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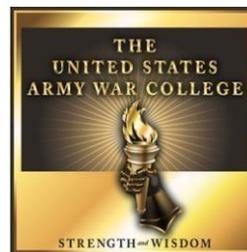
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# We Said, Xi Said: Moving to Partnership by Understanding China

by

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# We Said, Xi Said: Moving to Partnership by Understanding China

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## Abstract

The United States and China are on the road to conflict based on a lack of strategic trust. To avoid this, the United States must gain a more empathetic understanding of China's world view, based on its history, foreign policy perspective, and current leadership. This paper will provide a brief overview of China's history, show how its history influences Chinese foreign policy, and close with a synopsis of the current Chinese leadership approach to executing its policies. For those largely unfamiliar with China, this paper will provide an introductory level of understanding to help counter some of the common misperceptions and lay the foundation for further study and examination.

## **We Said, Xi Said: Moving to Partnership by Understanding China**

Misperception is one of the most insidious causes of war. States can find themselves locked in conflict based on misunderstanding by misapprehending the relative power, interests, or intent at stake.<sup>1</sup> China and the United States are on this dangerous path. It is unquestionable that China's growing power will alter the international system's balance; however, this reality currently leads both China and the United States to project nefarious intent on the other. The United States presumes China wants to replace American influence in the Asia-Pacific region, perhaps even the world.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, China suspects the United States wants to contain its expanding power to maintain America's dominant global position. As each state acts consistent with its belief, each act is interpreted as confirmation of the established perception. The views become ever more firmly entrenched.<sup>3</sup>

To achieve a mutually beneficial relationship, Washington and Beijing need to move past misperceptions and build trust. As a basis for this trust, the United States requires a more thorough understanding of China's history, international relations philosophy, and leadership priorities. A detailed understanding of China's perspective will allow Washington to more effectively navigate the relationship and find appropriate balance. Although there is no precedent for how two super powers should work together for the good of the world order, a productive relationship must begin with mutual understanding.<sup>4</sup> China and the United States will always have separate interests, which do not perfectly align and at times will conflict. This does not have to lead inevitably to discord. Even close allies have competing interests or even disagreements, but friction is defused by solid empathy. Simple understanding is often enough to prevent violent conflict.

## Trust as a Strategic Issue

China and the United States lack mutual empathy, causing an absence of strategic trust.<sup>5</sup> As Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi recently noted, there are three primary reasons for this distrust.<sup>6</sup> The first, as discussed above, is the narrowing power gap between them. Each country's uncertainty as to how the other will react to the changing world order intensifies existing suspicions.<sup>7</sup> Mutual fear and apprehension skew perceptions, causing each to overestimate the hostility of the other.<sup>8</sup> Paradoxically, each simultaneously expects that its own peaceful motives are obvious and understood.<sup>9</sup> Together these biases increase the chance that defensive responses are mistakenly seen as aggressive acts.<sup>10</sup> While the United States cannot control China's actions, it can seek to understand them, as well as how its own actions are interpreted, enabling a more genuine perception by both sides.

Additionally, the two countries are founded on very different political traditions, value systems, and culture.<sup>11</sup> Their history, both independent and shared, has shaped their world view, their perspective of their role within it, and their relationship to one another. While the United States is founded on principles of individual freedom, China sees an existential necessity to act for the greater good, even at the expense of some individuals. Nationalist rhetoric on both sides only serves to deepen the distrust.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, both states fail to understand each other's policy making processes and how the government relates to other entities.<sup>13</sup> The United States is inherently suspicious of authoritarian, particularly communist, governments, viewing democracies as more trustworthy, more transparent, and ultimately, more stable.<sup>14</sup> An authoritarian system such as China is seen as opaque and mysterious, creating a void in knowledge which allows suspicion to grow. This is especially true given its communist foundation,

which connects to residual Cold War fears of the Soviet threat.<sup>15</sup> Comparatively, the Chinese simply do not believe that America will ever willingly let China grow into a great power. To Chinese ears, Washington rhetoric such as “pivot” and “rebalance” to the Pacific translates to “containment.”<sup>16</sup>

To address the shortfalls and challenges, this paper will provide a brief overview of China’s history, show how its history influences Chinese foreign policy, and close with a synopsis of the current Chinese leadership approach to executing its policies. For those largely unfamiliar with China, this paper will provide an introductory level of understanding to help counter some of the common misperceptions and lay the foundation for further study and examination.

#### The “Middle Kingdom”: China’s Storied History

Chinese self-identity begins in ancient times when it was the center of the universe, surrounded by colonies and tributary states such as Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, which were all part of its Confucian culture.<sup>17</sup> As a civilization, China was inward looking and did not seek interchange with other civilizations or expansion of its territory beyond the seas.<sup>18</sup> Other countries came to it for its ideas and exuberant culture.<sup>19</sup> Rather than diplomacy, it operated a tribute system, which constituted an exchange of sorts – China granted legitimacy to those in its orbit who were willing to show it deference and provide gifts acknowledging its superiority.<sup>20</sup> In this way, China did not seek territorial control so much as psychological dominance and a recognition that it alone was the superior civilization.<sup>21</sup> The Emperor ruled with the legitimacy of the “Mandate of Heaven,”<sup>22</sup> which received critical corroboration from the foreigners willing to bow to China’s superior status.<sup>23</sup> Outside of this universe were other foreigners,

known to the Chinese as “barbarians” because they were not blessed with the influence of Chinese traditions.<sup>24</sup>

China’s world came under attack from these barbarians in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>25</sup> European emissaries became progressively more insistent on opening trade with China.<sup>26</sup> Believing it was the superior civilization with nothing to gain from Western goods or technology, China declined the invitation.<sup>27</sup> The British eventually used superior military power to force China to enter into a series of unequal treaties, coercing it to open trade routes, establish foreign embassies in its capital, and allow missionaries into its territory.<sup>28</sup> The British even forced China to import opium against its domestic laws, culminating in the Opium Wars and leading China to lose control of its foreign policy.<sup>29</sup> While Western nations viewed these developments as “enlightenment,” the Chinese experienced them as attacks.<sup>30</sup> The treaties’ most harmful aspect was compelling China to interact with other nations on a basis of equality. China admission that it was equal to other nations undermined the basis of its legitimacy, its mandate from heaven. The loss of this legitimacy destabilized China’s entire internal political system, leading to domestic upheaval and insurrection, and risking the collapse of the empire.<sup>31</sup> It eventually resulted in a civil war and the deaths of tens of millions of Chinese citizens.<sup>32</sup>

Weakened by challenges from European nations and internal disturbances, China faced threats from its neighbors.<sup>33</sup> China has always viewed its basic security challenge as protecting itself from strategic encirclement.<sup>34</sup> Although it is a large country, dwarfing the size of all nearby nations, it is surrounded by less than friendly neighbors. If these nations combined, they could overcome China.<sup>35</sup> Russia challenged

it from the north and west. While Western nations had only sought to open trade, Russia sought more, in the form of territory and permanent influence in China's outer border regions. The greatest danger came from the east as Japan sought to usurp China as the center of the Asian universe. It began taking over pieces of the empire until its ultimate victory led to the end of China's world order. It was one thing for China to be overpowered by foreign barbarians with stronger militaries and superior technology. It was another altogether for it to lose to an inferior nation who owed its very cultural foundations to China. Clearly, China had lost the mandate of heaven.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the loss of territory and some of its sovereignty, China survived. It kept its civilization largely intact through perseverance and skillful diplomacy. Even while dominated by foreign powers, China's leaders maintained a long-term view, accepting losses of territory and citizens in order to preserve the essence of the civilization as a whole. To the Chinese, this success was only possible through the endurance and cultural confidence of its people, based on their steadfast belief that China truly is the superior civilization.<sup>37</sup> This was and is China's ultimate line of defense. This period is known as the Century of Humiliation.<sup>38</sup> China learned several significant lessons from this experience, namely "the importance of sustaining one's strength, of continually developing one's military and technology, and of never letting down one's guard or surrendering a lead once acquired."<sup>39</sup>

Its humiliation did not end until 1949 when the communists unified China, moved to restore its power, and regained the territory lost during its "humiliation."<sup>40</sup> Mao Zedong was one of the strongest leaders in history, leading the nation through the communist revolution and unifying China largely based on zeal and the force of his character.<sup>41</sup>

Once he successfully overthrew the Nationalist government, his goal was to regain China's preeminence and its lost territory.<sup>42</sup> He did this by uprooting established institutions and aspects of centuries-old Chinese culture, which he blamed for China's weakness and ultimate decline.<sup>43</sup> His methods inflicted untold suffering on the population during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, including the deaths of millions of citizens and an economy in shambles.<sup>44</sup> But he succeeded in largely unifying the country and providing a base from which reform could begin.<sup>45</sup>

His successor Deng Xiaoping was a fellow revolutionary who had suffered greatly under Mao's rule but remained loyal to the revolutionary cause.<sup>46</sup> He understood the impossibility of China fully realizing its potential through fortitude and ideology alone. Instead, it needed economic growth and internal stability.<sup>47</sup> After Mao's death, Deng concentrated on implementing domestic reforms, recommending that China take a conservative, passive approach to foreign policy described by the mantra, "hide one's capabilities and bide one's time."<sup>48</sup> This approach set China on a path that led to its current power.<sup>49</sup> Deng also recognized the danger in allowing power to be concentrated in one man. He pushed for the government to adopt a system of collective leadership, where no one person could impose the catastrophic decisions of Mao.<sup>50</sup>

Since the revolution, China has sought to regain its former strength. Its tremendous size and location, bordered by 14 countries in a region containing nearly half of the world's population, provide it intrinsic power and inherent vulnerabilities. It has also undergone economic growth, technological advancement, and military improvement since 1949. China is ready to return to what it sees as its rightful place in

the world. It does not seek to overturn the global system, but it does expect the system to evolve to provide China the respect and influence it is due.<sup>51</sup>

### From Past to Present: China's Foreign Policy

China's long history gives it a unique foreign relations perspective. Despite its evolution from a hierarchical system, it is a strong supporter of the Westphalian system that is the basis of the current world order.<sup>52</sup> In fact, because it was aligned with the United States and the Western Allies in World War II, it was a founding member of several institutions which make up the core of this order, including the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.<sup>53</sup> The system's emphasis on sovereignty has been essential to China's resurgence, providing it the safety and opportunity in which to recover and grow.<sup>54</sup>

Yet, China remains ambivalent about its place in that system for several reasons.<sup>55</sup> First, it has not forgotten that it was forcibly pulled into the Western-based, Westphalian system against its will in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, at considerable cost to its citizens and its identity.<sup>56</sup> It had to fight through violence and degradation to maintain its civilization's essence. China maintains a constant vigil to ensure it is never so vulnerable again. Moreover, the CCP is cognizant that this system was created by Western powers, the very same which initiated China's decline, and not designed to provide it with a voice commensurate to its power.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, other institutions, such as the World Trade Organization and G-7, were formed without China's input.<sup>58</sup> Encouragement that it do more as a "responsible stakeholder"<sup>59</sup> in that system, provokes a visceral response, as it is being called upon to follow rules which it had no voice in making.<sup>60</sup>

China wants to take its place as a world leader, which to Beijing means it has a hand in shaping the world order.<sup>61</sup> It wants more influence in its current and future direction, as well as the ability to rectify past injustices.<sup>62</sup> In China's view, the existing order is dominated by the United States and must change to allow room for developing powers.<sup>63</sup> While Beijing is increasingly comfortable with global economic institutions, it is less comfortable with the American led security order, based as it is on "bilateral and multi-lateral alliances of which China is not a part."<sup>64</sup>

China struggles to come to terms with the haunting memory of past centuries, defending itself from threats it still sees and recoiling at the slightest notion of foreign interference. This innate defensiveness drives three characteristics of China's international relations. First, it focuses on realist thinking, centered on concepts of power and interest rather than enduring values.<sup>65</sup> Second, China is adept at employing psychological strategies to gain coercive power and compensate for relatively weaker military strength.<sup>66</sup> Finally, China opts for a long-term, comprehensive perspective, rather than the short-term and segmented American view. It is mindful of subtle connections and draws its strength from its enduring history, enlisting time as its ally.<sup>67</sup>

China's interest-based realism is anchored in the weight of its history and driven by its hope for the future. As it strives to return to its former status as a great power, it avoids being constrained by absolute values, focusing instead on maximizing advantages over the long term.<sup>68</sup> Its relations are pragmatic because they are not based on moral standards or long-term alliances, but on rational calculation of mutual benefit and sovereignty. In every relationship, it seeks to advance its interests over time. Two core interests rise above all others in guiding China's strategy, the survival of the

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>69</sup>

China's first core interest, which drives all others, is the survival and legitimacy of the CCP.<sup>70</sup> Ever since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, "China's foreign and domestic policy have both served the same goal: to maintain internal political stability under the leadership of the Communist Party."<sup>71</sup> Despite China's increased global power, its leaders perpetually fear internal chaos. Any sign of domestic strife evokes the ghosts of past civil wars where tens of millions of its citizens perished, outsiders invaded, and ultimately, its known world order collapsed.<sup>72</sup> To communist leaders, the CCP saved China and only the CCP is capable of maintaining sufficient stability to ensure its continued survival.<sup>73</sup> Thus, the CCP's endurance is paramount because it is inextricably intertwined with the existence of the state itself.

A key aspect of the CCP's survival is its legitimacy, which is heavily influenced by national dignity and respect. This stems from the ancient, hierarchical tribute system where the power of the Emperor was demonstrated by the deference he was paid by other states.<sup>74</sup> Dr. David Lampton, a noted China expert, observes that Chinese leaders will give up much, even on issues of substance, to preserve dignity and "save face."<sup>75</sup> Correspondingly, it will risk much to avoid losing it if backed into a corner. Another author asserts the regime "wants clout and respect, including respect for its economic interests wherever they reach, and to some degree subservience, in particular from its neighbors. It is an insecure state and near paranoid about being treated with the respect the leaders believe is due."<sup>76</sup> China's focus on respect stems from a culture that is extremely attuned to power relationships, both the current status and the future

prospects of it shifting.<sup>77</sup> For China, respect is driven by power, which results in influence.<sup>78</sup> Much as the ancient tribute system supported Chinese rulers' legitimacy under the Mandate of Heaven; moreover, respect paid by world powers provides the CCP with legitimacy.<sup>79</sup> For China, dignity and respect are not simply questions of etiquette, but essential signs of power.

The second core national interest is the protection of its territorial integrity and sovereignty.<sup>80</sup> Because of its geographic location and history, China constantly feels threatened in a way the United States has never experienced.<sup>81</sup> A pervasive Chinese narrative is that it should never again submit to foreign bullying as in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>82</sup> As such, China is willing to use military force to defend its territory and its interests.<sup>83</sup> Any Chinese leader's legitimacy is largely based on his ability to defend China's sovereignty and ensure it receives the dignity and respect to which it is entitled.<sup>84</sup> Chinese leaders will continue to take action to prevent the loss of territorial control, consolidate unsettled territories, and ensure China is treated as an equal in the international system.<sup>85</sup> For instance, no Chinese leader will likely ever acquiesce to the permanent loss of Taiwan. Likewise, China continues efforts to integrate areas such as Tibet and Xinjiang, despite the significant economic burden to maintain them.<sup>86</sup> It also continues to struggle with India over disputed border issues and makes disputed claims over territorial features in the South China Sea.<sup>87</sup> China's aggressive actions against Japan in the East China Sea are a particularly passionate manifestation of this interest.<sup>88</sup>

Additionally, both territorial integrity and sovereignty take on expanded meanings in today's globalized environment, leading to China's increasingly aggressive reputation.

Territorial integrity has expanded in accordance with China's global interests, leading it to be more assertive internationally, such as its claims to disputed territorial features in the South China Sea.<sup>89</sup> This assertiveness is linked to China's history, with a purported true belief in its sovereign claims and the continuing need to overcome its Century of Humiliation.<sup>90</sup> China's narrative as to these claims is that they are based on ancient historic ownership.<sup>91</sup> However, these claims serve as a defensive buffer to protect its present economic interests which rest in the shipping lanes and resources found there.<sup>92</sup> Sovereignty includes more than just physical space; it also includes the information and cyber realms. For instance, China has worked to establish strict concepts of internet sovereignty that establish firewalls to unwanted information.<sup>93</sup>

China's concentration on interests influences its foreign policy philosophy. It is integrally self-reliant.<sup>94</sup> Because its foreign policy is based on a rational weighing of interests, China has not developed long term, formal alliances like the United States.<sup>95</sup> It declines to acquiesce to abstract obligations beyond those which achieve concrete benefits.<sup>96</sup> Instead, it has strategic partners of convenience who happen to share common interests at a particular time.<sup>97</sup> In China's view, these partnerships last only so long as the convergence of interests.<sup>98</sup> It has also been willing to move forward alone to protect its interests.<sup>99</sup> It did so in the Korean War, when the Soviet Union declined to stand behind its pledge of support,<sup>100</sup> and its 1979 invasion of Vietnam,<sup>101</sup> in spite of Vietnam's alliance with the Soviet Union.

China's core interests mean that it has fundamentally irreconcilable differences with the United States on liberal political ideals such as democracy and human rights.<sup>102</sup> China's leaders view Western political values as an existential menace to its stability,

the CCP, and, consequently, China's existence. In a contravention of American values, China's priority is the greater good of the civilization, even when it means individuals must bear tremendous consequences.<sup>103</sup> As David Welch has noted, there is a tendency to discount motives overtly asserted by leaders on moral grounds and look instead for the covert underlying, rational self-interest.<sup>104</sup> In this instance, both China and the United States contribute to strategic distrust by discounting the sincerity of the other's motives.

Because China's actions are so incongruent with American values, Washington finds it difficult to accept the sincerity of Beijing's intent. Rather than accepting that China's actions are motivated by a genuine belief in what is necessary to protect its country, and ultimately its citizens, the United States sees only the manifestation of evil intent. China, on the other hand, finds it difficult to accept that the United States' position arises purely from sincerely held values. Driven by interests, there is no equivalent in China's foreign relations policy. Therefore, China, viewing Washington's position through its own interest-oriented lens, is suspicious of a Western human rights focused agenda. It discounts the values-based foundation and looks for the underlying interest, seeing it as a cloaked method to undermine China's government.<sup>105</sup> In China's view, this is an internal issue which has no impact on America's interests. Moreover, it hears echoes of past foreign bullying in Washington's human rights pleas as attempts to meddle in its domestic affairs.<sup>106</sup> Deng Xiaoping, China's most powerful leader after Mao, summed up China's perspective, stating:

[N]ational sovereignty is far more important than human rights, but the [West] often infringe upon the sovereignty of poor, weak countries of the Third World. Their talk about human rights, freedom and democracy is designed only to safeguard the interests of the strong, rich countries, which take advantage of their strength to bully weak countries, and which pursue hegemony and practice power politics.<sup>107</sup>

The aftermath of Tiananmen Square and its impact on Chinese-American relations illustrates the challenge. Chinese leaders saw the protestors as a threat which had to be suppressed to protect the nation.<sup>108</sup> In their view, any response which sustained the greater good was justified, even if it meant sacrificing a relative few. When the United States imposed sanctions on China following its violent response to the Tiananmen Square protestors, China could not understand the concern about an issue that had no impact on any discernible American interest.<sup>109</sup> The United States explanation of the importance of protecting human rights led to charges of “bullying,” particularly given America’s own issues with human rights.<sup>110</sup> President George H.W. Bush, experienced in Chinese culture, has since reflected, “For this understandably proud, ancient, and inward-looking people, foreign criticism (from peoples they still perceived as ‘barbarians’ and colonialists untutored in Chinese ways) was an affront, measures taken against them a return to the coercions of the past.”<sup>111</sup>

The second characteristic of China’s international relations is the primacy of psychological strategy.<sup>112</sup> China is accustomed to operating from a position of relative weakness and has become adept at playing this position to the greatest advantage. One method it has used for centuries is pitting “barbarians against barbarians,” using rival nations against each other to reduce their impact on China.<sup>113</sup> It proved successful in playing Russia and Japan against each other in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as the United States and the Soviet Union in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>114</sup> China also used this strategy in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when it was facing demands from a number of countries, offering “Most Favored Nation” status to all of its challengers.<sup>115</sup> By granting concessions to all, it

ensured that each had a vested interest in counter-balancing the power of the others. The multiplicity of interests guarded against domination by any one nation.<sup>116</sup>

China also seeks to avoid making psychological concessions through a constant presentation of strength and refusal to concede weakness.<sup>117</sup> Its near constant posture in dealing with foreigners is one of self-confidence and assurance, never weakness or doubt.<sup>118</sup> Where it operates from relative weakness, China substitutes “courage and psychological pressure [for]...material advantage.”<sup>119</sup> In this way, it responds differently to vulnerability than western nations; where the latter tends to avoid provocation, China will magnify its defiance and increase military bravado.<sup>120</sup> Aggression is, therefore, not necessarily a sign of strength, but one of insecurity designed to distract from internal weakness.<sup>121</sup> China is perhaps at its most dangerous when it is insecure and facing a stronger enemy, as rhetoric and military actions will increase in proportion to its fear.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, China can engage in different rhetoric in public than private, as its publicly disbursed ideology serves as a domestic management tool to preserve regime credibility and may not necessarily reflect reality.<sup>123</sup>

A typical way China masks its relative strength is through its use of surprise and offensive deterrence, which was perfected during the era of Mao. For Mao, the western concept of deterrence, waiting for an attack, was too passive.<sup>124</sup> Instead, China seeks deterrence through surprise by disrupting an enemy’s plans and obtaining an advantage despite its weakness.<sup>125</sup> Unlike the Western approach, which seeks a military advantage to prevent an attack, China’s approach aims to achieve a psychological objective. During the first Taiwan crisis, China used the strategy to reassert its claim to One China by shelling off-shore islands where Nationalist forces were present.<sup>126</sup> In 1962, it struck

India in an attempt to restore negotiations on a border issue.<sup>127</sup> In 1969, it attacked Soviet forces along the Ussuri River to shock the Soviets into ending a series of harassing border clashes.<sup>128</sup> In 1979 it preemptively attacked Vietnam to dissuade Vietnam from its involvement in Cambodia. In all of these actions, China obtained advantage through surprise, acting and terminating quickly, while it still held the upper hand.

The rest of the world tends to misunderstand these Chinese preemptive, deterrent attacks. While these actions appear offensive, China views them as defensive measures, capitalizing on surprise to counter-balance its relatively weak military power.<sup>129</sup> China's historic motive has been to maintain defensive space to prevent strategic encirclement, which is why it will always be more aggressive in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>130</sup> The challenge this approach poses to China's inclusion in the new world order is that as China's global interests expand, regardless of the motive, so does its need for strategic space and likelihood for continued aggression.<sup>131</sup> Thus, even China's recent, apparently unprovoked, aggressive actions such as in the South China Sea can be traced back to a defensive motive.

The final characteristic influencing China's international relations is its long-term view of issues.<sup>132</sup> China's strongest ally has always been time. It looks for the context of an issue, discerns strategic trends, and patiently makes incremental steps toward its goals.<sup>133</sup> It is better equipped for this than the United States because of the duration and scale of its society, as well as its system of government.<sup>134</sup> Chinese leaders know its civilization has withstood significant hardship and still survived for centuries. It has endured the deaths of tens of millions of its citizens multiple times; it professed to be

willing to suffer millions more to stand up to the Soviet nuclear threat.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, China knows it can accept even devastating short term tactical losses to achieve long-term strategic success. For example, in 1979 China's decision to invade Vietnam led to a tremendous loss of military forces, making its immediate result dubious at best; however, China achieved its strategic goal of sending a punitive message to Vietnam and undermining the Soviet Union's credibility with its allies.<sup>136</sup>

Moreover, China's system of government is conducive to a long-term view because it is not tied to the relatively short election or media cycles of democracies. Its leaders have more room to operate as they are less tied to popular will. China's leaders are better able to see each problem as part of a larger context, not as a discrete and isolated issue as seen by the United States.<sup>137</sup> American leaders tend to look for quick solutions to problems, while China looks ahead to see which new problems arise out of each solution and plans accordingly.<sup>138</sup> While the United States is looking to solve the immediate crisis, China is looking beyond one problem toward an evolutionary change.<sup>139</sup> It is given to layered maneuvers which America does not particularly understand.<sup>140</sup> Prior to the 1962 Sino-India War, for example, China's primary concern was that the United States would take the opportunity to support a Taiwan led revolution.<sup>141</sup> Before invading India, it checked on American support for an offensive by Taiwan. The United States, not understanding the context of the question, provided assurances that it did not support an offensive by Taiwan at that time. Having reduced its risk by securing stability on one issue, China proceeded to launch its offensive against India.<sup>142</sup>

Henry Kissinger described strategy as understanding a continually evolving context and relationships, capturing the direction of the evolution to serve designated ends.<sup>143</sup> China applies this skill well. Where Washington tends to provide an outline of practical, deliverable objectives on a particular issue, Beijing focuses on methodically shaping trends toward its goals.<sup>144</sup> Because it usually has the luxury of time, it is adept at embracing strategic patience and gaining benefits in exchange for its tolerance while remaining persistently focused on its goals. The reunification of Taiwan, for example, is a crucial Chinese aspiration.<sup>145</sup> While the objective is non-negotiable, the timing is.<sup>146</sup> China has repeatedly agreed to delay advancement on Taiwan to get other benefits, such as American support against the Soviet Union, as well as decades of economic assistance.<sup>147</sup>

Conversely, China's analysis of long-term trends can lead it to preemptive action. In addition to the preemptive deterrence approach discussed above, it is willing to act to forestall predicted future threats. In the Korean War, for example, Beijing assessed that an American victory would lead to increased American momentum and confidence to take action against China. It entered the war as a "[p]reemptive strategy against dangers that had not yet materialized and based on judgments that about ultimate American purposes toward China that were misapprehended."<sup>148</sup>

Molded by its history, China's foreign policy is grounded in a careful, pragmatic weighing of its interests. It is tempered with patience and a knowledge that its goals are often best obtained gradually, through calculated mental tenacity. While its policy foundations remain grounded in the same central tenants, it is China's leaders who face the difficult challenge of applying them in an increasingly transforming world.

## Chinese Leadership: Informed by History, Driven by Stability

China's leaders since Deng operate under multiple challenges. First, as a consequence of Deng's reforms, China's government is based on twin principles of collective leadership and division of work.<sup>149</sup> Designed to ensure a division of power, it divides authority among various agencies and leaders, multiplying the size of the bureaucracy and causing decisions to be made in a slow, at times contradictory, fashion.<sup>150</sup> Thus, where Mao and Deng could make and execute decisions simultaneously, the next generation of leaders, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, had to build consensus, leading to slower, and occasionally fragmented, decisions.<sup>151</sup>

Additionally, the legitimacy of today's leaders is less apparent. Unlike Mao and Deng, revolutionaries who united China and ended its Century of Humiliation, current leaders' right to rule is not so clear.<sup>152</sup> The basis of legitimacy is changing from personal history and character to performance. Leaders must continue to perform in a way that benefits the country to guarantee they, and the CCP, remain in power.<sup>153</sup>

China's current president, Xi Jinping, bears both the burden and the benefit of history. When Xi first took power in 2012, he was predicted to stay in line with his predecessors and conform to the collective leadership structure that had been in place since Deng.<sup>154</sup> He quickly defied expectations.<sup>155</sup> Since the beginning of his term in office, he has combined the strength of past leaders with the acumen of current politicians. He restructured the PRC government and formulated a new assertive foreign policy, commensurate with his view of China's power.<sup>156</sup> Recently, the CCP abolished term limits, setting the stage for Xi to maintain power for decades.<sup>157</sup>

While history is ever present in the background, Xi leads a much different population than did Mao or Deng.<sup>158</sup> China's economic growth has caused a

stratification of its society and economy by creating a growing middle class with new interests.<sup>159</sup> Correspondingly, the number of his constituencies has increased.<sup>160</sup> The Chinese population has more resources, including more money and more information, than ever before.<sup>161</sup> The increased financial and information resources, plus its sheer size, make the middle class a formidable group with the ability to set off internal instability should it lose faith in the CCP's ability to continue to provide good performance. This prospect perpetuates the quintessential historic fear of rising domestic instability.<sup>162</sup>

All of this together means that public opinion matters to Xi in a way it never has before.<sup>163</sup> Previous leaders such as Mao and Deng accomplished things through their personality and, when that failed, violence.<sup>164</sup> While the government still has a monopoly on force and violence within the country, it is less and less able to use that tool for internal control. Instead, Xi must carefully balance controlling the people with providing for them. CCP legitimacy is measured by the public welfare, including economic opportunity and domestic stability.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, he must monitor the economy and maintain the growth established since Deng instituted reforms.<sup>166</sup> A downturn in the economy threatens CCP legitimacy by risking government credibility and internal stability.<sup>167</sup>

As with his predecessors, Xi brought no significant personal legitimacy into office. He has no revolutionary credentials of his own. In fact, he is the first leader of the PRC who was born after the communist revolution.<sup>168</sup> He inherited some credibility from his father's role as a Mao-era revolutionary.<sup>169</sup> However, Xi and his family suffered greatly during the Cultural Revolution. Far from turning Xi against the CCP, Xi developed a

zealous dedication to the Party. Its preservation is his driving motivation.<sup>170</sup> In Xi's view, the CCP restored China's dignity, after a century of humiliation.<sup>171</sup> While it has had missteps and inflicted suffering on its people, the CCP has unified China and put it on a path to prosperity. In Xi's view, when China realizes its full potential and takes its place as a world leader, all the struggle will have been worth it.<sup>172</sup> However, to get to that place, the CCP must survive.

Xi manages these concerns by understanding the lessons of history and establishing a vision of the future. Xi's idea of protecting the CCP involves several key influences. First, his experience in the chaos of China's Cultural Revolution taught him to value stability and economic prosperity above all else.<sup>173</sup> Second, he is heavily influenced by the precedent of the Soviet Union's collapse and seeks to prevent China from following its path.<sup>174</sup> Moreover, he firmly rejects Western values for China, seeing them as a method of weakening China's strength.<sup>175</sup> Finally, he seeks to lead China to take its rightful place in the world, not only protecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity, but to once again become a great power and world leader.<sup>176</sup>

Xi is driven to protect the CCP by maintaining equilibrium and stability within the system. This stems partly from China's history, but also from his personal history. Xi's formative years occurred during the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution in which Mao's unchecked power subjected the country to chaos, death, and destruction. Constant political upheavals were the norm. Despite his loyalty to Mao, Xi's father was persecuted and his family torn apart.<sup>177</sup> While Deng's response was to fragment leadership into multiple roles, Xi has reversed this trend. In his view, strong central control is necessary to maintain stability and protect the Party. Periods of weak central

government have led to internal revolt, in ancient times and as recently as 1989 in Tiananmen Square.<sup>178</sup>

Paradoxically, Xi seeks to maintain stability and bolster the CCP's legitimacy by using a Maoist-like emphasis on centralized political power and ideological control.<sup>179</sup> Xi has deconstructed the system of collective leadership built by Deng and methodically moved to consolidate power to give him a broad purview over a range of policy decisions.<sup>180</sup> In his view, China can achieve greatness only through the CCP, which will be strengthened by increasing his personal power for the greater good of the country.<sup>181</sup> Xi's restructuring of government put him in charge of most important positions.<sup>182</sup> Now, he exerts influence and control over entire policy areas.<sup>183</sup> He has made major foreign policy changes, creating a National Security Commission (NSC)<sup>184</sup> and modernizing the military. Both are firmly under Xi's direct control; he leads the NSC and he is the military's commander-in-chief.<sup>185</sup>

For Xi, the fall of the Soviet Union stands as a cautionary tale that great communist powers are capable of implosion.<sup>186</sup> 74 years is the longest any communist regime has remained in power—and the CCP will reach that milestone in five years.<sup>187</sup> The Soviet Union's example shapes Xi's policy, teaching that regime survival is predicated on a careful balance of population control and reward.<sup>188</sup> In Xi's view, control of the population should never be allowed to erode.<sup>189</sup> Too much freedom allows unrest to spread and stability to crumble.<sup>190</sup> However, control of such a massive population cannot be maintained solely by force, but must include some method of inducing voluntary compliance. Consequently, the population must be rewarded, through economic prosperity, to gain its submission.<sup>191</sup>

In response, Xi has strengthened social controls.<sup>192</sup> The government monitors nearly every aspect of the cyber world, including the content of citizens' communications. It has imposed control on the academic world by clamping down on free expression and imposing stringent uniformity of thought.<sup>193</sup> Control of information has always been crucial to the CCP, but maintaining it is increasingly difficult in today's globalized environment.<sup>194</sup> There is little room for dissent under Xi's regime and restrictions have been placed on the media and internet access.<sup>195</sup>

Xi has also reinvigorated the rejection of Western political ideas. While Xi himself has spent time living on a farm in Iowa and has sent his daughter to study at Harvard, Xi refutes the utility of Western ideas for China. He has said that, given China's history and domestic structure, such ideas would not work in China and could actually lead to catastrophic consequences.<sup>196</sup> He believes the spread of Western liberalism was a significant factor leading to the Soviet Union's demise and that allowing these ideas to fester in China will create destructive dissatisfaction and dissent.<sup>197</sup> After all, the tumultuous uprising in Tiananmen Square happened after political controls were relaxed and students were exposed to ideas of democracy and individualism.<sup>198</sup> Under Xi's leadership, Beijing has not allowed promised democratic systems to proceed in Hong Kong, leading to mass protests in 2014.<sup>199</sup> These demonstrations, as well as revolutions in the Middle East and elsewhere have magnified China's suspicions of Western motives, believing that the United States and its allies are always interfering with others and seeking to undermine governments with which it does not agree.<sup>200</sup>

While Xi understands the need to reward the population, the greatest threat he faces is the slowdown of China's mega-growth economy.<sup>201</sup> Even as China's GDP

growth continues at an admirable rate, the amount of growth has slowed every year since 2010.<sup>202</sup> After years of double-digit increases, it appears unlikely to regain its previous momentum.<sup>203</sup> Because economic prosperity is the most direct source of CCP legitimacy, this sets the stage for potential instability.<sup>204</sup> Economic inequality within the population continues to increase and leads to thousands of internal riots each year.<sup>205</sup> Xi's options to reverse this trend are limited, though, because growth is slowing through the natural course of events.<sup>206</sup> The initial decades of double-digit yearly increases in GDP reflect the early and easiest growth. In an economy that starts from nothing, growth will occur easily at the beginning.<sup>207</sup> Moreover, the scope of growth it has experienced is unsustainable over time.<sup>208</sup> China lacks a sufficient base of innovation to free it from its dependence on outside sources, forcing it to pay for technology from outside its borders and limiting its ability to generate new growth.<sup>209</sup>

As the economic reward for the population has slowed, Xi has expanded the scope of performance which provides the CCP's legitimacy. His key insight is that to truly gain the allegiance of the people, more than just money is necessary: the Party must leverage moral and idealistic appeals.<sup>210</sup> He seeks to restore the moral foundation to the Party by returning to its idealistic roots.<sup>211</sup> His anti-corruption campaign goes directly to this objective.<sup>212</sup> Xi has essentially enlarged the measure of the CCP's performance to two pillars: a continually growing economy and increasing China's power so it can take its rightful place in the world. He has said that his two goals for China are doubling the GDP and achieving the "renewal" of the country by 2049, the century mark for the PRC's establishment by Mao.<sup>213</sup>

In the face of slowing economic growth, he relies heavily on nationalist rhetoric and expansion of China's international influence.<sup>214</sup> He has created a narrative that describes a unified program of national rejuvenation.<sup>215</sup> His ideology uses a language of power with a clear vocabulary of leadership. The language appears intended to evoke strong emotions such as national honor, pride, and dignity. A centerpiece of Xi's narrative is the "China Dream," which encompasses the aspirations of rejuvenation for a country with greater hopes and confidence than it has expressed in centuries.<sup>216</sup> Additionally, the National Congress of the Communist Party of China codified "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics of a New Era," Xi's philosophy for the future, in its constitution, a significant move which solidifies Xi as a powerful leader, on the level of Mao and Deng.<sup>217</sup> The language and the timing of the doctrine bears several marks of distinction. The term "thought" is above "theory," the term used by Xi's predecessors. Additionally, including his name in the title signifies his power. The fact that it was included in the Party's constitution after his first term, rather than after his retirement or death, means not only is he powerful, but that he is likely to be in power for decades to come.<sup>218</sup> This conclusion was solidified when the CCP recently abolished term limits.<sup>219</sup>

In addition to Xi's domestic efforts, his regime has espoused strong rhetoric against Western interference, coupled with assertive policies in the region. Consistent with historic Chinese tendencies, this nationalist rhetoric enables Xi to both protect against potential unrest internally and hide China's insecurity internationally while securing the core national interest of protecting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>220</sup> Xi has reinforced this message by taking a lesson from the failures of his

ancient predecessors and ensured that China has a military sufficiently capable of defending its territory. In the greatest military shake-up in decades, he has modernized and strengthened the military, evolving it into a more modular, agile force capable of joint operations and effective power projection.<sup>221</sup>

Drawing on all of China's foreign relations principles, Xi has also continued what could be considered a modern version of China's preemptive deterrence strategy through the systematic, incremental encroachment on disputed territories in the South China Sea.<sup>222</sup> This strategy carefully advances China's interests through a calculated long-term plan which psychologically hedges its bets. It begins with the rhetorical argument that there is no advancement at all, but it is simply taking back that which it has always owned.<sup>223</sup> China cloaks its aggression in non-military means by slowly advancing its interests while remaining under the threshold which would provoke a military response by the United States or its allies.<sup>224</sup> Each individual step gains only a little ground, but the journey as a whole is changing the strategic environment.<sup>225</sup>

Xi's expansive span of control over the government has enabled him to interpose his policies across all elements of China's power.<sup>226</sup> A crucial part of the "Chinese Dream" is his One Belt/One Road policy which, if successful, will expand China's economic and political influence throughout the globe.<sup>227</sup> The impact of this policy on the global order is beyond the scope of this paper, as are China's efforts at establishing alternative economic institutions which can either supplement or change existing ones. A true understanding of China's perspective requires thorough examination of, and additional research regarding, each element of Xi's strategy, as well as the impact of his intense consolidation and extension of power.

## Conclusion

All of this, China's history, its international relations perspective, and Xi's strong leadership, must be understood to have a more objective view of China's current foreign policy. Empathy for where China has been and where it is trying to go informs effective responses in developing a constructive relationship. Empathy does not equate to sympathy, however, and Washington must calibrate its actions strategically by thoughtfully applying strength, patience, or cooperation as warranted.<sup>228</sup> For example, at times America's best action will be to stand firm and display resolve to counter China's aggression. This should occur in two steps. Washington should make clear, in no uncertain terms, to both Chinese and American allies where its boundaries are and the interests for which it is willing to fight.<sup>229</sup> There should be no possibility that China will underestimate American resolve.<sup>230</sup> However, consideration of China's perspective suggests such discussions should be carried out in private to the extent possible to allow China to "save face."<sup>231</sup> Unnecessary public grandstanding challenging China's power is a sign of disrespect that will be the first step on the road to conflict. Moreover, Washington should be mindful that China will be most easily provoked internationally when it is facing upheaval domestically.<sup>232</sup>

The U.S. National Security Strategy is correct when it calls China a revisionist power, but that is not entirely negative.<sup>233</sup> The international system must change to accommodate rising powers such as China and India if it is going to remain flexible enough to be relevant. During remarks in a joint appearance with President Obama in 2013, Xi described his vision: "By the Chinese dream, we seek to have economic prosperity, national renewal and people's well-being. The Chinese dream is about cooperation, development, peace, and win-win, and it is connected to the American

Dream and the beautiful dreams people in other countries may have.”<sup>234</sup> Washington clearly looks upon such declarations with distrust and suspicion, viewing China’s position as one which seeks to weaken American power. The 2017 National Security Strategy declares, “China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests. China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model, and reorder the region in its favor.” In contrast, China asserts that it is proposing a “New Model of Major-Country Relationship featuring no-conflict, no-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation.”<sup>235</sup>

The truth is likely somewhere in between. It is true that China seeks to reorder the Asia-Pacific region and revise the international system in its favor, because it understandably wants more influence than it has been accorded in the past.<sup>236</sup> To be sure, China has acted in contravention of its agreements and customary international law when its interests dictate.<sup>237</sup> But then, so has the United States.<sup>238</sup> Neither did so with the intent of unraveling the world order, but of pursuing the path to best secure its own interests.<sup>239</sup> For the most part, China abides by the rules, constructing arguments within the context of international law in support of its actions even when it breaches generally accepted interpretations.<sup>240</sup>

Contrary to the rhetoric in the National Security Strategy, China is not in the same category as Russia, which seeks to affirmatively destroy American power. China remains internally fragile and is reliant on the United States for its economic well-being.<sup>241</sup> It depends upon the world order for its continued growth and security. Its aggressive actions work against it in that it has no true regional allies.<sup>242</sup> In comparison,

the United States is a party to multiple collective security agreements, including the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, and New Zealand in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>243</sup> China needs the United States and its relationship.

China's rise in power will naturally result in friction with the United States as both countries seek to extend their influence to advance their interests. China will most likely chafe at the liberal aspects of the world order which focus on openness and human rights, which conflict with its core interests.<sup>244</sup> This does not mean the United States should acquiesce internationally on values it considers fundamental, but it should apply restraint in interposing on matters China considers internal. The two should build trust in areas where they are more likely to find common ground such as climate change, economic development, and transnational terrorism. Other areas, such as military build-up, Taiwan, and territorial claims in the East and South China Seas will have to be carefully managed.<sup>245</sup> Additionally, their different systems of government will add to the potential for distrust and suspicion. As Henry Kissinger has explained:

Order always requires a subtle balance of restraint, force, and legitimacy. In Asia, it must combine a balance of power with a concept of partnership. A purely military definition of the balance will shade into confrontation. A purely psychological approach to partnership will raise fears of hegemony. Wise statesmanship must try to find that balance. For outside it, disaster looms.<sup>246</sup>

A careful understanding of China's perspective will allow Washington to more carefully navigate the relationship and find appropriate balance. Most significantly, it will help avoid unfortunate miscalculations by both sides which are potentially catastrophic to the world order.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>3</sup> Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 229.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 228-29.
- <sup>6</sup> Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi, *Addressing US-China Strategic Distrust*, John L. Thornton China Center Monograph Series (Washington, DC: Brookings, March 2012), 35, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0330\\_china\\_lieberthal.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0330_china_lieberthal.pdf) (accessed March 4, 2018).
- <sup>7</sup> Suisheng Zhao, "China As a Rising Power Versus the U.S.-led World Order," *Rising Powers Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (2016): 14, <http://risingpowersproject.com/quarterly/china-as-a-rising-power-versus-the-us-led-world-order/> (accessed March 6, 2018).
- <sup>8</sup> Jervis, "War and Misperception," 202-03; Kissinger, *World Order*, 229.
- <sup>9</sup> Axel Berkofsky, "'The Chinese Dream' and Chinese Foreign and Security Policies: Rosy Rhetoric Versus Harsh Realities," *Asia-Pacific Review* 23, no. 2 (November 28, 2016): 119.
- <sup>10</sup> Jervis, "War and Misperception," 205.
- <sup>11</sup> Lieberthal and Jisi, *Addressing US-China Strategic Distrust*, 35.
- <sup>12</sup> Minxin Pei, "How China and America See Each Other: And Why They Are on a Collision Course," *Foreign Affairs Online* (March/April 2014): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/how-china-and-america-see-each-other> (accessed March 9, 2018).
- <sup>13</sup> Lieberthal and Jisi, *Addressing US-China Strategic Distrust*, 36.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 229.
- <sup>16</sup> Anja Manuel, *This Brave New World: India, China, and the United States*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 267; Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 118; Pei, "How China and America See Each Other."
- <sup>17</sup> Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 4.
- <sup>18</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 8, 31.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 213; Howard W. French, *Everything Under the Heavens: How the Past Helps Shape China's Push for Global Power* (New York: Penguin, 2017), 6.

<sup>21</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 215; Kissinger, *On China*, 19 (Kissinger describes this principle as one taken from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*).

<sup>22</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 8; Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 216-20.; Kissinger, *On China*, 57.

<sup>26</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 216-18.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 54.

<sup>29</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 218.

<sup>30</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 64; Kissinger, *World Order*, 173.

<sup>31</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 64.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 56-58.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>36</sup> French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 60.

<sup>38</sup> Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can American and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), 113.

<sup>39</sup> French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 110.

<sup>40</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 89-90; Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 113.

<sup>41</sup> David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 62-63. Mao was not entirely successful in unifying China, of course, as Taiwan remains a separate and disputed territory and a major source of global tension; David Lampton, "How China is Ruled: Why It's Getting Harder for Beijing to Govern," *Foreign Affairs Online* (2014): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/>

[anthologies /2014-05-27/tiananmen-and-after](#) (accessed March 9 2018); Kissinger, *On China*, 90-92; 99-100.

<sup>42</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 99-100.

<sup>43</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 221.

<sup>44</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 107-8, 181-84, 192-97.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 196-97, 321.

<sup>46</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 92, 242, 322-23; Kerry Brown, *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping* (London: Tauris, 2016), 59.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 320-21, 329-37.

<sup>48</sup> Nien-chung Chang-Liao, "China's New Foreign Policy Under Xi Jinping," *Asian Security*, December 15, 2017, 83; Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 113.

<sup>49</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 321, 329-337; Kissinger, *World Order*, 75, 225, 230.

<sup>50</sup> Stein Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship: China in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), 11, 67; Sangkuk Lee, "An Institutional Analysis of Xi Jinping's Centralization of Power," *Journal of Contemporary China* 26, no. 105 (January 11, 2017): 326.

<sup>51</sup> Zhao, "China as a Rising Power," 14.

<sup>52</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 541; Kissinger, *World Order*, 178.

<sup>53</sup> Fontaine and Rapp-Hooper, "How China Sees the World Order." China entered the UN under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek before the communist revolution. While the People's Republic of China, controlled by the CCP, did not have a place in the UN until 1971 when it assumed that role from the Nationalist led Republic of China, it has continuously benefitted from the UN structure.

<sup>54</sup> Zhao, "China as a Rising Power," 18.

<sup>55</sup> French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 7; Kissinger, *World Order*, 225.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 225.

<sup>58</sup> Fontaine and Rapp-Hooper, "How China Sees the World Order."

<sup>59</sup> The call for China to act as a "responsible stakeholder" originated in a speech by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's keynote address to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations on September 21, 2005; Robert Zoellick, "Whither China? From Membership to Responsibility," public speech, Remarks to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, Washington, DC, September 21, 2005 <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm> (accessed March 26, 2018).

<sup>60</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 225.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 230; Kissinger, *World Order*, 225.

<sup>63</sup> Fu Ying, "Putting the Order(s) Shift in Perspective," *China US Focus Online* (February 15, 2016): <https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/putting-the-orders-shift-in-perspective> (accessed March 6, 2018.). Fu Ying is the Chairwoman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National People's Congress, People's Republic of China; LTG Qi Jianguo, "An Unprecedented Great Changing Situation: Understanding and Thoughts on the Global Strategic Situation and Our Country's National Security Environment," *Center for Naval Analysis Online* (2013; originally published in *Study Times* January 21, 2013): [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/DQR-2013-U-004445-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DQR-2013-U-004445-Final.pdf) (accessed March 6, 2018). LTG Qi was serving as the Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA with responsibility for foreign relations and intelligence.

<sup>64</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 135; Fu Ying, "Putting the Order(s) Shift in Perspective"; Fontaine and Rapp-Hooper, "How China Sees World Order."

<sup>65</sup> Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 148.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 171-72.

<sup>67</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 244-45.

<sup>68</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 110, 126-127, 136.

<sup>69</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 3-10.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>71</sup> French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid; Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 60; David M. Lampton, "Xi Jinping and the National Security Commission: Policy Coordination and Political Power," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 95 (March 18, 2015): 763-64; Kissinger, *On China*, 64-69, 410, 426-27.

<sup>73</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 47-48.

<sup>74</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 179.

<sup>75</sup> David Lampton, telephone interview by author, December 12, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 9.

<sup>77</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 217.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 126, 230.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>80</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 6-8.

<sup>81</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 226.

<sup>82</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 456, 459; Kissinger, *World Order*, 230; Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 7; Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 23.

<sup>83</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 178.

<sup>84</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 161.

<sup>85</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 6-8; Allison, *Thucydides's Trap*, 109.

<sup>86</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 6.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>88</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 259; Stewart Patrick, *The Sovereignty Wars*, (Washington, DC: Brookings University Press, 2018), Kindle e-book. Ultimately, these actions harken back to China's roots in the ancient tribute system, as well as demonstrate its intent to defend itself against any encroachment of what it views as its territory.

<sup>89</sup> Lampton, "How China Is Ruled"; Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 117, 107.

<sup>90</sup> Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 117.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 117; Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 248, 257; French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 15.

<sup>93</sup> Suisheng Zhao, "Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (July 2016), 88.

<sup>94</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 289.

<sup>95</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 184, 186.

<sup>96</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 289; Brown, *CEO, China*, 208.

<sup>97</sup> Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 113; Kissinger, *On China*, 394.

<sup>98</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 425.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-43.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

<sup>102</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 229-230.

<sup>103</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 38. At least one Chinese scholar blames the divergence on China's cultural roots in the Confucian order which is based on societal rites and "prescribed

codes of ritual behavior” rather than individual rights; Pei, “How China and America See Each Other.”

<sup>104</sup> Andrew Valls, ed., *Ethics in International Affairs: Theories and Cases* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 10.

<sup>105</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 229; Zhao, “China As a Rising Power,” 14.

<sup>106</sup> Berkofsky, “The Chinese Dream,” 114.

<sup>107</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 230.

<sup>108</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 410,418-19.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 420, 422.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 422.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 26, 53, 55, 97.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 148-49.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 62, 63.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 100, 251, 346-47.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 346-47.

<sup>121</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 278.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>123</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 276-77.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 276-77, 284.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-4, 134, 189.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-55.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 133, 190-91.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 133; Michael S. Gerson, *The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict: Deterrence, Escalation, and the Threat of Nuclear War in 1969* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense Threat Reduction Agency and Center for a New America, November 2010), 23-27, [https://www.cna.org/CAN\\_files/PDF/D0022974.A2.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CAN_files/PDF/D0022974.A2.pdf) (accessed March 18, 2018); Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 158.

<sup>129</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 134.

<sup>130</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 248, 252.

<sup>131</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 191.

<sup>132</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 101-102, 135.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 221-22; Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 166.

<sup>134</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 245, 377; Brown, *CEO, China*, 209.

<sup>135</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 222.

<sup>136</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 340, 370-71.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., *On China*, 244-45.

<sup>138</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 226.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>140</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 22-23.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>144</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 226.

<sup>145</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 151-52, 154, 212-13, 278, 386. China views this as a domestic issue rather than a foreign relations matter.

<sup>146</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 278, 386; Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 7.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 278, 386.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>149</sup> Sangkuk Lee, "Institutional Analysis," 326; Robert D. Blackwill and Kurt M. Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage: Chinese Foreign Policy Under a Powerful but Exposed Leader*, Council Special Report (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, February 2016,) 6, [https://cfrd8-files.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2016/02/CSR74\\_Blackwill\\_CampbellXi\\_Jinping.pdf](https://cfrd8-files.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2016/02/CSR74_Blackwill_CampbellXi_Jinping.pdf) (accessed March 16, 2018).

<sup>150</sup> Sangkuk Lee, "Institutional Analysis," 328.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 326, 328; Josef Gregory Mahoney, "Interpreting the Chinese Dream: An Exercise of Political Hermeneutics," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 19, No. 1 (December 17, 2013): 20; Lampton, "How China Is Ruled"; This is not to say that these leaders were ineffective at guiding China to greater progress. Jiang Zemin overcame the Tiananmen crisis with his personal diplomacy with the United States and by broadening the base of the CCP domestically. He led the PRC to becoming a fully engaged international state and trading system as a full member. He also oversaw one of the greatest per capita GDP increases in history. P. Hu Jintao's skillful diplomacy softened the world's fear of China's growing power and gave China more time to develop, establishing the foundation for China's status today.

<sup>152</sup> David M. Lampton, "Mainland China's Reform and Transition?" 5-6; Lampton, "How China Is Ruled."

<sup>153</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 30-31; Lampton, "How China Is Ruled."

<sup>154</sup> Sangkuk Lee, "Institutional Analysis," 326.

<sup>155</sup> Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 131.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Chris Buckley, "Xi Jinping Thought Explained: A New Ideology for a New Era," *The New York Times Online* (February 26, 2018): <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/26/world/asia/xi-jinping-thought-explained-a-new-ideology-for-a-new-era.html> (accessed March 9, 2012).

<sup>158</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 37-40; Lampton, "How China is Ruled."

<sup>159</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 224-26; Lampton, "How China is Ruled."

<sup>160</sup> Lampton, "How China is Ruled."

<sup>161</sup> Kissinger, *On China*, 406; Brown, *CEO, China*, 215; Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 71-77; Lampton, "How China is Ruled."

<sup>162</sup> Zhao, "China as a Rising Power," 18-19.

<sup>163</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 72-74; Kissinger, *World Order*, 231; Lampton, "How China is Ruled."

<sup>164</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 8; Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 72.

<sup>165</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 30; Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 139; David M. Lampton, "Mainland China's Reform and Transition?" 5-6.

<sup>166</sup> Evan Osnos, "Born Red," *The New Yorker Online* (April 6, 2015): <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/04/06/born-red> (accessed March 7, 2018).

<sup>167</sup> Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 11-12.

<sup>168</sup> Osnos, "Born Red."

<sup>169</sup> Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 8.

<sup>170</sup> Osnos, "Born Red;" Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 7.

<sup>171</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 17-19.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>173</sup> Lampton, *Following the Leader*, 141, 152; David M. Lampton, "Xi Jinping and the National Security Commission," 772, 777.

<sup>174</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 3; Brown, *CEO, China*, 213; Osnos, "Born Red."

<sup>175</sup> Lieberthal and Jisi, *Addressing U.S.-China Strategic Distrust*, 11; Osnos, "Born Red."

<sup>176</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 6; David M. Lampton, "Mainland China's Reform and Transition?" 15.

<sup>177</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 37.

<sup>178</sup> Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 162.

<sup>179</sup> Zhao, "Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival," 84; Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 137.

<sup>180</sup> Sangkuk Lee, "Institutional Analysis," 326.

<sup>181</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 14.

<sup>182</sup> Sangkuk Lee, "Institutional Analysis," 333; Brown, *CEO, China*, 28. Of 8 leading groups, he is the Chairman of 4, with the other 4 being chaired by 4 separate individuals. While this enable Xi to execute his decisions quickly, it raises the question of whether his span of control is too broad, making him responsible for such a broad range of policy that he cannot possibly effectively execute it all.

<sup>183</sup> David M. Lampton, "Xi Jinping and the National Security Commission," 760, 763; Sangkuk Lee, "Institutional Analysis."

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 760.

<sup>185</sup> Anthony Cordesman, *China Military Organization and Reform*, Working Draft, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 1, 2016), 9-10, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/chinese-military-organization-and-reform> (accessed March 6, 2018); Joel Wuthnow and Phillip Saunders, *Chinese Military Reforms in the Age of Xi Jinping: Drivers, Challenges, and Implications*, Institute for National Strategic Studies Series in China Strategic Perspectives (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, March 2017), 45-47, <http://inss.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/china/ChinaPerspectives-10.pdf?ver=2017-03-21-152018-430> (accessed March 6, 2018); Blackwill and Campbell, "Xi Jinping on the Global Stage", 7.

<sup>186</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 3; Osnos, "Born Red". Osnos describes how "[t]he year after Xi took office, cadres were required to watch a six-part documentary on the Soviet Union's collapse, which showed violent scenes of unrest and described an American conspiracy

to topple Communism through ‘peaceful evolution’: the steady infiltration of subversive Western political ideas.”)

<sup>187</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 213.

<sup>188</sup> David M. Lampton, “Xi Jinping and the National Security Commission,” 772, 777; Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 3; Allison, *Thucydides’ Trap*, 135.

<sup>189</sup> Osnos, “Born Red.”

<sup>190</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 3.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Suisheng Zhao, “Xi Jinping’s Maoist Revival,” *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (July 2016): 85, 87, 88, 93, 94; Mahoney, “Interpreting the Chinese Dream,” 28-29.

<sup>193</sup> Zhao, “Xi Jinping’s Maoist Revival,” 93.

<sup>194</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 206.

<sup>195</sup> Osnos, “Born Red.”

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 17.

<sup>199</sup> Berkofsky, “The Chinese Dream,” 115.

<sup>200</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 214-15.

<sup>201</sup> R.S. Kalha, “An Assessment of the Chinese Dream: 2015,” *Strategic Analysis* 39, No. 3 (April 2, 2015): 275; Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 10.

<sup>202</sup> Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 11.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 10-15; Berkofsky, “The Chinese Dream,” 118.

<sup>204</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 214-15; Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 11-13.

<sup>205</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 188-90; Brown, *CEO, China*, 213; R.S. Kalha, “An Assessment of the Chinese Dream,” 275. As Kahla points out, “The prevalence of inequality in China is further highlighted by the fact that the richest one percent own one-third of the country’s wealth, whereas the poorest 25 percent own only one percent.” The trend is also exacerbated by the aging of China’s population with 40% of China’s population expected to be over the age of 60 by 2050. Ibid. at 276.

<sup>206</sup> Ringen, *The Perfect Dictatorship*, 19.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>208</sup> Mahoney, "Interpreting the Chinese Dream," 19. China's growth has largely been based on exports, real estate, and massive infrastructure development. All three have reached maximum capacity as China's export market is shrinking, growth in the real estate market has fallen drastically, and excessive infrastructure development is revealed as an artificial driver of economic growth. R.S. Kalha, "An Assessment of the Chinese Dream," 275.

<sup>209</sup> Mahoney, "Interpreting the Chinese Dream," 19.

<sup>210</sup> Brown, *CEO, China*, 104.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>212</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 60.

<sup>213</sup> Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 110; Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 134.

<sup>214</sup> Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 14-15.

<sup>215</sup> Zhao, "Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival," 83; Salvatore Babones, "The Meaning of Xi Jinping Thought: National Revival and Military Power," *Foreign Affairs Online* (November 2, 2017): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2017-11-02/meaning-xi-jinping-thought> (accessed March 8, 2018). The Chinese tend to view their changing position in the world order as a "rejuvenation," meaning a return to greatness, rather than a "rise" from nothing; Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 120.

<sup>216</sup> Mahoney, "Interpreting the Chinese Dream," 27. This term appears to have been taken from a book entitled *The Chinese Dream: Great Power Thinking and Strategic Posture in the Post-American Era* which advocates China moving to take its rightful place as the most powerful nation in the world, at the expense of the United States; Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 110.

<sup>217</sup> Steven Jiang and Katie Hunt, "Chinese President Xi Cements His Grip on Power with Rare Party Move," *CNN Online* (October 24, 2017): <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/24/asia/china-xi-jinping-thought/index.html> (accessed March 8, 2018).

<sup>218</sup> Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "What is Xi Jinping Thought?" *The Jamestown Foundation Online* (September 21, 2017): <https://jamestown.org/program/what-is-xi-jinping-thought/> (accessed March 8, 2018).

<sup>219</sup> Buckley, "Xi Jinping Thought Explained."

<sup>220</sup> Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 119.

<sup>221</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 262; Babones, "The Meaning of Xi Jinping Thought;" Cordesman, *China Military Organization and Reform*, 12-13; Wuthnow and Saunders, *Chinese Military Reforms*, 2, 4, 5.

<sup>222</sup> French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 55; Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 257.

<sup>223</sup> Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 117.

<sup>224</sup> Cordesman, *China Military Organization and Reform*, 27; Axel Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream' and Chinese Foreign and Security Policies: Rosy Rhetoric versus Harsh Realities," *Asia-Pacific Review* 23, no. 2 (November 28, 2016): 117.

<sup>225</sup> Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 143.

<sup>226</sup> Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 16.

<sup>227</sup> Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 142.

<sup>228</sup> Axel Berkofsky asserts that China uses the "lack of understanding" of China by the West as a defense mechanism when any of its policies are criticized. Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 124. It is important to note that understanding or empathy does not preclude criticism, but informs a more objective basis for it.

<sup>229</sup> Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 268.

<sup>230</sup> Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 34.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 176.

<sup>233</sup> Zhao, "China as a Rising Power," 14.

<sup>234</sup> The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Obama and President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China After Bilateral Meeting," June 8, 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/08/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-jinping-peoples-republic-china-> (accessed April 24, 2018).

<sup>235</sup> Fu Ying, "Putting the Order(s) Shift in Perspective."

<sup>236</sup> Zhao, "China as a Rising Power," 14.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>238</sup> Allison, *Thucydides' Trap*, 189.

<sup>239</sup> French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 58.

<sup>240</sup> Zhao, "China as a Rising Power," 19; French, *Everything Under the Heavens*, 80 (China argues that the Permanent Court of Appeals which arbitrated the case against it brought by the Philippines, for instance, lacked jurisdiction because the Philippines had not sought bilateral negotiations first, as required by the treaty).

<sup>241</sup> Blackwill and Campbell, *Xi Jinping on the Global Stage*, 28.

<sup>242</sup> Berkofsky, "The Chinese Dream," 118; Manuel, *This Brave New World*, 255-56.

<sup>243</sup> United States Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/collectivedefense/> (accessed March 6, 2018).

<sup>244</sup> Pei, “How China and America See Each Other.”

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, 233.