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China's Grand Strategy?:

An Analysis of Chinese Foreign Policy in the Age of Globalization

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Abstract

China's impressive economic growth during the past quarter of a century has triggered the notion of 'the rise of China', and the idea that it is somehow destined to become a superpower. Observers of this development are divided in their views of how to perceive China. Basically, there are those that are purely positive and see great opportunities in the rise of China, and those that are more sceptical and suspicious and consider China more of a threat. Within this context, the interest for Chinese foreign policy has grown rapidly.

This paper aims to determine how Chinese foreign policy can be understood in relation to 'classical' strategies used by countries in global politics, and if these sets of policies in fact constitute a coherent long term grand strategy, as has been suggested by various scholars.

The findings point in the direction that there in fact is no conclusive evidence that there exists a Chinese 'grand strategy'. However, it seems Chinese foreign policy today contains a deliberate strategy of so called soft power, that is a charm offensive with the aim of making other countries want the same outcome as China.

Key words: *China, foreign policy, strategy, soft power*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Many has predicted that the 21th century will be the century of Asia. In this discussion the central role of China is usually emphasized. Since Deng Xiaoping introduced the market reforms in the late 1970s, China has experienced 25 years of double-digit GDP growth, and this "economic miracle" has led China on the path towards becoming a developed nation and reclaiming its 'predestined' role in the world.

Indeed, there is much talk about the rising China, and it is often predicted that it will grow to become the new superpower of this century. Observers are divided in their views of this development. Even though Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has repeatedly expressed that China's rise "will not come at the cost of any other country, will not stand in the way of any other country, nor pose a threat to any other country" (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 38), there are those who see the rise of an authoritarian China as a direct threat to the well-being of themselves and their countries. Others are convinced of the benevolence of Chinese foreign policy, or at least see the rise of China mainly as something positive, offering opportunities. Basically, there is the 'China threat theory' vs the Chinese 'sobriety' theory (or China opportunity-theory) (Keith 2005, p. 4).

For states and policy makers around the world, it has become increasingly imperative to have up-to-date knowledge and information about China and its foreign policy. Thus, Chinese foreign policy has become a fast-growing popular field of study. Chinese foreign policy is by many accounts becoming more and more coherent and complex, even to the degree of having the characteristics of a strategy. After being somewhat inconsistent and unapproving of globalization and the current global order characterized by unipolarity, something occurred in Chinese foreign policy in the late 1990s. A major shift in Chinese perception of international institutions and multilateral cooperation took place and bilateral agreements were traded for multilateral ones and the previous absolute stand against intervention and "meddling in other countries domestic affairs" was loosened to become a "maybe". In short, China embraced globalization in a dramatically new way.

1.2 Purpose and Question

The purpose of this thesis is *not* to try and discern if and when China will be a superpower. This thesis builds on the premise that it is the aim of every state to maximize its power, and it is thus a presupposition of the author that it is the natural goal of China to become a superpower. The term superpower is however a rather vague one, and

doesn't tell us a whole lot about what the aim and interests of China are more specifically. Basically, this paper seeks to answer the question "what does China want? And how is it making sure it gets it? More specifically, I will try to see how Chinese actions and foreign policy around the world relate to 'classical' strategies used by states in global politics. Moreover I want to investigate if there in fact exists something that could be called a long-term 'grand strategy'.

The question that this thesis will try to answer is thus: *How can Chinese foreign policy be understood in relation to 'classical strategies', and could this set of policies be said to constitute a 'grand strategy'?*

1.3 Operationalization

I will here make a definition of two key concepts to this paper. Firstly, I will give a definition of what is meant by a strategy, and then I will go on to present a number of different types of strategies that a country may use. I will also give a definition of what I mean by power.

1.3.1 What is a Strategy?

What is a 'grand strategy'? What separates it from just a set of foreign policies? A grand strategy does not have to be a written document, even though it can be just that, such as the US strategy of containing the Soviet Union, which was formalized in a document (Goldstein 2005, p 19). By definition a strategy is always about interdependent choices. The anticipation of actions and reactions, and the devised plan of action that comes from it, is what separates a strategy from just a number of set goals. The term strategy, as defined by the scholar Avery Goldstein, refers to "the distinctive combination of military, political, and economic means by which a state seeks to ensure its national interests" (ibid: p. 17). The label 'grand', according to Goldstein, refers to "the guiding logic or overarching vision about how a country's leaders combine a broad range of capabilities linked with military, economic, and diplomatic strategies to pursue international goals" (ibid: p. 19).

Different Types of Strategies

What kinds of strategies are there for states to pursue their interests and to get ahead in world affairs? A strategy can be both short-term as well as long-term, and different scholars use them in different context. Stephen Walt makes, in his work *Taming American Power: The Global Response to US Primacy*, an outline of different strategies

that states might use to either oppose or accommodate the current superpower, in this case the United States. I will below present these different strategies.

These strategies are of course not mutually exclusive, and often the actions of a country could be considered to be a combination of two or more strategies. Similarly, a grand strategy is often portrayed as containing elements of more than one strategy.

Among these different types of strategies some are more useful than others for the study of China. Some might also be more suitable for analyzing short-term strategies, that acts as a response to a particular situation. Therefore I will make more use of some of these, while I still consider the others as important points of reference.

Strategies for Opposing USA

Balancing: The classic realist theory states that in the anarchic global system there is always a tension between actors, and a natural response is for states to balance against the dominant state/states. In essence *balancing* refers to the effort by weaker states to "ensure that a more powerful state (or coalition) cannot use its superior capabilities in ways that the weaker side will find unpleasant" (Walt 2005, p. 120). The strategy of *hard balancing* usually occurs through the forming of coalitions or alliances, and has since the end of the Cold War been rather rare. In contrast, so called *soft balancing* is much more common. This strategy does not try to alter the current balance of power, but "seeks to obtain better outcomes within it" (ibid: p. 126), eg through opposing the superpower in less obvious ways.

Balking is "a deliberate decision not to cooperate with a nation's requests or demands (...), the international equivalent of 'just saying no'" (ibid: p. 141f). Unlike the balancing strategy a state that is 'balking' is not doing so because it wants to improve its position in relation to a certain state, but simply does so because it does not think it is in its interest to comply (ibid). A similar balking tactic is to formally cooperate, but in reality do "the absolute minimum necessary as slowly as possible" (ibid: p. 142). Thirdly, there is the alternative of so called free-riding, where one country genuinely supports the other, but still let's the other take all the costs (ibid). The latter two are both highly successful tactics, since they often let the state achieve a lot at a small cost.

Binding: By binding is meant the action of trying to limit another state's power through binding agreements and participation in international institutions. This tactic is based on the belief that "international institutions play a powerful role in sustaining international cooperation" (ibid: p. 144).

Blackmail: A blackmailing strategy is basically what the name indicates, that is when a state threatens to take a specific course of action, but is willing to refrain from this action if certain demands are met (ibid: p. 152). A strategy of blackmail is most often used by a state that is in a particularly weak position, and thus hasn't got much to lose (as in the case of North Korea and the threat of developing WMDs), or alternatively by a state that finds itself in a particularly strong position.

Delegitimation By delegitimation is meant the tactics of trying to depict the other (dominant) state in a negative manner. It is not the same as directly challenging the other state's power, eg by forming alliances directed at it. Instead, the aim is to undermine the belief that the other state's primacy is "morally acceptable" (ibid: p. 161).

Strategies for Accomodating USA

There are also several situations when countries will serve their interests best by not opposing the dominant state, but accomodating it. Also here there are different types of strategies to employ.

Bandwagoning refers to a situation where one state chooses to align "with the strongest or most threatening state it faces" (Walt 2005, p. 183). It will do so because it considers it the only way of not being punished. Accordingly to Walt, bandwagoning has been historically rare, since it requires a weak state to put its fate completely in the hands of the more powerful state. By bandwagoning with the main source of danger, a threatened state "in effect makes a potential adversary stronger, while hoping that its appetite is either sated or diverted" (ibid).

A similar but much more common strategy is so called *regional balancing*. It occurs when states are aligning themselves with the dominant power and it may appear to be the same as bandwagoning. However, the cause for this strategy is often a desire to balance against some regional threat (ibid: p. 186f).

Bonding is a strategy that goes a step further than the balancing alignments described above. Through the cultivation of a close strategic relationship, states will have a greater influence over how the dominant state uses its power, how it "views problems and some hope of shaping the way these problems are addressed" (Walt 2005, p. 192).

Penetration refers to the effort of one state to try and directly influence and shape the foreign policy of the dominant power. This may occur through direct political lobbying or efforts to influence public opinion (ibid: p. 194ff).

Other types of strategies

Hedging: In world affairs, many states might be reluctant to fully oppose or accomodate a single state, even if might be the most dominant one. For example, in dealing with rising China, many regional states are pursuing a hedging strategy, allying themselves with both China and USA.

Isolationism: This strategy is when a country neither seeks to actively oppose or accomodate the superpower, but instead chooses to isolate itself. There are very few examples of states that have pursued an isolationist strategy, although North Korea makes a fair example (Goldstein 2005, p. 36ff).

1.3.2 What is Power?

I have chosen to use the by now classical division of power into three dimensions, such as described by Steven Lukes already in 1974 (Lukes 2005, s. 17-29). I would say that military and economic power in real terms best reflect the first two dimensions, that is the power to force somebody to comply with your interests either directly or indirectly.

The third dimension, or structural power, is best described by what has come to be known as *soft power*. The term soft power was coined by harvard professor Joseph Nye, and by it he refers to the power of "getting others to want the outcomes that you want" (Nye 2004, p. 5). Nye describes the sources of soft power as three-folded. Thus a country's soft power rests on: 1. *Culture* ("in places where it is attractive to other"); 2. *Political values* ("when it lives up to them at home and abroad"); and 3. *Foreign policies* ("when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority") (ibid: p. 11). However, I choose to use a broader definition of soft power, such as the one suggested by Joshua Kurlantzick, which in addition includes elements like trade and investment and formal diplomacy and aid (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 6), since these make an important part of Chinese soft power.

1.4 Method and Material

My aim is to see how Chinese foreign policy can be understood in relation to different types of strategies. I will try to achieve this through a broad approach that aims to study Chinese foreign policy, not just focusing on a single geographic or political area, but through a 'birds-eye view'. There are of course certain limitations with this approach, such as the inability to go on the deep, which of course produce material of a more qualitative kind. The merits however are that I will be able to get the big picture, which will be especially important if one wants to say something of a country's overall strategy.

The material used is largely of second hand nature. I have, however, also made some use of relevant media, especially the internet version of the Chinese daily newspaper *China Daily*. It serves as first hand material in the sense that the paper mainly reflects the ideas and policies of the CCP, and thus makes an excellent reference for picking up current trends in Chinese foreign policy. Another important source for determining China's official positions in a number of questions is the many *white papers* issued by Beijing.

1.5 Structure

The paper largely consists of one main chapter where the presentation and analysis takes place. This is in itself divided into several smaller parts. I decided to leave out a chapter on Chinese foreign policy as a field of study, since I soon saw that it would be superfluous and adding little to the understanding of the subject. Furthermore, I will continuously through the paper discuss the relevant literature.

To fully appreciate the changing features of Chinese foreign policy and strategy, it will in the opening part be necessary with a presentation of Chinese foreign policy in the past. This will help to put current events into perspective. I will then go on to try and decide what the main determinants of Chinese foreign policy behavior and strategy are. After this I will take a look at the so called soft power and how it applies to the case of China. In the next part I will analyze China's new multilateralism and regional cooperation, which will be followed by a discussion on Chinese diplomacy and evolving norms of sovereignty. In the last part, before making my conclusions, I will interpret China's relations with key countries, as well as its present role in Africa.

2 Determining Chinese Strategy

2.1 Chinese Foreign Policy/Strategy Historically

2.1.1 Chinese Strategy During the Mao-Years

China has traditionally held a classic realist view of the world, and has been "a staunch advocate of the Westphalia international system of nation-state and national sovereignty" (Wang 2005, p. 159). The foreign policy of China during the Cold War had its roots in the 1930's. It followed a classical line of thinking in the international relations theory at the time. In essence it stated that a country should always give the highest priority to the principal threat at the moment and should seek alliances and support regardless of ideological differences in fighting this threat (Goldstein 2005, p 20). First the Japanese were the enemy, then later Mao perceived the Guomindang to be the main threat.

After the 'liberation of the mainland', the strategy of China between 1949 and 1976 was defined by what Mao perceived to be the main threats at the time. This resulted in three different approaches. In the 1950's the hostile and powerful capitalist alliance led by America was considered to be the primary enemy, and China thus allied itself with the Soviet-led socialist bloc. During the 1960's a split emerged in the Sino-Soviet relations, and China wanting to avoid exploitation by either the US or the Soviet which were considered to be in collusion with each other, tried for a brief time to forge a coalition with other developing countries under the banner of uniting the 'revolutionary forces of the third world'.

At the same time, it can be argued that China during this time pursued an *isolationist* strategy emphasizing self-reliance and the importance of a nuclear deterrence (Goldstein 2005, p 37). After 1969, when Soviet appeared more hostile and the Sino-Soviet split became even deeper, China chose to align itself with the US, and thus choosing a more *balancing* strategy.

In the 1980's Mao's strategy was abandoned for several reasons, mainly because of the downplayed threat of the Soviet Union. The new kind of policy that took shape was characterized by a high degree of pragmatism, and was, as Zhao Suisheng puts it, "ideologically agnostic, having nothing, or very little, to do with either communistic ideology or liberal ideals" (Zhao 2004, p. 4). The key principles for the new pragmatic Chinese foreign policy was defined by Deng Xiaoping in 1989 as "observe developments soberly, maintain our position, meet challenges calmly, hide our capacities and bide our time, remain free of ambition, never claim leadership" (Foot 2006, p. 84).

In the immediate post-Cold War era, China's foreign policy was somewhat incoherent and characterized by ad hoc solutions. Chinese foreign policy has during the past 25 years interweavingly used a number of well-sounding slogans to incorporate its message. Chinese diplomacy has for example been stressing 'independent foreign policy', 'seeking

common ground while reserving differences’, ‘good neighborliness, and ‘the five principles of peaceful coexistence’ (Keith 2005, p. 10). Some of these have been quietly dropped and changed for new ones, while others have simply been recycled and received a new package (it should be noted that even though Chinese proverbs and slogans often might seem ridiculous to Westerners, it is often only because of the difficulties in translating Chinese). One persistent slogan has long been “we will never seek hegemony”, which was adopted already by Mao Zedong, and is a statement of China’s alleged peaceful intent. This reflects the consistent official position that China “seeks to develop a world-class economy, to maintain military force only for defense, and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries” (Bernstein & Munro 1997, p. 51).

As a part of this pragmatic policy, Beijing has ever since the end of the Cold War and the transformation of world order from bipolarity to unipolarity, emphasized the desirable in a multipolar world. In line with its desire for a multipolar world, China wants China and the European Union to emerge as strong poles in the global power transfiguration in the 21st century (Cheng & Zhang 2004, p. 187). This goes hand in hand with the “we will never seek hegemony”-policy, and is according to Zhao part of a strategic behavior that is “flexible in tactics, subtle in strategy, and avoids appearing confrontational, but is uncompromising with foreign demands that involve China’s vital interest or that trigger historical sensitivities” (ibid: p. 5).

2.1.2 A New Strategy Emerges

In 1993 yet another approach to foreign policy was articulated by president Jiang Zemin: “enhancing confidence, reducing troubles, expanding cooperation, and avoiding confrontation” (Foot 2006, p. 84). With this new more embracing and engaging foreign policy, Jiang Zemin laid the ground work for what would later become the new coherent strategy of engagement.

It was not until the late 1990’s that this more coherent policy emerged. Before that, policies had to a much larger extent been decided by one or a few leading men (read Mao and Deng). Even they still had to gain support for preferred policies, but now policy formulation was increasingly decided through compromise and consensus building.

Central to the new Chinese foreign policy was the ‘New Security Concept’ (NSC), which Beijing formulated in 1996 (Xu 2006, p. 250). The NSC represented a new approach to the global, and in particular regional, security order. The basic idea expressed in the NSC was the emphasis on deepening cooperation, and the main building blocks included mutual trust, equality and coordination, mutual benefit, and adherence to the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence’ (*White Paper: China’s National Defense in 2006*, Article X). Still, for all its talk of cooperation, the NSC, as Michael Yahuda points out, “had an anti-American edge until very recently” (Yahuda 2005, p. 356). The three basic objectives for the new security policy, as put forward by Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, was: 1. Maintaining stability and prosperity in China; 2.

Safeguarding long-term peace and stability in its surrounding; and 3. Promoting dialogues and cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and equality. (Xu 2006, p. 253).

During the same time there emerged an awareness of the importance of soft power and the security dilemma. Chinese officials increasingly realised the dangers of appearing as a threat to others states, regardless of one's intent. The slogan of "China's peaceful rise" was thought to sound to menacing and has gradually been replaced by the softer-sounding "peaceful development" (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 37). Basically, what China wants to communicate with the "peaceful rise" policy is that the rise of China, unlike that of past emerging powers, will not threaten any other nation, even as it becomes a global power (ibid: p. 38).

This new approach to foreign affairs and way of viewing the global system seems to be only four or five years old (Foot 2006, p. 80). Chinese scholars and officials have embraced newer concepts "such as globalization, multilateralism and cooperative security" (ibid). This new trend seems to have been influenced by the 9/11 terrorist bombings and the beginning of war in Irak. Rosemary Foot means that there existed two main debates before that about the post-Cold War global order. The first, in the early 1990's, emphasized a traditional understanding of multipolarity, eg "a more equal distribution of power among states", combined with a perception that the US, despite its superpower status, had underlying weaknesses. The second trend, according to Foot, during the latter part of the decade, "accepted unipolarity as a long-term phenomenon" (however still seeing multipolarity as a desirable goal), but "added a more sophisticated understanding of power and about how to achieve security in a globalized age" (ibid).

According to Avery Goldstein, today's foreign policy has the consistency and complexity of a 'grand strategy'. Even though the foreign policy might be less explicit than during the Mao years, "China's foreign policies since the mid-1990's have been marked by a consistency that reflects the logic of a de facto grand strategy, one that is acceptable to a broad cross-section of the elite" (Goldstein 2005, p. 23). This is however not an obvious interpretation and will thus be questioned later on.

2.2 What Determines China's strategy?

2.2.1 What Does China Want?

To be able to identify the factors that determine a state's actions, one must first identify the goal and interests of that state. In the official rhetoric and in the many *white papers* issued, on matters including foreign policy, national defense, Chinese development, etc., the official goal, as repeatedly articulated, is to build a "moderately prosperous society in an all-round way and a socialist harmonious society" (see *White Paper: China's Peaceful*

Development Role, p. 232; and *White Paper: China's National Defense in 2006*, article I). In order to achieve this the two most apparent areas of concern for China could be summed up as the field of economy and the field of security. These two key areas could of course each be divided into a number of separate issues. I will below discuss each of these two key areas of interest separately, and analyze their importance in guiding Chinese foreign policy and consequently its 'grand strategy'. Finally, I will also outline the importance that the so called China threat theory has in determining Chinese foreign policy.

2.2.2 The Importance of Economic Development

The economic take-off that has taken place in China since the late 1970s hasn't escaped many people. This is however a double-edged sword. Being practically ideologically void, the legitimacy of the Chinese regime today heavily rests on the ability to provide economic growth. As China's economy grows and the living standard of its people with it, so does the CCP's dependence on a continued steady development. Therefore, securing the prerequisites for Chinese economic growth has to be central to any Chinese strategy.

Chinese security managers have thus clearly recognized that only sustained economic development can assure (a) "the successful servicing of social objectives to produce the domestic order and well-being long associated with the memories of the best Chinese states historically"; (b) "the restoration of the geopolitical centrality and status China enjoyed for many centuries before the modern era"; (c) "the desired admittance to the core structures regulating global order and governance"; and (d) "the obtaining of critical civilian, dual-use, and military technologies necessary for sustaining Chinese security in the evolving regional order" (Swaine & Tellis 2000, p. 99).

At the same time, a long-term economic success will, by many accounts need far more economic reforms and liberalizations, such as "more thoroughgoing price, tax, fiscal, banking, and legal reforms; the further liberalization of foreign investment practices, trade, and currency convertibility; the reform or abandonment of many state-owned enterprises; and the implementation of more effective environmental protection measures" (World Bank 1997, pp. 17-96). This poses an enormous problem for the Chinese regime, since measures in this direction would at the present and in the short-term surely lead to reduced growth rates and clash with political interests.

Also a prerequisite for China's economic development is the steady supply of energy resources. It could hardly have been missed by anyone that China has been touring the world, courting especially developing countries rich in natural resources, such as Brazil, Iran, Sudan, and Venezuela. Erica Downs, an energy analyst at the Brookings Institution in Washington, says that Beijing is convinced that it cannot trust the world's markets for long-term supplies of oil, gas, minerals, and other commodities, "since the United States controls the global sea lanes and has long-standing relationships with key oil suppliers like Saudi Arabia" (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 41). It is therefore crucial that China strengthens

its bilateral ties with key states that control resources such as oil and gas, and builds a network of allies of its own. China is investing in new oil and gas fields instead of just buying energy on the market, because, as Susan Shirk points out, "it wants to make sure that the United States or other countries can't shut off its lights if relations sour" (Shirk 2007, p. 23).

2.2.3 The Field of Security

As a consequence of China's geographic location and its extensive borderline, the country's military defense has always been especially central to its security thinking. However, since the end of the Cold War, there has been a rethinking of what constitutes security. The term seems no longer to exclusively refer to the military aspect. The forces of globalization have given rise to new threats to national security that are not military in nature. Such threats include the interconnectedness of monetary systems, climatic changes and natural disasters, etc.

According to the Chinese government, its defense policy is purely defensive in nature, and China will not "engage in any arms race or pose a military threat to any other country" (*White Paper: China's National Defense in 2006*, article II). However, although a headline in the *China Daily* recently quoted Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi as urging Asia to "drop Cold War mentality" (*China Daily*, 070802), it was immediately followed by the headline "PLA budget to rise with the economy" (*ibid*). Even though the two headlines are not necessarily contradicting each other, Chinese official reporting often does seem erratic. In fact, there are some different takes on how to interpret China's military modernization. The PLA has since the beginning of the 1990s enjoyed double-digit increases in its official budget. The defense budget for the 2007 fiscal year was USD 44.94 billion, an annual increase of 17.8 percent (Shirk 2007, p. 21).

Some however still see the development in the military area as comparatively modest and as a modernization that mainly focuses on territorial defense, and not for example the development of a great long distance navy. Avery Goldstein claims that the talk of Chinese military build-up has been overstated. He points out that China's arms export in the first half of the 1990's actually "dropped significantly from levels posted in the late 1980's" (Goldstein 2005, p. 55). Furthermore, in a comparison with the United States, Chinese military spending is still insignificant, and the above noted Chinese military defense budget should be compared to the estimated defense budget of the United States for the same year of USD 471.54 billion (National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2007, p. 4). In fact, today the military spending of America is more than the expenditures of all the other countries in the world combined (Shirk 2007, p. 10).

Still, others are more worried and see clear tendencies of a more assertive and even aggressive military build-up. Although China might not be focusing on increasing its ability of long distance warfare with an enemy such as the United States, it is trying to enhance its capacity of meeting the US at home. China has "deliberately sought to acquire military capabilities (such as anti-ship cruise missiles) that would make it more

difficult for the US navy to operate close to China” (Walt 2005, p. 136). These efforts appear to be specifically focused on a scenario of an escalation of the Taiwan conflict and where the United States moves in to defend the island. This type of military strategy, one that aims to deter any US involvement (because the price would be too high), is what Stephen Walt calls a strategy of *internal balancing* (ibid: 132ff). It has the benefit of not directly challenging an opponent, but serves as a hedging against future uncertainties.

The outspoken goal is for China, while keeping to the defensive nature of the country’s military, as Hu Jintao recently declared, to ”build a ’slim but strong’ armed forces by striking a sound balance between speed, quality and efficiency in the modernization drive of the country’s 2.3 million troops” (*China Daily*, 070802). Still, for all talk of the defensive character of the Chinese military, Chinese military experts likes to emphasize that they will have a modern force capable of defeating Taiwan and countering American intervention by the second half of this decade” (Shirk 2007, p. 9).

Among China’s security issues the question of Taiwan stands out as a special case and does not necessarily follow the Peaceful Rise-policy. China wants to internationally reduce the influence of Taiwan, and following a strategy which was first articulated in 1994 (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 42), China has consistently worked to counter every effort by Taiwan to strengthen its ties with countries around the world. This explains many Chinese visits to especially African and Latin American countries, which are the continents where most of the remaining countries that still recognize Taiwan lie.

2.2.4 Reacting to the China Threat Theory

During the 1990s, a series of events internationally gave rise to a perceived threat of a rapidly rising China, especially in the United States, Japan and Taiwan (Yong 2006, p. 193). According to Goldstein, this has been a main factor in shaping ”China’s great strategy” (Goldstein 2005, p. 69). The China threat theory, as it is often called, as well as the general view that China had begun a swift rise to great power status, emerged for a number of reasons. Goldstein points out five influences that fostered this view: 1. historical context (the idea that China ”deserves” a place among the great powers); 2. the low level from which the economic growth started; 3. the systems in which military modernization was concentrated; 4. the new purchasing power parity (PPP) method of calculating a nation’s wealth, used by IMF (which suddenly ranked China as the world’s third largest economy, in stead of the tenth); and 5. the Taiwan crisis in 1995-96 gave rise to the perception of a China that is willing to use whatever means to serve its national interests. (Goldstein 2005, p. 69ff).

The perception of China as a threat was from the beginning largely focused on its growing military power, but seems to have been gradually replaced by a fear of China’s economic power. China has become increasingly aware of the negative effects the perception of China as a threat might have, since it might cause other states to balance against China, eg through allying themselves with the United States. Beijing has thus become more appreciative of internationally transmitting a positive image of China, and

has realized that "like the United States and Japan before it, it also can utilize its economic heft to minimize these concerns" (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 86). Exactly how it has been doing this will be discussed later, but for now it is enough to establish that downplaying the 'China threat' and portraying China in a positive manner has come to be a key determinant of Chinese strategy.

2.3 China's Soft Power: Selling the Image of China

China has as already mentioned in recent years become increasingly attentive of its international image, and Chinese leaders have "repeatedly called for the improvement of the country's image abroad" (Wang 2005, p. 74). And, as a deputy to the National People's Congress told the *China Daily*, "It can help build up our national strength and should be taken as a way to develop our country's soft power" (Kurlantzick 2007, p 67).

Joshua Kurlantzick sees a coherent and deliberate strategy of soft power. His research is based on several years of on-the-ground work in south east Asia, Africa and Latin America. Presenting a number of opinion polls, he shows that the attractiveness of America has consistently declined in these parts of the world, while that of China has been steadily increasing. China's 'charm offensive', as he calls it., thus began in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and in essence consists of a new kind of diplomacy, embracing globalization, actively promoting multilateralism, and engaging in mediating. (ibid: p. 9ff).

The means through which China is spreading its soft power is varying. Kurlantzick uses the terms tools of business and tools of culture. In the field of business, China is, through trade, investment, generous aid programs etc., gaining a goodwill across the world which in effect becomes a type of power (which will be exemplified further on). Also, the 'Chinese miracle', as China's economic growth during the past quarter of a century is often deemed, is in itself carrying a lot of appeal. This Chinese model of economic growth, a semi-liberalized market economy within an authoritarian system, has been coined the "Beijing Consensus" (see Nye, *Wall Street Journal Asia*, 051229; or Thompson, *Jamestown Foundation's China Brief*, 051013), and stands out as a tempting alternative to the well-known 'Washington Consensus'. It is of particular interest to authoritarian and questionable democracies, many of which have a recent history of failed neoliberalistic economic experimentation. Trade and economic aid without political 'strings', such as demands of economic 'shock therapy' or political reform, thus has an obvious appeal.

In the field of culture, China is also advancing its positions. Firstly, the Chinese diaspora, spread across the world, plays an important part in the spreading of Chinese culture. Secondly, China's economic and cultural expansion is producing an interest in China and Chinese culture that is growing rapidly in every corner of the world, and the

number of foreign students in China tripled to 110,000 from 36,000, between 1995 and 2005 (Nye *Wall Street Journal Asia*, 051229). Just as France has its *Alliance Francaise* and Britain its *British Council*, China has established twenty-six so called *Confucius Institutes*, which will become 100 within five years, around the world to promote Chinese language and culture (ibid). China has even established its own version of the American *Peace Corps*, to send "idealistic young Chinese on long-term volunteer service projects to developing nations like Laos, Ethiopia, and Burma" (*People's Daily*, 060111).

China wants to sell the image that it is the defender of the developing countries, and is often playing on the fact that China has never been a colonizer and an imperialist in history. China's soft power strategy also entails a humble approach. For example, while the Japanese "asks talented Filipino scientists to come to Japan and learn, (...) the Chinese sent their scientists here, to look at the Philippines, to learn from the Philippines", says Federico Macaranas, a Filipino scholar (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 53). However, the evidence of Chinese modesty in international politics is not conclusive. According to some observers there is already a clear trend of a more assertive and confident China. Dominic Ziegler points, in a special report on China in *The Economist*, out that Deng Xiaoping's idea that the country should "disguise its ambition and hide its claws" seems to have been abandoned. He sites a senior Chinese diplomat, who, as a response to American ideas of containing China, says "Impossible! China is now far too powerful to be contained". (Ziegler, *the Economist*, March 31st-April 6th 2007).

Still, since China is increasingly appreciative of its image internationally, it is also getting more sensitive to criticism, and can be expected to become even more so in the future. For example, as a response to criticism from the United States about the human rights situation in China, Beijing issued its own report on the "Human Rights Record of the United States" (Walt 2005, p. 169). This action has the obvious purpose of defending itself against what it considers as unfair accusations, but also serves a *delegitimizing strategy*, portraying the US in a negative way, that will show to other countries the double standards of the United States and that they are not morally superior in any way.

The spread of Chinese soft power and the positive image of China among the broad masses in other countries is crucial, especially in democracies, because it may force leaders to pursue policies that are in China's interest. For example, in South Korea where government officials expressed concerns about the growing popularity of China, because it made it harder to follow their own agenda. They said that "they faced a difficult challenge in achieving these tasks in the face of widespread South Korean Public opinion of recently elected legislators, that gave China the top priority in South Korean foreign policy and took a dim view of the United States" (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 132).

In short, through engaging globalization in new ways China is strengthening its soft power. Whether this is the result of a deliberate strategy or not is however not self-evident.

2.4 Multilateralism and Regional Cooperation

In 2002 the Chinese government evaluated its foreign policy and ranked relations with the US first, and the relations with neighboring countries second. Two years later it was the other way around (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 52). Even though, as scholar David Shambaugh notes, "the truly regional 'order' has yet to emerge" (Shambaugh 2005, p. 12), the trend is clear.

I will here outline and analyze the Chinese approach to multilateralism and regional cooperation, but with a special focus on two organizations that I perceive to be of special importance: the *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (ASEAN) and the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (SCO)

2.4.1 ASEAN and the Southeast Asian Region

China is today playing an increasingly large part in regional affairs and is in many ways leading the development. Indeed, for a country that during the Cold War often was described as "a regional power without a regional policy" (Xu 2006, p. 250), China has today become "a born-again regional multilateralist", as Susan Shirk, the US former deputy assistant secretary of state, calls it. China is in fact participating in more multilateral agreements than would be expected from a country at its level of development (Shirk 2007, p. 9). Its participation in regional organizations has grown explosively and Beijing, previously strongly adverse to multilateral organizations, which were seen as "constraints on China's power and venues for other nations to criticize China" (Shirk 2004, "China's Multilateral Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific"), is today driving the push for closer cooperation and relations. Wang Jianwei points out that China in just a number of years has gone through the learning curve of reacting to, adapting to, initiating, and advocating multilateralism (Wang 2005, p. 187). He proposes that multilateralism today has become "the main thrust of China's periphery foreign policy strategy" (ibid).

China is working with and within several regional organizations, such as *ASEAN Plus Three*, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum* (APEC), and the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (SCO), and these and other initiatives to promote trade and monetary regionalization in East Asia reflect, according to Yong Deng and Thomas Moore, "a comprehensive and multilateral approach to security" (Deng & Moore, p. 126).

Chinese government in 2005 even proposed to create a free trade area with ASEAN, which resulted in the *China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement* (CAFTA), which will be implemented beginning in 2010. China is also working to set up new arenas for regional cooperation. For example, Beijing is today also hosting its own Boao Forum on Hainan Island in southern China, which it wants to become an "Asian version of the Davos World Economic Forum" (*The Economist*, March 31st-April 6th 2007, p. 66).

What then are the reasons for China's sudden change. Is this part of a deliberate strategy? It is a fact that there has been a change in the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region since the end of the Cold War, and according to Rex Li this represents a structural change that "encourages China to seek great-power status (Li 2004, p. 25). China is acknowledging the decreasing role of the United States and its soft power in the region and has obvious gains in filling this emerging vacuum of power. Although security US ties with South Korea, Taiwan, and several ASEAN countries remain stable, opinions of the United States have "declined sharply" in recent years (Walt 2005, p. 123).

In classical theory of rising powers, there isn't really room for much choice. A rising state will expand its power when a power vacuum emerges, not only due to internal pressure, but also due to "threats and opportunities in the external environment" (Schweller 1999, p. 3). There is an obvious danger in not expanding into the power vacuum, since other states might not be as restrained. Schweller points out that another reason that urges a rising power to expand is that surrounding states that "lack internal strength and stability will gravitate, irrespective of their own wishes, away from a declining power towards an expanding power", and it would be dangerous for a great power to "appear weak and irresolute" (ibid: p. 3f).

Xu Xin argues that the emphasis on multilateralism in Chinese Foreign policy largely reflects the growing importance of soft power in international relations, "of which the Chinese have become increasingly conscious and appreciative" (Xu 2006, p. 261). Whether multilateralism is a conscious soft power approach to international relations or not, it seems to be working. Indeed, as a leader in *The Economist* points out, it seems China is on good terms with everyone. (*The Economist*, Jan 2007, p. 49).

And the effects are clear. For one thing, an engaging China has the effect of reducing fears of a belligerent China, and thus undermines the 'China threat' argument. Working with multilateral organizations also signals that China can be the 'responsible stake-holder' that is internationally often requested. Even though initially sceptical towards growing Chinese power, China's rise is today welcomed by many Asian countries, and as Xu Xin points out "ASEAN states have not seen wisdom in identifying China as a threat". Instead they want to see that the notion of a 'China threat' does not become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Xu 2006, p. 266).

Another effect that China's improving relations with its neighbors is having is that the governments of these Asian nations will be reluctant to join any US efforts to pressure China since they might lose the positive benefits they gain from current relations with China. In effect, this web of multilateral agreements and understandings works as a constraint on US ability to pressure China. This is, as Robert Sutter points out, creating a "buffer against possible adverse pressure from the United States" (Sutter 2005, p. 9). One could thus say that China in this case is using a *binding strategy* against its surrounding states, and this thus works as a kind of hedging against American power.

2.4.2 The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

In Central Asia an extensive cooperation has emerged, more specifically within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization which was established originally in 1996 as 'the Shanghai Five'. From the beginning consisting of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, it was later expanded and renamed 'the Shanghai Cooperation Organization' (SCO) when Uzbekistan joined. The central purpose of the organization is to expand security cooperation to fight the 'three evils' of "extremist Islam, terrorism, and splitism" (Yahuda 2005, p. 352).

Although not originally thought of as an economic organization, SCO now also focuses more and more on economic cooperation. China has made impressive investments in the region and is making large contributions to the development of economic and physical infrastructure alike. Although the mutual benefits of economic cooperation among these countries "are not obvious" (Keith 2005, p. 97), as Keith notes, the SCO is still serving vital Chinese interests. Firstly, it is addressing security concerns relating to the somewhat unstable Xinjiang province. Secondly, through economic cooperation and assistance, China is building a goodwill for future economic advantage, and also adding to the positive image of China in the region, laying the groundwork for a future soft power architecture.

Chinese expanding engagement in Central Asia could also be considered as a response to the continuous work of the United States to develop its influence in the region, through strengthening its ties with countries such as Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan (Walt 2005, p. 128). Besides the fact that the Caspian Sea is lying on one of the world's greatest untapped oil foundations, the region is also strategically important for both China and the United States. In December 2004 China and Russia declared that they would hold their first joint military exercises, involving land, air and naval forces. The official purpose was to strengthen bilateral ties and to increase comprehensive security. Walt, however, distinguishes another purpose of balancing against the United States, and to "remind Washington that excessive unilateralism could lead to 'harder' balancing in the future" (ibid).

While Chinese moves in this area could simply be seen as a response to US moves, the truth, however, might simply be that it serves a number of purposes, and that countering US influence is nothing more but a byproduct, albeit a welcomed one.

2.5 China's New Diplomacy and the Question of Sovereignty

Globalization and increasing interdependence in all areas, especially the above mentioned rise of multilateralism, is for apparent reasons creating more and more pressure on China's traditional diplomacy (Zhao 2004, p. 6). Samuel Kim observes that while economic globalization and membership in the WTO have been relatively easy for China

to manage, in the sense that Chinese economic growth, of exports and of foreign investment, have made China a winner in economic globalization, "China has had to make important trade-offs in other sectors. For example, engagement with globalization has required China to come to terms with evolving norms of sovereignty." (Kim 2006, p. 298).

Thus there is a changing Chinese view on the international system and the concept of sovereignty. From a Chinese perspective the policy has traditionally been that states are absolutely sovereign, and that no other state has a right to interfere in its internal affairs. Chinese diplomacy is however beginning to see that China must bear new responsibilities, and even though it has often reiterated the continuing importance of state sovereignty, the policy is not as absolute today, and there seems to be a change taking place, which is reflected in Chinese foreign policy. The case of Sudan, which will be further elaborated on later, makes an example, although imperfect, of these changing Chinese perceptions.

What is the cause then for this change in policy? Allen Carlson claims that it is growing Chinese socialization that is enabling these evolving norms of sovereignty (Carlson 2006, p. 234f). Margaret Pearson does not fully share this positive view, and emphasizes instead that calculations of economic interest drive cooperative, norm-acceptant Chinese policy (Pearson 2006, p. 263).

2.6 China and International Relations

2.6.1 China's System of Partnerships

When dealing with other states, China uses a comprehensive system of partnerships, a hierarchy denoting the strategic importance of that particular country. China is very careful in its diplomatic language, and different types of partnership imply different levels of significance and expectations. Highest on the scale is 'strategic partnership (eg granted Russia and USA), followed by comprehensive partnership (France, Canada, Great Britain) constructive partnership (EU), partnership based on good neighborliness and mutual trust (ASEAN), and partnership of cooperation (India, Japan) (Zhao 2004, p. 186).

I will here outline China's foreign policy towards a number of the most important countries in the Chinese context, the United States, India, North Korea, and Taiwan. Relations with countries such as Russia and Japan are also important, but have been omitted due to limited space.

2.6.2 Sino-U.S. Relations

China's relations with the United States are naturally of vital interest, and the two countries have, since the low point that followed immediately after the Tiananmen incident in 1989, continuously been improving their relations. There is however a fear among Chinese officials that the friendly relations with the United States is largely a result of its current preoccupation in Afghanistan and Irak, and that it will resume its criticism of China, both regarding human rights as well as the question of Taiwan, as soon as it has finished its business elsewhere.

For all its criticism of American hegemony and unilateralism, Chinese foreign policy towards the United States has not been as aggressive as one could have expected, and is rather characterized by engagement. Stephen Walt points out that there are surprisingly few tendencies of balancing against the US, being the current superpower, and that this fact constitutes an anomaly (Walt 2005, p. 123). The kind of balancing acts that would have been expected according to classical balance-of-power thinking would include anti-US coalitions and alliances. Walt further argues that this anomaly disappears when we focus not on power, but on threats. Thus, if there appears to be little evidence of balancing against the United States, it is because it does not constitute an obvious threat.

But, is there really no balancing moves against the US being made from Chinese part? One can identify several examples of so called *soft balancing*, such as when China and a coalition of 21 developing countries, in the World Trade Organization managed to pressure the developed countries into making "significant reductions in their farm subsidies and other trade barriers" (ibid: p. 128).

2.6.3 Sino-Indian Relations

Being a historic adversary to China, the relations with India began to improve in the mid-1990s through a new policy aimed at "diffusing border conflicts and of improving (its) relationship with major powers" (Yahuda 2005, p. 353). Although there still are some border disputes that haven't been settled, there is without doubt a new kind of relationship that did not exist before.

Being wary of the growing Indian economy and the rapidly improving Sino-US relations after the end of the Cold War, China during the 1990s gave substantial assistance to Pakistan in their pursuit of a nuclear deterrent. So when India carried out its first nuclear test in 1998, Pakistan was able to immediately follow up with tests of its own. The Chinese actions reveal a classic strategy of *balancing* against Indian power.

The two countries have however put their differences about Pakistan aside for the time being, and Beijing has reevaluated its relations with its southern neighbor, and instead acknowledged the mutual benefits of economic cooperation. Michael Yahuda also wants to attribute their new relationship to "their common acceptance of US strategic predominance, and their recognition that a multipolar structure capable of constraining the United States is unlikely to emerge in the foreseeable future" (Yahuda 2005, p. 354).

Chinese efforts of improving relations with India do not in an obvious way reflect a specific type of strategy, but serves Beijing's policy of ensuring a secure environment.

2.6.4 Sino-North Korean Relations

Another issue that is of great importance, especially recently, in Chinese foreign policy and to China's security interest, is North Korea. Except for the diplomatic credit the recent six-party talks have given China, it also has a great interest in seeing a stable North Korea. Xu Xin sees three main aspects of this. First, a sudden 'regime change' would constitute a destabilizing factor, and would possibly mean a flood of refugees as well as an increased American military presence. Second, although a nuclear North Korea might not pose an immediate threat to China, "the scenario of a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia (...) would severely destabilize the regional security environment". Third, a new Korean War would be a security nightmare for much the same reasons as the above mentioned (Xu 2006, p. 273f).

Beijing has thus until recently held a very cautious policy towards its neighbor, trying not to aggravate or destabilize it. The 'six-party talks which China initially was almost forced into, however, turned to be a success, especially for China. Therefore are there today many who want to turn the 'six-party talks' into a broader north-east Asian security forum. (*The Economist*, March 31st-April 6th 2007, p. 66).

2.6.5 Cross-Strait Relations (the Taiwan Issue)

Taiwan is arguably the most serious potential security challenge on the country's periphery. Wang Feiling describes Beijing's incentive structure as a three-P triangular, consisting of preservation, prosperity and power/prestige. He points out the Taiwan issue as one of the most essential issues in Chinese foreign policy, because "it directly affects the CCP's political preservation, China's economic prosperity, and its national power and prestige" (Wang 2005, p. 41).

There are many observers who predict the conflict to escalate. *In America's coming war with China*, Ted Galen Carpenter sees it as inevitable that a war between China and USA will break out in the coming five to ten years over the Taiwan issue. At the core lies the American promise to defend Taiwan against a Chinese military attack and China's uncompromising 'One China-policy' (Carpenter 2005, p. 9ff). In addition, China last year passed a law that will make Chinese leaders legally bound to invade Taiwan in case of Taiwanese move towards independence.

China has ever since the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, contended China's right to Taiwan, and more consistently since the birth of the PRC in 1949 (ibid: p. 26ff). But, the Chinese position has hardened during the last years and is in contrast to the softer status-quo-policy of the Deng Xiaoping era (ibid: p. 102). Carpenter contributes this development to a growing Chinese impatience about Taiwanese authorities stalling

negotiations for reunification, and he points out that Beijing in a recent white paper for the first time "indicated that it might consider such delaying tactics by themselves sufficient grounds for resorting to military force" (ibid: p. 103).

Simultaneously, time is on China's side. Around the world more and more countries are cutting off their formal ties to Taiwan. This is largely the result of China's consistent strategy of isolating Taiwan. This is realized through a tireless lobbying from Beijing, mainly with the reward of economic benefits and preferential trade agreements.

2.7 China Around the World

As China is increasingly engaging the world and spreading its influence around the globe, it is paying particular attention to certain areas and nations. In the developing world, apart from neighboring countries and the Southeast Asian region, there is a special focus on Africa and Latin America. I will concentrate on presenting China's role in Africa.

China's growing economic involvement in these regions is giving rise to both welcoming cheers as well as suspicions and fears. China tries to counter any fears that developing countries might have about Chinese economic power by "signing free trade deals and making trade concessions" (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 95). However, Chinese image is improving in the developing world. A comprehensive 2006 BBC poll of twenty-two nations showed that overall there is a positive public opinion toward China and a deteriorating public opinion toward the United States (PIPA, "22-Nation Poll Shows China Viewed Positively by Most Countries Including Its Asian Neighbors", p. 4). It would however probably be overeager to consider this as purely the result of a consequent deliberate Chinese strategy of soft power. There are possibly several other factors contributing to an improving image of China, such as the somewhat aggressive foreign policy of the current White House administration.

China wants to portray itself as a guardian of developing countries, and Hu Jintao expressed, in an address in Brazil in 2004, that China will "always stay on the side of the developing countries", and the next year Hu met with the leaders of Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, and India to create a more broad partnership of leading developing countries in order to work together in international organizations (www.mfa.gov.cn, 050707). In line with this new emphasis on the spreading of soft power, China has dramatically increased its aid to the two continents. Beijing's financial aid to Latin America rose from basically nothing ten years ago to about USD 700 million in 2004, while the aid to Africa rose from USD 100 million to USD 2.7 billion (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 98). However, Chinese aid often comes at the price of reserving contracts for Chinese construction firms, as in the example of Angola where 70 percent of Chinese-funded assistance programs were reserved for Chinese companies (ibid: p. 102).

By allying with China, countries can avoid economic or political demands from the United States. Authoritarian regimes around the world of course welcome the growing influence of China. Following the Chinese model of development would supposedly allow them to enjoy economic growth without much political liberalizations.

2.7.1 China in Africa

During recent years there has been a continuous stream of officials going back and forth between China and Africa. Indeed, there has in the media been much covering of China's increasing engagement in Africa, and there has especially been a lot of voices criticising China and its "shameless exploiting of African natural resources" and Chinese support of authoritarian regimes. On the other side, there has been the argument of Western hypocrisy, and that if China's action on the continent seem immoral, it is nothing that can compare with what the Western countries have been doing there for the past two centuries.

Much questioned has been China's connections with Sudan, where it is the biggest foreign investor in the nation's oil industry (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 91). The question is mainly about Beijing's blocking in the UN security council of a resolution to send peace-keeping troupes to Darfur. There was recently, however, a sudden turn of events, when China basically forced Sudan to accept peace-keeping forces (Wong, *Sydsvenskan*, 070804). This turn-around seems to have been largely set off by a statement by the American actress Mia Farrow (also a Goodwill ambassador for Unicef), criticizing Steven Spielberg's part in the preparation committee to the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics 2008. According to reporter Ola Wong, it was the importance of portraying China as a modern and peaceful nation that is "nobler than raw profit" that ultimately made the UN-operation in Darfur, that is now under way, possible (Wong, *Sydsvenskan*, 070804). Whether or not it really was the criticism of an American actress that made China adapt its foreign policy in this case, China is, as discussed above, increasingly appreciative of how it is portrayed abroad.

Through a number of Chinese efforts, such as the organization of the *Voyage of Chinese Culture to Africa*, the creation of the *Program for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development*, support of the *African Union* (AU), and a greater role in the *African Development Bank* (www.mfa.gov.cn, 040706), China has gained a lot of influence and soft power in Africa. In fact, China's Export-Import Bank recently surpassed the World Bank as the largest source of loans to Africa (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 97).

It should however be noted that China's influence and solid relationships in Africa are the result of many years of investment in building relations through trade and economic aid, and cultural and technical exchange, and not just, as Drew Thompson notes, "the byproduct of China's recently booming economy and soaring demand for African raw materials" (Thompson, *Jamestown Foundation's China Brief*, 051013).

3 Conclusions

I have in this paper only been able to make a brief overview of the complex field of Chinese foreign policy. It has been my aim to use a broad approach to China's foreign policy, and by it get a better overview than would have been possible through just looking at one geographic or political aspect.

Since the legitimacy of the CCP ultimately depends on the success of its strategy, its primary focus is the economic development, which cannot be interrupted. Chinese foreign policy is thus currently designed to enable China to economically grow as much as possible, while at the same time reassuring the world of the harmlessness in China's growing power.

So, how does this translate into a coherent strategy? Well, it does not in an obvious way. China is for sure driven by the overarching interests of economic development and a secure environment. But, it is at the same time reacting to situations in a variety of ways, using different types of strategies. Chinese foreign policy does thus appear to be following a model of 'grinding-and-fitting', where international events trigger ad hoc responses that do not fit into the 'grand strategy'.

Holding joint military exercises with its neighbors and strengthening overall multilateral ties serves the dual purpose of *balancing* against US power and providing an improved security environment through increased interconnectedness. It seems however overeager to immediately consider this type of action as proof of a clear and coherent strategy of balancing against the United States.

The spreading of Chinese culture and a appealing Chinese image, and the soft power that this yields, is a long-term strategy that is valuable to overall Chinese interests. Whether as a result of economic assistance and generous aid programs, or just increased popular appreciation of the country, China is today gradually increasing its support around the world, which it can use as a leverage in international politics, particularly in international institutions, such as the UN. The "alternative pole", as Kurlantzick calls it (Kurlantzick 2007, p. 146), that China has begun creating, is making China more powerful to the effect that it can use these informal allies to block resolutions and moves that are contrary to Chinese interests. I would conclude that this is part of a deliberate strategy to boost China's image abroad, and thus China has a deliberate strategy *of soft power*. Still, China is vulnerable. Its international appeal depends both on a continued economic development and an unspoiled positive image. The case of Sudan, and China's sudden turn-around, points to the weakness of China.

China is a rising state, and has yet not a comprehensive well-defined 'grand strategy'. This, of course, is not to say that it does not have a clear set of goals, both for the short, medium and long term. I do not however consider it to have the coherency of a grand strategy. Chinese foreign policy is still characterized by ad hoc-solutions and adapting to situations when they appear. Chinese foreign policy does however have elements of specific types of strategies. In short, the goal of China could be said to be to maximize

the country's international influence and power, while at the same time trying not to trigger any counterbalancing reaction. Chinese strategy in this sense it is not a *balancing* one, like the one it had during much of the Cold War, but could be portrayed as a *soft bandwagoning*, in that it seeks to accommodate only to the extent that is absolute necessary. At the same time there is the awareness that through the growing of *soft power* internationally, China is also able to *hedge* against US power.

China's strategy is however a transitional strategy, and one that could change during certain circumstances. Even if China today may be increasingly embracing of multilateralism and participation in international institutions, that does not mean that the goals, and accordingly its behavior, will not change in the future. As Stephen Walt suggests, great powers will be tempted to act more unilateral in areas where their power is especially pronounced, while they will be more cooperating and positive towards multilateral institutions and agreements in areas where they don't have the same power advantage (Walt 2005, p. 148ff). If China would grow to become the world's largest economic or military power, they would accordingly act more unilateral in these fields. It could thus be expected to in many cases use a *blackmailing* strategy in the future, threatening to take a certain course of action, but promising to refrain from this action if its demands are met. Chinese strategy is thus in many ways depending on what moves the US, as well as other powers, make. So, to tell what the future is going to be like is impossible, but it is an interesting task for future research to follow Chinese foreign policy and strategy and see how able it will be in adapting to the changes in the international system, which will pose great challenges for China and demand further changes within its system.

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