices about what form these tensions take, and if it plays its hand well, tensions need not be incompatible with peaceful rise.

In particular, this analysis suggests that China needs to pay considerably more attention to the distinction between the regional and global levels, and the interplay between them. What seems obvious is that if China wants to pursue its current vision of cultural and political nationalism combined with economic liberalism, then the most congenial environment is likely to be found at the regional level in Asia, than at the global level. At the global level, the West and its values remain dominant, and nothing in China's current portfolio of ideas looks likely to overcome legitimate concerns about the rise of a non-democratic power. Probably the easiest thing to do, because the most familiar, is to avoid slipping into overt rivalry with the United States, or if that cannot be avoided, to make sure that *only* the United States feels challenged by China's rise. But if China wants to play its main game at the global level, it will have to expect sustained pressure to extend its domestic reforms much further and deeper than it has done so far. At the regional level, China's mix of social and political nationalism, concern for regime security, and limited economic liberalism are quite widely shared. In order to build on its good standing in the region, China has only to avoid threatening its neighbours (e.g. by refraining from aggressive pursuit of its claims in the South China Sea). Giving the development of regional international society first priority would distance China from the West, and put less pressure on it to reform its domestic social and political life.

This suggests that one way forward for peaceful rise would be for China to aim first at constructing a distinctive international society at the regional level based on 'Asian values'. Such a project would reflect the postcolonial view of global international society, and would necessarily mean a more decentralised global order. It could be argued that the current economic crisis offers a considerable opportunity to go down this road. With the Washington consensus in tatters, there is more room, and more need, for experiments in alternative modes of international political economy. If these are centred regionally, then global level international society would not follow the globalisation model but instead be based on stronger international societies at the regional level, and amongst these the pluralist

management of peaceful coexistence, trade and environmental issues.⁸⁰ The global level of international society would get thinner, and the regional level, as perhaps foreshadowed by the EU, thicker and more distinctive.

The choices China makes between the regional and global levels of international society will profoundly shape both the path that peaceful rise takes, and the probabilities of its success or failure. Whichever choice it makes, however, China's relationship with Japan will be a key factor for the prospects of peaceful rise. China cannot construct a peaceful Asian international society without Japan, and it cannot make itself at home in a peaceful global level international society without achieving peace with its major neighbour. As argued above, Japan also crucially determines how China relates to the United States. China therefore needs to repair the great flaw in its peaceful rise strategy represented by Japan, and to make this happen it will need to take the initiative much more than it has done so far. Because of the embedded and bitter politics on both sides, it will be far from easy for China to improve political and especially societal relations with Japan. China will have not just to take the lead, but also sustain the campaign for years, possibly decades. To make this work, China will also have to think hard about itself, and the extent to which its own identity, and the construction of its nationalism, have been shaped around a certain version of history.⁸¹ In sorting out how it wants to relate to Japan, China should also be able to work out a more coherent and specific image of itself and how it wants to relate to the rest of international society in the longer term. The Japanese will not move first unless their alliance with the United States comes unstuck. Here I disagree with Qin that Japan should be left to take the first step.⁸² Having the security of their alliance with the United States, having less to gain than China, and having a domestic problem equal to China's on the history issue, they almost certainly will not. Waiting for Japan to lead therefore means that the relationship will continue to deteriorate. Since China has the most to gain from change and the most to lose from the *status quo*, China must do it. This will require real depth of political courage and vision, both domestically and internationally, and an ability to take a long view and play consistently towards that goal. China's reputation for being good at the diplomatic and strategic long game, and its demonstrated capacity to make remarkable changes of policy, both suggest grounds for optimism.

Peaceful rise is an ambitious and difficult aim, but also a worthy and noble one. Achieving it would be an accomplishment of world historical importance. Peaceful rise is possible, but it will not be easy, and it will require new

⁸⁰ Charles A. Kupchan, 'After Pax Americana: Benign Power, Regional Integration and the Sources of a Stable Multipolarity', *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1998, pp. 40–79.

⁸¹ Wang Zheng, 'National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory'.

⁸² Qin Yaqing, 'China's Security Strategy'.

thinking from China. At the forefront of that new thinking must be three things: first, a clearer vision of China's own identity, and what kind of society it wants to be; second, and closely related, a clearer vision of what kind of international society China wants to promote; and third, a strategy for creating a proper reconciliation with Japan, at the level of peoples and not just of governments. These are unavoidable steps if President Hu's dream of 'a harmonious world where all civilizations coexist and accommodate each other' is to be realised.⁸³ They may seem to put a lot of the burden on China, and they do. China has now risen enough that it cannot avoid the responsibilities that go with power.

⁸³ Hu Jintao, 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity'.