CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATIONS IN THE NEXT DECADE: WITH REFERENCE TO KOREA*

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This paper is designed to explore basic ideas which have dominated Chinese foreign policy-making and their implications for the East Asian region, especially for the future of the Korean peninsula in the next decade. For this purpose, the paper attempts to portray how China would appear domestically or what direction China would move in its external relations. The conclusions are that, although strategic thinking has been important in China's relations with great powers, societal, ideological and historical factors have been felt much stronger in its foreign behaviors, and that the future of Korea is heavily dependent on China's perception of the Korean peninsula in this regard.

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For the past two decades, great changes have taken place in East Asian regional politics. The following dominating themes have disappeared since the end of World War II: the Cold War; Soviet expansionism; Sino-Soviet dispute; the modernization programs of economy and military in China; Sino-American rapprochement; and the increase of Japanese defense budget. On the other hand, the following have emerged as the focal points of common interest: mutual suspicion between the United States and China; the nuclear armament of North Korea; and the possible collapse of the Pyongyang regime. These phenomena may indicate the end of the Cold War politics with the coming of a stable era as far as regional politics are concerned. It does not mean, however, that all the factors which had contributed to the instability of the region are eliminated, and this is particularly true for the Korean peninsula.

The region is by no means stable; rather, it is anticipated to undergo further rapid transformations for various factors. The balance of power is not yet formalized as it has been witnessed in Europe, and bilateral relations of the countries in the region have various potential for conflict: the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese peace treaty is not yet visible due to the dispute of the so-called northern islands; territorial disputes between China and Japan, and Korea and Japan have uninterruptedly made their appearances; the future of North Korean regime is not predictable while its relations with the United States and Japan have not moved in a positive direction; and, above all, ever-existing tension along the border between the two Koreas is explosive at all time. The last, but not least important issue is that some of the countries are expected to meet serious challenges from the domestic situation in the near future.

The point in this paper is that China will take a central place in this great transformation of the region whatever shape it is to take, and that other countries are inescapably under its influence, directly or indirectly. This theme is widely accepted and has been currently discussed in Korean academic circles.¹ However, the general trend in these discussions is to treat 'China' synchronically—i.e., regarding China simply as 'a new force,' economically and militarily, in the regional international system. Naturally, this approach is more concerned with the strategic aspect of China's external relations and in this sense deals with some changes in China's responses to the changed external environment.

Of course, this approach is tenable to some extent. All the indices of the economy and military indicate the emerging of a giant in the world political scene, and expect in somewhat euphoric sense that China will work with other major powers within the frame of existing rules and regulations put forward by the world community. The present leadership in Beijing has also repeatedly assured this point. According to this view, if China becomes involved in conflict with other powers, it is because China feels its national interests threatened, or the international system cannot adjust to the demands of this new rising force. This is exactly the same point made by some revisionist scholars that the failure of the system to accommodate the revisionist power by the status-quo powers had

¹ Refer to the papers in the Reference.

ultimately led to the outbreak of World War II (Burton 1967; Pelz 1974).²

However, this approach is inclined to ignore other aspects in China's foreign relations, i.e., societal, ideological and historical ones. To be sure, China is a socialist country whose value system and world outlook are vastly different from the rest of the world. External relations are bound to impinge directly upon society, while political, social and economic changes at home affect orientation to the outside world. China is particularly conscious of this relationship; its socialist system must be kept intact from outside influences, especially from capitalist norms and values. And, for this reason, the societal and ideological aspects have played an important, and rather restraining role in its foreign policy-making. According to Michael Yahuda (1983, 3-9), by the mid-fifties, Mao Zedong voiced concern that 'the largest technological transfer in history' from the Soviet Union would make China dependent upon Moscow, a prospect which had eventually unleashed a series of political campaigns to eliminate pro-Soviet elements in Chinese society. Of course, ideological feeling has reached its lowest ebb in Chinese society these days, and moreover, the current attempt on the part of China at technology absorption is marked neither by an ideological affinity, nor by institutional similarity, with the foreign supplier. In this sense, the societal aspect has greatly diminished in Beijing's handling of external relations, but cannot be ignored, as long as the present leadership tries to maintain the socialist system armed with the so-called 'four principles,' – i.e., socialism, the dictatorship of proletariat, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

China also has a remarkable tradition in watching and analysing the world situation, and defining its role in world politics through its own looking-glass. Its world outlook is no doubt heavily influenced by its own culture, recent history and ideology. No one will dispute the fact that China, as other great powers, follows in the general line of prudent realism in dealing with security and other issues of national interest. Moreover, it is true that traditional factors together with societal ones are not sufficient enough to explain why and how a social phenomenon takes place at a certain time and in a certain place. Czarist Russian encroachments to China, animosity between Mao Zedong and Stalin, or differences in the interpretation of Marxism-Leninism might be secondary in explaining the Sino-Soviet disputes in the 1950s to 60s to the synchronic and structural factors of international politics at the time such as the differences in global strategy and the intra-party relations of the socialist camp, and border disputes of the two countries. However, it is not easy to say which are determinants or contributing factors. Moreover, in the history of Chinese foreign involvement from the Korean War to the recent takeover of Hong Kong, tradition has been felt most important, and perhaps the ultimate factor in its foreign relations. Thus, this paper is designed to explore some basic ideas which have dominated Chinese foreign policy-making and their implications for the East Asian region, especially for the future of the Korean peninsula in the next decade.

² However, Martin Wight (1966, 103-104) argues that foreign behaviors of a nation must be judged by the norms which have been developed among the nations over several centuries. The partition of Poland, the annexation of Korea by Japan and the division of Europe by the Yalta settlement, for example, might be acceptable in light of maintaining the balance of power but were clearly departed from the important norms of sovereignty and independence in the international system.

CHINA IN THE NEXT DECADE

Prior to the discussion on Chinese foreign policy, the shape in which China would assume in the next decade poses a concern. Considering a great deal of uncertainties surrounding China as well as the East Asian region, it is not easy and even futile to predict or forecast even in a vague term as to what appearance China would exactly take or in what direction China would move in the years ahead.

First and foremost, ten years or so are not long enough to change the shape of a nation, much less a gigantic nation like China. History shows that a socio-political phenomenon begin to surface after a long latent period, although society is unable to escape sudden changes by human and social behaviors such as war, natural disasters or developmental plans. Secondly, as traditionalists argue, prediction seems to be beyond the scope of social science and especially in the field of international relations on a simple ground that a social phenomenon has multiple causations. A recent study by Jarvis (1991/92, 39-46) also provides eight reasonable excuses for the inadequacy of predicting international politics.

Since the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989 and the resultant end of the Cold War system, serious discussions have been in progress among scholars in international politics as to why they or their scientific (or Sovietological) models had been unable to predict these events despite the fact that a huge bulk of books and papers on the Soviet system and its future had been produced (Malia 1992). Prediction on the foreign behavior of a nation becomes all the more difficult because the superpowers and small nations alike, were freed from the overriding concern for security matters since the demise of bipolar system, and are able to possess a wide range of choices in foreign policy-making. Nevertheless, it is highly important to predict the future of China, for it is closely related with one of the main themes in this paper, i.e., the Chinese perception of the world and the definition of its role. Thus, this paper attempts to examine the shape of China in the next decade by muddling through a tunnel filled with external and internal complexities.

It is fair to say that China will emerge as a super power, militarily and economically, in world politics in the next decade. According to recent statistics of the World Bank, the gross domestic product (GDP) of China in 1994 was around \$3 trillion, a figure which made China the second largest economy in the world after the United States. Apart from economic growth, Chinese achievements were more impressive in the fields of direct foreign investment and foreign-exchange reserves.¹ A study by Bernstein and Munro (1997), which has touched off much controversy in recent times on the future relationship of China and the United States, begins its argument with the assumption that within a few years, China will be the largest economy in the world, it is on its way to become a formidable military power as well, and that its strength and influence are already far greater than those of any other countries in the vast Pacific region except for the United States.

¹ Quoted from S. S. Kim, Refer to the Reference.

In the field of military build-up, China's official military budget rose to \$9.7 billion in 1996, or about 1.5 percent of GNP and 10 percent of the total state spending. The official budget has more than doubled in the last five years, and more than tripled since the mid-1980s. Since the Tiananmen incident of 1989, the military budget has been increased at the rate of 12 percent and more, and especially it was recorded 22.4 percent (or, 11.6 percent of the total budget), which was the highest since Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979. China has invested a large portion of its military budget in a major upgrading of the combat power of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The Chinese military budget is not so high, considering the size of military budgets of Japan and South Korea, and the length of the Chinese border with neighboring powers (F. Pak 1996).⁷ As usually practiced in the former Communist countries, however, the official budget has greatly underrecorded the actual military spending, and if all actual spending for military purposes had been included, a reasonable estimate of its military budget would be around \$28-36 billion, a figure which put Chinese military spending around the fourth largest in the world (Gurtov 1997; Gallagher 1994).

Nonetheless, China's future is not perceived to be bright. The Chinese economy and political structure have been inherently fragile, and no one can predict with any certainty the future of Chinese leadership, policies or international affiliations, even in the near future. These points are further explored.

It must be noted that China is virtually the only remaining socialist country in the world. With the collapse of the socialist camp in Eastern Europe, the worsening situation of North Korea, the impending suffocation of Cuba by the tightening blockade of the United States, and the widening estrangement of Vietnam from China, China has become isolated in the Hobbesian state of nature of world politics. Moreover, the neighboring countries, especially those in Southeast Asia, which have territorial disputes with China over mutual borderlines or far-off islands, have become increasingly alienated from China. These nations wonder about China's intention with its newly acquired power, and are consequently looking for protection from other powers including the United States.

In the domestic scene, the situation is more complicated and worrisome. For the past two decades since 1978 when Deng Xiaoping returned to power, China has pursued reform and modernization under the banner of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics.' This is a natural corollary to the slogan of 'Chinese studies (learning, culture, values) for the base (fundamental structure, framework), western studies for use (practical application),' a formula by which the Manchu government had tried in vain to revitalize the agricultural and feudal society of China during the last several decades of the nineteenth century (Teng and Fairbank 1971, 50, 169). The thrust of their ancestors' failure was that they overlooked the simple fact that various systems within a society must have harmony with one another. In the same vein, Malia (1992) argues that recent affairs in Russia since 1989 have demonstrated that political transformation is indispensably pre-

⁷ According to the official exchange rate, the Chinese military budget is about \$6.4 billion in 1994, 13.9 percent of that of the Japanese budget.

requisite to changes in economic field and others. It is especially true in a monolithic society where politics are important in every field, and that the first step toward change or the return to normality, is to end the total hegemony of politics.

In the case of China, the dilemma of the present leadership is also how to practice an 'open-door' policy in which only what it regards as desirable influences are imported, while these influences do not affect China's social norms and life-styles. As long as the political system remains pre-modern and monolithic, absolute monarchism based on the Confucian ideology, which had been contrived over centuries for the agricultural society, and which the Manchu dynasty had wanted to keep intact as 'the base of the new society,' will not survive. The present leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) follows the same ill-conceived path as its predecessors, and this is the fundamental cause of the unrest that the Chinese society has recently undergone in spite of the wealth brought about by reform measures.

Whatever justification the Beijing government proposes for its policy of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' or whatever theoretical argument can be expounded against it, the economic achievement of the past two decades is stunning. The reform and modernization policies by the CCP have virtually changed the face of the Chinese society, while uprooting its very foundation of socialism. More important is the fact that these policies transformed the attitude of the people to the opposite of what Mao Zedong and his followers cultivated with great care which was to mold the Chinese into egalitarian socialist human beings who despise material incentives. Corruption has been widespread and most people have pursued private rather than collective goals. Indeed, the current economic policies accentuate the promotion of private interests both in industry and in agriculture. This adverse trend seems to have reached to the point of no return in China as a whole, and particularly in the cities open to western influence. In short, 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' is already in the process of decay or distortion.

The last important factor is the implication of these trends to the border areas where the majority of the people is non-Chinese. Traditionally, people in the border areas took an ambivalent attitude towards the central government in China proper. When they felt threatened by outside powers, they looked for protection from the central government, while they tried to keep the middle kingdom at arms length in order to maintain their own independence.⁵ No visible threats are expected from the outside these days. On the other hand, China has completely destroyed its hope for national self-determination ever since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, a fact which indicates that China is evidently disliked by the people of the border areas.

The trend of rampant materialism and moral laxity combined with ethnic nationalism and other elements might develop into a serious problem. The contemporary history of China provides us with numerous cases of political and intellectual liberalization, whenever the government signalled to loosen its tight grip on society. The CCP leadership has been well aware that the intellectuals had demanded the abolition of the monopoly of power by the Communists with the introduction of a genuine multi-party system during

⁵ As for the traditional relationship of China and border areas, see Fairbank (1968).

the Hundred Flowers period in the late 1950s.⁶ Secondly, the Beijing government has rigorously pursued the policy of decentralization as part of its modernization and reform programs. Part of the decision-making power, which had hitherto been monopolized by the central government, has been relinquished to provincial or even Hsiang government and to industrial units. Each province is able to make its own developmental projects, for which it can endeavor directly and vigorously to invite investment from abroad.

Although the social unrest in China proper as well as in the border regions should not be exaggerated to the extent that it constitutes a threat to the CCP's control over the country, the Beijing leadership views it with a great concern. The government saw public order as a serious problem in 17 out of 29 provinces in 1994. Ethnic nationalist unrest, most recently in the Muslim province of Xinjiang this year, is becoming an increasingly complex challenge due to its anti-government and anti-Chinese nature. Moreover, some hostile foreign forces, in Beijing's view, have been manipulating public/ethnic resentment to subvert socialist Chinese rule under the guise of peaceful evolution (Gurtov 1997).⁷

Then, what will be the real shape of China in the early part of the next century? In a long-term perspective, China might enter the process of disintegration. This may come earlier than anticipated, as happened in the Soviet Union. Early in the 1980s, when the revolutionary fever reached its culmination in the wake of the Iranian Revolution, some Sovietologists made a very cautious prediction that the disintegration of the Soviet empire might begin by the end of this century. That is the time when a number of non-white ethnic people, especially that of the Muslims, are expected to surpass the Slav population due to different birth rates, thus, a third of the new recruits of the armed forces will be Muslims in the Soviet Union (Chubin 1980). The fragmentation of the Soviet Union, however, came earlier, and from a quite different direction; from the total breakdown of the economic system as generally believed or from the rise of a new kind of legitimacy as Kirkpatrick (1992) suggested.

The case of China might be different. The present authoritarian regime has maintained that Chinese socialism is different from that of the East European countries, when it crushed the Tiananmen uprising in June 1989. Moreover, the Chinese system seems at least outwardly to be consolidated with the prestige of the CCP leadership being greatly enhanced by material prosperity and strong defense posture. To Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues, who had initiated audacious reforms to shake off Soviet-style central planning and state socialism as well as Chinese ultra-leftist ideology represented by the 'Gang of Four' under Mao's mantle twenty years ago, this transition should not be assumed to lead to the establishment of liberal democracy and capitalism. Rather, what is important to these Chinese elites is to construct a more effective and rationalized political system, whether it is democratic or not. They would be satisfied if China emerges gradually as a stronger power with a slightly democratic and pluralized society.

In addition, there exist several obstacles to democracy as it necessarily entails the distri-

⁶ 'The downfall of the Communist Party does not mean the downfall of China,' quoted from People's Daily, May 31, 1957. Refer to MacFarquhar (1974).

⁷ In Yunnan Province bordering Indochina, where local authorities are conducting a war on drugs, the PLA acts as an occupation force.

bution of power and influence in society. In other words, democracy is bound to lead to the dissolution of the present one-party system, a phenomenon for which some conservative sections of Chinese society and the present leadership are not yet prepared. For example, those on the state payroll, especially state-sector industrial workers, low- and middle-level party and state officials, members of the police force, and the military, have had reason to feel threatened by, and are openly hostile, to the economic and political reforms. Moreover, the chief proponents of democratic reform which include students, intellectuals, and new entrepreneurs or businessmen are small in number and less organized; they do not form a coherent political body or movement, they are in a sense among the most favoured beneficiaries of the Deng Xiaoping reforms, and therefore should be relatively content with the *status-quo*. Furthermore, as the individual members of such groups are generally quite dependent on the state for their personal careers and future, they have to be careful critics at best, or express more complacency than protest for democracy. Thus, given the composition of conflicting social forces and the available options to current political power-holders, a normal or smooth transition to democracy in China seems to be remote (Shue 1992).

If democracy is a remote possibility in the Chinese political and social milieu, China might be engulfed in the political turmoil as was experienced in South Korea in the 1980s with much more complicated political, demographical and ethno-national problems. This transition can become very violent to the extent that the present regime cannot cope. Shue (1992) suggests that the present era is most reminiscent of the last years of the Qing Dynasty which lost legitimacy by its failure for reform, thus, igniting a nationwide movement for political renewal and cultural renovation. Just as it happened in the last days of the Qing, the toppling of the CCP regime would come suddenly with a rise of a military man or a popular regime like Yeltsin in Russia, but this course would not necessarily speed China toward democracy, as in the period of 'interregnum (1911-49)' in China.⁸

For the people in the border areas, democratization and decentralization are considered to be a long awaited opportunity, and the best means for them to achieve their cherished dream to become free from the Chinese rule. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Muslims in the Sino-Russian border have already achieved independence, and attracted their brethren inside China; Mongolians, whose land the Chinese used to call 'Outer Mongolia,' and who have succeeded to some extent in expanding their diplomatic relations, became the lodestar to their compatriots in 'Inner Mongolia'; in the southwest, the people in Tibet have never abandoned its hope for independence from the yoke of China.

Beijing views these phenomena as a concerted plot of the anti-China factions in the West headed by the United States to split and weaken China by giving support to separatists in minority localities and by exerting pressure on such issues as democracy and human rights. Thus, the Chinese response to these trends is firm and harsh. The CCP leadership did not agree that the people's cry for democracy as shown in the Tiananmen

⁸ Ibid. As for three kinds of scenarios for the future of China, see also S. S. Kim (1997), 10-11.

demonstration in 1989 was insurmountable. Deng and his followers crushed this demonstration in honor of the reform-minded leader, Hu Yaofeng, in blood-thirsty manner, as if the movement had contained antagonistic contradictions between people and reactionaries in terms of Mao's famous thesis of 1957. This was an unprecedented step taken by the CCP in its history. Mao and his colleagues claimed proudly that they had sought untiringly to solve contradictions among the people by peaceful means such as thought reform and self-criticism contrary to Stalin's method of bloody purge in the 1930s.⁹ The Tiananmen massacre was in this sense unmistakably a deviation from the CCP's tradition.

As for the border areas, things have been getting worse from the Chinese point of view, as the world trend for self-determination, democracy and human rights has long been opposed to the latter. Thus, there will be more complicated problems for a considerable period of time in the future. However, Beijing has determined not to allow any sort of disturbances to threaten the CCP regime, and consequently, it did not hesitate to adopt extreme means such as anti-crime campaigns and executions in provinces in connection with anti-government riots and other criminal charges such as violence against public officials, banditry, smuggling and corruption.¹⁰

CHINESE PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD AND FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION

The making of foreign policy begins with the perception of the outside world. Man or personified state reacts to the outside environment, which does not exactly correspond to the real world, but to his perceived image of the reality. This pattern of behavior is manifested more prominently when a state is guided by its own self-imagined role or ideology, and is especially true in the case of China. Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China has habitually drawn the world political map through its own looking-glass. During the early days of the Cold War, China viewed the world as divided into two rival camps led by the United States and the Soviet Union. China itself was tightly encircled by the aggressive, imperialistic, capitalist United States, and therefore, had to lean to the side of the Soviet Union, the leader of the socialist camp. It declared 'no middle road.' However, as the strategic association between the United States and the Soviet Union grew, as the former pursued a harder line against China over Taiwan and other issues, and as the latter's dispute with China began to intensify in strategic and ideological fields towards the end of the 1950s, Beijing concluded that the revisionist Soviets have joined in the anti-Chinese conspiracy, leaving China the sole bastion of socialism.¹¹

⁹ Mao's general policy towards counter-revolutionaries, even if they have committed crimes worthy of death, is to give them the opportunity of reforming themselves through productive labor. "A man's head is not like a scallion, which will grow again if you cut it off." Quoted from Schram (1969).

¹⁰ For example, the latest execution in Xinjiang took place in July 29, 1997.

¹¹ As for the Chinese image of the world, refer to Huxley (1971) and Fitzgerald (1969).

The attitude to analyze and interpret the world situation through its own image has been continued even after China emerged out of isolation to become an acknowledged, full participatory member of the international diplomatic system in the early 1970s. When Deng led the Chinese delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations in April, 1974, he identified China as a member of the Third World while the two superpowers and other industrial nations comprised the First and the Second World respectively (Yahuda 1978, 240-244).¹²

Nevertheless, the image of the world is not the only criterion for the Chinese in its foreign policy-making. Moreover, the image taken by China is not exactly identical with the reality. By and large, it is colored by ideology and necessity of time. In this respect, the gap between the reality and the image is bound to create tension when it comes to the making of foreign policy. The Chinese has fully understood this fact, which has been prominently displayed by its handling of foreign relations in terms of Realpolitik *vis-à-vis* other great powers. Since the foundation of the PRC, the Beijing government used to escalate tension over strategic and ideological issues with the two superpowers. Except for the Korean War, however, China never attempted to clash directly against any of the two superpowers. Even in the Korean War, the Communist regime which had just declared the establishment of a new China, dispatched volunteers in order to avoid the impression of direct military confrontation against the U.S. forces in the hostilities in the peninsula. In the subsequent events such as the Taiwan crisis in 1954 and 1958, the border disputes with the Soviet Union in 1969, and the Vietnamese War in the 1960s and early 70s, the Beijing leadership successfully managed confrontations either with the United States or the Soviet Union under its control. Thus, for the convenience of analysis, Chinese approach to its external relations can be divided according to these two different backgrounds from its past and tradition, and from prudent realism.

The two dimensions in Chinese external relations have been sufficiently revealed by its handling of external affairs. Of course, it is unable to distinguish which Chinese foreign relations issue belongs to which dimension; every issue has two aspects at the same time, and the difference is more a matter of degree. However, as discussed earlier, a sense of isolation, suspicion of the West and eagerness for the return of lost territories, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, definitely belong to the first category. This implies that the Chinese perceive international surroundings to be unfavorable to them. On the other hand, from the realist perspective the global and regional environments have greatly improved since the 1970s. Now Russia is unable to pursue its expansionist policy due to the collapse of its economy, as well as the independence of republics in the border regions. Thus, military tension brought about by U.S.-Soviet and Sino-Soviet confrontations in the Asian and Pacific region has diminished to a great extent. Moreover, *rapprochement* between the two continental powers has been underway; from the Russian standpoint it is essential to promote bilateral trade with China for its economic rehabilitation; for China, cooperation with Russia is indispensable for the

¹² Deng declared that "the socialist camp which existed for a time after the World War II is no longer in existence, which implies that most of Eastern Europe was under the Russian imperialist domination."

maintenance of peaceful environment in the border region as well as for thwarting American hegemony in strategic and economic fields. China's relations with the United States has been steadily improved since President Nixon visited China in 1972, although outbursts have broken out occasionally from Washington and Beijing over the Taiwan and trade issues, and despite the fact that China has not ultimately shaken off the distrust that the United States has been deeply engaged in conspiracy for the disintegration of China.

One of the prominent aspects with regard to the Chinese past is the rise of Chinese nationalism. This is probably the single most important element in the realm of foreign policy-making since ideological interpretation began to lose its momentum in the late 1970s. It is a well-known fact that over thousands of years, the Chinese state developed more or less autonomously and self-sufficiently, while foreign or 'barbarian' influences were either neglected or absorbed but viewed cynically. This culture-based 'Sino-centralism' was thoroughly shattered by the 'century of humiliation' imposed by the West, and later by Japan from the Opium War in 1840 until the establishment of the PRC in 1949. During this painstaking period, China's culturism was replaced by, or transformed into, nationalism. Even Chinese Communism is regarded as another expression of nationalism, as shown by the fact that Mao Zedong had strenuously upheld the principle of 'the Signification of Marxism' during the years of the Sino-Japanese War before World War II (Bianco 1971, 50; Schram 1969, 171-173).¹³ And, since Mao declared in September 1949 at the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference that 'China has stood up,' the Beijing government determined that 'our nation will never again be an insulted nation' (Schram 1969, 167-168). Now nearly 50 years have passed, and both China and the world have undergone tremendous changes. However, the undercurrent of the Chinese foreign behaviors is nearly identical to the above statement.

'Socialism with Chinese characteristics' or 'Chinese way of socialism' is viewed domestically that the CCP leadership wants to keep the present socialist system while tolerating the introduction of capitalist elements such as market economy. In external relations, however, this term is closely integrated with the phenomenon of the rise of Chinese nationalism. China has already discarded its traditional world outlook, in which China occupies the center while other countries in the periphery pay the tributary mission to Beijing. The Chinese notions have now been definitely replaced by Western norms such as sovereignty, independence and equality among nations, and China has behaved itself as a great power similar to the notion of a great power in Europe. In this completely different international system, the pursuit of 'Chinese way of socialism' is nothing but an explicit expression of reasserting China's greatness and establishing a Chinese centrality in world affairs (Yahuda 1983; Schram 1969, 160-61).

Territorial disputes with neighboring countries and tension over Taiwan with the

¹³ The last phase of the ideological struggle was not exactly, or not simply the triumph of Marxism over nationalism, but the absorption of the latter by the former. Marxism proved itself as the most effective system not only for attacking social inequities, but also for restoring a national pride that had been sorely tried for a century. See also Schram (1969, 171-173).

United States might be explained in the same vein. What might be called the Chinese irredentism is just one of the ways the Chinese has tried to recover its national pride, deprived of by the West during the past century. In the traditional Chinese world, the border between China and the outside world was loosely delineated by zone/belt of land such as the Gobi Desert or Himalaya Mountains rather than a line. According to the Chinese view, in addition to the territories taken from China such as Taiwan, Liu-ch'iu (Ryukyu) Islands, parts of Xingjiang and the Amur basin, the Western and Japanese imperialists drew lines between China and their colonies including India and Indochina in the latter's favor during this period. These injustices which were incurred upon China must be corrected.

China has been quite adamant about this matter, and has been unlikely to be conciliatory. Since the establishment of the PRC, China fought two wars against India, and sent one 'punitive expedition' to Vietnam, which was once a socialist ally, over border disputes. The recent 'unification' or 'handover' of Hong Kong was also an excellent opportunity to observe this attitude on the part of the Chinese leadership. Since 1984, China and Britain have negotiated the terms by which the latter would hand over Hong Kong to the former. At the time, it was widely speculated that China would get more benefits if Hong Kong would have remained in the hands of Britain, an idea which made China not enthusiastic in the matter of the liberation of the enclave. However, the Chinese handling of affairs in Hong Kong in the last days under the Union Jack, such as the dissolution of the elected Legislative Council under the auspices of British colonial government and the indirect encouragement of self-censorship of media, showed that it would not compromise and allow any sort of intervention from other powers when its sovereignty was at stake. Beijing's firm stand is not expected to be ameliorated in its treatment of affairs in this 'Special Administrative District' in the future.¹⁴

The issue of Taiwan is probably the best example which showed the true nature of Chinese foreign policy combining nationalism and practical Realpolitik. As was commented in a study by Tucker (1996), no issue in China's foreign relations, especially with the United States, has been as dangerous and divisive, or has had the devastating impact as the Taiwan question. This is precisely because the Taiwan question is closely related to Chinese nationalism. It has been the symbol of Chinese humiliation as it was deprived of by Japan as a result of China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Furthermore, the island was not returned to China after World War II since it was occupied by the Kuomintang (KMT), buttressed by the United States. The recent development of the island's independence movement by its native people headed by President Lee Teng-hui is not only a continuing affront to China's national pride, but also a real security problem.

Despite the repeated requests of the United States, China has never renounced the use of force against Taiwan, because according to the Chinese argument, it belongs to the realm of sovereignty. And the Chinese determination over this issue has been fully demonstrated by its military exercises involving missile tests just north of the island in

¹⁴ For examples, refer to MacGeary (1997) and Elliott (1997).

1995-96. Of course, these operations were designed to thwart the slightest move for the island's independence and to warn against the U.S. government's encouragement. However, China's handling of the issue has been rational and prudent as well. Its formula for solving the Taiwan question is the so-called 'one country, multi-systems,' which seems, to the eyes of the Beijing regime, to have been applied successfully to Hong Kong in the summer of 1997, and is further applied to Macao in 1999. Under this system, Taiwan would be allowed to run its domestic affairs and to possess its own armed forces, while subjected to the central government in the management of foreign relations.

Although the Chinese offer might be considered generous and liberal, Taiwan is not prepared to accept it. In short, the Taiwanese are not ready to be subjugated to a economically poor and politically dictatorial system in the continent. There has been a growth of a younger generation of Taiwanese, who does not have much affiliation with the mainlanders and wants to uphold the principle of self-determination — i.e., Taiwanese independence. Nevertheless, the Taiwanese does not risk to renounce the 'one China' principle which the KMT has maintained since its retreat to the island in 1949. On the other hand, the Taiwanese have also become more indifferent to the issue of unification. They see the unification as a long and gradual process, during which they expect democratization in the mainland to be advanced to the level in Taiwan. At the same time, the Taipei government under the native leadership of Lee Teng-hui is accelerating its bid for international recognition and for assuming a larger role backed by its economic power. Thus, the Taiwan question will not be solved in a short time, as long as the Taiwanese enjoy a high degree of prosperity, and the United States does not abandon the present policy of preventing China from the use of force against the island. The unification of Taiwan and China, in this sense, will be possible when the people in the island believe that the political system of the mainland is sufficiently improved to protect themselves from the tyranny of the Communist dictatorship. As for China, this signifies that the only and best way is to be ready to accept the status-quo across the straits for the time being, while to warn Taipei uninterruptedly against any move in the direction of self-determination.

When it comes to China's external relations from the perspective of realism, its relations with the United States is the most important. According to the conceptualization in international relations, China is considered a revisionist power in the region regardless of the rhetorics employed by the leadership in Beijing designed for its foreign policy orientation to be peaceful. To be a revisionist in international relations, it means that a state is discontent with the prevailing international system, and pursues policies to change the system in its favor. Its resurgent nationalism, as described above, demands implicitly and explicitly its rightful place under the sun, and it has been backed by China's steady and vigorous armament programme of its armed forces and by its stunning economic growth in the past several decades. Moreover, neighboring countries are already watching Beijing's moves with great concern.

Of course, the theory of the Chinese threat is not indisputable. First and foremost, during the Shanghai *Communique* with Nixon at the Bandung conference, and Deng's

speech of 1974 at the United Nations, the Beijing government has tried to assure neighboring countries that China would never seek hegemony in the region, and that China needs a peaceful environment for its economic development. It is probably true and trustworthy for the time being. Some scholars also argue that given the constraints posed by the deficiencies in the Chinese modern military technology and by domestic and international situations, the former of which had been partly proved by the PLA's poor performance during its 'punitive' expedition to Vietnam in 1979, Chinese threats to neighboring countries in Southeast Asia are 'illusory' (Gallagher 1994, 169; T. Kim 1997). Another study by T. Kim (1997) also concludes that, considering the credible capability of China, the will to use its armed forces, and the acceptance of Chinese hegemony by other powers, a 'hegemonic China' theme is a premature and alarmist view to some extent, thus, the study requires a careful examination. In other words, its military modernization is far behind the standard of the Western powers, a fact which was evidenced by the Gulf War, and gave PLA leaders a great concern.

This argument is partially untenable. First of all, the realist of international politics is more concerned with the capability of its enemy's contemplated rather than its proclaimed will. It is an undeniable fact that China's overall national strength, which has dramatically increased in the nearly twenty years of economic reforms, made it an actual security threat to its neighbors. To them, Beijing's gesture and will for peace is secondary to the actual capability which China can wield in dealing with them. In other words, nobody can guarantee that China will maintain its policy of cooperation and accommodation in the next decade. It is also evident, as indicated in the recent crisis in the Taiwan Strait, that Beijing would not hesitate to use, or threaten to use force when it feels its vital interests are at stake. They are alarmed and frightened by the prospect of China's potential power combined with its nationalistic assertion and cultural dominance in the region, and are looking askance at the true intention and future role of China in world politics. In addition, the inferiority which China feels *vis-à-vis* the Western powers in military technology carries little weight because its military machinery is already sufficient enough to impose its will in the weaker countries in the region. Even for the great powers of the region, the future of Chinese military capability has become a serious concern because the modernization of the PLA, especially its navy and strategic forces including nuclear weapons, can trigger an arms race with Japan. This is a situation which, in turn, might lead to a nuclear-armed Japan independent of the United States. This scenario is a nightmare not only for China itself, but also for other great powers including the United States and Russia, and for all Asian and Pacific countries which have experienced Japanese militarism in the first half of this century.

If China is a revisionist, it is inevitable that other powers will try to prevent China's search for domination in the region, and to seek assistance from the United States. Here, we can speculate the possibility of a clash between the United States and China. One such theory was provided by Samuel P. Huntington (1993) with the name of 'the clash of civilizations'. According to Huntington, world politics is entering a new phase after the end of the Cold War, and the primary source of conflict is not ideological or econom-

ic, but cultural. In historical perspective, he argues that conflict between civilizations, which he terms as 'cultural entities,' will be the last phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world. He also argues that civilization entity will be increasingly important in the future, and the world will be shaped in large measure by the interactions among seven or eight major civilizations including Western, Confucian, Japanese and Islamic. Here, non-Western civilizations have attempted to modernize without becoming Western, and to date, only Japan has fully succeeded in this quest. Though a clash between the United States and China does not come to the fore in his thesis, he clearly understands the present conflict and tension across the Pacific, and Beijing's ruthless policies in the border areas, including the Buddhist Tibet and Muslim Xinjiang. The military build-up in China, and the exporting of nuclear materials and missile technology to Arab countries, are by and large an anti-Western or Confucian-Islamic collaboration against the West, according to Huntington. He even anticipates that in the future, the principal East Asian economic bloc is likely to be centered in China along with its close ethnic and Confucian neighbors.¹⁵

Another study also points out the possibility of collision between the two powers in a similar context. In the absence of the East-West conflict, Samuel S. Kim (1997, 7) notes that Sino-American relations have become increasingly tense, and one of the sources of conflict is their traditions in external relations. The U.S. exceptionalism such as America's manifestation in destiny and the extension of American liberal empire which is expressed in the form of human rights diplomacy on the other hand, and the Chinese middle kingdom complex, which is based on its great civilization, and on the belief that the Chinese state sovereignty is exempt from international rules and norms.

Huntington's argument seems to be acceptable to a certain extent. In the breakup of former Yugoslavia, the policies of Western European countries and Russia can be explained in terms of their affinities with religion and civilization. It has been also noted that intellectuals in the West have rather kept silence or at least taken a low profile about the massacre of Muslims by the Serbs. It is contrasted conspicuously to the outcries or active participation of Western intellectuals in the independence movement of Greece and Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire in the last century during which local Christians had been high-handedly treated by the Muslim Turks. However, in the East Asian theater, it is hardly expected that China together with other Confucian and non-Western countries, including Japan, would unite for a common cause against the United States and Europe. In the mind of East Asians, unity would inevitably lead to the domination of China, an assumption which they would never be ready to accept. They are more likely to try to maintain the balance of power against the gigantic China by aligning themselves with the United States, if individual nations are not strong enough to have leverage *vis-à-vis* China. Here, their policy will be guided more by the consideration of security and other national interests than by the affinity of civilization.

Another theory of Sino-American clash starts with the assumption that China is actual-

¹⁵ As for China and the clash of civilizations, see Huntington (1993), 28, 34, 47 and 49.

ly or potentially a revisionist power. If China is a revisionist, the policy alternatives open to the United States are either to introduce Beijing to the club of satisfied status-quo powers by meeting its demands or to encircle China by containing its demands in the Cold War context. It is entirely up to the Washington government to judge whether China's demands are moderate for, and compatible to, U.S. interests, or China, as a leading power in the East Asian region, is entitled to claim its place in world affairs, or China is too harmful to maintain peace and to protect U.S. interests in the global and regional level. Present debates on Sino-American relations can be understood in this context.

The so-called 'engagement or containment' was first expounded by Joseph Nye, Jr. (1995), then the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, in his article, 'East Asian Security: The Case for Deep Engagement' in *Foreign Affairs*. Being reminiscent of an article written by X (1947) on the Soviet foreign behaviors half a century ago in the same journal which ushered in the age of Cold War, Nye's argument in favor of engagement policy has streamlined U.S. policy to Asia and particularly to China. In short, Nye argues that the United States should maintain the present level of U.S. troops in East Asia. In spite of the fact that the world after the Cold War has moved beyond the age of power politics to the age of geo-economics, according to the Assistant Secretary of Defense, this narrow geo-economic analysis cannot provide a reasonable sociological frame for geopolitical necessities to deploy a forward military presence in the Asian soil.

Nye aptly describes that the periods of the rise and fall of great powers are often times of great instability in international state systems, as indicated in the Peloponnesian War, French Revolutionary Wars and the World War I. He views that the international power structure in East Asia today is similarly marked by the rise and fall of great powers, as witnessed in the decline and collapse of the Soviet Union, the continued growth of Japan, and the economic transformation of China. The future problems of the region are, therefore, the adjustment of the international system to the rise of China's power, the eventual rejuvenation of Russia, and the evolving role of Japan as well as the reduction of tension in the Korean peninsula. Considering that the United States is the only global and economic power in the region and that multilateral institutions in East Asia are relatively weak compared with Europe which has created the European Union and other international organizations over decades, U.S. policy to the Asian region, must be 'engagement and enlargement.'

A strong and unswerving American leadership supported by the presence of U.S. troops in Asia, is a vital element in the policy of engagement. From the view of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, this policy of maintaining a stable level of troop strength does not mean to perpetuate the Cold War in Asia; moreover, it is cheaper for the United States because host countries such as Japan and Korea pay more than 70 percent of the troops' overall costs. Instead, he considers the creation of a NATO-like regional alliance to be a mistake in East Asia since it does not have a long tradition of regional cooperation. Nye strongly rejects the idea to portray China as an enemy, or to contain China on the assumption that China will be aggressive to outside of the Chinese cultural area, at present or in the future. Instead, he advocates that the United

States must try to engage in a dialogue with China on a broad variety of fronts. This policy of engagement has already produced some progress in the fields of proliferation of weapons, multilateral regional dialogues and confidence building measures between the two powers.

However, the point is that no matter how good intentions the United States has *vis-à-vis* China, Chinese perception of U.S. foreign behaviors is entirely different. Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State of the U.S. government, warned that: 'Once China becomes strong enough to stand alone, it might discard us. A little later it might even turn against the United States, if its perception of its interests requires it' (Kissinger 1979, 1091; Bernstein and Munro 1997, 22). In fact, the notion that the United States is China's main rival and enemy, is widespread among official and non-official circles in China. As a result, discursive languages which describe dark schemes about China by the United States have been constantly pouring out from Beijing. To the eyes of the Chinese, the main rival of the United States at present is the PRC, based on its global hegemonist strategy. High-level government officials used to perceive that 'interfering in China, subverting the Chinese government and strangling China's development are strategic principles pursued by the United States.' Because of this, American hegemonists have interfered blatantly in Chinese internal affairs and supported openly the debilitating activities of hostile elements inside and outside the mainland, subverting China's socialist system (Bernstein and Munro 1997, 22-25).

Of course, this attitude in China reflects a sort of besieged mentality in a world where China feels isolated and that everyone else are ganging up against itself. However, Beijing's official policy does not correspond to the above statements. In this sense, Chinese attitude has been contradictory. It is undeniable that the United States is one of the most important sources for Chinese economic development, by providing the market, capital and technology. Moreover, China does not hide the fact that it regards Washington as a strategic partner in great power politics. On the other hand, Chinese history and foreign tradition tell us that their suspicion of U.S. intention does not merely stop at xenophobic expressions because the collapse of Chinese dynasties was often brought about by collaborated efforts of domestic disturbances and foreign incursions. Domestic unrests encouraged barbarians in border areas to invade the China proper, while foreign encroachments provided dissatisfied elements inside China with an opportunity to take an anti-governmental action openly. Accordingly, as long as the present CCP leaders feel uneasy about the future of China due to the democratization of its society, the decentralization of provinces, and the self-determination of the people in border areas, they will inevitably turn attention to outsiders who could give support to anti-governmental elements inside China. Naturally, the United States comes to fore.

In this respect, S. Kim's (1997, 10) argument that the future of China is as much dependent on U.S. approach to Chinese affairs as domestic development of China itself is not quite convincing. Of course, it seems true that as long as Washington's approach to China is benevolent, it can be conducive to friendly responses from Beijing, a task which policy-makers in Washington hope to achieve. However, to the Chinese, the U.S. han-

dling of Chinese affairs today, such as human rights diplomacy, ban on nuclear technology sales to the Third World, as well as the Taiwan issue, is not benevolent or friendly at all. To the United States, human rights are one of the universal values which must be pursued by the countries all over the world regardless of parochial national customs and traditions; ban on the export of nuclear materials is the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War era; Taiwan is a historical legacy inherited from their mutual relations. However, to the Chinese, these issues seem to be designed to undermine the young China which has just taken off for national rehabilitation. If the present leadership is confident of the smooth evolution in such matters as the democratization of the Chinese society and solving the ethnic problem in the border areas, it might refrain from a hostile and antagonist stance *vis-à-vis* the United States, and treat bilateral issues raised by Washington on the *ad hoc* basis in a rational manner. Thus, it can be said that Sino-American relations in the future is very dependent on the development of the Chinese domestic scene.

CONCLUSION: CHINA AND KOREA

China's policy towards Korea is determined by a variety of elements which has been operated on different dimensions of the international political system. These include: the China's strategic concept in which the Korean peninsula constitutes an important part; its relations with other powers in the East Asian region; its ideological propensity which makes the Beijing regime regard Pyongyang as a socialist ally; Chinese domestic political situation in which modernization in the fields of industry, agriculture and technology is important; bilateral relations between Beijing and Seoul; and above all, North-South relations in the Korean peninsula.

Traditionally, China's Korean policy has been based on one principle: China should keep a grip on the peninsula and eliminate the influence of other powers from this strategic gate to the East Asian continent. In other words, China has not condoned the idea that the peninsula poses a threat to its security as happened since the last years of the nineteenth century. This strategic consideration is still valid and perhaps a big dream in the Chinese strategic thinking, which China wants to achieve, if circumstances permitted. Early in 1945, when hostility in Europe was just moving to the end, and China was not strong enough to repulse the Japanese army in the Asian continent, the Nationalist Chinese government approached to Washington discreetly to discuss the ways to eliminate the possibility of Soviet involvement in Korean affairs after the surrender of Japan. In reality, China aimed at the reestablishment of China's hegemony over the peninsula with the support of the United States. This strategy failed partly due to the incapability of China, and partly due to the earlier involvement of the Soviet Red Army in the Far East (*Foreign Relations of the United States 1945*).

This episode shows us what China, whether a Nationalist or Communist, tried to achieve *vis-à-vis* the Korean peninsula even in its worst state of affairs. Of course, the international politics surrounding the Korean peninsula are entirely different from the

past, and other powers including the United States, Russia and Japan also have a legitimate voice in Korean matters, since the peninsula is included in each power's security system in the region. This implies that the peninsula is no longer a monopoly of China; rather it is an arena where China interacts with other great powers in the region. Apart from great power politics, the Korean question has also evolved over bilateral relations between the two Koreas. The competition between Seoul and Pyongyang in the fields of legitimacy, nation-building and economic development was largely by the end of the 1980s, when Seoul succeeded in gaining diplomatic recognitions from the Soviet Union and China, while North Korea was on the verge of economic collapse. Thus, Sino-Korean relations evolve over multilateral relations among the great powers interested in East Asian politics on the one hand, and over two Koreas' relations on the other. These two dimensions, regional and local, have been tightly interwoven, as the peninsula has been one of the focal points in regional politics.

The bilateral relations between Beijing and Seoul is added as a third dimension. This aspect has been largely ignored since the South Korean economy was shattered during the Korean War, and it could not play a meaningful role in regional politics, while China, the staunchest supporter for the Pyongyang regime in the Cold War, was not ready to accept Seoul as an independent actor. However, with a rapid economic development in South Korea during the past several decades, together with great expansion in trade between the two countries, China could not but realize the fact that the basic interests of both China and South Korea have become more congruent than divergent. China finally came to the conclusion in August 1992 that relations with Seoul should be normalized. In this respect, the growing economy of South Korea was vital in bringing its new status in regional politics.

Sino-South Korean trade has steadily risen from \$498 million in 1984 (approaching the level of China's trade with North Korea, \$498 million) to \$3.1 billion in 1989, a year after the Olympic Games in Seoul. In the 1990s, China has emerged as one of South Korea's most important economic partners as well as one of its major competitors. The volume of trade between the two countries has reached \$16.5 billion in 1995. This figure is 30 times more than China's trade with North Korea, and China became South Korea's third-largest trade partner after the United States and Japan, while South Korea was China's fifth-largest trade partner after the United States, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In 1997, the total volume of bilateral trade recorded \$20 billion, and is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 18.9 percent in the 1997-2001, reaching \$56 billion by 2001 (S. Kim 1997, 15-6). Thus, though limited, South Korea is not only able to provide China with capital and technology for its modernization programs, but also to serve Chinese efforts to diversify its overseas markets, which has been overly dependent on the U.S. market. Presently, both countries have begun to regard each other as a potential partner against growing economic protectionism in the United States.

Sino-ROK economic cooperation has also borne fruit in the political field to some extent, as China has firmly committed to the maintenance of a peaceful environment in

East Asia, and especially in the Korean peninsula as a prerequisite for its modernization programs. This policy of Beijing would be a valuable asset for Seoul in preventing the Pyongyang regime from taking military provocation against the South. Moreover, the Chinese decision for normalization eliminated the last barrier which had restricted Seoul in its diplomatic front. Seoul has already received a green light from Beijing in August 1991 when it succeeded in making breakthrough in the long-standing issue of the two Koreas' membership to the United Nations. This served also a salutary warning to North Korea that Pyongyang should abandon its quest for absolute stand for international legitimization, namely, the one-Korea policy.

However, this is just one side of their relations. In the beginning, the Sino-ROK economic relations, which have laid a foundation for their mutual cooperation, are not so bright in the future as might be expected. One of the most serious and gloomy aspects is that the nature of their economic cooperation has changed in recent years from complementary to competitive in the world market. In the political field, China's policy to Korea is, in one sense, conducive to the stability of Korea by its guarantee of peace in the peninsula, but has a potential, in another sense, to carry negative consequences to both Koreas. For North Korea, Sino-ROK normalization means the loss of its last remaining supporter for international legitimization since Beijing agreed with Seoul's two-Korea formula, which Pyongyang had strenuously rejected. Of course, Beijing still maintains its alliance pact of 1961 with Pyongyang, because North Korea is still important for China's defense of its political center of the Beijing area and northeastern provinces. However, Pyongyang regards that China has already tilted to Seoul about the Korean question, and in this respect, Pyongyang is suspicious that Beijing will gang up against North Korea with Seoul and Washington during the four-party talks.

For the South, Chinese penchant for Seoul is of limited nature, being a sort of balancing act to the changing international situation. Normalization meant neither that Beijing abandoned Pyongyang, nor that both sides could find a common ground to solve the Korean problem. The Sino-ROK *rapprochement* is in fact a *mariage de convenance*. This has been amply manifested in China's handling of the nuclear problem of North Korea, which had begun to emerge just after the inauguration of the Kim Young-sam's government in February 1993. China, one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, never agreed to any draft resolution put forward by the United States and Korea together with other Council members, which can be interpreted as a sanction against the North. Though China has defined its position as favoring negotiation and dialogues to sanction and confrontation between Seoul and Pyongyang, it remained in a variety of ways a supporter for the cause of the Pyongyang regime. This shows, on the one hand, the big gap between the approaches of Seoul and Beijing to the Korean question, and on the other, the fact that China would not lose any leverage in future developments of the divided Korea.

Perhaps, the maintenance of leverage is a minimum requirement in China's Korean policy. Unless China exerts an exclusive influence on the Korean peninsula, the second best option for China is to partake in the politics of the peninsula, so that it is able to pre-

vent a situation in which the peninsula becomes opposed to the Chinese interest. For this purpose, China is ready to seek a coalition with other power(s) in order to deter the expansionist trend of an allegedly dominant power. In this sense, the Korean peninsula is a scene where China can experiment with its strength with other powers. At present, two rivaling powers over Korea are, without a doubt, China and the United States. Thus, China's own perception of its role in the Korean peninsula can be best described in the classical term as the balancer, the one that England performed in European politics for centuries.

This attitude on the part of China casts an ominous shadow on the unification of Korea. First of all, China would not condone any government in the peninsula to challenge its legitimacy in northeastern provinces, such as Manchuria, where a million Koreans have resided. Beijing and Pyongyang resolved their conflict over the common border, especially over Chientao (Kando in Korean) and Mt. Baekdu in the 1960s. However, in South Korea, there is a strong pervasive feeling that these areas belong to Korea. If the rising tide of nationalism in China and its counterpart in a unified Korea collides in the future, it will create the worst situation for both countries. Moreover, as long as China is suspicious of the real intention of the Koreans, it is evident that Beijing would not agree to the Korean unification, or demand the new Korean government to ratify the present Sino-North Korean treaty over their borderline as a prerequisite to its consent for unification. This is why the Koreans in the South should be careful in raising territorial issues with the Chinese.

Of course, all great powers interested in Korea would prefer the present situation of divided and peaceful coexistence of two Koreas to a unified Korea. Unification will inevitably add confusion to East Asian regional politics, with the collapse of North Korea. More important is the fact that the unified Korea will have a population of over eighty million, which will be a great power only next to Russia and the unified Germany in the European political context. Thus, the powers will not be complacent about the appearance of a second Japan in East Asian politics. However, it is China that is more likely than other powers to take a stance against unification. To China, the peaceful unification of Korea, which China has supported overtly, means the absorption of the North by the South. This is a step forward to the destruction of the socialist countries, something China has strenuously tried to avoid. In the long-term, this is a process by which peaceful evolution was brought about in the socialist countries by the liberating forces, which is a theory the United States expounded in the early days of the Cold War, and seems to have come true with the desolation of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe. The Korean peninsula is the next place where this theory can be applied and this process seems to be achieved at the present time by the *Götterdämmerung* of Kim's dynasty in North Korea (Matray 1985). To China, the collapse of North Korea is a nightmare which implies that China itself is the last remaining object of the long-term conspiracy of the United States, besides a loss of a socialist ally and strategic partner.

For Koreans, unification is possible only when Beijing considers that the future Korean regime will be friendly or that Korea will not be occupied by, or under the influence of,

powers hostile to its security. In this regard, the preoccupation with a sense of isolation by the present CCP regime and the conspiracy theory of the United States are not helpful. This state of mind on the part of the Chinese will open the way for a new Cold War in East Asia, by which confrontation between the great powers will become increasingly intensified, and by which China will not remain indifferent towards North Korea's absorption enemy.

No less important for Korean unification is the democratization of the Chinese society in general. This aspect, which is referred to in this paper as the 'societal aspect' in Chinese foreign policy-making, is particularly germane for the future of Korea. The more the present CCP leadership feels that the Chinese society is alienated from the social development of other countries, the dearer the Kim Jung-il regime in Pyongyang will be to China. Of course, any Chinese assistance will entail serious risks for Beijing in its relations with Seoul. On the other hand, if China is democratized due to economic liberalization and participates in the world economic system, China will be relieved by the friendly milieu in the East Asian region. It will realize that the new Seoul regime is not a threat to its security, and that the presence of U.S. forces in the peninsula is simply to act as a stabilizer in regional politics. If these forecasts turn out to be roughly congruent with the emerging reality, then, China may accept the inevitability of a unified Korea.

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