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ASSESSING CHINA'S POWER
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CHAPTER 1

Assessing China's Power

Jae Ho Chung

Few would argue against the fact that China today is on the verge of becoming a great power defined as a nation that is capable of wielding a considerable degree of influence over the making and diffusion of the structures and rules of international politics and economics.¹ Yet, more than three decades ago, when China first embarked upon the path of systemic reforms, the international community cast many doubts and posed as many questions regarding whether the Communist regime could break out of the ideological cast and whether Beijing's ambitious policy platforms could really work.² Worse yet, the downfall of Deng Xiaoping's hand-picked successors, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, and the tumultuous Tian'anmen tragedy of 1989, along with the implosion of the Soviet Union and the demise of the East European bloc in 1991, jointly gave birth to a so-called China collapse thesis, making China's reform appear less likely to succeed.³

The China collapse thesis, thus far, has been fairly effectively rebutted by high levels of growth recorded by China during the past 20-some years since the early 1990s.⁴ China's fast-growing presence—ranging from the overflow of China-made products in the international market to the flooding of Chinese tourists the world over—became a keyword in everyday news in the eyes of the general public. From the perspective of opinion leaders, too, China's ever-expanding power and influence—ranging from economic, diplomatic, and military to technological, scientific, and cultural—make them ponder whether Beijing is likely to honor the West-centered status quo.

Russia's nuanced withdrawal from the extensive management of global affairs, a "relative" decline of the United States, and Beijing's self-imposed tenet on "responsible great-power diplomacy" (*fuzeren de daguo waijiao*) have placed China at the center of discourses and debates on possible changes in the international political and economic order.⁵ As a matter of fact, China is often viewed as replacing Russia as the de facto strategic rival/competitor of the

United States, enjoying the status of the so-called stakeholders/Group of Two (G-2), and constituting a potential challenger in the upcoming spiral of global power transition.⁶

How sensible and reliable are these assessments about the rise of China? This chapter, focusing on what and where to look when evaluating China's growing power in a systematic way, consists of three sections. The first horizon-gazes the growing literature on the rise of China and infers from that overview the very importance of this volume in both scholarly and policy-relevant terms. The second section, on the basis of pertinent theories and historical precedents, lays out four dimensions of China's power: namely, (1) domestic (economic and political) factors; (2) military capabilities; (3) external adaptability; and (4) perceptions by others. The final section offers some questions and observations for the future.

Power is indisputably an elusive concept at the least and, therefore, assessing it properly poses a daunting challenge both conceptually and methodologically. Yet, there is no need for repeating or elaborating here on what has thus far been said or written on this highly abstract theme.⁷ In relation to the concept at hand, three issues are particularly worth noting. First, the amount of power that one actually possesses may be quite different from the amount of power that one is perceived by others to possess.⁸ Second, power is not necessarily always or automatically translated into the corresponding extent of influence as many domestic and external factors are bound to condition or constrain such a transformative process.⁹ Third, power should not be assessed or measured single-dimensionally. Particularly in assessing a nation's overall/comprehensive power, the task must cover multiple dimensions of power however it is to be defined.¹⁰

Debating China's Rise

While there has been a broad consensus on the rise of China as a relatively long-term process, the same cannot be said of the final destination/outcome of China's ascendancy as a great power. As it stands now, pundits around the world appear to be largely divided into three schools of thought. The first—which can be labeled as the “Confident School”—posits that China's rise is an irreversible trend, its eventual success and global expansion will lead to fierce strategic competition with the United States regionally and globally, and it will eventually lead to the eclipse of America, heralding a “Chinese century.”¹¹

The second school may be branded the “Pessimist School” as it focuses mainly on the myriad of domestic problems and external constraints that China is likely to face. In contrast with the “Confident School,” however, it suggests that China's rise is not predestined as China's growth may falter down the road, may eventually fall short of constituting an effective challenge to the United States, and, therefore, is not likely to dominate the twenty-first century.¹²

The third “Not-Yet/Uncertain” School takes a more reserved middle-of-the-road position. While it does recognize China's tremendous potentials for making a great and even hegemonic power, it also underlines the uncertain and

gradual nature of the process of becoming one. In contrast with the former two schools of thought, proponents of this school consist mainly of China specialists and China hands.¹³

Predictions into a distant future are a risky business indeed as social scientific inquiry has not been particularly well-suited for them. Therefore, this volume is premised on the notion that China's future—based on its power and influence—is an open-ended question that requires careful empirical investigations from multiple angles and perspectives. For that purpose, it is both necessary and important to first lay out multiple criteria and yardsticks for assessing China's power and influence.

The Paths toward Great Powers: Prerequisites and Beyond

Since the fall of the Roman Empire, no monopolistic empire ever came about to rule the world. The term great power, therefore, probably denotes a nation that falls short of being a global hegemon but is nevertheless a member of oligarchic powers.¹⁴ Throughout history since the sixteenth century, great powers rose and fell, repeatedly. In Europe in particular, great-power wars went unabated where challenging nations continuously took on leading ones. Much of the European dominance—including the Pax Britannica—was by no means hegemonic but replete with the Thucydides traps and plagued with constant wars for influence and colonies. The Pax Americana, too, was mostly a duopoly with the Soviet Union, and its post-Cold War “unipolar moment” was perhaps too brief.¹⁵

Historical precedents suggest that power transitions start at home—that is, by way of building internal strengths. The European manifestation was based largely on the establishment of absolute monarchy with strong conscription and taxation powers, technological innovations for military superiority, and industrial revolutions for capital accumulation and global colonialism.¹⁶ America's path differed significantly from the European experiences in that the cultivation of a federal-democratic system with rationalized bureaucracies and maximal industrial powers led to a great-power status. While a rare peaceful power transition was achieved without a hegemonic war with Great Britain, the foundation for its ascendancy was primarily domestic in nature.¹⁷ Japanese and Soviet experiences present alternative paths to a great-power status. While the Japanese mode was characterized by an Asian success of reforming from within and utilizing a key military alliance (Japanese-British), as well as by its grandiose failure to appeal to the region as a whole, the most distinctive feature of the Soviet path was its “soft”—ideological and ideational—power that was attractive enough, at least initially, to build the socialist bloc worldwide.¹⁸

What kind of path, then, is China likely to take? While it is as yet difficult to provide a definitive answer, we may at least delve into the task of gauging China's power today against general prerequisites and specific conditions for a great power. In this study, the general prerequisites and conditions for a great power status specifically refer to the following three dimensions: (1) the will to become a great power; (2) the perceptions and recognitions as such by others;

and (3) the possession of multiple capabilities that entitle one to be a great power.¹⁹

As for the first prerequisite, no elaboration seems necessary since China's longings and aspirations for becoming strong again and recovering its "center-of-the-world" status is so widely known.²⁰ Similarly, regarding the second, worldwide popular recognition of China as a great power—if only regional for the time being—has also been spreading fast and widely.²¹ In fact, China's self-perception has also changed over time. During the 1980s through mid-1990s, China took pains to distinguish "big nations" (*daguo*) from "strong nations" (*qiangguo*) in order to categorize itself as one of the former. Since the late 1990s, and especially after 2008, however, China lost no time in calling itself a "great power" (denoting a big and strong nation) and is currently making frequent references to the "great revival of the Chinese nation" (*zhonghuaminzu de weida fuxing*).²²

We are, therefore, left with the third prerequisite—namely, the possession of multiple capabilities that entitles one to be a great power. Below, we explore four dimensions of China's capabilities—namely, economic, governance-related, military, and external/soft.

Economic Caliber and Political Governance Capacity

Military capabilities are a highly expensive commodity that can only be purchased and sustained with a solid economic base (and that is why great powers are rare and mostly short-lived). The development of new weapons technologies and the acquisition of competitive weapon systems, as well as the sustenance of large-scale armed forces, all require enormous economic resources. From the Spanish *Armada Invincible* to the Pax Americana, hefty coffers were indispensable for a world-power status, and such conditions as industrial revolutions, effective taxation, and colonial expansion were behind the sound economic base for maintaining formidable standing armies of the great powers in history.²³

Such indicators as gross domestic products (GDP) and gross national products (GNP) are widely used in referring to a nation's economic prowess. While useful and convenient, they may often be misleading in that they point only to the overall size of wealth without due regard for how much of it can actually be mobilized and put to use as the government sees fit. As Organski and Kuglar have aptly pointed out, it may not necessarily be an overall size of wealth per se but the total amount of "mobilizable wealth" that really matters.²⁴ Closely related is the indicator of per capita income, which is also widely utilized in assessing a nation's economic capacity. If only this type of indicators is used, the economic prowess of China is likely to be grossly underestimated as its rank in per capita income currently stands in the range of eightieth in the world. In this regard, we are reminded of the sobering fact that the Soviet Union, whose per capita income indicators did not fare well, managed to compete with the United States for more than four decades.

The concept of "mobilizable wealth" and the case of the Soviet Union point to the issue of political governance capacity. History's unequivocal lesson that

almost all empires fell from within underscores the crucial importance of domestic cohesion and internal control.²⁵ Historical precedents offer no definitive clues as to the democratic institutions and liberal values as a prerequisite for a great-power status. In fact, great powers prior to the nineteenth century were hardly democratic in nature, and the political structures of European powers and the United States differed quite considerably. As far as effectively mobilizing wealth is concerned, certain authoritarian systems may have their own distinct advantages over nonauthoritarian ones.²⁶

More pertinent is the issue of internal governance capacity, with which the political regime can sustain its power and authority, thereby pushing for economic development and military modernization. Some call it “internal cohesion,” while others dub it “political unity.”²⁷ Conceptually speaking, internal governance capacity consists of the capabilities to cope with three principal challenges—(1) centrifugal forces against the central/federal authorities; (2) large loopholes in administrative and taxing capacities; and (3) multiethnic and/or multicultural obstacles to national integration. Again, the case of the Soviet Union is vividly illustrative of the importance of this particular factor, often overlooked when assessing the prerequisites for great powers.²⁸

Francois Godement, in chapter 2, takes on one of the most daunting tasks—appraising China's economic power and projecting its future trajectory by 2025. Standing on the side of a cautious optimist, Godement does not subscribe to the so-called collapse/bubble thesis. Instead, he projects an enduring US-China duopoly in which cooperation may outweigh direct competition between the two. At the same time, Godement delves into the logic of uncertainty in offering future forecasts. Most notably, he acknowledges that economy is also made of perceptions and expectations. Furthermore, he underscores the heightened degrees of interconnectedness between global economics on one hand and a wide range of strategic factors operating at the level of great power politics on the other.

In chapter 3, Tony Saich digs into yet another complex issue of China's political governance capacity. On the basis of a series of nationwide surveys conducted since 2003, Saich closely examines the extent to which the Chinese populace trusts and supports their government. Despite a wide range of problems and challenges facing the leadership, Saich suggests, the locus of the governance problem as perceived by the Chinese people resides mostly at local levels (where corruption is more intense and administrative monitoring more difficult), while the central government is generally viewed as an “ally” of the society.²⁹ Saich, however, observes that either economic meltdown or social tension could trigger a catalyst for drastic changes although it is more probable than immediately possible.

Military Capabilities

The great power status can only be achieved with commensurate military capabilities. Canada and Australia, despite their physical size and resource endowments, are rarely called great powers due to their lack of formidable

military capabilities. As a scholar aptly puts it: “[T]he candidate [for a great power] need not have the capability to defeat the leading state, but it must have some reasonable prospect of turning the conflict into a war of attrition that leaves the dominant state seriously weakened, even if that dominant state ultimately wins the war.”³⁰ The history of great powers since the sixteenth century forcefully demonstrates that key advances in weapons technologies and revolutions in military affairs made global reaches, intercontinental power projection, and hegemonic control—like those of the Pax Britanica and Pax Americana—possible.³¹

There is something strange about China’s military power as it rarely “lost” wars since 1949. Many call it a draw with the United States during the Korean War, a swift victory over India in 1962, and a mediocre punitive action against Vietnam in 1979. On top of that, a new genre of literature has come into being on diverse dimensions and aspects of China’s military modernization since 1979, leading to an assessment that China is no longer a “sick man of the East.” As far as the global projection capabilities are concerned, China’s military power—in terms of aircraft carriers, airborne refueling, overseas military bases, and so on—are still deemed deficient, particularly compared with that of the United States.³² Yet, if the focus is shifted to the Asian regional theater—where China borders on as many as 14 countries and, therefore, long-range power projection is largely unnecessary or irrelevant—China is already dubbed as America’s “regional peer competitor.”³³ Particularly under the circumstances where China has increasingly desired to consolidate its “regional” influence first—unlike the European experiences in which overseas expansion was prioritized over securing exclusive control over the region—before venturing beyond Asia, China’s military capabilities in a limited theater are not to be taken lightly.³⁴

The dictum that “[I]t is all in the eyes of the beholder” is nowhere more pertinent than in assessing the military capabilities of the People’s Republic. Some exaggerate the fast-growing caliber of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) as if it is to overtake the United States any moment.³⁵ Others go so far as to belittle the remarkable accomplishments of the PLA’s modernization as if it constitutes no match at all for America’s military irrespective of regions and environments. The truth must stand somewhere in between, and that truth is perhaps continuously evolving as military capabilities change over time and so do the perceptions of them. Factors of technological leapfrogging (as demonstrated by China’s development of anti-ship ballistic missiles, low-visibility fighters, and anti-satellite and supersonic weapons) and domestic budget politics often weigh in heavily, making linear projections more difficult and complicated.³⁶ A net assessment is, therefore, neither easy nor static.

This volume is hinged on the premise that a key criterion for hegemonic—global and regional—control rests on superior military capabilities although other dimensions of power are equally important. In this regard, the book has three chapters devoted wholly to the assessment of China’s military capabilities from sector-based angles. Andrew S. Erickson, in chapter 4, evaluates China’s conventional military power, focusing particularly on its naval and air

capabilities. Erickson's assessment is that China's military modernization has a rapidly improving but still mixed record of progress. At this point, he observes, China still lags behind the United States in many key aspects (i.e., longer-range projection capabilities and software), and Beijing by no means poses a "peer competitor" problem for Washington. Nevertheless, Erickson suggests that China has been fairly successful in leapfrogging in certain areas and, therefore, the narrowing capability gap particularly in the Near Seas and their immediate regions—where China seeks a zone of exceptionalism to safeguard its "core and vital interests"—will be a growing challenge for the region and the United States.

Michael S. Chase, in chapter 5, offers an appraisal of China's military modernization in the realm of nuclear weapons and related technologies. Chase's findings suggest that the PLA's push for the modernization of nuclear weapons and delivery systems has been generally modest or even conservative in scope and largely reactive in nature. China still adheres to the no-first-use (NFU) principle and does not seek to race toward parity with America. Yet, today, China is no longer a regional deterrent. With road-mobile ICBMs and SSBNs entering into service, China will have a larger and more advanced nuclear deterrent in the future, which will nevertheless be smaller than those of Russia and the United States. Chase adds that Sino-American interactive perceptions—that is, the classical spear-versus-shield dilemma—are deeply embedded in the sector and that new technological advances such as space-based laser weapons may bring about heightened uncertainties.

Kevin Pollpeter, in chapter 6, examines what may be termed as "extreme capabilities" at China's disposal—namely, abilities to dominate in the three commons of outer space, cyberspace, and the Arctic. Pollpeter assesses that China's push for the modernization of outer space and cyberspace war-fighting capabilities has been offense-dominant and is becoming more robust in recent years. Given that space and cyberspace warfare constitutes the backbone of China's "counter-intervention" (i.e., anti-access/area-denial) strategy, as well as of America's AirSea Battle strategy, mutual suspicion and competition in these areas will only intensify down the road. In contrast, according to Pollpeter, China's approach toward securing the access to the Arctic has to date been mostly political and largely modest at best.

External Adaptability and Soft Power

When rising/challenging states were on the horizon, leading states and the international community almost always harbored concerns and suspicions about their intentions and preferences. Given that violent wars were more often eventual outcomes of the continuous cycles of power transition in modern history, they had every reason to be suspicious. From a rising state's viewpoint, therefore, mitigating such concerns and affirming the peaceful nature of their rise were deemed both necessary and crucial. Although not every effort as such proved successful, the case of America's keeping a generally low profile in the late nineteenth century stands out. Despite the fact that its economic

size already surpassed that of Great Britain in 1872 (and London was aware of it), America's strategic modesty—often dubbed as “imperial under-stretch”—was effective in assuaging Britain's suspicion and concern.³⁷ Thirty years later, British politicians were still confident—if not overly self-complacent—about their global power relative to that of the United States:

[T]he British Empire is even greater than the United States of America. We have a population of over 50,000,000 against the [America's] 70,000,000. . . . We have, in addition, 350,000,000 or more of people under our protectorate under our civilization, sympathizing with our rule, grateful for the benefits that we accord to them.³⁸

No other country has reflected more on the lessons from history than China, as Beijing has repeatedly emphasized that its rise would certainly be peaceful and do no harm to its neighbors and the international community.³⁹ Keenly aware of the fact that the international community's suspicions are not so easy to mitigate and that system-level calculations on the future distribution of power are crucial to its rise to a great-power status, China has over the years deployed an additional measure—that of enhancing its “soft power.”⁴⁰

Soft power is an elusive and often residual concept as it refers to everything that is not in the realm of hard power. Given that hard power generally denotes military and economic power—that is, tangible resources that can be used for threats and sanctions against others—soft power refers to the ability to make others do something willingly and voluntarily that they would not do otherwise.⁴¹ To this author, the concept possesses three key components: (1) a persuasion-related component of norms and values; (2) an emotional/sentimental component of attraction; and (3) a rational component of standards-setting.⁴² These components may not be the absolute prerequisites for a great-power status as the pre-World War II cases of Japan and Germany demonstrate. Yet, they may be both necessary and sufficient conditions for a hegemonic status since a hegemon should be able to lead, attract, and persuade other states.⁴³ It is widely known that China has over the years been meticulously studying the precedents of great powers in history. It can be inferred, therefore, that China will actively seek to use those lessons from the history to their advantages.⁴⁴

In contrast with the amount of effort China has invested, evaluations of China's soft power are not so positive. Ann Kent, in chapter 7, examines China's external adaptability in the realm of forging multilateral cooperation and complying with international norms, particularly in worldwide and regional organizations. Kent assesses that 2008 was a watershed year; while China had largely been a compliant, if not cooperative, state until 2008, it began to challenge and undermine fundamental norms and rules of the international system since then. Kent comes to a conclusion that China has become more “assertive” and that Beijing's greater sophistication in managing its interests within multilateral organizations is alarming. She recommends that it is incumbent on every member of the international community to respond to Beijing's rising assertiveness within multilateral settings.

In chapter 8, Hankwon Kim evaluates China's soft power from a dual perspective of attracting and normative power.⁴⁵ On the basis of seven different series of global surveys and data sets, Kim's findings suggest that the international community's favorable views toward China have more or less consistently been on the decline in recent years and that no firm evidence is available to support that China's norms and values have been successfully diffused to and accepted by the international community at large.

China's Power Perceived Differently: By Whom and How?

As noted earlier, debates go unabated on the nature of China's fast-growing power and the level of China's influence, both regionally and globally. It is perhaps inevitable that assessing one's power and influence is relative and, to a considerable extent, subjective. More often than not, one's own ideological preferences and geopolitical interests color or even overshadow such assessments. As Kupchan aptly notes, states view the level of others' "benignancy" differently. According to Buzan and Foot, it all depends on who views China's power from which specific angle. That is, interests and perceptions matter dearly in coming up with one's own appraisal of China's growing power and influence.⁴⁶ In recent years, even a new scholarly genre on "views of and responses to China's rise" has been in the making, pointing to diverse perspectives and interests of different states with regard to China.⁴⁷

This volume does not seek to delineate cross-state variations in their respective views of China's ascendancy, of which there are already plenty of studies. Instead, the remainder of the book provides regional, global, and self-portraying perspectives on China's growing power and influence. In the "Regional Impact of China's Power" part, two chapters assess China's power in the East Asian context which is directly related to China's core and vital interest.

David Kang, in chapter 9, offers an evaluation of China's growing power and influence in Northeast Asia where hedging and buck-passing has already been rampant. Kang notes that the evidence for the region's balancing against China's rise—in terms of defense expenditures—is fairly ambiguous. At the same time, he acknowledges that optimists and pessimists differ on the region's eventual response to the rise of China. As for the future, Kang comes down on the former's side by asserting that countries are seeking ways to manage relations with each other and with China that emphasize institutional, diplomatic, and economic solutions rather than purely military solutions. In all of these, of course, America remains as a key variable.

In chapter 10, Evelyn Goh provides assessments of China's power in Southeast Asia. According to Goh, in the last two decades, China's rise—economic, diplomatic, and maritime-assertive—has cast a huge shadow over the region. China's fast-growing power advantage has necessitated both individual and collective efforts on the part of Southeast Asian states to enmesh China, sustain America's involvement, and diversify their economic dependency. She also notes that the region is increasingly concerned about the fallout of US-China conflicts. Goh cautions the readers by highlighting the South China

Sea disputes as a major irritant in the region and by underscoring the possibility of internal disagreements among Southeast Asian states regarding how to deal with China.

In the “Assessing China’s Global Power” part, three chapters look at China’s power from global and self-assessing perspectives. In chapter 11, Shaun Breslin provides a comprehensive appraisal of China’s power and influence on the global stage. He takes notes of a clear shift in the balance of global authority and, at the same time, views China as *a*—not *the*—global power. According to Breslin, China is largely a “reformist veto power”—a power able to block others’ initiatives while promoting changes within the existing global order. While he admits that China’s power is increasingly more real than imagined and that China is genuinely dissatisfied with the standing global order, Breslin is not certain if China could make a successful transition to *the* global leader. In a nonunipolar world that is coming, Breslin remains uncertain about how long China’s “defensive assertiveness” will last.

In chapters 12, Suisheng Zhao reconstructs Chinese views of China’s power on the basis of government doctrines, key leaders’ views, Chinese media reports, and major scholarly publications. Zhao suggests that the Chinese people, both leaders and ordinary citizens, are still torn between China’s identity as a developing nation, great power, and world number one. Due to a myriad of domestic challenges, Zhao observes, China is as yet a fragile great power and is not quite well-prepared, psychologically, to shoulder global responsibilities and common welfare. When that self-perception will eventually change and what will be accompanied by such changes are largely uncertain.

Zhimin Chen, however, offers in chapter 13 a somewhat different appraisal based on a series of Chinese surveys and think-tank reports that were not widely publicized before, as well as on important publications of Chinese scholars. According to Chen, Chinese internal assessments of its power used to be rather “conservative” and modest at least up to 2010. That is, after the eruption of the global economic crisis and China’s overtaking of Japan in GDP terms, sentiments began to change as many have pointed to China’s transforming itself from a geopolitical to comprehensive power. While debates still go unabated within China, in Chen’s view, internal assessments appear to become a bit overly optimistic in recent years.

All of the 12 chapters in the volume (except for this introductory one) address three coherent themes, though to varying degrees: (1) assessing China’s power today; (2) comparing China’s power with that of the United States; and (3) forecasting China’s power in 2025. At the end of reading this book, it is hoped, the readers will get a fairly good sense of where China already stands out, where China still has a long way to go, and where China’s comprehensive power is and will be situated at the hierarchy of the international system today and beyond.

Some Questions about the Future

The foregoing discussions lead us to an interim conclusion that China’s power and influence is growing rapidly, generally faster than previously and popularly

expected. While there are certain variations among different domains and sectors, overall, China's attaining a great-power status (though not a hegemonic one) is more or less predestined. The term "predestined" refers to the possibility that the trend of China's rise is less likely to be totally reversed although the pace of its ascendancy may change over time depending on internal and external factors. If the main focus is not global but narrowed down to the region of Asia, the importance and relevance of China and its rise get further accentuated, probably on a par with the United States.

Where do we go from here? The answer rests on posing the right questions about the future that is much too uncertain, even for a short run. At this juncture, five questions can be thought of, not all of which are dealt with in this volume. First, is the center of gravity in international relations really shifting toward Asia away from the West and the United States? The fundamental issue here concerns whether America can at some point rebound by getting its economic act together and overcoming its usual self-complacency.⁴⁸

Second, if the world's center of gravity is indeed moving toward Asia, specifically what kind of Asia does that refer to? Whether it denotes a China-centered Asia, a Chindia-based Asia, or a US-included Asia may have starkly different geostrategic implications for the future.

Third, if the center of gravity should really become a China-centered Asia, specifically what kind of China are we talking about here? China of the twenty-first century will perhaps be qualitatively different from that of the twentieth century. China may no longer be stuck with the tenet of "keeping a low profile and biding time for the right moment" (*taoguang yanghui*). While China still stresses the principle of "refraining from seeking hegemony" (*buchengba*), its twin component of "not assuming leadership" (*budangtou*) has already been scratched off from Beijing's foreign policy statements. In recent years, China has indeed become more active and proactive (*zhudong jinqu*)—often to the verge of being viewed as assertive and even aggressive—and does not hide its aspirations to stand on the center stage of world affairs.⁴⁹ After China's comprehensive power should equal or surpass that of the United States, what kind of China will it be? When "those born after 1980" (*balinghou*: who had little experiences with poverty, starvation, political hardship, and so on) take over leadership positions around the nation, will they still be modest and sensible?

Fourth, in the era of balance of terror (mutual assured destruction: MAD) based on nuclear deterrence, all-out wars between China and America is not likely, all other things being equal.⁵⁰ More importantly, unlike the US-USSR relationship of the twentieth century, both Washington and Beijing share enormous vested interests in sustaining the liberal-trading regime from which they have benefitted more than most others. Under the circumstances where the hegemonic competition is not likely to be determined by wars of destruction (unless crucial breakthroughs are made unilaterally and asymmetrically in space and missile-defense technologies), the game of benignancy may weigh in. That is, in the eyes of regional states and the international community, which of the two superpowers will be regarded as more benign or, alternatively, less threatening?

Fifth, traditionally, hegemonic competitions almost always led to wars, after which the winner took all the spoils while leaving the loser to fade away. Without hegemonic wars in the nuclear era, the mode of dividing the spoils may differ quite considerably. During the second half of the twentieth century, the line of division followed the ideological divide in the sense that the Soviet Union ruled the Communist bloc while the United States prevailed in much of the non-Communist regions. In the twenty-first century, after the successful rise of China, how will that play out in the absence of clear ideological lines?

Notes

1. International relations literature is rather vague on the concept of great power as it generally refers to one “that performs a major role, manages the international system, or sustains the international order” without specifying the components embedded in it. See, for instance, Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Powers System 1495–1975* (Lexington, KY: University Press of America, 1983), p. 76; James L. Richardson, *Crisis Diplomacy: The Great Powers since the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 5; Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: MacMillan, 1995), 2nd ed., p. 6; Paul A. Papayoanou, “Great Powers and Regional Orders: Possibilities and Prospects after the Cold War,” in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds.), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1997), p. 125.
2. As for China’s open-ended processes of reform, see Joseph Fewsmith, *Dilemmas of Reform in China: Political Conflict and Economic Debate* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 19–20; Jae Ho Chung, *Central Control and Local Discretion in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Chapter 3. And for the West’s initially negative projections about China’s reforms, see Thomas G. Rawski, “The Political Economy of China’s Declining Growth,” in P. J. Lloyd and Xiao-guang Zhang (eds.), *China in the Global Economy* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2000), p. 29.
3. See Arthur Waldron, “Warlordism versus Federalism: The Revival of a Debate,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 121 (March 1990), pp. 116–128; Maria H. Chang, “China’s Future: Regionalism, Federation, or Disintegration,” *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (September 1992), pp. 211–227; Edward Friedman, “China’s North-South Split and the Forces of Disintegration,” *Current History*, Vol. 92, No. 575 (1993), pp. 270–274; Jack Goldstone, “The Coming Chinese Collapse,” *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 99, No. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 35–52; Gordon Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Knopf, 2001); Ni Jianzhong, *Daguo zhubou (Feudal Princes in China)* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui chubanshe, 1996); Tong Zhongxin, *Shibeng de diguo (The Empire Off Balance)* (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 2001).
4. China’s growth even during the global economic crisis since 2008—as indicated by its annual GDP growth rates of 9.2, 10.3, 9.2, 7.8, 7.7, and 7.4 percent, respectively, for 2009–2014—has been remarkable, recording three times as high a rate of growth as the world average.
5. See Ye Zicheng, “Zhongguo shixing daguowaijiao zhanlue shizai bixing” (“China’s Implementing a Great-Power Diplomacy Is Indeed an Imperative”), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi (World Economy and Politics)*, No. 1 (2000); Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American Order* (New York: Norton, 2008), Chapters 3–4.

6. Zhiquan Zhu, *US-China Relations in the 21st Century: Power Transition and Peace* (London: Routledge, 2006); Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009); Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York: Penguin, 2012); David P. Rapkin and William R. Thompson, *Transition Scenarios: China and the United States in the Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
7. As each chapter in this volume forcefully demonstrates, nearly all the contributors are—at least tacitly—in agreement with what they mean by China's growing power (and influence).
8. While surpassing others in GDP terms is by no means equal to becoming superior to them across the board, Japan's perceptions of China's power since 2010 (when Beijing overtook Tokyo in GDP terms) tell us a lot about the importance of perceived power in the making of foreign and security policy.
9. The best example in this regard would be China's near-helplessness vis-à-vis North Korea's provocative acts despite the former's possession of diverse leverages over the latter. See Jae Ho Chung and Myeonghae Choi, "Uncomfortable Allies or Uncertain Neighbors? Making Sense of China-North Korean Relations, 1949–2009," *Pacific Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2013), pp. 243–264.
10. See, for instance, A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kuglar, *The War Ledger* (New York: Knopf, 1980), Chapters 1 and 2.
11. See Ted C. Fishman, *China INC: How the Rise of the Next Superpower Challenges America and the World* (New York: Scribner, 2006); Arvind Subramanian, *Eclipse: Living in the Shadow of China's Economic Dominance* (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2011); Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: Norton, 2011); Hugh White, *The China Choice: Why We Should Share Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Juan Pablo Cardenal and Heriberto Araujo, *China's Silent Army: The Pioneers, Traders, Fixers and Workers Who Are Remaking the World in Beijing's Image* (New York: Crown, 2013); Geoff Dyer, *The Contest of the Century: The New Era of Competition with China—and How American Can Win* (New York: Vintage, 2014).
12. Timothy Beardson, *Stumbling Giant: The Threats to China's Future* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); Mel Gurtov, *Will This Be China's Century? A Skeptic's View* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013); Jonathan Fenby, *Will China Dominate the 21st Century?* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014); Regina Abrami, William Kirby, and F. Warren McFarlan, *Can China Lead? Reaching the Limits of Power and Growth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2014).
13. Jae Ho Chung (ed.), *Charting China's Future* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Larry Wortzel, *The Dragon Extends Its Reach: Chinese Military Power Goes Global* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2013); David Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
14. See George Modelski, "Long Cycles of World Leadership," in William R. Thompson (ed.), *Contending Approaches to World Systems Analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1983), pp. 126–127; Christopher Chase-Dunn, *Global Formation: Structures of the World Economy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), Chapter 9.
15. A spectrum of different views as to the duration of America's unipolar moments exists. See Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990/1991), pp. 23–33; Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion:

- Why New Great Powers Rise,” *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Spring 1993), pp. 5–51; Michael Mastanduno, “Preserving the Unipolar Moment,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Spring 1997), pp. 49–88; Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Revisited,” *National Interest*, Vol. 70 (Winter 2002/2003), pp. 5–18; Christopher Layne, “The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States’ Unipolar Moment,” *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (October 2006), pp. 7–41.
16. A. F. K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 1968), 2nd ed; Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *The Great Powers and Global Struggle, 1490–1990* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).
 17. Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experiences of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Zara Steiner, “The Fall of Great Britain: Peace, Stability and Legitimacy,” in Geir Lundestad (ed.), *The Fall of Great Powers: Peace, Stability and Legitimacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 59–74.
 18. For the Japanese case, see Akira Iriye, “Japan’s Drive to Great-Power Status,” in Marius B. Jansen (ed.), *The Emergence of Meiji Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 268–329; Bruce Cumings, “Japan’s Position in the World System,” in Andrew Gordon (ed.), *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 34–63. And for the Soviet path, see Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987), pp. 488–514; Matthew Evangelista, “Internal and External Constraints on Grand Strategy: The Soviet Case,” in Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (eds.), *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 154–178; Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), Chapter 9; Lu Nanquan, *Sulian xingwangshilun (History of the Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union)* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2004).
 19. Jae Ho Chung, “Gangdaegukghwa eui jokon gwa jungguk eui busang” (“Conditions for a Great Power and the Rise of China”), in Jae Ho Chung (ed.), *Jungguk eui gangdaegukghwa (China’s Path to a Great-Power Status)* (Seoul: Gil Publishing, 2006), pp. 11–52.
 20. Yong Deng, *China’s Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); William A. Callahan, *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China’s Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt, 2015).
 21. See note 6.
 22. *Guangming ribao (Guangming Daily)*, July 25, 2013; Wang Yizhou, *Quanqiu zhengzhi yu zhongguo wajiao (Global Politics and Chinese Foreign Policy)* (Beijing: Shijiezhishi chubanshe, 2003), Chapter 9; *Xuexi Xi Jinping zongshuji zhongyao jianghua (Key Speeches by General Secretary Xi Jinping)* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2013), pp. 70–79.
 23. Chase-Dunn, *Global Formation*; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Chapter 3; Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 12–20; Chalmers Johnson, “The Developmental State: Odyssey of a Concept,” in Meredith Woo-Cumings (ed.), *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 314–319.

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25. See Amy Chua, *Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance—and Why They Fall* (New York: Anchor, 2009).
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27. See, respectively, Layne, “The Unipolar Illusion,” p. 5; Kenneth Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000), p. 32.
28. Dennis Phillips, “Upper Volta with Rockets: Internal versus External Factors in the Decline of the Soviet Union,” in Ralph Summy and Michael E. Salla (eds.), *Why the Cold War Ended: A Range of Interpretations* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), pp. 123–138; Gail W. Lapidus and Edward W. Walker, “Nationalism, Regionalism, and Federalism: Center-Periphery Relations in Post-Communist Russia,” in Gail W. Lapidus (ed.), *The New Russia: Troubled Transformation* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), pp. 79–114.
29. This is a conclusion analogous to Jae Ho Chung, “Assessing the Odds against the Mandate of Heaven: Do Numbers on Popular Protest Really Matter?” in Jae Ho Chung (ed.), *Charting China's Future* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. 107–128; Martin Whyte, *Myths of the Social Volcano: Perceptions of Inequality and Distributive Injustice in Contemporary China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).
30. John Measheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), p. 5.
31. Rasler and Thompson, *The Great Powers and Global Struggle*, p. 18; Papayoanou, “Great Powers and Regional Orders,” p. 64; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Chapter 3; Richard Harding, *Seapower and Naval Warfare, 1650–1830* (London: Routledge, 1999).
32. See, for instance, Task Force (chaired by Harold Brown), *Chinese Military Power* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003); Shambaugh, *China Goes Global*, Chapter 7.
33. For the assessment of China as America’s “regional peer competitor,” see Michael A. McDevitt, “The China Factor in Future U.S. Defense Planning,” in Jonathan D. Pollack (ed.), *Strategic Surprise* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2003), p. 153. For a positive assessment of China’s ground forces, see Martin Andrew, “The Dragon Breathes Fire: Chinese Power Projection,” *China Brief*, Vol. 5, No. 16 (July 19, 2005), p. 5. Also see Wortzel, *The Dragon Extends Its Reach*.
34. On the condition of exclusive regional control, see Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 147. Also see Kai He and Huiyun Feng, “Rethinking China’s Monroe Doctrine,” *RSIS Commentaries*, No. 128 (July 4, 2014).
35. Editorial Board, “Beijing’s Breakneck Defense Spending Poses a Challenge to the U.S.,” *Washington Post*, March 13, 2014; Randy Forbes and Elbridge Colby, “We’re Losing Our Military Edge over China,” *The National Interest*, March 27, 2014.
36. See, for instance, Michael D. Swaine, et al., *China’s Military and the US-Japan Alliance in 2030: A Strategic Net Assessment* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013).

37. The quote is from Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), Chapter 3. Of course, there were also racial, cultural and civilizational common denominators between the two. See Duncan Andrew Campbell, *Unlikely Allies: Britain, America and the Victorian Origin of the Special Relationship* (New York: Hambleton Continuum, 2007).
38. Joseph Chamberlain, "Retaliation" (The Town Hall, Greenock, October 7, 1903), in Charles W. Boyd (ed.), *Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches* (London: Constable, 1914), Vol. 2, pp. 178–179. I thank Doo Hwan Ahn for sharing this material with me.
39. See Zheng Bijian, "China's Peaceful Rise to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (September–October, 2005), pp. 18–24; Robert L. Suettinger, "The Rise and Descent of 'Peaceful Rise,'" *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 12 (Fall 2004), <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org>; Xia Liping, *Zhongguo heping jueqi (China's Peaceful Rise)* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2004), Chapters 7–10; Peng Peng (ed.), *Heping jueqilun (Theory of Peaceful Rise)* (Guangzhou: Guangzhou renmin chubanshe, 2005), pp. 13–26.
40. For the importance of system-level calculations of the future distribution of power, see Barry Buzan and Ole Waver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 35. For China's efforts on the front of enhancing soft power, see Men Honghua, *Zhongguo Ruanshili fan-gluo (China's Soft Power Strategy)* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2007); Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money and Minds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), Chapter 4; Li Mingjiang, *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Guo Shuyong, *Zhongguo ruanshili zhanlue (China's Strategy for Soft Power)* (Beijing: Shishi chubanshe, 2012).
41. Susan Strange, "The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony," *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Autumn 1987), pp. 551–574; Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs, 2004), Chapter 1.
42. Chung, "Gangdaegukghwa eui jokon gwa jungguk eui busang," p. 25.
43. Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 45; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 198–199.
44. On China's meticulous study of historical precedents, see Ren Donglai, "Daguo jueqi de zhidu kuangjia he sixiang chuantong" ("Institutional Frameworks and Philosophical Traditions in the Rise to a Great Power"), *Daguo* (Great Power), No. 1 (2004), pp. 75–86; Ding Xin, "Heping baoguo yu wuli jueqi de duijue" ("The Competition between Peaceful Security and Military Rise"), *Daguo*, No. 2 (2005), pp. 124–134; Peng, *Heping jueqilun*, Chapter 2.
45. From the planning stage, this book project had had a chapter specifically on China's standards-setting and diffusing power. Regrettably, due to the failure of the scholar in delivering the chapter he had earlier committed himself to, the volume lacks the assessment of the third dimension of China's soft power.
46. See Charles A. Kupchan, "Benign States and Peaceful Transition," in Charles A. Kupchan, Emanuel Adler, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Yuen Foong Khong, *Power in Transition* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2001), Chapter 2; Barry

- Buzan and Rosemary Foot (eds.), *Does China Matter? A Reassessment* (London: Routledge, 2004). Also see Francois Godement, *Divided Asia: Implications for Europe* (Paris: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2013).
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 48. Great Britain, keenly aware of the fact that America's economic prowess outweighed its own in the early 1870s, still gave its hegemonic control over to Washington in less than 70 years. For an optimistic projection in favor of the United States in the upcoming power contest, see Nina Hachigan and Mona Sutphen, *The Next American Century: How the U.S. Can Thrive as Other Powers Rise* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008). Also see the so-called "Pax Americana-II" scenario in Rapkin and Thompson, *Transitions Scenarios*, Chapter 7.
 49. See the statement on "proactive forwarding diplomacy" (*zhudong jinqu*) and "China-as-the-main-stage" (*zhuchang waijiao*) by Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the National People's Congress in March 2014; President Xi Jinping's speech at the CICA meeting in Shanghai in May 2014.
 50. There are concerns, however, that chances or little things could ignite big troubles between Washington and Beijing. See Richard Rosecrance, "Contingency as a Cause (Or Little Things Mean a Lot)," in Richard Rosecrance and Steven Miller (eds.), *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of US-China Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), Chapter 14.

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