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# China's Security Dilemma to the Year 2010

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October 1997

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The Center is grateful to the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the Peter Kiewit Foundation, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for supporting this project. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not represent positions of the Center, its supporters, or Stanford University.

This is an updated version of a paper presented to a conference on "China and World Affairs in 2010," sponsored by Stanford University's Institute for International Studies, February 25-26, 1996.

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Printed in the United States of America

## Abstract

Whether China can achieve its economic and political goals depends very much upon whether PRC's domestic stability can be maintained and large-scale devastating military conflict, either internally with Taiwan or externally with major foreign powers, can be avoided. This article will speculate on China's security role in the region and in the world ten to fifteen years hence, and assess China's likely intentions, capabilities, and strategies in domestic and foreign affairs, in light of the changes in China's geopolitical environment.

# China's Security Dilemma to the Year 2010

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The year 2010 is seen in China as a milestone in the nation's new Long March toward modernization and reunification. A long-term target for the year 2010 was proposed at the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee's Plenum in September 1995.<sup>1</sup> The major economic target to be implemented by 2010, when China's population reaches 1.4 billion, is to double the GNP figure of the year 2000.<sup>2</sup>

Less than three months later, an expanded meeting of the CCP's Central Military Commission (CMC) was held on December 9. At the meeting, principles were established to draft plans for the development of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) during 1995-2000 and up to the year 2010. The military stressed that, "the next 15 years will be an important period to promote the peaceful reunification of the motherland."<sup>3</sup>

The 2010 deadline for the national reunification was actually decided three years ago. On October 6, 1994, at a CCP Central Committee's working session on the Taiwan affairs, the Party's Politburo member and the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office Director Wang Zhaoguo said: "We have explicitly stated under what situation [we would] use force to solve the cause of reunification of the two sides of the Strait. We will definitely not tolerate the confrontational situation between the two sides after 2010."<sup>4</sup>

Whether China can achieve its economic and political goals depends very much upon whether PRC's domestic stability can be maintained and large-scale devastating military conflict, either internally with Taiwan or externally with major foreign powers, can be avoided. This article will speculate on China's security role in the region and in the world ten to fifteen years hence, and assess China's likely intentions, capabilities, and strategies in domestic and foreign affairs, in light of the changes in China's geopolitical environment.

Chinese communist leaders still believe two Karls—Karl Marx and Karl von Clausewitz—in that: "economy is the basis and politics is the superstructure, while military is the continuation of politics." Based on their philosophical outlook, the article tries to analyze China's changed threat perceptions, its strategy for preventing Taiwan from drifting apart, as well as its defense modernization.

The article also argues that China by 2010 will be a friendly member in the world community, while playing a synthetic core role in East Asia. Whether China will become threatening to U.S. interests in the region, however, depends upon U.S. policies toward China and the entire East Asian region.

## China's Changed Threat Perceptions in the Changed World

Under the influence of the new world geopolitical environment and through the nation's own historical process of evolutionary and revolutionary developments, China has been rapidly changing. In order to understand China's current security concerns, the new issues that underlie China's changed threat perceptions must be discussed.

Among all possible motives behind military developments, threat perceptions are the most important ones. For the case of China since 1989, domestic/internal (not foreign/international) and civil (not military) threats to the current regime's survival are the most crucial, as perceived by leaders in Beijing.

### Threat to the Nation's Survival Disappeared Long Ago

For a hundred years following the 1840 Opium War, China was on the verge of losing its thousands-year-long national identity. Japan annexed Taiwan and Manchuria from China, and Outer Mongolia, with Stalin's help, declared independence. Hong Kong, Macao, and numerous small areas became concession zones to foreign imperialist powers. It seemed that, following India, which fell victim to British colonialism all at once, China was going to be torn down piecemeal by multiple imperialists.

That history ended, never to return, not in 1949 but in 1945, when China became one of the five leading allies winning the final victory over fascists. The danger to China's national survival has disappeared under the general background of world decolonization. China, whether red communist or white capitalist, will endure forever. However, who rules the nation and how the nation is ruled may change. A key point is why and how the change may happen.

### No War Threat to PRC from Major Powers

Since its foundation in 1949, PRC had been involved in two major wars against the United States—a direct one in Korea and an indirect one in Vietnam. China also engaged in countless border clashes with the former Soviet Union. During the Cold War years, the Chinese communists felt continuous threats to China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity from American imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism.

The Chinese description of the two superpowers as old-day colonial imperialists contemplating to eliminate China as an independent and sovereign nation-state was either a dogmatic misunderstanding or a deliberately misleading interpretation. The truth was that, while Beijing pretended to become the Third World leader, both Washington and Moscow intended and contended to change China's regime in their favor respectively. Neither was stupid enough to have ever thought of being able to deprive China of its right to exist as a nation-state in the world. Nor did they believe that foreign military intervention should or

could be used to change the regime in Beijing. China is not Haiti, where several thousand American GIs could change the regime. China is also incommensurably bigger and stronger than Iraq, where foreign troops with the most sophisticated military technologies failed to change the ruler.

The end of the Cold War, followed by deep reform in former socialist countries, has basically terminated the antagonistic struggle between two systems of ideology and political economy. The export of communist revolution is no longer in Beijing's interests. Moreover, Chinese-style socialism, which allows for private ownership and has adopted a market economy (albeit one planned at macro-level), has made China's own identity ambiguous: is it really socialism or capitalism? Perhaps it is neither traditional capitalism nor classic socialism; or, perhaps a socialism-capitalism combination and convergence. For Washington, watching and encouraging the so-called peaceful evolution in the former socialist world, no longer is there the need to use military means to contain the reformist China—although some American right-wing extremists have recently suggested the resumption of the Cold-War containment policy. For Moscow, the bitter lesson of economic-political bankruptcy, partly due to simultaneous military confrontations against China and the West, will not soon be forgotten, even if Russia recovers. In short, the lessons learned by all major players in world politics guarantee that China need not prepare for meeting any war threat from major military powers in the post-Cold War world.

#### Real Threat to the Regime's Survival Is from Within

The real threat to the PRC's current regime comes not from foreign military intervention, as it was mistakenly perceived by Mao Zedong and his comrades-in-arms during the Cold War years, but from the Chinese people's pervasive dissatisfaction with the regime's corruption, which is clearly discerned by Deng Xiaoping's successors today. A recent Party document says that, "efforts must be intensified to...keep a good government and carry out the anti-corruption struggle, and this is a prerequisite...for maintaining social stability," and that "the CCP committees and governments at all levels should understand the importance of fighting corruption from the high plane of the rise or fall, existence or death of the Party and the country."<sup>5</sup>

All ruling dynasties in China's history wanted to be *banzai*, i.e., to endure for ten thousands of years. None of them could last that long, and past rulers, as they became corrupted, were overthrown. In general, no corrupted regime, whether feudal, capitalist or socialist, can survive forever.

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Unless a political reform is launched and succeeds, in which the current regime in China takes initiative to change itself from a one-party dictatorship to a multi-party check-and-balance democracy, the corruption will not end but the regime will be finished. The current regime will definitely change, either through—hopefully and quite possibly—its own political reform or, otherwise, through the will of an angered people.

Both the ruling class and the ruled people in China expect that the ongoing economic reform will lead to a political reform sooner or later, because the introduction of check-and-balance mechanisms is a worldwide trend of political development as well as a necessity according to the Communist Party's own philosophy of dialectics. However, due to the fierce resistance from special interest groups inside the ruling class, political reform is not

guaranteed to achieve essential progress before the people's anger erupts. Therefore, gaining time is the name of the game.

### Factors Helping the Regime Gain Time

Several factors may work in favor of extending people's patience before political reform is introduced. Economic development is, of course, the most fundamental and effective factor, for the reason that it improves living standards and thus makes people less rebellious. The Party's General Secretary Jiang Zemin said: "There exists an inseparable inner link among reform, development and stability. Development is the hard core of all principles...and is indispensable in maintaining stability and withstanding the pressure of hegemonism and power politics...and fundamentally shaking off economic backwardness and ranking China among the world's modernized countries."<sup>6</sup>

Enhancing the nation's international prestige is another stabilizing factor. It is commonsensical that a regime can survive longer than expected if it can hold high the nation's international prestige, and that revolution is more likely to occur in a nation defeated or humiliated by foreign enemies. To the Chinese, proud of their glorious culture in the world's long history but intimidated by foreign military powers for more than a hundred years in the recent past, this is especially true.

The improvement of living standards itself may raise the nation's international reputation, which in turn helps corrupted officials win people's forgiveness. Modernization of the national defense is another possible way in which a big country such as China can gain respect. Developing the military strength and sophistication of the PLA may well enhance the self-respect of the Chinese people as well as the nation's prestige abroad. The following reasoning may occur! "If the government can keep upgrading our income and our nation's prestige to the level we have never enjoyed before," the Chinese people would think, "let the officials temporarily, although unfairly, be corrupted, and let necessary political reform—which, if not conducted peacefully by the ruling class from the top down, may hurt the economy and the nation's image by causing domestic chaos—wait until the country is strong enough. Corruption may be unavoidable in the period right after the opening of a puritanic socialist society to capitalist indulgence, and we can always clean it up later."

The emotional issue of the Mainland-Taiwan reunification is yet another factor in favor of the central government in Beijing continuing its rule. Unlike peoples in the former Soviet Union and East European communist countries, where independent movements have easily gained momentum due to ethnic differences, a majority of the Chinese people reject any separatist intention. The national reunification task consolidates the people firmly around the government, corrupted or not.

### The Current Taiwan Strait Crisis

Beijing's judgment is that Taiwan's current president Lee Teng-hui is determined to create two Chinas or one China and one Taiwan. General Liu Huaqing, CMC's first vice chairman, said, "If the old Chiang and young Chiang (Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-Kuo) were still alive, the Taiwanese separatists would not have gone that furiously. Our PLA must get prepared for the case of forceful liberation of Taiwan."<sup>7</sup> The basic

guideline is what Deng Xiaoping said in 1994: “Whoever lost Taiwan must step down and stand condemned through the ages.”

### Beijing’s Policy Baseline

Beijing officially stated that Taiwan would not be the first priority issue on the agenda of the motherland’s reunification until Hong Kong and Macao returned to China on July 1, 1997, and December 31, 1999, respectively. Chinese communist leaders have been consistent with Mao’s policy on Taiwan. Mao said on May 22, 1960, at a Politburo meeting: “It is preferable to have Taiwan left in Chiang-father-and-son’s hands so that it will not fall into American hands. With respect to Chiangs, we can wait. It is not necessary that the task of liberating Taiwan be fulfilled in our generation, it can be left for the next generation to accomplish.” Then, the Politburo decided that, “So long as the Taiwan authorities keep Taiwan not split away from China, the mainland will not change the current relationship with Taiwan.”<sup>8</sup>

Beijing has no intention to pursue a hasty reunification. Mr. Lee Kwan-Yew of Singapore, respected in both Beijing and Taipei, said: “If I have to make a speculation, I think they [PRC leaders] will maintain the status quo in the next 15-20 years.”<sup>9</sup> Before Taiwan’s eventual reunion with the mainland, presumably by 2010, Beijing prefers to maintain the principle of “yige zhongguo, gezi biaoshu” [one China, and each side asserts, according to its own definition, what the China is]. Moreover, the future reunified China’s official title, as well as its national flag and anthem, is negotiable; it may be neither PRC nor ROC.

A high-ranking communist intelligence officer recently wrote: “Even if this reunification process cannot be completed by 2010, conditions will be more favorable as the gap of the living standards on both sides of the Taiwan Strait will have narrowed.”<sup>10</sup> It is economically premature to force a quick marriage between the two when there is a huge gap in per capita income.

More importantly, the reunified China would need to have the Nationalist Party (KMT) return to the mainland to develop its grass-root organizations and compete with the CCP, because KMT is, verbatim, the zhongguo guomin dang [Chinese (not Taiwanese) Nationalist Party]. Deng Xiaoping’s “one state, two systems” will inevitably be accompanied by a two-party system. Yet, the Beijing regime is politically not ready to open the mainland’s society to a bipartisan competition and a system of checks and balances until 2010.

In both economic and political terms, the PRC is currently at a stage similar to dictatorial South Korea and Taiwan before the mid-1980s. Beijing needs another fifteen years of economic development before it can introduce the Singapore model of electoral authoritarianism or the so-called “authoritarian pluralistic society.”

### Lee Teng-hui’s Two-China Policy

Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo strictly insisted on the one-China policy. For this, Mao Zedong commended that, “Chairman Chiang was China’s great patriotic nationalist.”<sup>11</sup> The old Chiang ordered that ROC be pulled out of international organizations, particularly the United Nations, if PRC was officially recognized and represented there.

Convinced by Deng Xiaoping’s reform, Chiang Ching-kuo started the reconciliation process on November 2, 1987, when he lifted the ban on visits to the mainland by ROC’s citizens. After Chiang Ching-kuo passed away in 1988, Lee Teng-hui continued promoting



the process until he was able to consolidate his power by having Premier Hau Pei-tsun, a military strongman loyal to Chiang's one-China principle, ousted in February 1993. Since then, Lee has gradually shifted from Chiang's one-China policy toward seeking Taidu [Taiwan-independence]. "Lee Teng-hui has only one consuming ambition—to have Taiwan as separate from China as possible," Lee Kwan-Yew said, based on his personal experience with Lee Teng-hui.<sup>12</sup> Lee Kwan-Yew has decided never again to act as a mediator between Taipei and Beijing because "I have been undercut by President Lee on a previous occasion. I have bowed out as his mediator."

Lee officially announced a "jieduanxing liangge zhongguo" [interim or transitional two-China stage] policy, which is a tricky form of Taidu, because no one can be sure how long the two-China phase will last and why it may not turn out to be a transition to Taidu. According to this policy: (1) ROC's national sovereignty no longer covers the mainland China, and ROC is renamed as ROC-on-Taiwan; (2) the ROC-on-Taiwan tries to gain, in parallel with PRC, a seat in the United Nations and to establish ROC's embassies, together with PRC's embassies, in any countries; (3) Lee also has started a process of Taiwanization of both the ROC government and the KMT Party by declaring that the previous ROC government, moved to Taiwan in 1945, was an outside power imposed on Taiwan, whereas the KMT Party, although founded by Dr. Sun Yet-sen in 1894, is only two years old (implying that the new KMT Party is now Taiwanese, since he became the Party's chairman, and has nothing to do with the old KMT Party of China).

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord, intending to prove that Lee Teng-hui does not take the two-China position, pointed out at a press conference that, "the government of Taiwan does not wish to be a separate country." Yet, Taipei's foreign spokesman categorically refuted Lord's "prescription of ROC's policy" and noted that "he probably is not aware of Taiwan's new position."<sup>13</sup> In an interview with the Asian Wall Street Journal, ROC foreign minister Frederick Chien further suggested that, "facing ROC government's new pragmatic policy since 1991, the United States should reconsider its 1972 position on the China issue."<sup>14</sup> This revealed that Lee's two-China policy is indeed a covered version of Taidu.

Lee Teng-hui's two-China policy violates ROC's constitution, which stipulates that ROC's national and territorial sovereignty covers all of China, including Mongolia and Tibet. Actually, some people in Taiwan warned to sue Lee's government, when ROC's representative office in Atlanta used the new official title of ROC-on-Taiwan to issue invitation cards for ROC's national day celebration party in October 1995. Under public pressure, ROC Foreign Ministry officially apologized.<sup>15</sup>

A state leader can be brought to court, if he is involved in a case of treason. Some people in Taiwan nicknamed Lee Teng-hui as "Lee Tae-woo", implying that he will be indicted similarly to the case of former South Korean president Rho Tae-woo. Others call him Wang Jingwei, implying that every Chinese patriot is obliged to catch and kill him [renren jieke de'er zhuzhi].<sup>16</sup> Mr. Hau Pei-tsun said at the 1995 annual meeting of the Veterans Association in Taipei that, "contemporary Wang Jingwei is more threatening than communists."<sup>17</sup> He also told a group of military veterans' descendants: "We ought to sacrifice our flesh and blood to eliminate Taidu."<sup>18</sup> Lee seems to have felt that he is in danger. He said, "for the sake of country, I don't care about my personal life. Either life or death poses no problem."<sup>19</sup> So far, he insists on his two-China version of Taidu.

Recently, without promising to return to Chiang's one-China position, Lee has proposed that Beijing sign an unconditional peace agreement. He intentionally puts the cart before the

horse so that no progress can be achieved. As a Taiwanese newspaper wrote in its editorial, “It is impossible to sign a peace agreement, if the Taiwan authorities cannot adhere to the one-China policy. If the Taiwan authorities can adhere to the one-China policy, there would be no need to sign such an agreement because the Taiwan Strait may remain calm and tranquil without the peace agreement. The one-China principle is the key and precondition to keep the Strait peaceful.”<sup>20</sup>

“If Taiwan’s current policy is kept unchanged after the [presidential] election,” Lee Kwan-Yew wrote about the recent crisis, “it is very likely that China will hold more military exercises.” “Taiwan should be granted international living space only in economic, social and cultural areas. Unless Taiwan assures China that the ‘international living space’ is maintained within the one-China framework and will not lead to independence, no agreement can be reached between the two sides.”<sup>21</sup>

### PLA’s Military Strategy

The PLA top commanders and strategists know their ancestor Sun Tzu’s art of war very well. “It is preferable to subdue a state whole and intact than to destroy it. The skill in killing does not deserve the highest praise. To conquer the enemy without resorting to war is most desirable. The adepts in warfare are those who can conquer the enemy without fighting battles. They can win a complete victory without as much as wearying their own men.”<sup>22</sup>

PLA does not have the capabilities nor the intention to launch a cross-strait amphibious beachhead landing operation against Taiwan. Politically, the present goal is to stop Lee’s two-China policy rather than to attain an undesirable premature reunification through military occupation of Taiwan. If PLA can successfully stop Lee in a way that causes neither heavy casualties to PLA nor substantial collateral damage to local Taiwanese people, it may offer a good opportunity for Beijing to gain sympathy from both people on the mainland and compatriots in Taiwan. However, if it shows poor performance in fulfilling this goal, the PLA will lose face both at home and abroad. Worse, gone with China’s military prestige would be the stability of its domestic regime.

Based on the above political considerations, PLA will fight a high-tech war, with collaboration from within Taiwan, against Lee Teng-hui alone. PLA will launch precision-guided missiles, both ballistic and cruise, to make pinpoint hits on Lee’s presidential palace and residence. The missile-warhead explosion will sound as a signal to patriotic Taiwanese to take actions to arrest, if not kill, Lee Teng-hui. That’s why PRC’s Foreign Minister Qian Qichen warned: “Taiwan compatriots don’t have to worry about the military exercises. But, I would urge them to stay away from those independence-inclined politicians.”<sup>23</sup> A PLA source said that, “If any unexpected situation occurs, it will not spread to damage ordinary people’s lives and wealth because the target has been very clearly defined.”<sup>24</sup> Citing the history of the 1948 uprising in Taiwan against KMT, Beijing appeals to “Taiwan’s compatriots to make new contribution to the anti-split, anti-Taidu struggle.”<sup>25</sup>

Given the condemnation of Lee Teng-hui as Wang Jingwei inside Taiwan, the strategy is not groundless. To verify the strategy, PLA conducted two ballistic-missile exercises in July 1995—in the wake of Lee’s visit to the United States, and in March 1996—ten days before Taiwan’s presidential election. The first missile exercise proved to be very productive. Responding to it, two KMT vice chairmen, Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun, issued a statement accusing Lee of “intending to huidang panguo [destroy the Party and betray the state].”<sup>26</sup> They were later expelled from KMT by Lee, which marked the open split of the

Party. Commenting on the second missile exercise, former ROC defense minister Chen Li-an gave Lee Teng-hui a Buddhist prophecy: “zi zuonie, buke huo [due to self-committed sins, he cannot survive].”<sup>27</sup>

Beijing made a mistake, at least tactically if not strategically, in conducting the second missile exercise, which turned out to be counterproductive. First, the pro-one-China patriotic KMT leaders inside Taiwan had done their maximum (to denounce Lee Teng-hui and to cause the KMT split) after the first missile exercise. They could find nothing effective beyond this maximum to respond again to the second missile exercise. While PLA could double the exercises, it would be senseless to repeat what they had once said and be ridiculous to make the already-split KMT split once again. Second, it is common sense that any show-off can be impressive only the first time. Third, the exercise on the eve of Taiwan’s presidential election offered Lee Teng-hui a propaganda opportunity. He was able to mislead domestic and international public opinions by arguing that Beijing was opposing Taiwan’s democratic process, not the separatist movement. Fourth, it gave the United States an excuse to send aircraft carrier groups to defend “democracy and stability” in East Asia in word and to support Lee Teng-hui’s two-China policy in deed.

Having won 54% of the vote and American military support, the re-elected Lee Teng-hui has started pushing further his two-China policy. On April 7, ROC’s chief of the Mainland Policy Committee for the first time publicly suggested that, “Both shores [of the Strait], one side is ROC and the other is PRC, have representative rights in the United Nations as well as all international organizations.”<sup>28</sup> The next day, when meeting Mr. Craig Thomas, chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, ROC Premier Lien Chan appealed for the first time that, “the United States review the three communiqués signed with Chinese communists as well as the Taiwan Relations Act” because these documents “were stipulated and produced when the communist Soviet Union still existed.”<sup>29</sup> Mr. Lien said, “Today, the situation has changed,” implying that the United States no longer needs the PRC. Lien also reiterated the cart-before-horse proposal of signing a peace agreement between Beijing and Taipei “without pre-conditions.”

Two days later, Beijing responded to Taipei’s renewed two-China effort after Lee’s re-election. Mr. Li Ruihuan, vice chairman of PRC’s People’s Congress and standing member of CCP’s Politburo, told a delegation from Thailand, “There are different matters in the world, some of them are elastic, some are less elastic and some are not elastic at all. The principle of ‘One China’ is not elastic and not subject to negotiations, regardless who is the family head. But, the ‘Two Systems’ may be negotiated in future.”<sup>30</sup> Mr. Tang Shubei, Beijing’s chief negotiator with Taipei, categorically refuted the disinformation spread by Taipei to the international community that tensions have been reduced after Lee Teng-hui’s re-election: “The relations between two shores can be restored only when [Taipei] returns to the one-China principle.”<sup>31</sup>

If Lee Teng-hui continues slipping down the road toward two Chinas, it seems certain that PLA will use the hit-Lee-only strategy to oust him before his new four-year term expires. The strategy may also play a long-term stabilizing role in maintaining peace in the region because it implements Sun Tzu’s strategic principles and forestalls any all-out war across the Strait.

### Washington’s Policy

Washington’s current policy of so-called strategic ambiguity, combined with dispatching carrier battle groups near Taiwan and promising to supply more advanced defensive systems

to Taiwan, does not work well and will be doomed if the crisis erupts into an open war and the United States is forced to choose one side. Ironically, if the Seventh Fleet patrols along the Strait, it will encounter nothing. It can only block an amphibious operation, which PLA does not intend to do at all. It cannot stop PLA's missiles flying across the Strait to punish Lee. Nor can the Patriot anti-missile system, which showed poor performance against primitive Scuds, intercept advanced DF-15 ballistic missiles, let alone cruise missiles.<sup>32</sup>

Actually, there is no strategic ambiguity at all. It is clear to both Beijing and Taipei that, on the one hand, Washington is encouraging Lee to continue his two-China policy and, on the other hand, U.S. troops will never be committed to fight against PLA on China's soil. Indeed, Chinese and Americans fought against each other only in and on behalf of third countries: Korea and Vietnam.

Nevertheless, the United States holds the key to solving the crisis, if Washington is willing. A clear-cut one-China policy must be spelled out to Beijing and Taipei, respectively. Instead of appealing for an unconditional peaceful solution, Washington should demand that Beijing promise a conditional no-use-force agreement, i.e., PLA must not invade or threaten to invade Taiwan unless the Taiwan authorities pursue the two-China policy. On the other hand, Washington must discourage Taipei from continuing its current two-China policy. It is not enough for the U.S. government to only say that it does not favor the two-China policy. Washington should explicitly state that it opposes the two-China policy and will veto Taipei's application for a second China seat in the United Nations, under the name of either ROC or ROC-on-Taiwan or Republic of Taiwan. This would be a devastating blow to Lee's two-China policy, which has been the sole factor destabilizing the region.

Unfortunately, "there are elements in the United States determined not to see China recover Taiwan."<sup>33</sup> The United States has been imitating Lee Teng-hui's "cart-before-horse" strategy. At best, the United States and its China specialists, many of whom do not carefully read Taiwan's policy statements or are unable to decodify the tricky Chinese-style wording, are not aware of Lee's explicitly (to all native Chinese) manifested two-China policy. It is hopeless to attempt to improve Sino-U.S. relations and regional relations before Washington moves the horse to the front of the cart.

## PLA's Defense Modernization

Defense modernization is a worldwide phenomenon in the post-Cold War era. While there is no international major war threat to China, the national defense modernization remains one, though the last one, of its "four modernizations" (the others being industry, agriculture, and science/technology).

Strengthening domestic stability by enhancing the nation's prestige, a component of which is China's military muscle, is one of the motivations behind PLA's weapons R&D programs. However, improving living standards raises the nation's international image and consolidates its domestic stability more effectively and directly than equipping PLA with advanced weapons. Therefore, military spending should by no means hurt the nation's economic development. The total military budget in the next fifteen years will be 356.2 billion U.S. dollars, only 31% more than the one-year 1994 U.S. defense budget.<sup>34</sup>

## Upgrade of Nuclear Missile Arsenal

Mao Zedong said in 1958, “We also need to build a few atomic and hydrogen bombs, without these [bombs] others would say ‘you are nothing.’”<sup>35</sup> China’s nuclear arsenal played a role more political than military during the Cold War years, when two superpowers were deadlocked in mutual nuclear deterrence. Possessing the bomb drastically increased PRC’s position in the international arena—with it, Mao’s representative could replace Chiang’s in the United Nations and be seated in the Security Council on an equal footing to the other four permanent members.

The prestige concept at that time was rather simple. On the one hand, although China’s nuclear forces were primitive, what mattered was “have” or “have not”. “Have what” was not a question. On the other hand, while the international prestige helped PRC act abroad, it had nothing to do with maintaining its domestic regime, which remained corruption-free and stable under Mao’s slogan of “serving the people.”

China started the R&D of its second-generation nuclear missiles in the early 1980s. The guideline for the program was to develop mobile and thus survivable long-range ballistic missiles.<sup>36</sup> To make them mobile, however, it is necessary to miniaturize the nuclear payload and shift from liquid propellants to solid rocketry. Although the Cold War has ended, China’s strategic force modernization plan cannot be given up halfway because a substantial amount of resources has already been spent. If the nuclear warhead miniaturization program were interrupted, costly achieved developments in the area of ballistic missiles would have also been wasted.

For the miniaturization of nuclear warhead, China needed to conduct two to three more underground tests by 1996, when the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was likely to be signed. Foreign opposition to China’s nuclear tests helped consolidate the Chinese people around the government. The people understand that other nuclear powers have developed and deployed many more generations of nuclear missiles. To maintain the position of being more or less equal in the Big-Five Club, China must deploy a few nuclear missiles of the second and the last generation, which will be stored in tunnels and not targeted at anyone.

## Modernization of Conventional Forces

PLA officers stationed in Moscow for purchasing Russian weapons and military technologies were instructed by CMC leaders that their purpose is to prepare the use of force against Taiwan’s possible independence.<sup>37</sup> The current modernization of conventional forces must reflect the strategy of executing high-tech pinpoint strikes upon Lee Teng-hui, with minimal collateral damage to local people. The military prestige concept must also be taken into consideration.

Americans admit that the 1950-53 Korean War was the first overseas war that the U.S. troops did not win. However, Chinese maintain that they won in Korea, although the war ended where it started. The logic underlying the Chinese judgment is that a draw between two unevenly equipped opponents equals a victory of the poor over the strong. However, PLA could not convince domestic or international audiences of its claimed victory in the 1979 Sino-Vietnam War, due to the heavy casualties it had suffered. Instead of teaching the Vietnamese a lesson, as Deng Xiaoping instructed, PLA was taught a lesson: It may lose face in a war against a small rival, if it cannot keep the casualties at a very low level.

The 1991 Persian Gulf War offered another lesson to the PLA leadership. Videotaped scenarios of the Desert Storm Operation were replayed again and again at all levels of the

military. The lesson was especially enlightening in the sense that, to gain military prestige in an era of mass media reportage, a strong army must be able to wage high-tech warfare with precision-guided weapons so that casualties and collateral damages can be kept to a minimum.

First of all, China has accelerated its development of a land-attack cruise missile, which can be ground-launched as well as ship-borne (including submarine-borne) or air-borne. Key to the cruise missile program is the development of guidance packages based on the combined inertial and global positioning satellite en-route navigation system and the terminal terrain contour-matching radar system.<sup>38</sup> “The Clinton administration has protested Russia’s sale of cruise missile rocket motors to China, as well as other transfers, but Russia is going forward with the sales.”<sup>39</sup>

Second, the prevention of any desperate air retaliation on the mainland by F-16s and Mirage-2000s, which Taiwan has acquired, is a matter of necessity for both military actions and prestige. That is why the Su-27 aircraft and C-300-PMU air defense system were among the first to be purchased from Russia.

Third, the PLA Navy must not suffer any disgraceful loss, while blocking Taiwan’s sea lane access to the world. Russian Kilo-class conventional submarines, with hulls completely coated by sound-absorbing rubber tiles, are famous for their noiselessness. Four such submarines were delivered since early 1995 to the East China Sea Fleet base in Ningbo. It was reported that one of the submarines in a “red-against-blue” military game last August successfully penetrated into a tightly guarded harbor to lay mines.

It is expected that PLA’s capabilities of fighting high-tech warfare will not only impress the world but also inspire anti-separatist patriots in Taiwan to overthrow Lee Teng-hui.

#### No Blue-Water Navy, No “China Threat”

It has been widely reported that the PLA Navy is trying to acquire at least one aircraft carrier to protect China’s interests in the South China Sea and to improve China’s big power image. All the other four nuclear powers have aircraft carriers, why not China? Even India has two and Thailand has placed an order for one from Spain. The speculation was intensified by PRC defense minister Chi Haotian’s visit of Spain in September 1995, when he asked about the construction of a \$360 million dollar mini-carrier for Thailand. Later, PRC’s foreign spokesman refuted the speculation at a press conference, saying that “China will not build nor buy from any foreign country aircraft carriers.”<sup>40</sup> Actually, by paying attention to what the host was proud of showing him, General Chi just wanted to be a polite guest.

Contrary to western reports, an aircraft carrier is not included in the Sino-Russian arms trade list. Naturally, Chinese naval officers are eager to improve the Navy’s image. The biggest warships the PLA Navy has deployed are the 4,200-ton Luhu-class destroyers. However, “given the limit of its defense budget, China’s military will be defense-oriented even by 2010, without the blue-water fleet.”<sup>41</sup> Worse, when Russians offered to sell a heavy cruiser at the price of steel, PRC foreign minister Qian Qichen vetoed the deal, saying that it would prompt westerners to cry out against the “China threat.”<sup>42</sup>

The PLA Navy’s current modernization program is aimed at extending its defense perimeter from jin’an [near-shore], where the fleet can rely on the support from ground-based cruise missiles ranged no more than 150km, to jinhai [near-sea], within the coverage of land-based air forces.<sup>43</sup> Without large surface-warships, PLA will not have the power projection capabilities in the open waters of the western Pacific Ocean beyond the three inner seas surrounding China until after 2010, when Taiwan is expected to return.

Since the 1980s, PLA has reduced its troop size from four to three million, with further announced cuts of another half million. “If the U.S. stops its military sales to Taiwan, then it is certain that by 2010 the size of Chinese military will be much smaller than the current level.”<sup>44</sup> Meantime, “to create a more stable social environment for achieving China’s long-term goals and the smooth progress of reform and opening up to the outside world,” as Jiang Zemin urged, the PLA’s military police will expand from 1.3 million to 1.9 million by 2000.<sup>45</sup>

## China in the New Northeast Asia

During a meeting with South Korean politician Kim Dae-Jung on October 27, 1995, Chairman of the Chinese People’s Congress Qiao Shi stated general guidelines for China’s security policy: “Hegemonism and power politics still exist in today’s world. Peoples of PRC, ROK and other Asian countries, being united closely and speeding up their economic development, may help defend themselves against hegemonism and power politics.”<sup>46</sup>

When talking about today’s hegemonism and power politics, Beijing is clearly speaking about the United States, which continues to transfer its long-range Trident missile technologies to Britain, while accusing China of exporting short-range M-11 missiles to Pakistan. The United States tries to block China’s peaceful nuclear cooperations, under the UN International Atomic Energy Agency’s approval and inspection, with Iran, Pakistan, and Algeria. U.S. companies export products made in American jails, but the U.S. government demands that Chinese prison-labor goods be barred worldwide, not only from the American market. The U.S. Congress prohibits the UN from allocating U.S.-contributed funds to China’s birth control program, which has been highly recommended by the United Nations. Beijing also is annoyed with American finger-pointing on China’s poor human rights record, while East Asian neighbors either argue on behalf of China or keep silent on this issue. The worst of all is Capitol Hill’s open support of Tibetan and Taiwanese independence. All these make the Sino-U.S. relations sour.

Given value difference—in addition to the superpower’s arrogance and ideological prejudice—no easy fix can be expected any time soon. Nevertheless, China by no means feels militarily threatened by the single superpower. PRC’s basic policy on Sino-U.S. relations remains as Deng Xiaoping instructed in 1989: “build mutual respect, diminish troubles, promote cooperation and prevent confrontation.”

That the Qiao-Kim meeting took place two days after the 45th anniversary of China’s entry into the Korea War, in which Chinese and South Koreans killed each other, signifies that the world has fundamentally changed. State leaders, strategic analysts, and ordinary people all see the changes. However, few have understood the deep essence of the changes behind the visible superficial phenomena.

Speaking at PLA’s National Defense University in 1994, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry correctly pointed out that, “the Asia-Pacific region today is more peaceful and stable than at any time in its history. And throughout the region there is a sense of increased confidence and optimism about the future.”<sup>47</sup> At the same time, unfortunately, he asserted that “America’s security alliances and military presence in Northeast Asia, I believe, are key components of the region’s stability.” The notion that the stability of the Asian-Pacific region is secured by the U.S. military presence (USMP) in Northeast Asia has been popular in

the international strategic community, which is under the deep-rooted influence of the traditional balance of power theory. However, the universal applicability of this theory is arguable and its application to Northeast Asia is particularly controversial.

#### Is Northeast Asia Balanced and Do We Need a Balance?

It is commonly acknowledged that the USMP in East Asia played an important balancing role against the Soviet threat during the Cold War years. But now, despite the collapse of the Soviet superpower, the American superpower remains militarily present in Japan and South Korea. By eliminating a major term only from one side of an equation, how can the balance of the equation be still maintained?

Conversely, if we assume that a balance of power in Northeast Asia exists today, then we must admit that we had lived under a strategically unbalanced environment yesterday, when the Soviet polar bear was alive. But, this would mean that, with the unbalance then in favor of the Soviets, we still could have successfully managed through the terrible Cold War years. If so, why do we need the balance of power at all? There may be a balance, either today or yesterday, but not both. There must be an unbalance, either today or yesterday, or both. Balanced or not, Northeast Asia survived the Cold War and is currently “more peaceful and stable than at any time in its history”.

Indeed, are the United States, Canada, and Mexico militarily balanced in North America? Of course not. Yet, they have never solicited a balancing force from outside. As a matter of fact, the United States was an imperialist aggressor against its neighbors. It invaded Mexico and annexed the latter’s territory, for example. Today, however, they can peacefully coexist because the United States has entered its post-imperialist stage. In North America, where the three principal countries are mature, the balance of power is no longer needed. Economic competition and cooperation have replaced military confrontation and invasion.

The three nations in Northeast Asia are now mature, too. Japan has passed its imperialist stage and China has abandoned its communist policy of exporting proletarian revolution, whereas Korea has never been an aggressor. They have started coexisting peacefully and cooperatively, and no longer need a powerful babysitter from outside.

#### A De Facto Collective Security in Northeast Asia

A traditional calculation of military strength can never result in a strategic balance among the three members in Northeast Asia, given China’s size, populations and nuclear arsenal. A comprehensive analysis, taking into consideration all economic, geopolitical, and science-technological factors, may prove that Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans will never again engage each other militarily. An eternal peace will further be consolidated after China and Korea get reunified.

As the threat from Moscow disappeared, some strategists have tried to invent a potential threat from Tokyo to justify the continued USMP in Northeast Asia. Were there no American forces, they argue, the old Japanese militarism would revive and threaten East Asia again.

The revival of Japanese militarism is impossible. Japan can never repeat its militaristic activities of the period from 1895 to 1945. According to the so-called “Tanaka Sojo”—a strategic report from Japan’s Premier Tanaka Giichi to Emperor Hirohito in July 1927—for Japan to dominate the world it must first conquer China; but to conquer all China it must



first occupy Manchuria and Mongolia. Before this, however, an even earlier step must be the annexation of Taiwan and Korea as the two cornerstones to start its successive expansions, which Japan achieved when China and Korea were governed by rotten feudal dynasties. The Tanaka strategic master plan is past and gone. Today, even if Japan intended to conquer Taiwan or Korea, the invasion would be easily defeated by China or Korea, together or separately.

Neither China nor a reunified Korea, nor both together, would be able to launch an amphibious invasion or pose a sea-lane blockade against Japan. Such a scenario is precluded by new developments in military technology on the one hand and the global geopolitical environment on the other. By the same token, Chinese would never be able to subdue Koreans, even if China became a communist superpower in the future. The Soviet failure in conquering its neighbor Afghanistan is a lesson to all.

Citing the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese war, many analysts speculate that Beijing does not want to have a unified Korean neighbor. This is completely wrong. The war was an extension of the “communist mini Cold War” between Beijing and Moscow. Deng Xiaoping ordered to “teach Vietnam a lesson”, not because the unified Vietnam posed any threat to China but because Hanoi, after driving Americans out, sided with Moscow. Actually, Beijing is very much in favor of the peaceful reunification of Korea. As a CCP Politburo member said in 1988: “North Korea has been one of the three burdens placed on our shoulders by Chairman Mao. We have thrown away the two others, Albania and Vietnam.” Beijing would like Seoul to help release China from the last burden.

The China-Japan-Korea triangle is stable in terms of collective military security. There is no viable military threat from one country to another. Security interests of the three are mutually interlocked. Moreover, by sticking together, the three—with the nuclear China as a core and without U.S. military forces directly involved—would be strong enough to resist a hypothetically revived Soviet superpower at any time in the future.

### Common Features Among Northeast Asians

The triangle in Northeast Asia is also promising in terms of economic-political development due to the countries’ unique common features. First of all, populations in the three nations are remarkably homogeneous. Even China has a minority population of only eight percent, and no ethnic conflict is regime-threatening or in need of international help for peacekeeping. While separatist sentiment has become a post-Cold War popular fashion from East Europe to Canada, national reunification is a consensus in Northeast Asia. Neither South Korea nor Japan, for example, supports Tibetan or Taiwanese independence.

Second, in contrast to the western *laissez faire* market economy, liberal democracy, and individualism, most East Asian nations prefer to have guided economic-political development and an authoritarian-pluralist society, one which is “characterized by restrictive politics, with choice and freedom constrained, but with a civil society existing apart from the state in some degree. The economy, moreover, is one where the market plays a crucial role although with extensive state involvement.”<sup>48</sup>

East Asians do not criticize each other’s internal affairs. They did not distance themselves from China, for example, after June 4, 1989. “Unlike Americans, we don’t go everywhere in the world and tell others how to behave—even Japanese don’t act that way”, Singapore’s vice premier Lee Hsien Loong says.<sup>49</sup>

Third, a cultural affinity ties Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese together. Former Japanese premiers Yasuhiro Nakasone and Noburo Takeshita noted that, “From a historical point of

view, Japan belongs to the circle of Chinese culture” and “China and Japan are countries using hanchi [Chinese characters].”<sup>50</sup> Actually, Korea is the middle link between China and Japan, not only geographically but by all socio-cultural and economic-political aspects. Japan is more westernized and materialist and, on the other hand, China has retained too much backward oriental orthodoxy, while Korea is somewhere in between. The three nations share Confucianism concepts of peace, harmony, and self-discipline. They stress high saving and education rates. All these cultural traditions contribute to a smooth economic-political regionalization in this region.

#### USMP in Northeast Asia Beyond 2010?

As the Subic Bay and the Clark military bases in the Philippines were eliminated in 1992, Washington requested new military bases in East Asia. The premier of Thailand flatly rejected the request. Indonesia’s foreign minister suggested that “other forms be used, rather than the military bases, if the United States wants to display its strength.” Malaysian prime minister Mahathir maintained that, “Southeast Asian nations did not feel threatened by any country, including Japan and the communist China. We don’t have tensions, enemies and fear in this area. Why should we fabricate them out of nothing?”<sup>51</sup>

Russia will be weak for the indefinite future. Former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker admits that “in East Asia, there is no single threat commonly perceived” and he sees it as a rare moment, which “presents us with new possibilities for reshaping international relationship in Asia” and to “open a new chapter of U.S. engagement in the region as we approach the 21st century.”<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, his “new chapter” is old-fashioned: “Our forward-deployed military presence and bilateral ties to Japan, ROK, the allies within ASEAN and Australia are widely accepted as the foundation of Asia’s security structure.”

President Clinton has been practicing the Republican policy of the Reagan and Bush administrations, rather than resuming what was proposed by his Democratic predecessor, Jimmy Carter. The latter made a misjudgment in the late 1970s when the Soviet superpower was moving into Afghanistan. He mistakenly attempted to start withdrawing U.S. troops from South Korea. Today, however, even China alone could prevent North Korea from launching another suicidal adventure.

An absolute security guarantee, however, is to change the regime in North Korea. For this purpose, we need first to open that country. Nixon opened China in 1971 and the Chinese communist system has been changing ever since. The USMP cannot open North Korea but forces it to keep closed and isolated. The two processes—a phased U.S. military withdrawal and a phased Korean reunification—must go in parallel. We need another Nixon and another Carter.

States are like individuals in the state of nature. A personal tragedy of Mao Zedong lies in that he did not step down at the peak of his glory. The United States is now suffering a “Mao Zedong disease.” Having won the Cold War and the Gulf War, the United States is at the peak of its glory. It is exactly the best time to start a phased military withdrawal from Northeast Asia. Doing it too late and passively under the pressure of South Korean and Japanese people, which will sooner or later erupt against the now virtually occupational forces, may turn the otherwise triumphant withdrawal into a defamed “Yankees-go-home” scenario.

China has not wanted to irritate the United States on this issue. China’s official stance is that the USMP in Japan and South Korea is “a legacy of the history, and will be solved in the

process of historical development.”<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, can the historical process last beyond 2010?

Recently, China has given up its patience and begun to denounce, publicly and officially, the U.S. military presence in East Asia. In April 1997, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman for the first time declared that “Peace and stability in Asia must be maintained by Asian nations themselves and Asian nations are completely capable of doing so.”<sup>54</sup> Chinese analysts argue that East Asian countries “are not willing to stake their own security and destiny on the United States, a country that is notorious for power politics and its self-appointed role as a world policeman.”<sup>55</sup>

### Solving or Shelving Disputes with Neighbors

There are territorial disputes, left over from history, between China and most of its neighbors. Some of the disputes are minor, such as contentions between China and Japan over Diaoyu Dao (Senkaku Islands), between China and Korea over the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Yellow Sea, and between China and Vietnam on the division of jurisdictional zones in the Beibu Gulf (Gulf of Tonkin). More serious problems exist along the Sino-Indian border, where large territories are involved, and in the South China Sea, where five parties (China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei) lay claim to all or part of the Nansha (Spratly) Islands.

PRC does not expect any military conflict to recur with India. Nor is it worried about the situation in the South China Sea. Rather, in Beijing’s calculation, all the territorial disputes—minor or major—are manageable within the framework of maintaining the status quo and will be solved peacefully in future. Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said that Asian-Pacific countries “should settle territorial and border disputes as well as other problems left over from history through peaceful consultations...Pending settlement of a dispute, the countries concerned should adopt security-enhancing and confidence-building measures so as to avoid possible contingencies or conflicts.”<sup>56</sup>

Sino-Indian relations, frozen after their large-scale military conflict in 1962, have been steadily improving since 1988, when Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to China initiated a thaw. China and India signed an Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Along the Line of Actual Control in the China-India Border Areas in September 1993. Both sides agreed on several confidence-building measures, including the withdrawal of troops from disputed areas, a joint survey of bordering mountains, mutual visits of military camps, and increased high-level contacts.<sup>57</sup>

In August 1995, China and the Philippines reached a broad consensus on the South China Sea issue, with a joint communiqué on cooperation, joint development, and a code of behavior in the South China Sea—including provisions not to use or threaten to use force, solving disputes through negotiations, and assured international free passage.<sup>58</sup>

China and Vietnam have issued four joint communiqués since 1991. During a visit to Vietnam in 1992, PRC premier Li Peng said in regard to the territorial disputes between the two countries: “As to issues comparatively easier to be solved, the Chinese side puts forth the principle of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, fairness and equity. As to more difficult issues such as the Nansha Islands, we put forth the proposition of shelving the disputes and of joint exploitation.”<sup>59</sup> Vietnamese communist leader Do Muoi visited Beijing in December 1995. “The two sides expressed satisfaction with the positive progress and results in the development of friendly relations since 1991.”<sup>60</sup>

China and four republics of the former Soviet Union (Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikstan) have had eighteen rounds of joint negotiations on arms reduction in their bordering areas. All parties have reached agreement on strengthening mutual trust in military-related issues, which is “the first such kind of politico-military document in the history of the Asia-Pacific region.”<sup>61</sup> Ninety-nine percent of the 4,000-kilometer Sino-Russian boundary is finally determined. What remains to be resolved concerns two small islands, and “negotiations are going on with signs of progress.”<sup>62</sup>

## New “Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”

The next fifteen years will be important for the world in a transition from making expedient adjustments to the post-Cold War environment to searching for ways toward eternal global harmony. The major orientation of this transition is guided by the fact that “economics has taken command of international relations ...ideology has declined in the face of the pragmatic impulses stemming from economic primacy.”<sup>63</sup> However, economic development alone may not necessarily lead to intranational and international harmony. Political development and ideological convergence must follow. Northeast Asia, where the best-planned capitalist economy of Japan and South Korea meets the most market-oriented socialist economy of China and where social discipline and participatory democracy are equally appreciated, may become a vanguard in the search for harmony based on socialism-capitalism convergence.

Speaking at the 1991 Pacific Economic Cooperation Council meeting, Singapore prime minister Goh Chok Tong considered three factors critical to the success of any Asia-Pacific community: Progress in the PRC’s reform, painless merging of Hong Kong into the PRC, and closer relations across the Taiwan Strait. By 2010, when mainland China’s per capita GNP reaches 2,700 dollars and when Beijing’s experiment on socialism-capitalism convergence succeeds accordingly, Taiwan will be willing to return to the “one China” family. The reunified China will start a new stage of development. It is estimated that the 1.5 billion Chinese may achieve a per capita GNP of 6,600 dollars by 2030. Then, with its 10 trillion dollar aggregate GNP, China’s economy will draw close to that of the United States.<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, if socialism can converge with capitalism in China, why can’t a similar convergence take place in Korea? If North Korea is not isolated but opened up toward the outside world, why can’t Koreans compete with Chinese in who can succeed in getting their nations reunified first? If the Korean peninsula is peacefully reunified, how can the U.S. military insist on staying in Korea and Japan? However, the fundamental question remains of what will happen after Northeast Asia is free of American occupational forces.

As Professor Scalapino pointed out: “A process of Asianization is expanding ever more rapidly. At the same time alliances of the earlier type are disappearing or undergoing significant alterations. Sub-regional groups will undoubtedly emerge, formally or otherwise. The nonwhite East Asian Economic Group proposed by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir harkens back to the old Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.”<sup>65</sup>

History tends to repeat itself, though not exactly in every detail and in the same manner. Some things happen twice in history: the first time being bad and the second time being good, or vice versa. The Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was doubtlessly an imperialist concept, proposed by Japanese militarist aggressors, when Korea was a colony and China

was split inside and invaded from outside. The old label must not be considered as permanently bad and it can be used again to advertise a new and good thing. Today, a proposition for the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere is progressive rather than aggressive.

Mr. Lee Kwan-Yew predicted that, in the twenty-first century, “a stripe of modern industrialized nations with high living standards will stretch from Japan, Korea, China, Vietnam to ASEAN countries. This area will become the world’s strongest economic component and biggest market.”<sup>66</sup> A multipolar world, with the North America Free Trade Area, the European Community, and the proposed East Asia Economic Group, would be more stable than a world dominated by a single superpower playing hegemonism and power politics. However, our ultimate goal is a global harmony. Unfortunately, we probably will have to pass through a stage of regionalization before arriving at the highest stage of globalization.

What is important at the regionalization stage is to ensure that trans-Pacific relations between East Asia and North America be cooperative, though competitive, but not confrontational. This, to a large extent, depends upon two factors. First, the U.S. government needs to adopt, before it is too late, a new East Asia policy of military disengagement coupled with economic engagement. Second, the East has been learning from the West for more than a century, and will continue the endless learning process. However, it is now the time for the West to realize that the learning must be mutual.

As to China, it feels permanently secure in a military sense, but not completely certain of manifesting the massive economic and political transformations at home and abroad. China’s basic foreign policy to ensure its economic and political security is to shelve territorial disputes with neighbors, facilitate economic and political regionalization in East Asia, cooperate with the West whenever and wherever it is fair and reasonable, avoid direct one-against-one confrontation with the United States, but collectively—mainly with East Asian nations—resist hegemonism and power politics of the single superpower.

## Concluding Remarks: The Best Case and Desirable U.S. Policies

It is the Chinese leaders’ desire, as well as that of the majority of the people, that domestic political stability and an international peaceful environment be maintained so that China’s economy can continue to grow at high speed. By 2010—when the current generation of leaders in Beijing become octogenarians and have to give up their power—economic achievements will allow, and the consequences of economic development will require, that their successors conduct a fundamental political reform in transferring the regime from single-party rule to certain political pluralism. As both the economic and—more essentially—political gaps between both sides of the Taiwan Strait narrow, the nation will be peacefully reunified under the name of neither PRC nor ROC, but simply China.

Although yet a nuclear power, an economically developed and somewhat politically democratized China, with mixed or converged socialism and capitalism, will not militarily threaten—nor feel threatened by—its neighbors or other major powers. Indeed, why can’t China, half-powerful economically and militarily compared to the United States, peacefully and cooperatively coexist with its neighbors in East Asia, just as the latter can in North America? If East Asia still feels anxious by 2010, the anxieties may come from sources other than China.

The above case is the best and most desirable, not only to China but also to all in the world. In contrast to Russia's failure, China's success in transformation of orthodox socialism into a planned market economy with East Asian authoritarian pluralism may indicate a feasible way to solve the century-long ideological confrontation between socialism and capitalism. In a deeper and broader sense, the peaceful convergence of the reformed socialism and the revised capitalism in East Asia may lead the world to a global eternal harmony within the twenty-first century.

The best-to-all case may seem to Americans too idealistic to materialize, given the deep-rooted anti-communist ideology in U.S. foreign policies and domestic politics. Nonetheless, the realization of the best case mainly depends upon whether Washington adopts the correct policies toward China and East Asia. Therefore, to maximize chances for the most desirable case, it is still worthwhile to identify three priority issues where U.S. policies are likely to have a particularly high payoff, or where actions are particularly needed to reach optimal outcomes:

(1) A clear-cut one-China policy: Instead of following Lee Teng-hui's "cart-before-horse" strategy, Washington should demand Beijing to seek a peaceful reunification if Taipei does not seek independence in any form, and warn Taipei that U.S. military and political support would not be granted if Taipei insists on the two-China position.

(2) An unbiased dualistic pro-democratic China Policy: In regard to the current everyday condemnation of China's poor human rights record under the communist party's authoritarian rule, it should not be forgotten that the United States tolerated dictatorial rulers in ROC, ROK, and other non-communist countries, such as Chile, before their economic development eventually led to certain democracy. A political double standard must not apply to PRC, which is not our enemy, although not an ally either.

(3) A policy of phased military disengagement coupled with economic engagement with East Asia: Let East Asians manage—they can—their own military security issues. Economic security and prosperity across the Pacific, however, require more and closer constructive engagement between North America and East Asia.

Beijing will definitely appreciate Washington's clear-cut stated One-China policy, and become more cooperative and even concessive on other issues. To consolidate China's cooperation with the United States in all bilateral and international affairs, however, Washington may have to become more patient with Beijing's seemingly delayed political reform. While expecting future pluralistic democracy to appear in China, starting in 2010, the best U.S. long-term policy for making China democratic and thus less threatening to U.S. interests in the Asian-Pacific region is a combination of pressure on Beijing's communist leaders to embark on political reform with patience toward the single-party authoritarianism.

China's economic-political progress and American policy toward East Asia are two major factors in making the region free of security anxieties by 2010. U.S. troops, stationed in East Asia after World War Two, were peacemakers and peacekeepers in this century's third and fourth quarters, respectively. They may be seen as trouble-makers, however, if not withdrawn by 2010, when the reunified China becomes one of the democracies of the mature East Asia. If the year of 2010 is not the deadline to terminate the U.S. forward-based military deployment in East Asia, then when? All in all, it can't be "banzai", it must have an end. To secure a triumphant U.S. military withdrawal, Washington would be better to think of it before it is too late.

Prejudice in ideological thinking and inertia in strategic thinking are two basic difficulties for any administration in the White House in constituting right policies. However, a Chinese proverb says, "The onlookers see the game better than the players." East Asian onlookers may see U.S. domestic politics better than North American players.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Proposal of the Central Committee of the CCP for Formulating the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1996-2000) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Term Target for the Year 2010,” Renmin Ribao [People’s Daily], October 5, 1995, p. 1. The document was approved on March 17, 1996, by the Chinese People’s Congress.

<sup>2</sup> Deng Xiaoping’s original target of quadrupling the 1980 GNP figure by 2000 was fulfilled in 1995. The new goal is to quadruple the 1980 per capita GNP by 2000, when China’s population is around 1.3 billion—300 million more than that of 1980. This means China’s aggregate GNP will grow 4 x 1.3 = 5.2 times in the twenty years between 1980 and 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Nan Shiyin, “Zhongyang Junwei Kuoda Huiyi Neiqing” [Internal Story of an Expanded CMC Meeting], Guangjiaojing [Wide Angle], No. 280, February 1996, pp. 6-10.

<sup>4</sup> Ling Lin, “Zhonggong Jiefang Taiwan de Shijianbiao” [The Schedule of the Communist Liberation of Taiwan], Cheng Ming Monthly, November 1, 1994, p.21.

<sup>5</sup> “Li Explains Plenum’s Development Plan,” China Daily, October 6, 1995, p. 3. It ought to be noted that the “country” actually means the “regime.”

<sup>6</sup> “Principles on Modernization Drive,” China Daily, October 9, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Shijie Ribao [The World Journal, Daily News], April 2, 1995. p. A12.

<sup>8</sup> Renmin Ribao [People’s Daily], February 28, 1994, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> From an interview given to the British Broadcasting Company on January 12, 1996; cited from Qiao Bao [The China Press], February 1, 1996. p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Yan Xuetong, “China’s Security Goals Do Not Pose a Threat to World, Analyst Says,” China Daily, March 4, 1996, p. 4. Yan is deputy director of the Center for China’s Foreign Policy Studies at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, which is a communist intelligence organization.

<sup>11</sup> Jin Yaoru, “Ruo Jin-Ma Chejun, Beijing Youhe Dongzuo” [If Troops Withdrawn from Quemoy and Matsu, How Beijing Will Act], Shijie Ribao, November 9, 1995, p. A5.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Montagnon and James Kynge, “In the Mammoth’s Shadow: The FT Interview with Lee Kwan-Yew,” The Financial Times, May 12, 1997, p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., July 14, 1995, p. A2 and July 15, 1995, p. A2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., August 8, 1995, p. A2.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., October 12, 1995, p. A1.

<sup>16</sup> Qiao Bao, July 19, 1995, p. 8. Wang Jingwei (1883-1944) was Chiang Kai-shek’s deputy chairman in both the KMT and the ROC government before Japan’s invasion of China in 1937. Wang betrayed China and led a Japanese-puppet government in Nanking after Chiang’s legitimate central government retreated to Chongqing in 1938.

<sup>17</sup> Zhongguo Shibao [The China Times], evening edition, July 18, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Zili Zaobao [The Independence Morning Post], October 28, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Shijie Ribao, February 15, 1996, p. A6.

<sup>20</sup> “Jianchi Yige Zhongguo, Quebao Taihai Heping” [Adhering to One-China to Assure the Taiwan Strait’s Peace], Ibid., March 5, 1996, p. A2.

<sup>21</sup> “Lee Kwan-yew Appeals Both Sides to Avoid War and Create New Situation,” Zhongguo Shibao [The China Times], March 5, 1996, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Cited from Sun Tzu: The Art of War.

- <sup>23</sup> “Qian Qichen Yu Tai Minzhong Yuanbi Taidu Zhengke” [Qian Qichen Urges Taiwan’s People Staying Far Away from Taiwan-Independence Politicians], The China Press, March 8, 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>24</sup> “Zhonggong Yanxi, Manyi Caiting” [Chinese Communists Will Conduct Exercises Until They Are Satisfied], Shijie Ribao, March 6, 1996, p. A1.
- <sup>25</sup> “Ji Xiwang yu Taiwan Renmin” [Placing Hopes on Taiwan’s People], Renmin Ribao, editorial, February 28, 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>26</sup> Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun, “Gei Zhongguo Guomindang Quanti Tongzhi de Gongkaixin” [An Open Letter to All Comrades of the Chinese Nationalist Party], The China Press, December 10, 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>27</sup> He Zhenzhong, “Yongyu Neidou” [Bold in Internal Struggle], Shijie Ribao, March 7, 1996, p. A6. Chen Li-an’s father, general Chen Chen, fought against Chinese communists all his life and was Chiang Kai-shek’s vice president in Taiwan.
- <sup>28</sup> “Liang’an zai Liangheguo Duyou Daibiaoquan Caineng Jiejue Wenti” [Problem Can Be Solved Only When Both Shores Have Representative Rights in the United Nations], Ibid., April 8, 1996, p. A1.
- <sup>29</sup> “Lian Zhan Shouci Yu Mei Chongxin Shenshi” [Lien Chan Appeals to U.S. for Reviewing], Ibid., April 9, 1996, p. A1.
- <sup>30</sup> “Yiguo Yao Queding, Liangzhi Ke Zaitan” [One Nation Must Be Confirmed, Two Systems May Be Negotiated], Ibid., April 11, 1996, p. A1.
- <sup>31</sup> “Fouren ‘Liang’an Guanxi Yijing Huanhe’ de Shuofa, Tang Shubei Zaicu Tai Dangju Tingzhi Fenlie Huodong” [Refuting the argument on ‘the tensions between two shores have been relaxed’, Tang Shubei urges the Taiwan authorities to stop separatist activities], Qiao Bao, April 18, p. 1.
- <sup>32</sup> The DF-15, also code-named M-9, is hard to detect and destroy because its small warhead separates from its huge body after the rocket’s motor shuts down and, with terminal guidance, the warhead may change its trajectory. For details, please refer to John W. Lewis and Hua Di, “China’s Ballistic Missile Programs: Technologies, Strategies, Goals,” in *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2, Fall 1992, p. 35.
- <sup>33</sup> Montagnon and Kynge, “In the Mammoth’s Shadow.”
- <sup>34</sup> Yan Xuetong, “China’s Security Goals.”
- <sup>35</sup> Su Fangxue, “Shengming zhi Guang Bi Taiyang Hai Liang” [Life’s Light Is Brighter Than the Sun’s], in Shen Jian [Magic Sword], No. 5, 1987, p. 3.
- <sup>36</sup> For details, see Lewis and Hua, “China’s Ballistic Missile Programs,” pp. 26-31.
- <sup>37</sup> 1994 interview in Moscow with Chinese officials involved in Sino-Russia arms deals.
- <sup>38</sup> “China Speeds Development of Missile with Taiwan Range,” *Defense News*, Vol. 11, No. 9, March 4-10, 1995, p. 1.
- <sup>39</sup> “Ambassador James R. Lilley: China Aims to Project Its Power,” *The Risk Report*, Vol. 1, No. 4, May 1995. During Hua’s interview in January 1996, the Chinese officers in Moscow confirmed that, “the Yeltsin government under American threat to withhold international economic aids was reluctant to sell the whole package of Russian cruise missiles, which is no less accurate than American Tomahawk. We will see what will happen after the forthcoming Russian presidential election.”
- <sup>40</sup> “China Does Not Have Aircraft Carrier Development Plan,” *Renmin Ribao*, (overseas edition), January 24, 1996, p. 1.
- <sup>41</sup> Yan Xuetong, “China’s Security Goals.”
- <sup>42</sup> From interview in Moscow last January with Chinese officials involved in Sino-Russia arms deals.
- <sup>43</sup> From a statement given by a PLA naval delegation at a conference sponsored by Stanford’s Center for International Security and Arms Control in 1994.
- <sup>44</sup> Yan Xuetong, “China’s Security Goals.”
- <sup>45</sup> “Defend Stability, Police Told,” *China Daily*, February 10, 1996, p. 1; Also, “Wujing Shengge” [Military Police Upgrading], *Shijie Ribao*, February 24, 1996, p. A12.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., October 28, 1995, p. A12.
- <sup>47</sup> “Remarks by Secretary William Perry, Beijing, China, October 18, 1994,” U.S. Department of Defense Circular Release.



- <sup>48</sup> Robert A. Scalapino, "The United States and Asia: Future Prospects," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 4, p. 23.
- <sup>49</sup> Shijie Ribao, March 3, 1994, p. A14, which cites *Japan Economic Weekly*, February 28, 1994.
- <sup>50</sup> *Renmin Ribao* (overseas edition), May 4 and 6, 1991.
- <sup>51</sup> Shijie Ribao, November 8, 1994, p. A14.
- <sup>52</sup> James A. Baker, III, "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 4, pp. 1-17.
- <sup>53</sup> This was stated by a PLA naval delegation at a meeting at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate Institute in 1994.
- <sup>54</sup> "Beijing Opposes US Maintaining 100,000 Troops in Asia," *The China Press*, April 8, 1997, A2.
- <sup>55</sup> Wu Xingbo, "Time for US Military to Leave E. Asia," *China Daily*, March 19, 1997, p. 4.
- <sup>56</sup> *Beijing Review*, August 31-September 6, 1992, pp. 11-12.
- <sup>57</sup> Shijie Ribao, August 21, 1995, p. A10.
- <sup>58</sup> "China Befriends Its Neighbors," *China Daily*, December 20, 1995, p. 4.
- <sup>59</sup> *Renmin Ribao*, December 3, 1993, p. 1.
- <sup>60</sup> "Facing the Future with Vietnam," *China Daily*, December 4, 1995, p. 4.
- <sup>61</sup> "Waijiaobu Fayanren Da Jizhe Wen" [Foreign Ministry Spokesman Answers Correspondents], *Renmin Ribao* (overseas edition), September 27, 1995, p. 1.
- <sup>62</sup> "China Befriends Its Neighbors."
- <sup>63</sup> Scalapino, "The United States and Asia," pp. 21-22.
- <sup>64</sup> Shijie Ribao, October 12, 1995, p. A2.
- <sup>65</sup> Scalapino, "The United States and Asia," pp. 26, 29 and 31.
- <sup>66</sup> *Renmin Ribao* (overseas edition), October 2, 1992, p. 3.