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**Ukraine Thumps**

**Biden not focused on Asia – Ukraine proves**

**Madhani and Megerian 3-17-2022**

[Aamer and Chris, AP News reporters, “Biden’s China ‘pivot’ complicated by Russia’s war in Ukraine”, https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-biden-business-china-d47d4b2215de708b55a12bc4b648818d]

President Joe Biden set out to finally complete the “pivot to Asia,” a long-sought adjustment of U.S. foreign policy to better reflect the rise of America’s most significant military and economic competitor: China. But Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine has made that vexing move even **more complicated**. China’s government has vacillated between full embrace and more measured responses as Russian President Vladimir Putin prosecutes his war, making the decisions for Biden far more layered. Biden and China’s Xi Jinping are scheduled to speak by phone on Friday, a conversation that the White House says will center on “managing the competition between our two countries as well as Russia’s war against Ukraine and other issues of mutual concern.” The Biden administration is left **needing to focus east and west** at the same time, balancing not simply economic imperatives but military ones as well. **“It’s difficult. It’s expensive**,” Kurt Campbell, the coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs on the White House National Security Council, said during a recent forum of maintaining a high-level U.S. focus in two regions. “But it’s also essential, and I believe we’re entering a period where that’s what will be required of the United States and of this generation of Americans.” **Biden has been deeply invested** in rallying NATO and Western allies to respond to Russia with crippling sanctions, supplying an overmatched Ukraine military with **$2 billion in military assistance** — including $800 million in new aid announced Wednesday — and addressing a growing humanitarian crisis. Eastern flank NATO allies, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, have made clear to the Biden administration that they want the U.S. to increase its military presence in the region and do more to address the worst humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II. More than 3 million Ukrainian refugees have fled their country in recent weeks. Though the war in Ukraine has **dominated Biden’s focus** of late, White House officials insist they haven’t lost sight of China — and are watching intently to see how Xi decides to play his hand.

**No Link – Appropriations**

**Congress will just fund the plan – they love funding the DOD**

**Reuters 6/22/2022**

[“U.S. Congress moves to boost Biden's record defense budget”, https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-congress-moves-boost-bidens-record-defense-budget-2022-06-22/]

WASHINGTON, June 22 (Reuters) - The U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee on Wednesday backed a proposal to increase spending for the Department of Defense by $37 billion on top of the record $773 billion proposed by President Joe Biden. The vote paved the way for a Pentagon budget of at least $810 billion next year after the Senate Armed Services Committee already backed a $45 billion increase in its version of the bill. The two chambers will decide the ultimate level when they meet in conference on the bill at an undecided date. The vote in favor of the $37 billion amendment to the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was 42-17, as more than a dozen Democrats joined Republicans in favor of higher spending. The amendment included $2.5 billion to help pay higher fuel costs, $550 million for Ukraine, funding for five ships, eight Boeing Co-made (BA.N)F-18 Super Hornet fighter jets, five Lockheed Martin Co-made (LMT.N) C-130 Hercules planes, and about $1 billion for four Patriot missile units. Biden requested a record peacetime national defense budget of $813 billion which earmarked $773 billion for the Pentagon. About $40 billion of Biden's national defense budget is set aside for other national security-related programs at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Energy and other agencies. read more Biden's budget requested a 4.6% pay raise for troops and the largest research and development budget in history, as Russian aggression in Ukraine spurs demands for more military spending. Last year, the NDAA authorized $778 billion in defense spending, which was $25 billion more than requested by Biden.

**Link Turn/Not Zero Sum**

**Commitment to Europe deters China**

**Liptak 5/19/2022**

[Kevin, CNN, “Biden turns his attention back to Asia after months focused on Russia's war in Ukraine”, https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/19/politics/joe-biden-asia-trip-preview/index.html]

After months of all-consuming attention on Russia's war in Ukraine -- a conflict that has summoned Cold War comparisons and revitalized alliances built last century -- Biden's debut visit to Asia is an opportunity to renew what he views as this century's challenge: Confronting a rising China through a system of renewed economic and military partnerships. "We think this trip is going to put on full display President Biden's Indo-Pacific strategy and that it will show in living color that the United States can at once lead the world in responding to Russia's war in Ukraine, and at the same time chart a course for effective, principled American leadership and engagement in a region that will define much of the future of the 21st century," national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters a day ahead of Biden's departure for Asia. Sullivan discounted the suggestion that the President and his team were distracted from their Asia initiatives by the crisis in Ukraine. "We actually **don't regard this as a tension** between investing time, energy and attention in Europe and time, energy and attention in the Indo-Pacific. We regard this as **mutually reinforcing**," he said, adding: "For us, there is a certain level of **integration and** a **symbiosis** in the strategy we are pursuing in Europe and the strategy we're pursuing in the Indo-Pacific and President Biden's unique capacity to actually **stitch those two together**, is, I think, going to be a hallmark of his foreign policy presidency." Even as Biden turns his attention to Asia, the crisis in Ukraine remains his administration's dominant foreign policy focus. Before he departs Thursday, Biden will meet at the White House with the leaders of Finland and Sweden, who filed emergency applications this week to join NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

**No tradeoff, and the plan solves**

**Lowry 5/19/2022**

[Rich, editor of National Review and a contributing editor with Politico Magazine, “Opinion | Why Even America-First Conservatives Should Back Aid to Ukraine”, https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/05/19/america-first-conservatives-back-ukraine-aid-00033762]

Hawley further contends that the $40 billion distracts from the need to focus on China. **It is not a zero-sum game** between Europe and East Asia, though. We will need a **robust trans-Atlantic alliance to help contain China**. If we leave Europe to deal with the Ukraine crisis on its own, it’s less likely to be there for us on China. On top of this, **Beijing is** obviously **watching** how we deal with the Russian invasion as part of its calculations with regard to Taiwan. If Russia gets it way, or if we pull up short in our support of Ukraine, it will send the wrong message.

**No Impact**

**No China war or rise.**

**Norrlof 2021**

[Carla; March 23; Visiting Professor at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs in Helsinki, Senior Fellow at The Atlantic Council and at Massey College, Associate Professor at the University of Toronto, and Research Associate at The Graduate Institute of Geneva; The Washington Quarterly, “The Ibn Khaldûn Trap and Great Power Competition with China,” vol. 44]

The return of **great power rivalry** has been the defining feature of the 21st century. Since the beginning of the new millennium, China and Russia have openly defied the United States and upset the stability of the liberal international order. Both China and Russia share physical and material attributes possessed by the United States that are traditionally required for great power status: land mass, a sea portal, a large population, and technology to field and develop a competitive military capability. Most scholars and policymakers agree that China presents the largest challenge to US interests and the US-led liberal international order. Economic and military growth in China has been astounding, surpassing Russian expansion. China’s outward extension is **not** primarily resource-based as is Russia’s but multidimensional, posing a structural challenge to US military and economic dominance. Much ink has been spilled over the nature of US-China rivalry and whether the two great powers are destined for war. **Structural factors** figure prominently when predicting US-China relations. A famous deadly **Greek trap** describes how the fear of a **hegemonic power** sparks **catastrophic war** with a rising power. In the History of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides writes, “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.” 1 Thucydides’ statement has been widely adopted as a **metaphor** for the dangers associated with great-power transition. Both A.F.K. Organski’s power transition theory and Robert Gilpin’s realism see great-power wars as most likely to occur when a rising challenger is about to surpass a declining hegemonic power. 2 Today, the Thucydides Trap is highly relevant insofar as we have a clear incumbent power, the United States, and according to many measures of great powerhood, a clear rising power—China—with military, manufacturing, and commercial, and corporate power. However, the analogy **mismatches** international **hierarchy** and **regime type**. In classical times, the incumbent land power, Sparta, was the **authoritarian** power who **feared the rise** of the **democratic** maritime power, Athens.3 This **incongruity** is not even the biggest problem with the analogy. In order for the Thucydides Trap to apply, China would have to **significantly narrow** the **power gap** with the **U**nited **S**tates. While China has caught up with the United States in important respects, it has **not caught up** with the **U**nited **S**tates in terms of the logic and networks that **inform dominance** in the **key economic** and **security areas** required for power transition.4 Apart from the obvious **inhibiting factors** of **nuclear weapons** and **economic interdependence**, the **U**nited **S**tates and China are **nowhere close** to the power parity likely to spark a major power war between them. The Thucydides Trap is a powerful analogy for bellicose dynamics between a hegemonic power and a rising power, but in the **near term**, war between the **U**nited **S**tates and China for the reasons proposed in the Thucydidean analogy is **highly unlikely**.

**No US-China war**

**Krulak and Friedman 2021**

[Charles C., former President of Birmingham-Southern College, former Commandant of the US Marine Corps, M.S. from George Washington University, Alex, former Chief Financial Officer of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, J.D. from Columbia University, “The US and China Are Not Destined for War,” Project Syndicate, 08-17-2021, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/us-china-not-destined-for-war-by-charles-c-krulak-and-alex-friedman-1-2021-08]

First and foremost, any military conflict between the two would quickly turn **nuc**lear. The US thus finds itself in the same situation that it was in vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Taiwan could easily become this century’s tripwire, just as the “Fulda Gap” in Germany was during the Cold War. But the same dynamic of “**m**utual **a**ssured **d**estruction” that limited US-Soviet conflict **applies to the US and China**. And the international community would do everything in its power to ensure that a potential **nuc**lear conflict did not materialize, given that the consequences would be fundamentally transnational and – unlike climate change – immediate. A **US-China conflict would** almost certainly **take the form of a proxy war, rather than a major-power confrontation**. Each superpower might take a different side in a domestic conflict in a country such as Pakistan, Venezuela, Iran, or North Korea, and deploy some combination of economic, cyber, and diplomatic instruments. We have seen this type of conflict many times before: from Vietnam to Bosnia, the US faced surrogates rather than its principal foe. Second, it is important to remember that, historically, **China plays a long game**. Although Chinese military power has grown dramatically, it still lags behind the US on almost every measure that matters. And while China is investing heavily in asymmetric equalizers (long-range anti-ship and hypersonic missiles, military applications of cyber, and more), it will not match the US in conventional means such as aircraft and large ships for decades, if ever. A head-to-head conflict with the US would thus be **too dangerous for China** to countenance at its current stage of development. If such a conflict did occur, China would have few options but to let the nuclear genie out of the bottle. In thinking about baseline scenarios, therefore, we should give less weight to any scenario in which the Chinese consciously precipitate a military confrontation with America. The US military, however, tends to plan for worst-case scenarios and is currently focused on a potential direct conflict with China – a fixation with overtones of the US-Soviet dynamic. This raises the risk of being blindsided by other threats. Time and again since the Korean War, asymmetric threats have proven the most problematic to national security. Building a force that can handle the worst-case scenario does not guarantee success across the spectrum of warfare. The third reason to think that a Sino-American conflict can be avoided is that China is already chalking up victories in the global soft-power war. Notwithstanding accusations that COVID-19 escaped from a virology lab in Wuhan, China has emerged from the pandemic looking much better than the US. And with its **B**elt and **R**oad **I**nitiative to finance infrastructure development around the world, it has aggressively stepped into the void left by US retrenchment during Donald Trump’s four-year presidency. **China’s leaders** may very well **look at the** current **s**tatus **quo** **and conclude** that **they are on the right** strategic **path**. Finally, **China and the US are deeply intertwined economically**. Despite Trump’s trade war, Sino-American bilateral trade in 2020 was around $650 billion, and China was America’s largest trade partner. The two countries’ supply-chain linkages are vast, and China holds more than $1 trillion in US Treasuries, most of which it cannot easily unload, lest it reduce their value and incur massive losses.

**China Not Revisionist**

**Multiple years of empirical research disprove Chinese revisionism**

**Jalil 19** (Ghazala; 4-3-2019; Research fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies at Islamabad; “China’s Rise: Offensive or Defensive Realism”; <http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/3-SS_Ghazala_Yasmin_Jalil_No-1_2019.pdf>; SML)

The test of the offensive realism theory would be to determine whether China displays the revisionist tendencies, acts aggressively towards its neighbours and shows power maximising behaviour. In sum, it would entail determining whether China displays revisionist tendencies or acts like a status quo power. Under Mao (1949-1976), China had the policy of overturning all the imperialist regimes in Asia and the world. During this period, China actively supported revolutions in many developing countries that it considered imperialist or saw them as imperialist proxies. This threatened China’s neighbouring states especially the US allies.28 China essentially wanted to export its socialist ideology to other states. During this time, China’s policy can be described as operating under the principles of offensive realism. At the same time, during this era, China was operating with limited capabilities in an international environment characterised by bipolarity. It was operating within an environment where global politics was driven by the intense Cold War rivalry of the two great powers ─ the US and the former Soviet Union.29 However, since the 1970s China’s policies have shown less revisionist tendencies. The country has increasingly become a state that is embracing **defensive realism**. One thread of this evidence is that China has toned-down its revolutionary rhetoric. It is also not supporting insurgencies in other countries. The second thread of evidence is that since the late 1970s China has increasingly pursued a cooperative security approach in its relations with regional neighbours and in the international arena. By and large, China has tried to forge **friendly relations** with its neighbours. It includes ameliorating relations with states like India which is traditionally a rival. Their relations did become strained in 2017 when there was a standoff between the Indian and the Chinese forces on the Doklam plateau. Dhoklam is a territory claimed both by Bhutan (aligned with India) and China. However, Indo-China relations improved as the two countries held an informal summit in China in April 2018.30 The two countries even held a joint military exercise in December 2018, called Hand-in-Hand.31 Over the years, China has also managed to resolve border issues with so many neighbouring states. It has settled border disputes with countries like Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan initially and recently with Russia, bordering the Central Asian States and Vietnam.32 Moreover, China has territorial disputes with India and Japan but it has never made these disputes a hurdle in forging friendly ties with these two countries. Avery Goldstein dubs it a neo-Bismarckian grand strategy of China whereby it is pursuing its interests by reassuring those who may feel threatened and may form anti-China alliances.33 This, in his opinion, has resulted in a security environment that is conducive for China as well as for the region as a whole. Another indication that China does not show aggressive behaviour in its policies is that China has **increasingly engaged and integrated with the international community**. Over the past 30 years, China has amply demonstrated this by its increasing membership of international organisations and institutions as well as membership of treaties since the 1980s. China has increasingly participated in the regional multilateral institutions over the years. In the last few decades, East Asia has seen a number of regional institutions being formed. Foremost among those are the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); ASEAN plus 3 and the East Asia Summit. China is part of most of these multilateral institutions as well as an active member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). China was also a key player in the sixparty-talks in getting North Korea to halt and roll back its nuclear and missile programmes. On the global front, China sought participation in global institutions like the World Trade Organisation (WTO). China is also playing a very active role in the UN. According to one figure, China’s membership of international governmental organisations doubled (from 21 to 52) during the years 1977-1997. In the same time period, its membership of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) increased from mere 71 to an impressive 1,163.34 Similarly, according to another account, China signed less than 30 per cent of the arms control accords it was eligible to join in the 1970s compared to 80 per cent by mid-1990s. 35 China has actively taken part in the treaties of the nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as those of aimed at non-proliferation of biological and chemical weapons. It has also become a part of the voluntary non-proliferation groups like the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2004 and exercises strict export control policies. Since 2004, China has also shown interest in joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). This is an indicator of China’s willingness to participate in international institutes and regimes, increasing comfort towards norms of interdependent behaviour among states. It has also exhibited the desire to somewhat shape the rules of the game for regional cooperation. This is definitely an indication of its tendency towards the status quo. It also advances China’s national interests and helps dispel concerns about its increasing economic and military power.36 This is also an indicator that China is willing to work in the existing Western-dominated systems of international institution and regimes rather than challenge the system or seek to break it up. Moreover, China consciously pursued a good neighbour policy. The pursuit of good relations with its neighbour is the foundation of its strategy for economic development. It has the dual benefit of attracting foreign trade and investment while, at the same time, it reassures its neighbours that it does not present a threat for them. Deng Xiaoping laid two paths for China’s foreign policy in 1990 ─ anti-hegemonism and establishment of a new multi-polar international order of politics and economics. This meant that China adopted a policy of active defence of China’s interest ─ of minding its own business and be neither a leader nor a challenger but a participant or co-builder of the westerns international order.37 This remains the foundation of China’s foreign policy today. Many analysts, however, argue that participation in the international institutions is not an adequate indicator but compliance with the norms, rules and goals of these institutions is a better indicator of whether a country is a status quo state or not. Along these lines, Alastair Johnston considers China’s compliance with five global normative regimes: these include sovereignty, free trade, non-proliferation and arms control, national self determination and human rights.38 As far as sovereignty is concerned he writes: “Today China is one of the strongest defenders of a more traditional absolutist concept (of sovereignty).”39 Similarly, free trade is another international norm that is seen as an indicator of status quo behaviour. China has moved to support the norms of global free trade. China’s membership of WTO in 2001 is a testament to its support for free trade. China’s tariff rates have declined from over 40 per cent in 1992 to less than 20 per cent in 1997.40 In 2015, the tariff rate was 3.4 per cent.41 China has gradually embraced global capitalist institutions and system. In the Belt and Road Forum that China held in May 2017, hosting 30 world leaders, it released a communiqué, which was signed by all 30 world leaders present on the occasion that emphasised the need to “build an open economy, ensure free and inclusive trade (and) oppose all forms of protectionism.”42 However, the ongoing trade war with the US has forced China to increase its tariffs. Since 2017, the US had imposed three rounds of tariff on the Chinese products worth US$250 billion. China has retaliated by imposing US$110 billion on the US goods. Beijing has accused the US of starting the “largest trade war in economic history.” 43 This damages the global free trade regime. China has gone even a step further and initiated projects like the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is envisaged as a journey towards economic regionalisation. The CPEC is a framework of regional connectivity which is expected to be beneficial for China and Pakistan as well as the regional states like India, Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Its primary aim is to promote geographical linkages and improve infrastructure connectivity. It would also result in a higher flow of trade and businesses in the region.44 Its ultimate aim is to have a well-connected region, promote harmony and accelerate economic development. This is also a clear indication that **China is focused on economic development and regionalisation instead of displaying aggressive hegemonic behaviour**. As far as China’s non-proliferation record is concerned, it has a fair record, with no blatant violations of international nuclear non-proliferation norms. The prevailing concerns mostly centred on the transfer of missile technology and components to Pakistan in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, China has not signed the 1987 MTCR, so it does not amount to any violations of China’s treaty obligations. On the positive side, in 1996, China signed the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which a major nuclear non-proliferation proponent like the US has not done till date.45 It has been cooperating with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) and has installed four new International Monitoring System (IMS) stations, bringing the total number of certified stations in China, to five. Furthermore, it is also a part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) since the time that it was signed. Moreover, along with Russia, China has long been trying to get a treaty negotiated to ban the stationing of offensive weapons in outer-space. For nearly two decades, now there have been the Chinese and Russian efforts to negotiate a treaty for Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). Many proposals have been put forward including the two Chinese working papers and a joint China-Russia working paper in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). However, PAROS remains blocked due to the US refusal to negotiate any such treaty because it goes against its missile defence and space plans.46 China has also played a stabilising role in the North Korean nuclear issue. It acted as a lynchpin in hosting and conducting the six-party talks, which were meant to solve the North Korean nuclear issue. Even after the breakdown of the six-party talks in 2009 and the recent high tensions on the Korean Peninsula in 2017 with the US, China played the role of a stabiliser, urging both sides to show restraint and emphasising that war was not an option for any country. China has, thus, helped strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation norms. Also, China’s growing soft power47 or its “charm offensive” in Southeast Asia and elsewhere is another indicator that it is not an aggressive, power maximising state. Its economic progress has been accompanied by its increasing cultural and diplomatic influence around the globe. Its growing soft power is not only evident in Southeast Asia but also in Beijing’s economic partnerships in Latin America and Africa.48 The fact that China is able to attract and appeal the states in the region through its soft power is an indicator that its neighbours are increasingly viewing China as less of a threat. However, this has stirred the concerns of waning the US influence in the region. In many parts of Asia, Africa and the Latin America, the “Beijing Consensus” which advocates a mix of authoritarian government and market economy, is overtaking the “Washington Consensus” of market economics and democratic government which was popular in the past.49 With signs that the US is placing emphasis on hard power under President Donald Trump, China seems to be positioning itself as a champion of globalisation and economic integration. It seems to be placing an emphasis on soft power. **Taiwan** issue is one instance where China’s policies are viewed by the West as a non-status quo. However, the issue can be seen in terms of a **security dilemma between the US and China**. In the last few decades, America continued selling advanced weapons to Taiwan, mainland China considers these developments to encourage Taiwan’s independence and a threat to its interests. According to Yiwei Wang, “on the Taiwan issue, America’s logic is that peace comes from “balance of power.” China has time and again protested the matter of arms sales to Taiwan with the US but to no avail. China sees these moves as an effort to change the distribution of power in the region. In turn, China has threatened Taiwan against moves for independence and deployed missiles on the mainland as well. Consequently, this makes the US suspicious of China’s revisionist intentions towards Taiwan – locking the two powers in a **security dilemma**. Another area where China has been accused of displaying revisionist tendencies is in the South China Sea. The dispute centres on territorial claims over two island chains the Paracels and the Spratlys and surrounding oceans. The area provides valuable trade passage and fishing ground, as well as holds hydrocarbon resources ranging from 25,000 Mboe to 260,000 Mboe.51 China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei all have competing claims. The dispute has existed for centuries but things got tense in the last few years. China has been island-building since 2014 and has also increased naval patrols. It can be argued that China’s actions are defensive in nature. The US has had increased interference in the area. Under the garb of “freedom of navigation” operations, the US sent planes and ships in the disputed area to keep access to key shipping and air routes.52 In February 2017, the US deployed the aircraft carrier, Carl Vinson, strike force to the South China Sea under the garb of “freedom of navigation.”53 Another week-long US and British Naval exercise took place in January 2019.54 These are meant to send a signal to China to rescind claims over the disputed area. These exercises have angered China. **China does not have expansionist or hegemonic designs in the S**outh **C**hina **S**ea. It claims over the two island chains are not something new. Beijing has adjusted its strategy to safeguard its interests, as it becomes increasingly powerful. However, a military conflict over the dispute is not an option. Moreover, the US influence over other claimants of the territory complicates matters for China. This has resulted in China acting more assertively in the South China Sea in order to defend its interests. In fact, the US would act more aggressively if any country was to interfere in matters close to its borders. Overall, from the above analysis, it can be summarised that China has so far behaved more as a status quo power rather than as an aggressive revisionist power. This is apparent in China’s engagement with its neighbours, its participation in the regional and international institutions, it is in compliance with most of the international norms as well as its emphasis on projecting its soft power. The claims of Mearsheimer’s offensive realism are in contrast with Waltz’s defensive realism on several points. While Mearsheimer claims that great powers act aggressively and aim to gain so much power that they are the ultimate hegemons in the system, Waltz’s defensive realism sees the states as acting defensively to maintain rather than upset the balance of power. For Waltz, the states are primarily concerned with maintaining “their position in the system.”55 Defensive realists argue that offence-defence balance favours the defence. 56 Therefore, a robust defence and careful balancing should deter any aggressive impulses from great powers. Defensive realism argues that great powers are concerned with maintaining the status quo rather than maximising their power because often the **cost of expansion outweighs the benefits**. Defensive realism sees security dilemmas as a problem where an increase in the power of one state increases the insecurity of the other causing the latter to increase its power. Under the conditions of defensive realism, great powers would try to alleviate any security dilemmas rather than exacerbate it. China’s current policy seems to be firmly rooted in defensive realism. Its policy seems to be aimed at maintaining the balance of power rather than upsetting it. As the earlier section has argued, China is not a revisionist power but a status quo one. The analysts like Shiping Tang are convinced that China’s security strategy flows out of its realisation of the security dilemma whereby the Chinese leaders have understood that an aggressive expansionist strategy would just lead to **counterbalancing alliances**. “This recognition has led China to adopt a defensive realism-rooted security strategy emphasising moderation, self-restraint and security cooperation.”57 Moreover, China’s military modernisation, its Taiwan policy and its increased policies in the South China Sea also make more sense if seen through the lens of defensive realism. China’s Taiwan policy may be more geared towards preventing redistribution of power in the region. Since the US is providing arms assistance to Taiwan, China may be averse to the US aiding Taiwan’s independence ─ the latter issue is one where China has made clear that independence is not acceptable to China. Similarly, there is good evidence that China’s military modernisation programmes and training exercises since the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996 are aimed partially at dealing with the issue of the Taiwanese separation.58 On the question of whether China is balancing against the US, Johnston says, “There seems to be little doubt that China’s military modernisation programme since the mid-1990s has been aimed in large measure at developing capabilities to deter or slow the application of the US military power in the region.”59 It would then seem that China is not concerned with gaining power or projecting its powers but with balancing against a predominance of the US power in the region. **China has not shown any signs of hegemonic behaviour** as a lot of Western analysts feared. Instead of guided by offensive realism, China’s policies seem to be guided by defensive realism where it is concerned with survival and with maintaining its position in the system. Just as the US fears China’s hegemonic rise, China also fears the increase of the US influence in the region and its talk of containing China. China’s policy may change in the future to display hegemonic tendencies. However, at present, **there is not much evidence to support the theory of offensive realism.**

**China Containment Fails**

**US containment of China fails and makes war inevitable**

**Colebrook 2020**

[Michael Colebrook- U.S. Army officer who holds a Ph.D. in Political Philosophy from the University of Dallas, 4-27-2020, "The Rhymes of History: Beijing’s Nightmare Strategic Scenarios," RealClearDefense, <https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/04/27/the_rhymes_of_history_beijings_nightmare_strategic_scenarios_115230.html>]

History does not repeat itself. With the exception of general platitudes about the permanence of international tension and the sporadic recurrence of violent conflict, statements about historical patterns and cycles of warfare can at best lead to historiographical confirmation bias and, at worst, can prejudice policymakers into taking counterproductive and unnecessary escalatory measures.[1] Diplomats, intelligence professionals, and politicians must tread with care when approaching history and any patterns that emerge from it, especially when trying to draw parallels with present-day events. History and policy are ultimately about particulars—particular interests, particular leaders, particular decisions, and particular crises. Specific policies matter and can go a long way towards avoiding war altogether or minimizing its impact should it occur. History and policy are ultimately about particulars—particular interests, particular leaders, particular decisions, and particular crises. Simplifications aside, a close study of history does have its merits. To borrow a phrase attributed to Mark Twain, history may not repeat itself, but it certainly rhymes. While the circumstances that cause state and sub-state groups to engage in open conflict are unique, the geographical, ethnic, and cultural conditions leading to tensions among these groups remain at least semi-permanent. The challenge before policymakers is to accurately assess present realities, many of which have historical precedents, and act within the small but undeniable window of choice these realities offer. Recently, few issues have received as much attention as Sino-U.S. relations, and none have invited so many historical parallels. Phrases like “Senkaku Paradox” and “Thucydides Trap” are common parlance among young strategists and military leaders.[2] Comparisons with the pre-World War I Anglo-German rivalry or Athenian-Spartan relations before the Peloponnesian wars abound. These analogies fit into a specific version of the realist outlook on international affairs. According to these theories, sovereign states exist in perpetual latent conflict—a war of all against all—in an anarchic global environment. In the end, they must rely only upon themselves and the acquisition of power to achieve security. In this framework, status-quo hegemons find themselves in unavoidable conflict with hegemonic challengers. It violates the presumed axioms of realism for two hegemonic superpowers to coexist peacefully. Conflict—both cold and hot—is preordained. Yet the preceding reflects only one particular strand of realist analysis. **It is possible to adopt a more open-ended outlook on historical development while acknowledging the semi-structural elements that govern international issues.** As states pursue their national interests—a fundamental principle of realism—opportunities arise not only for de-escalation of tension but even cooperation on particular matters. Indeed, if the international situation is suitable for it, cooperation between rivals can make the most strategic sense. The Helsinki Accords and Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I/II) treaties at the highpoint of the Cold War, as well as the collaboration between U.S. and Iranian negotiators during the talks that eventually led to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, demonstrate the potential for cooperation between apparently hostile countries. Assessing bilateral relations between the U.S. and China today suggests areas where cooperation is possible.[3] A future Sino-U.S. war is far from inevitable, at least if leaders manage relations delicately and with sufficient mutual appreciation for each other’s unique history, culture, and strategic ambitions. Strategists cannot emphasize the point enough: China is not Sparta or Germany; the U.S. is not England or Athens. Each has a horizon for interpreting international relations that are unique to it, and American policymakers must make a genuine effort to understand the Chinese outlook. Beijing holds a number of nightmare scenarios coloring their strategic worldview, and U.S. policymakers should keep this in mind if they want to avoid rhetoric and actions that could inadvertently trigger Chinese fears of escalation. Strategic Nightmare Scenario #1: Strategic Encirclement In his influential assessment of China’s history, Henry Kissinger claims China’s greatest geopolitical fear is strategic encirclement—that a single hegemonic rival or an alliance of multiple weaker ones will surround its vast territory and work to destabilize its periphery.[4] This fear is strongly rooted in geography and history. In terms of security, geography has not been kind to China. Twelve different countries share its borders, and many of them have a history of aggressive action and outright cruelty toward the Middle Kingdom. What is more, several maritime powers lie within a few hundred miles of its coastline. Fate has positioned China precariously, explaining in no small measure the mistrust that has characterized its diplomacy. While China has often been regionally ascendant, it has always remained keenly aware that national tragedy or embarrassment are close-at-hand if these surrounding nations were to band together against it. China’s Belt and Road (Shutterstock) China’s two most significant geopolitical initiatives over the last decade confirm this lesson. For China, The Belt and Road Initiative serves primarily as a peaceful way to buy influence with many countries on its western periphery. For instance, many Central Asian countries have secured sizeable funding for infrastructure projects in the Belt and Road. Likewise, the maritime aspects of Belt and Road aim to construct a logistical basis for sea routes whose accessibility does not rely upon the goodwill of China’s island neighbors. Furthermore, China’s gradual militarization of the South and East China seas suggests an effort to secure its eastern and southern maritime flanks. Considering this element of China’s strategic horizon, the **Belt and Road as well as the militarization of the South and East China Seas take on a new meaning. They are attempts to avoid the strategic disaster encirclement entails by creating a Eurasian sphere of influence less susceptible to maritime embargo or land-based intrusion.** For China, The Belt and Road Initiative serves primarily as a peaceful way to buy influence with many countries on its western periphery. It is thus not surprising these initiatives are experiencing significant push-back from several rivals in China’s neighborhood who fear that their room for maneuver in the region will diminish. Among these encircling states, three stand out: Russia, Japan, and the United States.[5] All have complicated economic relations with China today, with points of tension coexisting with cooperation on many fronts. All have engaged in military conflict with China at some point in its history, and **Beijing holds them primarily responsible for orchestrating its “century of humiliation.”[**6] Although currently not a potent military superpower, Japan’s proximity perpetually stokes memories of its brutal occupation of Manchuria and illustrates the real and present dangers of domestic political instability and military weakness.[7] Shinzo Abe’s efforts to remilitarize the island nation of Japan have understandably provoked consternation on the continent. These efforts are one of the motivating forces behind the Belt and Road and the militarization of the South and East China Seas. **The tit-for-tat steps of military buildup on both sides risk feeding into narratives that make de-escalation difficult**.[8] Russia, on the other hand, currently enjoys relatively stable and cooperative ties with Beijing. But such was not always the case and may not be in the future. Talk of a budding alliance between the two powers ignores the severe headwinds around the corner.[9] Both view the Eurasian landmass as their backyard, and both seek to develop stronger economic and military ties with Central Asian nations. Russian initiatives tied to the Eurasian Economic Union, whose objectives include creating a single market for goods, services, capital, and labor, as well as promoting deeper integration of the post-Soviet space, collide with China’s own visions for the future of the Eurasian landmass. In the short term, China and Russia are engaged in a high level of cooperation aiming to integrate the two projects.[10] However, the long-term prospects of cooperation are less bright. If either party begins to perceive any asymmetry in influence, an increasingly hostile and mutually suspicious attitude will inevitably emerge, especially if their common enemy, the United States, follows through with President Trump’s desire to withdraw entirely from the region.[11] A hostile Russia on China’s borders would create a situation reminiscent of the 1970s, when the U.S. was able to exploit the discord to its own advantage. Looking into the future, it seems localized great power competition between Russia and China, without the U.S. as a participant, could benefit the U.S. significantly more in an area that matters very little to American vital interests. Perceptions of Strategic Encirclement (OrientalReview.org) Currently, the chances of a complete U.S. withdrawal from the region appear slim. **In fact, the American presence only seems to be growing, with Beijing perceiving the U.S. as the most likely contender to carry out this nightmare strategic scenario.** Therefore, the pervasiveness of America’s imprint along its entire periphery strikes an emotional chord with the Chinese leadership.[12] American troops and strategic partnerships in South Korea, Japan, Afghanistan, Taiwan, Australia, India, and the Philippines, not to mention recent efforts to gain influence among the Central Asian countries critical to the Belt and Road, represent a textbook case of hegemonic strategic encirclement that understandably worries Beijing. One area of controversy rarely mentioned in the American press is the war in Afghanistan. Despite America’s perception of the region as the heart of the so-called War on Terror, China’s perspective on this war differs considerably. Not only does Afghanistan share a border with China, but more importantly, strong cultural ties link Afghanistan to China’s most restive region, Xinjiang.[13] China initially supported the coalition effort to overthrow the Taliban—which has, Beijing believes, trained and provided refuge for Uighur separatists in Xinjiang—and promotes initiatives aimed at stabilizing the troubled country.[14] But a growing cohort in the Chinese leadership fears the conflict is morphing into a new arena for “Great Game” competition. The Chinese believe this transformed conflict risks leading to more instability on its periphery, not less.[15] Because China believes instability in Afghanistan means instability in Xinjiang, the Chinese leadership could perceive this conflict in one of two ways. In the first, China views this instability as a headache inadvertently caused by the U.S. presence. China will have to dedicate substantial resources—both military and financial—to dealing with a problem that it sees as indirectly rooted in a U.S. military presence. In the second, China could suspect a deliberate U.S. hand in stoking instability in Xinjiang. As implausible as this suspicion may be, Washington cannot ignore Chinese perceptions of the nineteen-year conflict. The U.S. must come to terms with the reality that it may be inadvertently feeding Chinese fears of strategic encirclement. Strategic Nightmare Scenario #2: Domestic Chaos Understanding how Beijing behaves on the international stage also requires a deep appreciation of its complex domestic conditions. What often strikes western observers as an unnecessary violation of human rights represents, for the Chinese leadership, not only a matter of regime survival but also, more importantly, a matter of averting national catastrophe. Memories of the bloody civil war between 1927 and 1949—in which as many as 3 million people died—still haunt many Chinese. Illustrative of this lesson in more recent history are the 1989 Tiananmen Square anti-government protests. Western observers believed these protests were a prelude to the full democratization of the Chinese mainland. So the eventual government crackdown on the demonstrations—leading to the deaths of thousands and the arrests of even more—struck democratic societies as exceptionally cruel. For many Westerners, Tiananmen symbolized the promise of China, what it could be if only the current communist regime decided to make necessary political and economic reforms. Protesters in Tiananmen Square, 2 Jun 1989 (CNN) As Kissinger astutely observes, understanding the political and historical context of Tiananmen shows that this event symbolizes something much darker for the Chinese leadership. In the lead-up to the unexpected death of Hu Yaobang, whose funeral was the trigger for the Tiananmen protests, Deng Xiaoping’s political reforms and economic restructuring were beginning to expose latent fissures within Chinese society. While many in the West marveled at surging Chinese economic growth, the tens of thousands of students sent abroad, and the incredible changes in the standard of living inside the country, there emerged significant indications that new, potentially destabilizing currents were churning within. On the economic side, attempts to make prices reflect real costs inevitably led to price increases, at least in the short term, which in turn led to a run to buy up goods before prices went even higher. This rush created a vicious cycle of hoarding and higher inflation. Also, to recast the command economy on the model of the European system, Deng Xiaoping dismantled many central institutions and streamlined the bureaucracy.[16] Reforms thus enraged many established interests. As Kissinger points out, “The relative success of economic reform produced constituencies at the core of the later discontent. And the government would face declining loyalty from the political cadres whose jobs the reforms threatened.”[17] Significantly, many of the Tiananmen protesters were not of the liberal-democratic mindset, but disgruntled communists whom liberal-democratic reforms had hit hard.[18] On a cultural level, economic reform had raised Chinese expectations on standard of living and personal liberties, while simultaneously creating tensions and inequities that many Chinese believed could only be resolved by a more open and participatory political system. Discontent was thus growing on all sides of the political spectrum. At the same time, in the far west of the country, Tibetans and the Uiygur Muslim minority in Xinjiang were beginning to agitate. For the communist leadership and Deng Xiaoping in particular, the ubiquitous protests stirred the historical Chinese fear of chaos. Regardless of the stated goals of the demonstrators, they recalled both the civil war and the bloody Cultural Revolution.[19] Deng carried out the eventual crackdown reluctantly. In his mind, it was a necessary measure to avoid national disaster.[20] Presently, Beijing appears more confident domestically and internationally. Over the last two decades, China has enjoyed sustained growth rates well above those of Western democracies and has managed to weather the storms of an international financial crisis in 2008-2009 and a trade war with the U.S. with only a relatively minor effect on its overall growth. Standards of living continue to rise and poverty rates are the lowest they have ever been.[21] At the parade for the 70th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China on October 1, 2019, this self-assurance was clearly on display, as enormous crowds gathered to admire the overwhelming might of a nation resurrected from the dustbin of history. Nevertheless, as Matthew Goodman, Elizabeth Economy, and other commentators have suggested, all of this optimism masks a much bleaker reality for the Chinese leadership.[22] The regime’s legitimacy has come to rely almost entirely on its ability to continue to deliver high levels of economic growth, something that will become increasingly difficult as its population ages and the economy becomes more consumer-driven. Industrial production growth slowed to a 17-year low in August of 2019, and anecdotal evidence suggests that ordinary Chinese are starting to feel the effects of slower wage growth and higher prices.[23] Furthermore, many respected Chinese economists are calling attention to the fact that government efforts to spur growth in the face of these obstacles are less and less effective.[24] The marginal efficiency of capital, measured by the incremental capital-output ratio (ICOR), is declining sharply since it takes more and more units of investment to generate one additional unit of growth.[25] All of this could potentially spell disaster for a financial system already racked with increasing debt and a forecasted growing disproportion between retirees and workers. Confrontation between the U.S. and China? (Shutterstock) It will be necessary for Chinese leadership to cultivate other sources of legitimacy over the coming years if these economic trends continue. U.S. policymakers should be sensitive to these necessities and not overreact to any rhetoric that aims primarily at shifting the basis of legitimacy within China, even if it strikes an ostensibly anti-western or nationalistic tone outside of China. Xi Jinping’s position may require at least three levels of communication, one with other world leaders, one within the Communist Party, and another that serves primarily to protect domestic stability and the regime’s standing within China. Historical perspective shows that, in China, a weak regime means increasing domestic instability. It also shows this instability can take on a life of its own, leading to civil war, mass-murder, and vulnerability to foreign interference in its affairs. Beijing will do everything in its power to avoid this scenario, so leaders in Washington must be realistic about what it can expect from the Chinese leadership in the years ahead. Historical perspective shows that, in China, a weak regime means increasing domestic instability. An Uncertain Future Current Sino-U.S. relations are a complicated affair, and though strategists should never rely on history to provide an accurate picture of future developments, it can be a useful, albeit incomplete, guide to the particular concerns, interests, and strategic outlook of their Chinese counterparts. China’s two strategic nightmare scenarios outlined above are deeply rooted in its history, culture, and geography. They by no means explain all of its domestic and international behavior, but they can provide context for much of its rhetoric and many of its geostrategic initiatives. **If the U.S. wants to elude the maelstrom of unavoidable war over relatively small strategic stakes, it would do well to avoid measures that feed China’s fears about these scenarios.** Although Washington should not be naïve in its dealings with Beijing, it **should also make a deliberate effort to adjust its rhetoric to appease these legitimate concerns.** Above all, it should demonstrate that its economic and military endeavors in China’s neighborhood intend, not to actualize some sort of strategic strangulation, but to serve Asia’s long-term interests by providing stability and prosperity to a region that, without a U.S. presence, would be much more dangerous for everyone. The U.S. should be more honest about the fact that its future prosperity depends largely upon China’s success. What is more, Washington should make clear that, while it does stand for human rights and the gradual reform of China’s political institutions, it understands that given China’s domestic conditions, these reforms cannot be made overnight. Perhaps the most challenging consequence of a non-repetitive history is that the future is mostly undetermined, a mystery revealed only by the unfolding of particular events. This uncertainty puts the onus of decision and responsibility squarely on the shoulders of political, diplomatic, and military leadership, who must navigate this challenging terrain with incomplete knowledge of its features. **A Sino-U.S. war is not preordained, nor is it an impossibility**. If it ever does happen, **it will be the result of the particular choices, words, and deeds of particular leaders, not a pattern embedded in the structure of history.**