

THE CHINA THREAT : AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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ABANTI BHATTACHARYA

**DIVISION OF CHINESE STUDIES
CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY,
NEW DELHI-110067**

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CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067

Telegram : JAYENU
Phones Off. : 6107676, 6167557 Extn.: 419

Fax : 91-(11)-616-5880
91-(11)-616-2292

July 21, 1998

CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation entitled "**THE CHINA THREAT : AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS**" submitted by Abanti Bhattacharya in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University and is her own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. R.R. KRISHNAN
(CHAIRPERSON)

Dr. MADHU BHALLA
(SUPERVISOR)

CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
INTRODUCTION	1-17
CHAPTER I	18-51
THE CHIENSE WORLD VIEW	
CHAPTER II	52-83
THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY	
CHAPTER III	84-109
THE CONTEMPORARY CHINA THREAT DEBATED	
CONCLUSION	110-124
BIBLIOGRAPHY	125-137

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Abanti Bhattacharya
ABANTI BHATTACHARYA

INTRODUCTION

Current affairs magazines, newspapers, academic journals and books today point to China's "rising power" and to China's challenge to Asian security and wonder if the Awakening Dragon will be expansionist. The popularity of these perspectives raises questions about the reason for the current phobia over China's economic and political rise.

Despite the recent financial crisis in South East and East Asia, the economic development of East Asia, more particularly China, and the growing self confidence of Chinese society are important phenomena of the second half of the 20th century. "China could become the most remarkable economic transformation the world has ever seen", writes one World Bank economist. Over the past two decades (1978 to 1995) China's average annual rate of growth was 9.4%. It's trade has increased about tenfold since 1978 (from \$36 billion to \$300 billion). Next to the U.S., China is the largest recipient of foreign direct investment which grew from a mere \$2.3 billion in 1987 to \$41.67 billion in 1997. Chinese economist Li Jingwen and his team of researchers have built an economic model which predicts that by 2030 China will be the second largest economy in the world and by

2050 it will surpass the U.S. in size.¹ Such a robust economic growth is seen as a threat to China's neighbours. Besides China being regarded as an economic threat, there is growing concern about China's military buildup. In fact, China has increased its military budget and made efforts to expand and upgrade its weaponry from the 1990s. China also sells arms and even transfers nuclear weapon technology to some countries and is thus seen as fomenting regional conflicts. Also China's manoeuvres in the Taiwan straits are accompanied by a strong naval buildup. These have cautioned China's neighbours as to Beijing's power intentions. In fact, to many scholars Napoleon's warning about China "let her sleep. For when she wakes, she will shake the world" is destined to come true.

This threat theory has also spurred other scholars who put forward variants of the threat perception. Chief among them is Samuel Huntington's notion of civilizational threat.² Huntington's argument is that Western ideals like individualism, liberalism, democracy, equality, etc., are alien to Islamic or Confucian cultures and, therefore, East and West will be pitted against each other. So the East naturally poses a threat to the West. Huntington also views

¹ C. Ram Manohar Reddy, "Asia's biggest economic miracle," Hindu, Oct. 7, 1997, p.8.

² See Samuel P., Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, (New York:Simon and Sushter, 1996).

Eastern culture as more homogenous and, therefore, the possibility of ethnicity and culture in Asia to supplant nationalism as a binding force. Contrary to the above argument for ethnicity as a cohesive force, some scholars have come up with the "China nationalism threat" theory. U.S. media allege that anti-Western sentiments are the primary characteristics of Chinese national identity.³ This emerging sense of national identity gives Chinese nationalism a cohesive force that creates panic in the West.

The charge of threat, however, raises crucial questions about, first, whether China really is a threat and to whom. Second, is the threat perception grounded in the region's reality or is it only a Western perception. Thirdly, whether the Western perception of China as a threat is a homogenous one or whether there exist various shades of threat perceptions of China. By raising these three broad questions on the threat perception theory, this study will at the outset, question the validity of the Western conception of the Chinese view of the world order. Those scholars who explain China's perception of the world order predict that by the 21st century China might seek great power status. They link this urge to the Sino-centric view of the world order that is presumed to have dominated Chinese

³ Wang Zhongren, "'China threat' Theory Groundless," Beijing Review, Vol.40, No.28 (July 14-20, 1997) p.8.

perception until the 19th century, and was a reason for her tardy response to the West. Again, during the Maoist regime, scholars view Mao's emphasis on self-reliance as a manifestation of the historical view of Chinese power as based on ethical and moral principles in the service of a self-sustaining and self-sufficient nation. Under Deng Xiaoping and in the post-Deng era they argue, China has moved rapidly towards economic growth and prosperity and has shown signs of rising from its slumber. China's economic rise is seen as a step towards the recreation of a Sino-centric world order. Therefore, scholars have reiterated the view that China is a dissatisfied, anti-status quo power and poses a threat to world peace.

Though the notion of Sino-centrism no longer enjoys an overt appeal, the basic assumptions of the Sino-centric world view still characterize recent studies on China. In fact, the many works on China which view it as a great power emphasize implicitly or explicitly the aspect of threat which is rooted in the assumptions of the Sino-centric view.

However, Sino-centrism is a distorted tool to explain China's perception of the world order and has largely produced a distorted picture. This distortion is rooted in the colonial and racial bias of the 19th century. In the 20th century this colonial, imperialist tendency

was replaced by the cold war conspiracy theory. In the Post-Cold War era, the threat theory has been resurrected owing to China's determination to play an active role in Asian and global affairs. This threat theory echoes the clamour against the 'Yellow Peril' that began in the 19th century and was mainly fanned by the European West, particularly Britain, against the Yellow race, the Chinese.⁴ In recent years, frenzied 'China threat' arguments have been revived by the Anglo-American media and American China watchers.

Second, the thrust of this study rests on the Asian perception of China and its role in world politics. In fact, China's foreign policy is much affected by its dealings with the neighbouring smaller Asian powers. It is here, in fact, that the Western heuristic tool of Sino-centrism can be tested. Also the fears of China posing a military threat can be best analysed in this context, particularly in the face of the dispute over the islands of the South China Sea. This region reflects the *GLOBAL* scramble for ocean resources and sea space. Regionally, however, it is logical that it would become a burning issue in China's relations with South-East Asia which fears China's moves to transform the South China sea into a 'Chinese Lake'. On the other hand, in the Post-Cold War era China is also developing close

⁴ See Harold R., Issac, Scratches on our minds : American View on China and India (New York, 1980).

ties with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in order to neutralize the U.S.-Japan Pact (April 1996) by courting the support of ASEAN. In fact, the growth of regional blocs like ASEAN in South-east Asia, which seek to engage China on regional issues, may be seen as a positive response to the growing power of China. However, the new forum launched in Bangkok in January 6th 1997, BISTEC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation) reflects the tensions over China's growing power. It is aimed at countering China's influence in the regions around the Bay of Bengal. The Post-Cold War scenario, in fact, is marked by an intensification in the rise and growth of regional blocks. It is in this context that China's role, its influence, and its ability to threaten South and South-East Asia can be examined.

The thrust of this study, thirdly, rests on the existing debate by Chinese scholars on how China perceives its role in world politics. Chinese leaders vociferously insist that there is no cause for alarm. They regard the basic purpose of the China threat theory as containing China's development. The Chinese leaders point out that fears of an emergent China, though understandable, are not tenable. They vehemently argue that "the assumption that only Western countries have the right to development is exactly an expression of self-centered nationalism, a remnant of colonialism and the logic of

hegemonism.”⁶ In fact, Beijing suspects ‘engagement’ is actually ‘containment’ to deny China its rightful place. China has unresolved disputes with Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan in parts of the South China Seas and the Paracels, and with Japan in the East China Sea. Also China’s border problems with Russia and India have not been completely resolved but China has achieved a workable agreement or a sort of stop-gap arrangement in order to concentrate attention on its modernization process. Therefore, the question arises as to how long these problems will be shelved by Beijing or Is China waiting to become stronger so that its increased strength will increase its bargaining position. If China succeeds in solving unresolved issues like the South China Sea dispute by occupying the areas to which it lays claims, how would Beijing be viewed - as exercising its right of self-determination, as fulfilling its assertive nationalism, or as a belligerent expansionist power? Hence, whether China is a threat to world peace is a crucial question that needs to be probed. The study therefore, focuses on the Western, Asian and Chinese debate in order to answer the three questions raised above.

⁶ Wang Zhongren, p.8.

C.P. Fitzgerald's pioneering study give the Sino-centric world view its first systematic, scholarly treatment.⁶ Following him John K. Fairbank presented a more persuasive and forceful argument on Sino-centrism. He saw China as perceiving itself to be the very "centre of the world with its self sustaining society and its isolated self sufficient culture".⁷ He concluded that "China's foreign relations were accordingly hierarchic and non-egalitarian".⁸ Once China turned Communist in 1949, Fairbank and others embarked on the endeavour to "formulate an alternative to" Marxism, to picture "the modern world and its history more meaningfully than Marxism-Leninism".⁹ What led to this was a new academic perspective known as the "American Modernization theory".¹⁰ The essence of such a theory was that "the communist victory and the sudden eruptions of dynamism in China in the last 42 years was regarded as the benevolent impact of

⁶ See C.P., Fitzgerald, The Chinese View of their Place in the World (London:Oxford University Press, 1964).

⁷ J.K., Fairbank, (ed.), The Chinese World Order, Traditional China's Foreign Relations (Cambridge, Mass:Harvard University Press, 1968) p.8.

⁸ Ibid., p.2.

⁹ James Peck, "Revolution versus Modernization and Revisionism," in Victor Nee and James Peck (eds.) China's Uninterrupted Revolutions : From 1840 to the Present (New York:Pantheon Books, 1973) p.61-62.

¹⁰ Paul A. Cohen, Discovering History in China : American Historical Writing in the Recent Chinese Past, (New York:Columbia University Press, 1984) p.38.

modern Western civilization".¹¹As James Peck writes, "though American China experts hoped that China's incorporation into the world order would be resolved through the process of her 'modernization' and assimilation and a 'gradual accommodation' between the Chinese state and the international community, the Chinese regrettably retain their sense of cultural superiority, national humiliation and 'messianic zeal' which continues to prevent the necessary adaptation".¹² Sino-Centric world order views were also echoed by O.E. Clubb¹³ and Norton Ginsburg.¹⁴ This scholarly treatment superseded the Western Sinological tradition created by the Christian missionaries, Jesuits priests and Western travellers. It was the Venetian merchant, Marco Polo whose *Travels* in China provided rich information and detailed descriptions of medieval China. In the 16th and 17th centuries Jesuit priests were an important bond between the East and the West and by the latter part of the 17th

¹¹ Tan Chung, "Review Essay : Western Scholarship and Chinese History," China Report 28:4 (1992) p.413.

¹² James, Peck, "The Roots of Rhetoric : The Professional Ideology of America's China Watcher," in Edward Friedman and Mark Seldon (eds.) America's Asia : Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations (New York:Vintage, 1971) p.49.

¹³ See O.E., Clubb, Twentieth Century China (New York:Columbia University Press, 1964).

¹⁴ See Norton, Ginsburg, "On the Chinese Perception of a World Order," in Tsou Tang ed. China in Crisis, Vol. II (Chicago:The University of Chicago, 1968).

century they held first place as authorities on China. The works of the Jesuits revealed an idealized portrayal of 17th century China.¹⁵ But in the 18th century, characterized by the age of reason, the literature on China was the product of not just missionary minds but more practical minds like that of Daniel Defoe - whose fictional character Robinson Crusoe provides a rather negative impression of China - an impression which has a "striking note of colonial militarism that is so typical of the time of the British empire".¹⁶ In fact, in the 19th century, the concept of China underwent a radical change as the influence of the Jesuits began to wane and a more practical commercial view took precedence. Mary Gertrude Mason provides a full treatment of various 19th century Western concepts of China.¹⁷ Zhang Longxi vividly analyses through a survey of Western literature how Westerners viewed the Chinese. He quotes historian Giambattista Vico, on how the Chinese, "represent a totally alien civilization that is oblivious to any progress in history and is lifelessly frozen in their vast timeless immobility".¹⁸

¹⁵ In this connection, The work of Jonathan Spence, The Search for Modern China, (London:Hutchinson, 1990) is noteworthy.

¹⁶ Zhang Longxi, "The myth of the other : China in the eyes of the West," Critical Enquiry Vol.15, No.1 (Autumn 1988) p.121.

¹⁷ Mary, Gertrude Mason, Western Concepts of China and the Chinese, 1840-1876 (New York:Serman Printer Inc., 1939).

¹⁸ Zhang Longxi, p.116.

In contemporary literature several works deal with the "China threat". Ross Munro, Coordinator of the Asian Program of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, is regarded as one of the first Western advocates of the "China threat" theory. But the work that created the most controversy was that of Samuel P. Huntington.¹⁹ Huntington opines that future world conflicts would be primarily cultural in nature, dividing the world into the Western, Islamic and Confucian cultural blocs. However, though one cannot smugly ignore Huntington's thesis, this is a hypothetical work with little empirical foundation. The argument that China desires to Confucianize the world is also untenable. Huntington's work, however, raises interesting questions by drawing an analogy between inter-war Germany with an emergent China and stating that China might become expansionist and anti-status quoist after achieving rapid industrialization and sweeping economic growth. In Allen S. Whiting's words, "the conditions in China exist for assertive rather than confident nationalism and a danger exists of the emergence of aggressive nationalism."²⁰

¹⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, p.2.

²⁰ Allen S. Whiting, "Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy after Deng," China Quarterly No.142 (June 1995).

There are also many works dealing with the South-East Asian perception of China. Mention may be made of Chak Wing David Tsui's work where he makes an interesting inference while reflecting on Sino-Thai relations. To quote, "... China's foreign policies towards South-East Asia in general and Thailand in particular, have been scarcely expansionist in either its tribute grant or Communist era".²¹ C.P. Fitzgerald in his work also reflects on China's relations with South East Asian nations.²² In the context of China and Vietnam he writes that China wanted an independent and Communist Vietnam in order to offset America's influence in the area.

Marwyn S. Samuels deals with the dispute over the islands of the South China Sea. Specifically he explores the origins, contexts and consequences of this dispute. He highlights the geo-political importance of the South China Sea and concludes that the peace and security of Asia is hanging "on a delicate thread".²³ All these works deal with the period of the Cold War era and from different perspectives look at issues that relate to Chinese power, security interests and geographical claims.

²¹ Chak Wing David, Tsui, China and the Communist Armed Struggle in Thailand (New Delhi:Radiant Publication, 1995) p.65.

²² See, C.P. Fitzgerald, China and South-East Asia Since 1945 (London:Longman, 1973).

²³ See Marwyn S. Samuels, The Contest for the South China Sea (New York, London:Mehtuen, 1982).

Opposed to this view of Sino-centrism, to the view that an aggressive China presents a threat, a number of books and articles substantiate the proposition that China is not a threat and that Sino-centrism is a Western construct. The most important source in this regard is that of Tan Chung who decoded Chinese words like *tianzi*, *tianxia*, *Zhongguo* to negate Sino-Centric implications. The basic premise which triggered off this Sino-Centric prejudice - the concept of the middle kingdom has been analysed at length to show it to be merely a "geographical concept" devoid of manifestations of cultural superiority and "value judgement"²⁴ Tan Chung, however, does not present any alternative view of the Chinese world order. Again Mark Mancall demolishes the Western descriptions of Sino-centrism by attacking the concept of the tribute system as central to the concept of Sino-centrism.²⁵ Michael H. Hunt also argues against the misconception of Sino-Centrism and analyses China from a power oriented approach. But he too harks back to the concept of hierarchical concentric zones of Chinese power.²⁶

²⁴ Tan Chung, Triton an Dragon (New Delhi:Gian Publishing House, 1986), p.65.

²⁵ See, Mark, Mancall, China at the Centre : 300 Years of Foreign Policy (New York:The Free Press, 1984).

²⁶ See, Michael, H., Hunt, "Chinese foreign relations in historical perspective" in Harry Harding (ed.) "China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1984).

A corpus of Chinese journals like the Journal of International Studies from the Institute of International Studies, Beijing, focus on Chinese views of global politics. The Beijing Review, FBIS-CHI SWBS-CHI make available important primary sources to analyse Chinese conceptions and perceptions of the world. Many articles in Beijing Review and also PLA periodicals contradict the threat theory completely and instead view China as being under threat from the West. Writing against the threat theory Zhao Xixin writes, "As for China's fundamental strategy and long term intention, they are quite transparent all along....., such a long term state policy determines that China will seek Asia-Pacific and global peace and stability."²⁷

This brief review of literature on China's foreign policy perceptions reveal a wide ranging analysis of China's place in world politics. However, to allow one to arrive at a more meaningful view of the way in which China locates itself in the world and China's perceptions of itself, its behaviour and reality need to be studied afresh. This attempt to look afresh at Chinese behaviour is all the more important in the Post-Cold War era, where the Soviet Union's disintegration and the fear of a U.S. dominated world, coupled with recent testing of nuclear devices in South Asia and the PRC's

²⁷ Zhao Xixin, "The Clinton Administration's China Policy and Sino-US Relations," Foreign Affairs Journal No.39, (March 1996), p.51.

response to the situation has raised China's profile considerably. In fact, the East Asian economic development is altering the balance of power between Asia and the West, specifically the U.S. This volatile situation in world politics calls for a proper understanding of China's international relations.

For a meaningful understanding of the Chinese perception one needs to study Chinese foreign policy behaviour. An analysis of Chinese foreign policy behaviour can best be had through a thorough understanding of Chinese conceptions and terms relating to China's foreign policy.

To analyse the Chinese perception of the world order, to argue that Sino-centrism is essentially a Western construct and to explode the myth of the China threat I have used the historical analytical tool. This tool will help me to analyse the Chinese notion of the state, power and security. Through this I will trace the influence of Western constructs like Sino-centrism, Middle Kingdom and the Tribute System. This will, in fact, comprise the second chapter of this study. The second section of the same chapter will reflect on the development of Western images of China and will examine the imperialists notions and constructs about China and question the validity of the Western threat perception theory. In the third section I

will trace China's relations with South-East Asia and South Asian nations and also focus on the inner Asian zone which played a determining role in China's security concerns in the past and does so today as well.

In the third chapter, an attempt has been made to bring to the fore the actual implications of Chinese conceptions of the core principles of its foreign policy namely, national interest, security and the state. These themes may be understood in the context of the three significant periods in recent Chinese history namely, the Western intrusion in the 19th century, the post civil war period and Mao's China, and the Post Cultural Revolution and Deng's China. It was in these three watershed periods that Chinese foreign policy was defined and redefined. In the fourth chapter the contemporary China threat theory will be analysed at length taking into account the economic, military and civilizational threat perception of the Western and Asian nations.

In conclusion this study argues that Chinese foreign policy is guided by national interest, and peace and development are its catchwords. To achieve this China has had to take recourse to the path of co-operation and peaceful co-existence with the outside world. Also China being a pragmatic power, would not take recourse

to war in order to control foreign territory, even after reaching a super power or big power status. In the words of Michael Yahuda "the harsh realities of the problems of maintaining their rule at home has persuaded China's rulers of the imperatives of deepening economic engagement with the outside world and Pacific Asia in particular."²⁸ Again, it may be noted that as communism is no longer the only rallying ideology, the Chinese people have resorted, as well to the appeals of nationalism. However, the rhetoric of nationalism in China is underpinned by the strong demands of the economy. Therefore, aspects of nationalist spirit and national security and the imperative to keep the wheels of modernization and economic development moving gives primacy to the co-operative approach in Chinese perceptions of the world order.

²⁸ Michael, Yahuda, "How much has China learned about interdependence?" in Goodman David S.G and Gerald Segal (eds.) China Rising : Nationalism and Interdependence (London:Routledge, 1997) p.97.

CHAPTER I

THE CHINESE WORLD VIEW

SECTION I : THE CHINESE DEBATE

The Chinese civilization occupies a unique place in the history of the ancient civilizations of the world. It is perhaps the one ancient culture that has evolved relatively unbroken from 2500 B.C. to the present day. The identity of this enduring and remarkably continuous civilization was never really threatened until the coming of the West, forcing China to redefine the nature of the Chinese state and its position in the world. For long China considered itself as the centre of its civilizational world - the Middle Kingdom. This Middle Kingdom represented a civilizational state with no definite boundaries, exercising influence over its peripheral powers who accepted the superior culture of the Chinese state and accorded to it the place of the head in the family of nations.

The concept of Middle Kingdom, however, disintegrated with the Western onslaught when a redefinition of the Chinese world became imperative. In order to deal with China, the Western world drew a picture of a Sino-centric world order which became an effective tool to confront, dominate and subjugate China. The Chinese

concept of Middle Kingdom was transformed into a distorted Western notion of Middle Kingdom to vindicate Western dynamism and justify mercantilist intervention, on the one hand, and emphasize Chinese weakness stasis and obstructionism, on the other.

The Chinese Concept of Middle Kingdom

The Middle Kingdom concept as understood by the Chinese was woven around a specific view of three principal elements - the state, power and security.

Notion of the State

The history of the Chinese civilization began with the growth of the Chinese state around the Wei River, a tributary of the Yellow River. This river based civilization naturally acquired a central area which subsequently expanded southward to incorporate the Yangtze River area during the Zhou dynasty. The subsequent Qin dynasty brought about the unification of China by ending Chinese feudalism and led to the establishment of a centralized bureaucratic state which had an extensive reach at the local level. The Chinese emperor claimed the status of the Son of Heaven and the ruler of "everything under Heaven". As the Son of Heaven, he was a 'mediator between

harmony in the universe. Thus, the concept of Son of Heaven appropriated to itself the rights and duties of a universal king who would lead guide and protect the "world". The geographical dimensions of the "world" for the Chinese differed from that of the West.

By the time the West came to China, Europe and the America had already defined the notion of the "world" in geography, science and the historical and social sciences. Therefore, to the Westerners, geographically the concept of the world was a universal one and was applied to all known, discovered and notionally mapped areas of the world. But culturally the "world" signified only the Christian West. Since the "world" was perceived geographically as being universal, the West regarded its right to access to it as natural as evidenced in the colonial project. But culturally, since the "world" was a narrow concept the West confronted and dominated the 'other' who existed outside the pale.

In contrast to this the Chinese "world" was limited geographically to those areas where Chinese culture spread and was

¹ Marc Mancall, "The Ching Tribute System : An Interpretive Essay," in Fairbank ed., Chinese World Order, (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1968), p.63.



assimilated. Therefore, the Chinese world comprised of Manchuria in the north east, Inner and Outer Mongolia in the north, Kokonor and Tibet in the South West, Sinkiang and Turkestan in the north West over which the Chinese state exercised direct rule. The tribute paying states of Siam, Burma, Laos and Nepal were included in the sinic world on the basis of their acculturation of Chinese culture as were Korea, Japan and Vietnam. This sinic world, however, did not include India in the Southern region or the northern border tribes of Russia nor did it include the African continent of which the Chinese had knowledge or the European continent. Within this partially conceived geographical "world" notions of civilizations took on a universal definition.

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The Son of Heaven was responsible not only for the security of the Chinese state but for "civilization" defined as a whole. Therefore, implicit in the Son of Heaven concept was a definition of the state as a civilizational state. The notion of the civilizational state stood in contrast to the Western state which had fixed political boundaries and specific national characteristics. Civilizational states constituted cultural entities with no fixed boundaries. Chinese civilization constituted a culture based on Confucianism. This Confucianist culture transcended China's political entity and spread to the neighbouring areas. By virtue of the rich development of its



institutions, system of thought, language and culture, China set itself up as a civilizational model for neighbouring states. In fact, the neighbouring states acknowledged Chinese supremacy and leadership in the eastern world. Therefore, what is designated as a sinic world comprising of China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam was actually a zone in which China had cultural influence. What attracted the neighbouring powers was the Chinese institutions, it's system of thought, it's language and culture which had a "genuine utility for native development".² In fact, "the Chinese model came theoretically at least, as a well - integrated unity.... China herself "marketed" its distinctive culture as "universal"³

But Chinese culture was relatively accommodationist. Therefore, the Chinese state, while acknowledging that the culture of the "other" is different allowed the "other" to coexist. In contrast, Western culture was absolutist and hence confronted and dominated the "other" and therefore, was coercive in nature. Chinese culture, being accommodationist, was not hegemonic. This is evident from the fact that the "barbarians" on China's frontiers were not coerced into Chinese civilization but were allowed to seek voluntary assimilation.

² Joshua Fogel, "The Sinic World," in Ainslie T. Embrae and Gluck Coral eds. Asia in Western and World History (Armonk : ME. Shapre, 1997), p.685.

³ Ibid., p.685.

The term barbarian was applied to those who were outside the pale of Chinese civilization. The distinction between the Chinese and the barbarians was basically determined by the "different modes of life: the agrarian community of the central plains and the nomadic tribes of the Steppes. This distinction remained for none emulated each other in life-style. Since a settled agricultural economy with an ordered society was definitely a stage ahead of pastoral nomadism, the Chinese had reasons to consider themselves superior and civilized.

But this superiority did not prevent the Chinese from interacting with the outside world. China carried out extensive cultural and economic exchanges with foreign lands. It received a large number of foreign traders and visitors and welcomed foreign ideas and material goods. During the Han period (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) the famous silk route was established that connected the triangular trade between Rome, India and China. During the Tang Period (618-906 A.D.) Buddhism from India took root, Zoroastrians, Nestorians, Manichaeans, Jews and Muslims traded and settled here. Therefore, Chinese culture was tolerant, vibrant and dynamic. To describe China, as an isolated and stagnant world, therefore, is anachronistic. Even in the 17th and 18th century we hear of Roman Catholic missionary acquiring considerable favour at the court owing to their

astronomical knowledge and their ability to rectify the irregularities in the Chinese calendar. This testifies to China's readiness to accommodate foreign culture without confronting and dominating it.

Power

China was indeed a superior power yet it was not a hegemonic and expansive power. The Western descriptions of the Tribute System as one through which the Chinese worked out their imperial designs on neighbouring powers is faulty and open to question. In fact, as the Middle Kingdom China regarded itself "as the head of the family and the smaller states on her periphery - Korea, Annam, Siam, Burma and Japan for a time - assumed the position of junior members, paying homage to her in the form of periodic tribute."⁴ Hsu C. Immanuel illustrates that in Korean records, relations with China were described as *Sadae*, or serving the senior, whereas those with Japan were known as *Kyorin*, or relations with a neighbour. In fact, the East Asian family of nations is actually an extension of the Confucian notion of family - one in which all members are linked by duties and claims. The family is not a competitive arena and therefore

⁴ C.Y. Hsu, Immanuel, China's Entrance in to the Family of Nations : The Diplomatic Phase, 1858-1880, (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1960), p.3.

undermines the concept of hegemonic individualism and privileges a concept of common good and stability.

China by virtue of its superior political, economic and social system, assumed the role of head of the family. However, such organization of power does reflect a hierarchical notion of power. Yet this power structure stands in contrast to the Western power structure, where the nations competed with each other for gold and glory. Since there was competition which often resulted in conflictual relations, there arose the need for formal structures to regulate such conflicts among the nation states laying the basis for a specifically Western conception of international community. Hence we have conflict regulating institutional bodies like that of the Congress of Vienna and later the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization.

But since China was not located in competitive relationships, the mode of interaction that developed among the states was through the so called Tribute System. The Tribute System, according to Mark Mancall, "functioned to intermesh rather than to integrate the Central, East and South-East Asian societies that ... were peripheral to China.... The intermeshing was more than mere contact because it was highly institutionalized and simultaneously took place at several

dimension such as the economic, the political and the cultural.⁵ The underlying principle of the Tribute System was to secure peace and order. The Chinese state achieved this by winning the allegiance of the neighbouring states receiving tributes. The Tribute System was accepted by the Tributary States because it gave them the prestige to interact with the Middle Kingdom. Second, it was economically profitable as in return for tribute the Chinese emperor loaded them with gifts and riches. Third, it facilitated trade and provided trade concessions to the tributary states.

The structures of trade resembled somewhat that of the present day U.S. which in return for the acknowledgement of its super power status and American democratic liberal norms floods its client states with loans, aid and investment. But such stark issues of economic and security matters in imperial China were couched in the language of aesthetic and moral principles of the Tribute System and unlike the Western system of international relations of later days, Chinese tribute relations were primarily ceremonial and ritualistic rather than exploitative.⁶

⁵ Marc Mancall, China at the Centre : 300 Years of Foreign Policy, (London : The Free Press, 1984), p.15.

⁶ Ibid., p.15.

Further unlike the U.S. which also reserves to itself the right to intervene in the affairs of the other states, the Chinese did not attempt conquest or direct intervention. Owen Lattimore in his discussion on Central Asian policies of Chinese state points out that in the expeditions carried out (mentioned in the chronicles) trade and the acquisition of luxuries were of subordinate importance. "Only two questions of policy are constant and these are essentially aspects of the same policy - either the control of Central Asian Oases and tribes in order to build up alliances against the nomads of the steppe or the defensive occupation of Oases that otherwise would be laid under tribute by the nomads and used by them as bases. Neither aspects of policy was best served by conquest." The Chinese state, therefore, devised a scheme of engagement whose primary objective was to accommodate the non-Chinese powers and co-exist peacefully. Therefore, the Tribute System subsumed this accommodationist policy.

Security

For China security matters have reigned supreme. The greater part of Chinese history is replete with nomadic attacks from the steppe region and therefore for the major part, Chinese dynasties were concerned with defence against the northern nomadic tribes.

To maintain peace and order across the northern borders the Chinese state built the famous Great Wall. However, the state also took to preventive attacks on the invading tribes when diplomacy failed. According to Ssu-ma's military strategy, "A nation which loves war will be eventually and inevitably destroyed, however large and strong it might be. On the other hand, a nation is in danger indeed it, enjoying peace, if is unprepared for the eventuality of war."⁷ This strategy highlighted the Chinese aversion for expansion and domination and at the same time maintained that the time of peace of nation should not forget the possibility of war.

Chu-Fu-yen in a memorial presented to Emperor Han Wu-ti in 134 B.C. mentioned "we reap no economic gains by conquering the Hsiung-nu territory and we cannot.... protect them when and if we have brought them under control."⁸ testifies to Chinese unwillingness to look upon expansion as the only choice.

Here we may contrast Chinese expansion to the South with the Inner Asian Frontiers. In the South the Yangtze valley culture was complementary to the culture in the Yellow River basin of the Han Chinese. Therefore, the Chinese advancement to the South "did not

⁷ Quoted from Chu-Fu-Yin, "On the proposed expedition against the Hsiung-nu" in Dun J. Li ed. The Essence of Chinese Civilization (London : D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1967), p.216.

⁸ Ibid., p.216.

set up any conflict between the colonizing margin of advance and the solid core of China."⁹ In fact, the state had to convert the southern wilderness into a Chinese settlement. Here the Chinese did encounter "barbarians" but they were either intermeshed into the Chinese state and economy by the spread of Chinese culture or were forced to retreat to the borders of Indo-China. Hence the land to the south became a Chinese area. But on the steppe frontier, the Chinese advance was restricted due to the presence of an entirely different society of the nomads who had their own political structures and pastoral economies that stood in an antagonistic relation to the centralized agricultural society of Chinese state. However, the Chinese state did not endeavour a conquest of the north. Instead it acknowledged the different culture of the steppe and undertook defensive attacks only when threatened.

In a nutshell, China established a centralized, self sufficient state. The superior economic and political structure automatically bestowed on this state the leadership of the eastern world. By framing out a peaceful and accommodationist structure to interact with its neighbours it could control the eastern world and maintain its superior culture successfully.

⁹ Owen Lattimore, Inner Asian Frontiers of China (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1988). p.469.

Such a civilizational state with its distinctive way of engagement with the neighbouring powers was confronted with an entirely new civilization of the West in the 18th and 19th centuries. This was a civilization that valued mercantilist initiative and diplomatic and military interactions based on economic need and justified by a body of international law developed around just these notions.

In the 1840s China failed to engage with the new mercantile powers of the West. The Chinese state which was already in the throes of socio-economic crisis and dynastic decline could not meet the new challenge of Western intrusion. This gave a blow to the Chinese Middle Kingdom concept and saw the virtual degeneration of China into a semi-colonial appendage of the West.

SECTION II : THE WESTERN DEBATE

When Europe knocked at the door of China in the 18th century, mercantilism was just leading into the age of industrial capitalism. This brought in its sweep a revolutionary change in the economy, polity, society and culture of Europe. Europe no longer was a civilization in isolation. Its power politics no longer was confined to its continent. With scientific technical breakthrough, better guns and

armaments, entrepreneurial capabilities and missionary zeal it was all set to stamp its civilization on the rest of the world.

When Europe encountered China it found the Chinese civilization nowhere near as Marco Polo had described it in the 13th century. To Westerners in the 19th century, China seemed decadent, stagnant, ignorant of scientific developments and too proud to accept the superior aspects of Western culture. Europe at this time was indeed powerful and advanced by virtue of its scientific and technical know-how and material prosperity. "The Europeans came to view scientific and technical achievements not only as the key attributes that set Europe off from all other civilizations, past and present, but as the most meaningful gauges by which non-Western societies might be evaluated, classified and ranked."¹⁰ In the process Europe's political organization, institutions and Christian religion were also projected as different and superior than the 'other'. Therefore, the Europeans branded the 'other' as inferior and uncivilized. Since the European powers found China to be backward and inferior they took upon themselves the task of civilizing the Eastern world and spreading enlightenment. In fact, Europe at this time grew into an aggressive and interventionist power. It was motivated to expand

¹⁰ Michael, Adas, Machine as the Measure of Man : Science, Technology and Ideology of Western Dominance (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1989) p.144.

and conquer to sustain its economic growth and individual progress.

China fell victim to European imperialism.

Europe's definition on China was linked to its own views on the nature of the state, of power and of security. China's definition or the three elements of state structure differed from Europe. Since China's standard for measurement of a civilization did not coincide with the West, it failed to engage with the alien power of the West. It is therefore, necessary to understand the three elements that characterized the European state system around this time, namely the definition of the state, power and security when differences with Chinese conceptions became the grounds for confrontation and hostility.

State

The Western notion of the state was grounded in specific political and economic philosophies that outlined the nature of power, the location of sovereignty and the relation of the individual to the state. Whether power was conceived in relation to the Church or temporally, it was underscored by the location of sovereignty. In the prolonged conflict between the church and the monarchy, and the latter and the people, power shifted first to the monarchy, then to the people and led eventually to the establishment of a nation state. The

monarchical state rested on the sovereign power of the monarch who was supreme and unchallengeable. "This sovereign was equipped to resist the universalist claims of the Papacy and the Empire on the one hand and the decentralizing almost anarchic tendencies of feudalism on the other."¹¹ In the French Revolution the monarchical form of government was knocked down unleashing the new egalitarian values of liberty, equality and fraternity and led to the creation of a Republic. This establishment of a secular, republican power upheld the rights of the individual.

Coupled with the political changes were the economic changes. With the end of feudalism, mercantile and free trade principles took hold. In fact, the sinews of Europe's new nation states were dependent on national wealth. This national wealth was measured in gold and silver. Therefore, the state stood behind the new mercantile groups and encouraged them to undertake trading enterprises and colonial expeditions and thereby enhance national wealth and power. what thus emerged was a strong, aggressive and purposeful state geared to encourage individual development and to enhance national growth through expansive mercantilist endeavour.

¹¹ Norman, D. Palmer and Howard, C. Perkins, International Relations : The World Community in Transition (Delhi : CBS Publishers, 1955) p.11.

In contrast to this the Chinese state was still a feudal state where Confucian philosophy established an ordered relationship from top to bottom in an hierarchical pattern. On the top was thus placed an autocrat whose purpose was to maintain order under Heaven. The Confucian philosophy upheld that since Heaven is superior to earth, Heaven delegated powers to a righteous ruler, the Son of Heaven, to rule and maintain order under Heaven. "So the emperor far from being the ruler of one state among many, was the mediator between heaven and earth."¹² In China, hence, power was grounded on the social philosophy of Confucian. The Confucian philosophy "regarded all men including the emperor and all communities including the emperor the world state, as subject to the will of Heaven. It safeguarded the natural order and harmony by teaching moral respect for the five fundamental human relationships : those between man and woman, father and son, older and younger brother, friend and friend, sovereign and minister."¹³ When this pattern of relationship was respected and understood, peace and order would prevail in the state. Therefore, "stability and order which were the highest virtues in the cosmological continuum were secured through maintenance of

¹² Mark Mancall, China at the Centre : 300 Years of Foreign Policy (London: The Free Press, 1984) p.22.

¹³ Adda, B. Bozeman, Politics and Culture in International History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) p.135.

hierarchy and performance of rituals."¹⁴ The Confucian philosophy of state stressed the ruler's status quo and thus order in the community rather than individual initiative which might disturb this order. A feudal monarchical state that emphasized hierarchy and the status quo was necessarily autocratic and extractive. Its latter attributes were however, limited by its paternal function necessary to retain the mandate of heaven.

Therefore, the purpose of the European and that of the Chinese state diverged. The former stood for individual growth and national development while the latter stood for community peace and order. Thus when the West knocked at the door of China, the Chinese state and the West could not establish a meaningful dialogue coming as they did from contrasting conceptions of the purpose of the state.

Power

From the European concept of state flows the idea of power. In order to fulfill the purpose of the state - that is, the protection of the nascent nation state, safeguarding individual rights and enhancement of economic growth - the states of Europe built up a strong military power. They also instituted laws that again empowered the state to regulate the activities of the individual internally. Externally,

¹⁴ Mark Mancall, p.21.

international relations had to be regulated by a new system of international law. In fact, with the emergence of nation states came the requirement for new concept of interaction among the new states. With the end of the Thirty Years War in Europe, the Treaty of Westphalia, 1648, for the first time clearly laid down the rules of international law governing relations among states.

Such a system of law contrasted again with the Chinese notion of law to regulate relations between the states. In the context of Confucian thinking "government was on all its levels, a matter of personal character and conduct, and character and conduct were proper when they conformed to traditional standards of goodness, rather than to any legal precepts of behaviour."¹⁵ So definitions of power in Chinese society was not based on military strength alone but also on cultural and ethical conditions. Externally, the Tribute System "was considered the extension of the social structure of civilization into the realms beyond the immediate power of the empire."¹⁶ The five Confucian relationships often provided the vocabulary for specific Tributary relationships

Therefore, the West, particularly Britain which understood institutions, based on laws, found China a backward power bereft of

¹⁵ Ada Bozeman, p. 137.

¹⁶ Mar Mancall, p.33.

any civilization traits and an "outlaw" country fit to be conquered, ruled and civilized.

Security

Security in Europe, internally, aimed at protecting the private property of the individual and the property of the state. Externally, the security system of the Western powers was based on the principle of the Balance of Power. In fact, it was the cardinal feature of international relations after the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648. It was basically meant to establish equilibrium among the nations that would prevent any one power from becoming sufficiently strong to dominate others. Thus it would maintain peace and order. The balance of power could be enforced through diplomacy by establishing permanent missions in European states. Though sending missions was an age old practice the "institution of permanent missions (was) much more recent."¹⁷ It was Machiavelli, the Florentine ambassador who set the standards of diplomatic practice. In the Congress of Vienna (1815) the diplomatic practice was "rationalized.... by inventing devices for minimizing conflicts."¹⁸ When diplomacy failed, the balance of power fizzled out and result was outbreak of war. Thus

¹⁷ George Modelski, Principles of World Politics (London : The Free Press, 1972) p.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.

diplomacy in the Western concept was basically a system to avoid conflicts.

To the Chinese, on the other hand, security meant basically to secure its borders from outside invasions. In effect it meant to protect the Chinese culture and society by keeping hostile forces at a distance. The instrument for achieving this was the Tribute System which could both intermesh and distance.

Europe encountered civilization in the East totally alien to it. Therefore, a clash between China and the West was inevitable. It was no accident. European traders and missionaries, particularly Jesuits, did come to China in the early 16th and 17th centuries. But there was no clash at that juncture. What we have from them are eulogist images of the Chinese "as people [of] high intelligence, persistent, industry, filial piety, peaceableness stoicism."¹⁹ These admirable qualities attributed to the Chinese were suddenly thrown aside and replaced by descriptions such as "deviously cunning villain thrifty... murderers... and masses of ant like creatures indifferent to human life."²⁰ This drastic change in perception indicates more than anything else, the incompatibility of Europe with China due to the dual

¹⁹ Harold, R. Isaacs, Images of Asia : American Views of China and India (New York : Harper Torchbooks, 1958, 1978) p.63.

²⁰ Ibid., p.xi.

ideological and politico-economic revolution in Europe represented by the Renaissance-Reformation and Industrial Revolution respectively. Therefore, "the idea of China as, above all, a first rate world market (began) to be the sole concern of public opinion."²¹ Such images, in effect, created the foundation for Western perceptions of the Chinese world view. Interestingly the idea of the Middle Kingdom as a negative concept found mention in early writings on China like that of the American missionary S. Wells William's Middle Kingdom (1848). He wrote, China "styled itself the 'Middle Kingdom'...Other nations were barbarians, doomed to live at the eternity of the "square cornered earth" or upon the small islands in the four seas surrounding the 'Middle Kingdom'"²²

From these scattered sources came up a systematic Western perception of the Chinese world view in the 1960s which 'found its manifestations in the Sino-centric view of the world order. This Western debate on Sino-centrism was basically, pioneered by American sinologists. A careful analysis of this Sino-centric concept becomes important since the current phobia on the 'China Threat' is

²¹ Quoted in Zhang Longxi, "The Myth of the Other : China in the eyes of the West", Critical Enquiry, Vol.15, No.1, 1988, p.123.

²² Quoted in Gertrude Mary Mason, Western Concepts of China and the Chinese, 1840-1876 (New York : Serman Printers, Inc. 1993) p.72.

rooted in this concept. In fact, 'Sino-centrism', the 'Yellow Peril', the 'China Threat', all seem to be old wine in a new bottle.

The primary assumptions of Sino-centrism are, first, that China perceived itself as a centrally located paramount power. This central locus of power also defined the periphery. At the periphery therefore, were located the subordinate powers in irregular, concentric zones over which China exerted varying degrees of control. This is what comprises the Middle Kingdom syndrome. Secondly, China represented an ethno-centric power with a strong sense of cultural superiority. As a logical corollary to it, China demanded that other nations approach China not as equals but as inferiors. What follows from this is the notion that China was a self-sufficient and self-sustaining country opposed to inferior cultural penetration in the form of foreign interactions and exchanges. Therefore, the West coined the term Tribute System to describe such interaction of China with the world. The peripheral nations had to pay tribute to China and accept China's Vassalage. Thus it was seen as a device to contain the neighbouring powers of China.

It was around this concept of Sino-centrism that the present notion of the China threat has emerged. China has been projected as an unsatiated power, trying hard to retrieve her lost greatness.

Therefore, China's primary goal is to expand and dominate the world. It's massive arms and armaments built up, it's high rate of economic development, all are therefore, regarded as inputs into the expansionist zeal of China.

SECTION III : THE CHINESE WORLD VIEW : MANIFESTATIONS IN ASIA

The Chinese notion of the state, power structure and security, as they developed over the 19th and 20th centuries affected China's conduct of foreign relations. China's relations with foreign lands were confined to the 'world' it knew and the areas which were of significance to it. This Chinese world may be divided into four zones : South Asia, East Asia, South-East Asia and Central Asia. It is here that China's world view was manifested giving us an understanding of it that is clearly contrary to the West's definition.

China and South East Asia

In pre-modern times, the political landscape of South-East Asia was characterized by polycentrism. Much of the area was occupied by people of ethnic-tribal origin. These ethnic groups were torn apart by diverse cultural pattern and "because they (were) often economically and socially self-sustaining units, the normal 'political' condition(ed) toward disunity rather than towards a permanently organized

state."²³ Such a loosely knit political set up naturally was unstable and fragile, thus rendering the South East Asian states vulnerable to outside intervention. In fact, China considered this area to be "generally unstable politically and a potential threat to the efficient flow of commercial goods into China."²⁴ This poly-centered nature of South East Asian states was also determined by the geography of Asia. Vast stretches of forest and hilly area permitted only pocket like settlements. Further its "central geographical component comprised of sea and not land which, therefore, in place of a continuous vast landmass led to the assemblage of numerous small islands."²⁵ These localized small powers, however, were weak and lacked adequate resources to manage and control the seas. But its strategic location along the complex network of maritime sea routes rendered it susceptible to extra-regional intervention. Therefore, the dual complementary forces of politically weak states and strategic locis

²³ Watson Andaya, "Political Development Between The Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries", in Nicholas Tarling, ed. The Cambridge History of South East Asia, Vol.1 : From Early Times to C.1800 (Singapore : Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.403.

²⁴ Kenneth R. Hall, Maritime Trade and State Development in Early South East Asia (Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 1985) p.42.

²⁵ Charles A. Fisher, "Geographical continuity and political change in South East Asia" in Mark W. Zacher and Stephen R. Milne, eds. Conflict and Stability in South East Asia, (New York : Anchor Books, 1974) p.4.

constituted the development of the South East Asian states. This enabled China to influence the region as a stabilizing actor.

The contact between South East Asian states and China came however, much later than the Indian presence in this region by the sea route. China, in fact, was averse to adventures by sea and therefore, much of its direct intervention was in Vietnam and Korea because of the accessibility by land. However, China did not intend the political domination of the South East Asian states. The South East Asian States only accepted "prudent acknowledgement of Chinese suzerainty."²⁶ This involved mere tendering of precious gifts to the Chinese Emperor who in return bestowed upon them even more magnificent gifts. China had no obligation to protect or defend these peripheral countries nor were the South Eastern states expected to render any political or military help to the Chinese emperor. What the tributary relationship gave the South East Asian states was "recognition of their legitimacy and trading status."²⁷ These states naturally expected legitimization and recognition from China since it was a strong and stable power in the Asian continent. This practice may be equated with the current diplomatic practice of extending

²⁶ C.P. Fitzgerald, The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People (London : Barrie and Jenkins, 1972) p.25.

²⁷ Kenneth Hall, p.43.

recognition to established states. Illustration may be drawn from Siam's traditional foreign policy which was based on "accommodation with the region's dominant powers".²⁸ The dominant power then was China and Siam accommodated with it within the context of the Confucian Tributary System.

However, the relationship between China and the surrounding states was definitely based on the concept of China's superior status while Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malay, Java were all 'subordinate' or 'dependent' states. This concept of dependent state could only be understood in the "context of the traditional Confucian cultural relations rather than by the Western legalistic concepts."²⁹

The notion of traditional Confucian cultural relations based on father-son relationship rendered stability to the relationship between China and the South Eastern countries. The South East Asian states could not act contrary to Chinese interest being involved in a tributary agreement but this was accepted as natural as China was assigned the place of a father or an elder brother. This Confucian culture in fact, was not alien to the South East Asian Countries for they borrowed heavily from Chinese governmental patterns,

²⁸ Mark Mancall, China at the Centre : 300 Years of Foreign Policy (London : The Free Press, 1984) p.27.

²⁹ Chun-tu-hsueh, Dimensions of China's Foreign Relations (New York: Praeger Publications, 1977) p.39.

institutions, language, script and culture.³⁰ Therefore, Vietnam which was a "Chinese Tributary state participated in the East Asian world order on the basis of its own Confucian heritage."³¹ Thus the Confucian code of conduct was assimilated and adapted to the South East Asian region. In effect, China acted as a balancing power.

China and Central Asia

To the north of the Pamir Plateau were situated the lands of Tibet, Chinese Turkestan, Mongolia and Manchuria which comprised the Central Asia zone. This zone was inhabited by nomadic tribes whose pastoral economy was more suited to the climatic and geographical conditions. These nomadic tribes carried out frequent raids into the settled agricultural based society in the Great Wall frontier region of China. These raids primarily involved looting of material goods. For more than 2000 years down to the 19th century the Chinese rulers confronted the perennial threat of nomadic raids. This rendered Chinese culture more continental and inward looking. As Owen Lattimore pointed out "until the Western challenge from the sea,.... the foreign affairs of China had been concerned primarily, with the Great Wall frontier... overseas foreign relations (were) of minor

³⁰ Mark Mancall, p.24.

³¹ Ibid., p.24.

importance."³² Therefore, the defence against Inner Asian tribes got primacy in the foreign policy of every Chinese dynasty. This defence was all the more crucial since in Confucian terms the emperor would lose the mandate of Heaven if he failed to control the barbarians.³³ The policy that was evolved to control the Inner Asian tribes was both defensive and offensive. Larry W. Moses in his case study of Tang Tribute Relations with the Inner Asian barbarians has shown that the number of barbarian embassies was greater in periods of barbarian strength when the Chinese perceived a serious threat and interacted more with the barbarians rather in periods of barbarian decline.³⁴ This indicates that the threat was more to the Chinese than to the barbarians and therefore defensive wars were often undertaken. At times Chinese rulers also supplied the barbarians with economic aid when it kept them at a distance to contain them. So a kind of containment policy was evident in Chinese relations with the Inner Asian tribes.

It was, however, the Manchus who finally conquered and incorporated the whole of Inner Asia within the Chinese Empire.

³² Owen Lattimore, Inner Asian Frontiers of China (New York: Capital Publishing Col., Inc., 1951) p.7.

³³ Mark Mancall, p.29.

³⁴ Larry W. Moses, "Tang Tribute Relations with the Inner Asian Barbarians", in John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith, eds. Essays on T'ang Society (Netherlands : E.J. Brill, 1976) p.89.

Through repeated expeditions in 1720, 1728 and 1750, Tibet was brought under Chinese control. J.K. Fairbank pointed out that this was a "strategic move so that Peking could control the Buddhist Church under the Dalai Lama at Lhasa, through which in turn Mongol life could be stabilized."³⁵ This can also be interpreted to mean that China used a combination of military and cultural strategies to control/contain threats - militarily it controlled Tibet; culturally through control of the Buddhist church it contained the Mongols.

China and East Asia

The East Asian zone mainly comprised of Korea and Japan. Korea basically acted as a buffer between China and Japan. It was also located near the Chinese capital. Therefore Korea was strategically important to China. Korea, on its part, being a small power and caught between two formidable powers - China and Japan, preferred to hold fast to the one ally which was strong and stable.³⁶ Therefore, Korea placed itself closer to China and accepted Chinese suzerainty. Also Korea's choice fell on China for Japan posed a constant threat to it. Therefore for strategic reasons at various times Korea came under direct Chinese rule. In fact, it was over Korea that

³⁵ John K. Fairbank, China Perceived : Images and Policies in Chinese-American Relations (New York : Alfred A Knopf, 1974) p.46.

³⁶ Korea : It's People and Culture (Seoul: Ick-Dalkim, 1970) p.56.

China fought two wars with Japan one in the 7th century and another in the 16th century.

Japan, however, mattered little to China. This was probably due to its location far out in the sea to be of much importance politically or strategically to China. China never invaded Japan. Japanese civilization, on its part though it was heavily influenced by Chinese culture and social and political models, flourished independently and adapted to local conditions. Therefore, except for precluding Japanese influence on Korea, China's relation with Japan in the pre-modern era was hardly of any significance.

China and South Asia

In the South Asian zone, the Himalayas acted as geographical watershed between the two flourishing civilizations in China and India and therefore, insulated much of the interactions between the two. However, it was the South East Asian zone where the two met. But South East Asia curiously did not turn into a "cultural battle field"³⁷ between the two. On the contrary, Buddhism spread to China from India and found official recognition. Also from the 3rd century A.D. onwards the famous Silk route formed a triangular trading bloc among China, India and the Roman civilization. China's relations with India

³⁷ D.R. Sardesai, South East Asia : Past and Present (New York : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1981) p.15.

were, however, confined to cultural and economic ties and saw no political or diplomatic ties.

From the survey of the major zones of Asian civilization and its interaction with China, a few inferences can be drawn. First, China throughout its history did not exhibit any imperialist designs. "The phenomenon of Chinese cultural expansion and migratory settlement in new lands (should) not be associated with particular policies or with contemporary regimes."³⁸ This is particularly true of China's expansion on its Southern frontiers which did not entail violent imperial conquests. In fact, the expansion was "a combination of trade penetration, peasant and small urban settlement... and only finally, or at a late stage, consummated by political control and incorporation in the Chinese state."³⁹

However, when China intervened or invaded, it was done in the interest of the security of the Chinese Empire. This is evidenced in China's conquest of Tibet to preclude the Lamaist influence of the Mongols.

As to the policy towards the barbarians from the north, the Great Wall of China bore testimony to the Chinese defensive policy in

³⁸ C.P. Fitzgerald, The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People (Delhi : Vikas Publications, 1972) p.xv.

³⁹ Ibid., p.xxi.

general. On the other hand, it also gave an inward looking character to the Chinese state which in a way determined Chinese policy vis-a-vis the Southern powers characterized by a peaceful policy of engagement through tributary system. In the relationship between China and the barbarians, "the balance of power in the long run seems to have been in favour of the nomads."⁴⁰ The barbarian tribes established a number of 'sinicized' or 'semi-sinicized' kingdoms in North China from the fourth to the 13th centuries. During the next seven hundred years they twice conquered all of China one in the 13th and again in the 17th century."⁴¹

As regards the South East Asian state we find two levels of interaction with China. One was through a tributary relation. The second, was based on the migration of a Chinese population to the South East Asian states particularly from the Ming times onward. This migration took on new heights with European intervention when efficient and cheap Chinese labour was in great demand in Indonesia and Malaysia to act as intermediaries between the Europeans and the natives of South East Asia. This migration policy posed a threat to the economic interest of the local populace and was responsible for much

⁴⁰ Dun J. Li, "Foreign Relations" in Dun J. Li ed. The Essence of Chinese Civilizations (Toronto : D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1967) p.11.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.11.

of the late racial conflicts and riots.⁴² But such immigration was not uncommon as Indian labour and Arabs who were financially strong, came to this part of the world and settled here too. While this entailed no ethnic riots, what determined the overseas Chinese position was the role of the Chinese as cogs in the colonial economy who were in favour of the imperialists. Also the Chinese immigrants were not thoroughly assimilated to the South East Asian culture. This created a new problem - "the threat of the rising of a state within a state."⁴³ In retaliation many of the South East Asian governments imposed restrictions on the overseas Chinese in order to make room for expected indigenous enterprises"⁴⁴ in the post-independence era. But it may be noted that this threat from the Chinese immigrants were not political but mainly economic.

⁴² See, Shee Poon Kim, The Roots of Sino Phobia in The ASEAN countries : A comparative Perspective, A report.

⁴³ B.P. Chatterji, South East Asia in Transition (Delhi : Meenakshi Prakashan, 1965) p.25.

⁴⁴ Stephen Milne, "The influence on Foreign Policy of Ethnic Minorities with External Ties", in Mark W. Zacher and Stephen Milne eds. Conflict and Stability in South East Asia (New York : Anchor Books, 1974) p.92.

CHAPTER II

THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY

Having drawn out the three broad debates on the Chinese world view and having shown the genesis of the Chinese threat theory, we may now look into the various themes of Chinese foreign policy namely national interest, security and state. A consideration of these concepts is likely to indicate China's contemporary perception of the world and its place in it. As well, this examination of core concepts will also indicate the validity-or otherwise- of the China threat view. These three themes may be better understood in the backdrop of the three major periods points of modern Chinese history namely, the Western intrusion, the post Civil War period and Maoist China, and the post Cultural Revolution era and Dengist China. It is in these periods points that the three concepts took shape in modern China and were defined and redefined.

SECTION I

WESTERN INTRUSION AND CHINA

Mid-19th century China was in a period of crisis. This crisis was two fold: internal and external. Internally the mid Qing period suffered from persistent maladies fuelled by increasing population.

shrinkage of land, bankruptcy of the peasantry and outbreak of rebellions. A weak and corrupt bureaucracy aggravated the situation. But it was the external factor that was the last straw on the camel's back. The Europeans in 1900s ripped open China by dividing it into spheres of influence and reduced it to the status of an international colony. China confronted a new civilization with which it failed to relate China's Middle Kingdom notion was fractured and this called for finding new ways to define its position in the world. The crises unleashed a serious debate among Chinese intellectuals and literati about what was wrong with Chinese civilization. In response to the new situation, new perceptions were called upon that changed existing Chinese notions of state, national interest, power and security.

State

Before the European intrusion China was a cultural entity, "defined in terms of the traditional, predominantly Confucian high culture, and to be Chinese was in the final analysis the same as to be civilized."¹ In the wake of China's defeat against the European powers, there was dawning awareness among the Chinese literati

¹ Loden Torbjorn, "Nationalism Transcending the State : Changing Conception of Chinese Identity", in Stern Tonnesson and Hans Antlov eds. Asian Forms of the Nation (Great Britain:Curzon Press Ltd., 1996) p.270.

about the crisis in Chinese culture. The solution to the crisis was initially sought in the revival of Chinese culture which would thereby regenerate the Chinese state. In fact, the issue of saving China's culture in the 19th century was inextricably linked with the nature of the Chinese state in the post-Opium War era. "Traditionally the Chinese felt no particular identification with the State."² Their loyalty was first to the family and the clan, then to the locality and then the State, "The Chinese state was co-terminus with Chinese culture."³ But the Opium War punched a hole into this notion. After the Opium War, the Chinese groped for various solutions to the cultural crisis that could also provide a blueprint for the survival of the state.

Initially the confidence of the Chinese in their traditional political structures was not shaken and the question to do away with the dynasty did not arise. But the humiliating defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War (1895) drove home the fact that the restoration of the monarchy was a failure. "What was at stake then, was not just Confucian values, but also the Confucian institutions which made up the state."⁴ This dawning awareness knocked down Chinese

² Colin Mackerres, Eastern Asia : An Introductory History (Malbourne:Longman Cheshire, 1992) p.170.

³ Ibid., p.170.

⁴ Jerome Chen, "Hisotrical Background", in Jack Gray ed. Modern China's Search for a Political Form (London:Oxford University Press, 1969) p.9.

'Culturism' and nationalism took its place. Therefore, the Reform Movement of 1898 demanded the dismantling of "the two institutional pillars of the Confucian state - the monarch and his civil service."⁵

Meanwhile, the government sponsored Boxer rebellion of 1900 ended in failure and prompted a renewed Western onslaught. This made it clear that China's very existence was at stake and the responsibility for its survival fell on two elements - the West and the Manchus - both foreigners in Han China. This provided the justification for the argument that the Manchus were foreigners and therefore, they had also to be expelled from China.

In order to prepare China to meet the challenge of the new situation in the post Boxer period and also to strengthen the imperial government against internal and external threat, therefore, the solution sought was to overthrow the Manchu government. The anti-Manchu movement thus led to the establishment of the Republic in 1911. However, the Republican experiment failed. Coupled with it was China's shabby treatment by the Western powers at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. It triggered off the May 4th Movement of 1919 when the news of Japan's refusal to relinquish Shandong province, seized from Germany in World War I, reached China.

⁵ Ibid., p.6.

Chinese anti-imperialism acquired a nationalist character. The May 4th, in fact, "saw a cultural revolution aimed at transforming Chinese culture as a means of national regeneration."⁶ Therefore, it called for the adoption of Western political and philosophical concepts.

What emerged in 1919 was a Chinese state that was characterized by the new forces of nationalism and anti-imperialism. However, the concept of the Chinese nation-state was not identical with that of the West. Rather the Chinese nation state defined itself in the process of confronting internal and external threats. Since the question of saving the nation was the primary goal, it meant, in effect, saving Chinese identity or Chineseness. Hence, the notion of China as a civilizational state or a cultural entity remained intact. In the words of Loden, "the emergence of Chinese nationalism has been a process of conceptually separating China and traditional Chinese high culture, which would make it possible to reject those aspects of the cultural legacy that stood in the way of China's development and entrance as a respected member into the family of nations."⁷

National Interest

⁶ Mackerras Colin, p.173.

⁷ Loden Torbjorn, p.285.

The Chinese national interest in the wake of Western intrusion demanded a programme of reform and modernization in order to confront the West. Therefore, "China now competed for survival in a world of states which looked not to morality or virtue for legitimacy but rather to industrial and military power."⁸

Modernization initially implied a narrow concept and was limited to aping Western military technology. It was basically motivated to 'Learn from the enemy in order to conquer him'. But since China envisaged itself as cultural power rather than a military power, it sought a cultural strategy to resolve the crisis - the strategy of self-strengthening. In contrast, Japan, which also faced a threat from Europe when Commodore Perry knocked at her door, responded with a policy of systematic military strengthening to cope with external threat.

The Chinese self-strengthening movement was essentially meant to strengthen Chinese culture by adopting Western methods. 'Chinese learning for substance, Western learning for function' - the slogan made by a brilliant scholar - official of the Qing period, Chang Chih-Tung (1837-1909), optimized the ethos of the self-strengthening movement. However, self-strengthening did not suggest radical

⁸ Fred Drake, China Charts the World (London:Harvard University Press, 1975) p.175

reform, instead it preserved the feudal order and the reforms proved to be anachronistic and therefore failed to revive Chinese power. It was the humiliating defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 that made the Chinese realize that mere tinkering at reforms would not lead to Chinese revival. Instead "major structural reforms" were needed from above to "save China from permanent international humiliation or even colonial domination."⁹ Thus came the Reform Movement of 1898. This entailed, in addition to scientific learning, remodelling Chinese laws and political institutions after that of the West. But the establishment of the Republic, the subsequent reemergence of War Lord rule and the second attempt at monarchic restoration proved that mere transplantation of laws and political institutions did not work. What was needed was a complete repudiation of the traditional culture of China as a whole. It aimed at embracing Western culture to reform and transform China's culture in order to project China into the ranks of the advanced nations of the world. The May 4th Movement of 1919 thus upheld the new realization.¹⁰

⁹ Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions : A comparative analysis of France, Russia and China (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1987) p.77.

¹⁰ See Franke Wolfgang, China and the West (Oxford:Basic Blackwell, 1967).

In fact, all these movements, whether the Self Strengthening of 1861-1894, the Reform Movement of 1898, or the May Fourth of 1919, were guided by one principal motive, that of reviving China's greatness that had fallen to great depths partly due to the Western intrusion. In order to achieve its past glory the suggestion focused on modernizing China by transforming its traditional Confucian culture in the interest of the survival of the Chinese civilization.

Power

In Chinese Confucian thinking a profound relation existed between morality and power. The Tribute System through which the Chinese conducted their foreign relations in the pre-Opium War era was built on the moral concept that "if the Son of Heaven were demonstrably virtuous, the countries on China's peripheries would spontaneously assent to Chinese primacy."¹¹ This Tribute System disintegrated in the 19th century with the Western onslaught.

With the end of the Arrow War, the permanent presence of foreign diplomats in Peking led to the creation of the office for General Management of Matters concerning the various countries, which in Chinese came to be known as the 'Zongli Yamen' in 1861.

¹¹ Paul A. Cohen, "Wang T'aos, "Perspective on a Changing World", in Albert Feuerwerker, Rhoads Murphey and Mary C. Wright eds. Approaches to Modern Chinese History (Berkeley:University of California Press, 1967) p.139.

The new institution solely looked into the management of Western diplomats stationed in Peking. The establishment of Zongli Yamen created a watershed in China's foreign relations. It formally ended the Tribute System. It, however, did not "signify either the end of China's resistance or the completion of her adaptation to the modern state system based on rivalry and co-existence among sovereign and equal states."¹²

Security

Until the Sino-Japanese war of 1895, the Self Strengtheners and reformists were "mainly concerned with equality in wealth and military strength and certain aspects of modernity, like more efficient political institutions and scientific education."¹³ Also their main purpose was the revival of Chinese culture in the quest for survival. But after the Sino-Japanese War and more particularly after the fall of the Manchu dynasty and the establishment of the Republican government in 1912, a serious threat to China's independence was felt and realized. Apprehensions were raised over Russo-Japanese activities in Manchuria, the take over of Korea by the Japanese in 1910 and during, the first World War, Japan's imposition of the

¹² Banno Masataka, China and the West, 1858-1861 : The origins of the Tsuagli Yamen (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1964) p.1.

¹³ Wang Gung Wu, China and the World since 1949 (London:Macmillan Press, 1977) p.10.

Twenty One Demands on China along with her presence in Shandong "was not merely the question of being an equal but the much more serious matter of the erosion of Chinese sovereignty within Han China itself"¹⁴ that was at stake. Therefore, the issue of the security of China and her boundaries came to the fore front. To meet with this security crisis, the earlier cavalier attitude towards military strengthening was given up. This cavalier attitude had much to do with the Chinese culture - a nation where "military force was of much less significance than culture as a symbol of authority and greatness."¹⁵ After the West invaded China the need for military strength was realized but it was limited to the preservation of domestic order and the Confucian System. The "final result of the Sino-Japanese War had a major influence on the course of Chinese history. It emphasized that security is the precondition of the development of a country."¹⁶ Therefore, in effect, the survival of the state ultimately depended on military power, not merely on cultural regeneration. Therefore, by the 1890s China had begun to build up modern military power. Yet this concern was limited by conceptions

¹⁴ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁵ Iriye Akira, China and Japan in the Global Setting (Cambridge, Mass:Harvard University Press, 1992) p.9.

¹⁶ General Liu Huaqing, "Defense Modernization in Historical Perspective", in Michael Pillsbury ed. Chinese Views of Future Warfare (Washington D.C.:National Defense University Press, 1996), p.116.

of the Chinese state that were steeped in culturism rather than in any clearly defined political concepts.

In conclusion, in the first phase of the China crisis - that of the period of Western intrusion - the notion of national interest, state, power and security in Chinese history were all woven up into one common objective - the survival of China. Through several reform processes China attempted to resolve its 19th century crisis and find a niche for itself in the world arena. It's aim was to rise again to the great heights from which it had fallen. Therefore, China sought cultural transformation to overcome the cultural crisis that it viewed as responsible for its predicament. Since the emphasis was on cultural regeneration rather than on emerging as a military power, the concept of the Chinese state, national interest, power and security were yet to become major political themes. These themes, in fact, came into focus after the May 4th Movement when resistance to imperialism got preeminence in Chinese political thought and culture. However, "the bottom line was the survival of the state, while the long term objective was national wealth and power".¹⁷

SECTION II

POST CIVIL WAR AND MAO'S CHINA

¹⁷ Mackerras, p.171.

The post second World War era came to be characterized by two major developments one was the emergence of Cold War politics. Communist China was inevitably a part of this conflict. it was affected by it and in turn affected world politics. The second, was the process of decolonization that led to the emergence of the Third World comprising of newly independent nation whose aversion to join the bipolar politics led to the growth of the non-aligned movement. This Third World politics also had a significant impact on China which was also a Third World country.

When the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) was established, it confronted a precarious situation. Politically, from the very inception of Communist rule, China had to confront a rival power base in Taiwan under the nationalist forces of Chiangkai Shek who fled there in the aftermath of the civil war. Therefore, Communist China regarded the Chinese revolution and unification as 'incomplete'. Territorially, as a legacy of British imperialism, Tibet and Xinjiang (Chinese Turkministan) were divested from China. Economically, China was vulnerable and needed immediate regeneration. Militarily, being involved in Cold War politics, China faced a military threat from American military bases in Japan, the Philippines and Taiwan. In response to this situation, China under Mao Zedong came up with definite policies and strategies on issues like national interest,

power, security which were directly related to the nature of the new state.

State

Mao's concept of the state was first developed in his writing "On New Democracy" (1940) where he systematically put forth the idea of a Chinese State. This conception of state formed the basis of the political structure of China in 1949. Mao's state was not a proletarian dictatorship or a democratic dictatorship of workers and peasant. Instead, it was, as Mao described it, "a new-democratic state under the joint dictatorship of several anti-imperialist clauses."¹⁸ This new political order was different from the Socialist Republic of the Soviet Union. Mao believed that the Soviet type of political order would be unsuitable to the revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial countries."¹⁹ Therefore, Mao's New Republic incorporated a wide social base of the peasants, the proletariat, the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie.

Economically, the New Democracy created state enterprises but did not confiscate capitalist private property or "forbid the development of capitalist production" since "China's economy (was)

¹⁸ Mao Zedong, "On New Democracy", in Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung (Peking, 1967) p.351).

¹⁹ Ibid., p.350.

very backward."²⁰ Also the Chinese Republic took the necessary steps to confiscate lands from the landlords and distributed it to the peasants. Thus the P.R.C. carried out Sun Yat Sen's slogans of "land to the tiller". In the foreign policy arena, P.R.C. later proclaimed 'lean to one side' that is to enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union.

Mao's conception of the state was thus based on the experiences of the Chinese revolution. The ultimate goal of the Chinese state was to transform China from a "new democracy" into a socialist and communist society. In the new state, sovereignty was located theoretically with the people but in reality with the party and the object of the state was to create a strong and prosperous China by implementing an inclusive 'Common Program'.

National Interest

With the establishment of the P.R.C., Mao declared that China had finally "Stood up" in the world. This carried definite implications for a redefinition of the P.R.C's national interest. One, it meant an end to foreign political and economic oppression. Second, that China would attempt to regain its past greatness. Its foreign policy goals emphasized the theme of national interest.

²⁰ Ibid., p.353

China, being a poor, under developed and a war-torn country in the new era, was compelled to pursue a strategy of 'dependency' on the Soviet Union for her economic regeneration, socialist reconstruction and protection from the American threat. This led to 'lean(ing) of on side', a strategy born out of expediency²¹ But at the same time Mao envisaged that China would be an independent member of an extensive United Front centered around the Soviet Union and trading freely with the Western World while posing as a unique revolutionary model for the peoples of Asia.²² In spite of China's basic urge to steer an independent policy, the precarious world power equation, and economic dependence on the Soviet Union, led her to compromise with her avowed independent stand. China gave up her role as a 'Junior Partner' in the late 1950s after the Sino-Soviet split. Though the split was a result of ideological and policy differences, "its fundamental cause was the conflict of national interest."²³ China's national interest was adversely affected in 1958 when the Soviet leaders "put forward what the Chinese considered unreasonable demands designed to bring China under military

²¹ Yahuda Michael, Towards the end of Isolationism : China's foreign policy after Mao (London: Macmillan Press, 1983).

²² Ibid.

²³ Chun-tu Hsueh, China's Foreign Relations : New Perspective (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982) p.2.

control".²⁴ Thus, if it was the economic and military issue which brought about the Sino-Soviet alliance in the early 1950s it was the issue of Chinese sovereignty that caused the Sino-Soviet rift in the late 1950s.

The second facet of China's national interest may be witnessed in the Chinese desire to retrieve its lost territories and unify them with China. Such was the case with Tibet which was incorporated into China. Again, U.S. support to the nationalist Republican government was a thorny issue in Sino-American relations, for the Chinese regarded America's role as obstructing Taiwan's unification with mainland China.

Power

Chinese foreign policy based on 'dependency' or 'lean(ing) to one side' affected the balance of power in East Asia. It allowed the U.S. to extend its containment policy to China. But the Sino-Soviet alliance soon broke down, the aftermath of which was of much significance to China's foreign policy. It led to the emergence of China as an independent power with its influence on regional as well

²⁴ Ibid., p.2

as global politics. Further it also led China to diversify its economic and diplomatic relationships with non-communist powers.²⁵

The third world dimensions in Chinese foreign policy emerged out of Mao's understanding of Cold War politics.²⁶ Mao regarded that there were two zones represented by the two super powers - the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. - and in between them was the intermediate zone. This intermediate zone had two sub zones - one comprised of newly independent developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the other comprised of European capitalist developed countries, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In the 1950s it was with the first intermediate zone that China first interacted. This phase is identified with the Bandung phase of China's foreign policy. This phase was significant since it introduced the famous Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence that, infact, determined Chinese foreign policy for a long time to come. It was the fruit of diplomacy conducted with India and Burma in 1954. In the 1960s China extended its foreign relations with the second intermediate zone. The significant outcome of this was the establishment of France-China diplomatic relations in 1964 and the Sino-U.S. rapprochement in 1971 in the aftermath of which China

²⁵ Sui Sheng Zhao, Power Competition in East Asia : From the Old chinese World Order to Post-Cold War Regional Multipolarity (London:Mamillan, 1997) p.118.

²⁶ Ibid., p.118.

gained admission in the U.N. as a permanent member of the Security Council in 1972. These events "marked the recognition of China as a legitimate state in the international community."²⁷ In 1972 the historic visit of U.S. President Nixon to China signalled that "China's influence reached the level of global significance."²⁸

Security

For a nascent Communist China the primary concern in 1949 was peace and security. In fact, security constitutes a cardinal principal of any country's foreign policy goals. For China the issue of security gained primacy in view of the emergence of Cold-War politics and a weak domestic politic-economic situation after the civil war period in China.

Though, China's "lean to one side" policy emerged out of the need for economic reconstruction and ideological unity, the threat from America's policy of containment was a fundamental reason behind the tilt. The threat of America was not an illusion for Sino-American relations from the start were based on hostility and friction. The U.S. refused to recognize the Communist regime on the Mainland and instead recognized the nationalist government in Taiwan. The

²⁷ Sui Sheng Zhao, p.180.

²⁸ Ibid., p.120.

two - China policy thus injected a definite hostility in Sino-American relations. Secondly, America implemented a policy of containing China by organizing a military network around China. The defence treaties between America and Japan, the ANZUS Pact and SEATO were all directed to encircling and containing China. The Korean War and the Vietnam War were the fall outs of this containment policy.

After the Sino-Soviet split Chinese foreign policy itself came to be characterized by anti-Sovietism as well as anti-Americanism. Thus "isolated and enraged by international denial (headed by U.S.) of its legitimacy, Peking actively supported insurgencies and national liberation movements in the third world as a counter move to the 'collisions' of the two super-powers".²⁹

In the 1970s, the pro-American tilt in Chinese foreign policy was again occasioned by the question of a threat to China's security. In 1969 the Sino-Soviet rift deepened to result in a border conflict. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was also regarded by China as a threat to its own existence. This understanding led to the normalization of Sino-U.S. relations.

Given China's overriding concern for security, John Franklin Copper argues that China's programme of foreign aid served as an

²⁹ Chun-tu-HSueh, op.cit., p.2.

instrument of foreign policy. China "employed aid to extend its influence in Asia and elsewhere and deal with what it consider(ed) potential threats."³⁰ Thus China's aid to Pakistan could be regarded as a strategy to counter balance India.

Summing up, in the Maoist era bipolar politics basically shaped Chinese foreign policy. China, in fact, became the target of the influence and enmity of both the superpowers and it "found itself in the uniquely dangerous position of being alternately wooed and threatened by both super powers."³¹ When China sided with the Soviet Union it confronted the U.S. pressure and when China took up an anti-Soviet stand, the Soviets responded with similar pressure.

Therefore, in the Cold War era China's position was rather vulnerable to super power conflicts. Hence Chinese foreign policy perceptions reflected a defensive posture.

³⁰ Copper, F.J., China's Foreign Aid : An Instrument of Peking's Foreign Policy (Lexington:D.C. Heath and Company, 1976) p.9.

³¹ Nathan, A.J. and Ross, R.S. The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress : China's Search for Security (New York:W.W. Norton and Company, 1997) p.14.

SECTION III

POST CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND DENG'S CHINA (1978-1980)

"The Cultural Revolution, which lasted from May 1966 to October 1976, was responsible for the most severe set back and the heaviest losses suffered by the party, the state and the people since the founding of the People's Republic."

"Resolution on Party History", 1981.³²

The era of the Cultural Revolution in China indeed left a trail of economic, political and cultural chaos. It shook the very foundation of the Party's structure. In fact, Maoist principles of politics in command brought "wave after wave of political campaigns, which disrupted every day lives, set people against each other and created widespread resentment, turmoil and chaos."³³ So communist utopia no longer appealed to the people. the Chinese economy exhibited serious imbalances, and inefficiency coupled with technological backwardness. In the foreign policy arena the Chinese pursuance of an isolationist policy proved disastrous and threatened China's security. Therefore, the new leaders after the death of Mao in 1976, confronted both economic and political crisis and hence called for a prudent pragmatic policy to deal with the situation. The party realized that its time in power would be short unless it constructed

³² Quoted from Macfarquhar Roderick, "The Party's Armageddor", Time (May 13) 1996.

³³ Ibid.

itself, that marketization was the only economic alternative, that the influence of personalities on politics would have to be limited and that the influence of ideology would have to be limited and that the influence of ideology would have to be relegated to a secondary position with the economy acquiring primacy. Therefore, under Deng Xiaoping, instead of politics, 'economy took command'. The programme of economic readjustment and reform formulated according to the spirit of the historic Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in December 1978, signified a major shift in the development strategy of China's economy. This shift in economic policy brought a significant change in Chinese foreign policy perceptions and this impacted on China's conception of State, national interest, power and security.

State

Since 1978 China is on the path of modernization and development characterized by socialism with Chinese characteristics. This characterization of Chinese development has raised several questions as to the basic character of the Chinese state.

As the tide of economic reform moved forward in the mid 1980s and as the market reforms increasingly became a success story in China, Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong - thought began to lose its

snape. Until the reform era, the Chinese socialist state was based on two assumptions : first, that China was in a transition period and it would soon lead to communism; second, the progress to socialism could be measured by expanding state ownership, reducing differences between town and country, relying more on moral and less upon material incentives.³⁴

In the post reform era, this notion of socialism has undergone striking changes. This change was evidenced in the "theory of the initial stage of socialism" which was unveiled by Zhao Ziyang at the 13th Party Congress in October, 1987.³⁵ Zhao argued that China should be recognized as an underdeveloped country in which the commodity economy was weak and as such China was merely in "the initial stage of socialism". What implied basically was that "the criterion for progress in socialism.... is modernization."³⁶ Therefore, Zhao Ziyang emphasized that the fundamental task of a socialist society was to expand the productive forces and the method through which to achieve this was 'reform'. This is what epitomised socialism with Chinese characteristic.

³⁴ John Gittings, China Changes Face : The Road From Revolution, 1949-1989 (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1989) p.255.

³⁵ Zhao Ziyang, 'Advance Along the Road of Socialism with Chinese Characteristic - Rport Delivered at the 13th National Congress of the CPC on Oct.25, 1987, Beijing Review (Nov 9-15) 1987.

³⁶ John Gittings, p.256.

In fact, the socialist market economy under Deng created wide discrepancies between practice on the one hand, and what communist theories required on the other. Su Shaozhi, the director of institute of Marxism - Leninism - MaoZedong thought in China's Academy of Social Sciences called upon his colleagues to study the new conditions, solve new problems and draw new conclusions by using the Marxist stand point, thus developing Marxism instead of abandoning it.³⁷ Nevertheless, Chinese spokesmen though constantly reiterating that China is following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, actually imply the subordination of ideology to economic pragmatism and of politics to economics. The Chinese state, hence is a socialist state with capitalist tendencies.

National Interest

To mitigate China's backwardness and to propel China to the ranks of a world power, Deng realized that rapid socialist modernization was the need of the hour. Socialist modernization entailed China's need to open its doors to the outside world (Kaifang) thereby integrating its economy to the world economy. This again implied China's breaking away radically with the earlier line of "regeneration through self reliance" and thereby leading to

³⁷ See Su Shao Zhi, Democratization and Reform (England:Spokesman) 1988.

interdependence rather than total independence.³⁸ But the Chinese involvement in the world economy is distinct in that it is characterized by a limited and cautious approach. Michel Oksenberg sees this cautious attitude as a reflection of "confident nationalism". "It is a patient and moderate nationalism rooted in confidence that over time China can regain its former greatness through economic growth based on the import of foreign technology and ideas. It is also a determined and resolute nationalism flexible in tactics, subtle in strategy, but deeply committed to the preservation of national independence, the reunification of China and the attainment of national wealth and power."³⁹ This confident nationalism in many ways harken back to 19th century nationalism where Chinese reformers encouraged the importation of foreign technology while preserving the cultural identity of China. The basic goal had been saving China by acquiring national wealth and power. Maoist China too aspired for the similar goal. Under Deng the same quest for wealth and power underlie the drive for modernization.⁴⁰

³⁸ Torbjorn Loden, "Nationalism Transcending the State : Changing Conceptions of Chinese Identity", in Stein Tonneson and Hans Antlov eds. Asian Forms of the Nation (Great Britain:Curzon Press Ltd., 1996), p.286.

³⁹ Michel Oksenberg, "China's Confident Nationalism", Foreign Affairs Vol.65 No.3, 1987 p.

⁴⁰ Loden, p.284.

Power

In the last decade of the Cold War, particularly in the 1980s, the power structure in East Asia was determined by the strategic triangle among three nations : the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and China. In this set of relations, the strategic interests and behaviour of each country toward the other shaped the global power structure.⁴¹ This triangular relationship was "qualitatively" different as well as more vital than any other relationships and "other nations were important in the power competition, but they were usually deemed as functional dependents of one or another of the three principal power players."⁴² In this relationship China definitely was not a superpower but the "most reactive state" within the strategic triangle. In fact, both the super powers used the 'China Card' against each other. China's role was basically to play one against the other and thus achieved political leverage in the game. In this kind of triangular relationship China acted as an independent power and was definitely not assigned the position of a 'junior partner' as in the Sino-Soviet alliance of the 50s. China's importance in this triangle when it was

⁴¹ William T. Tow, 'China and the International Strategic System', in Robinson T.W. and Shambaugh D. eds. Chinese Foreign Policy (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1994) p.122.

⁴² Siu Shengzhao, Power Competition in East Asia, (London:Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), p.139.

not itself a super power is explained by a number of facts. As Sui Shengzhao explains three factors were significant for Chinese position in the strategic triangle.⁴³ First, China's importance rested on "a combination of nuclear deterrance and the idea of a People's War. China had a huge military machine, a huge population and enormous resources that rendered her a formidable deterrent force. Second, China had a unique "diplomatic flexibility". China was the only country that had opposed both the super powers as well as diplomatically engaged both. This kind of diplomatic flexibility in fact, gave Chinese foreign policy an unpredictability which in general enhanced China's diplomatic leverage with the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Third, bipolar politics created much tension between the super powers and "China's role in this Cold War tension was viewed as 'ameliorat(ing) or exacerbat(ing) the burden of the super power conflict.'"⁴⁴

While the growth of this strategic triangle may be traced to the dramatic turn in Sino-U.S. relations in 1972, its significance in the global power competition was heightened only in the late 1970s. A major motivation for China to normalize relations with the U.S. was to limit Moscow's military threat. Already a border war had been fought

⁴³ Sui Shengzhao, p.141.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.143.

between the two along the Ussuri River in 1969 and another was in the offing in 1978. But the process of normalization was further strengthened with the growing Soviet-U.S. detente. The withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam and the Vietnamese alliance with the Soviet Union contributed to a further shift in the East Asian balance of power. The consequent perception of threat by China and its war against Vietnam were partly an outcome of this shift. However, the Sino-Vietnamese war had one positive fall out - both the Soviet Union and China realized the need to diffuse tension on the border issue. The Soviet Union on its part realized that increased hostility with China would push it further towards the U.S. Therefore, by improving its relation with China, the Soviet Union would be able to play a 'China Card' in its dealing with the U.S. China responded positively to the Soviet Union's overtures with the U.S. and 'also China needed to play the 'Soviet card to enhance its position vis-a-vis the U.S.'⁴⁵

Security

In the opening speech at the Twelfth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party Deng Xiaoping declared that "Our strategy in foreign affairs is to seek a peaceful environment for carrying out the

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.159.

four modernizations."⁴⁶ In fact, peace and development became the cornerstones of Beijing's foreign policy in the reform era.

Certain underlying characteristics of Chinese security calculations greatly affect Chinese foreign policy. Among these calculations, as highlighted by David Shambaugh, is the Chinese concept of Security as characterized by comprehensiveness.⁴⁷ The Western definition of national security is mainly based on the military sinews of a nation. but the Chinese concept of security is comprehensive, and includes not merely military aspects but political and social aspects as well. For example "baoguo (preserve the state) baozhong (preserve the race), baojiao (preserve the civilization) and baomin (preserve the people) all figure prominently in Chinese strategic thought.⁴⁸ This found reflection in Dang Xiaoping's socialist modernization when he regarded "world peace and China's economic development (as) mutually supportive⁴⁹ and argued that a stable China is a guarantor of China's external security.

⁴⁶ Deng Xiaoping, Selected works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975-1982, p.396.

⁴⁷ D. Shambaugh, "Growing Strong : China's Challenges to Asian Security", Survival, Vol.36, No.2 (Summer, 1994) p.45.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.45.

⁴⁹ Mel Qurtov and Byong-Mao Hwang, China's Security : The New Role of the Military (Boulder:Lynne Rienner Publishers) 1998, p.5.

The second defining characteristic of Chinese security calculation is the presence of a certain "determinism" as exemplified in Chinese assessment of world affairs. Mao's concept of hegemonism, derived basically from the past experience of imperialism and exploitation, found echoes in Deng's China. In Deng Xiaoping's speech delivered to the U.N. General Assembly in 1979, the Chinese leader stated that "the two super powers, the United States and the Soviet Union are vainly seeking world hegemony. The two super powers are the biggest international exploiters and oppressors of today. They are the sources of a new world war."⁵⁰

The third calculation is the historical weakness of modern China. China from its past experience has realized that a weak state is prone to external threat, and foreign aggression in turn impedes the country's economic and political development. The fourth calculation included protecting "China's core culture from external contamination."⁵¹

From these security calculations emerged China's security objectives. Song Yimin⁵² enumerated them as *first*, to build a country

⁵⁰ Shambaugh, p.46.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.46.

⁵² Song Yimin, On China's Concept of Security, UNIDR (Geneva:United Nations Publications, 1986).

that is economically prosperous, politically stable and militarily strong, capable of ensuring China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. *Second*, to lay stress on a good neighbour policy with the purpose of establishing friendly and cooperative relations with the neighbouring countries. *Third*, to develop friendly relations with all the nations on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

In conclusion China in the aftermath of the cultural revolution and during the first decade of Deng Xiaoping's leadership exhibited an urge to play the role of a major actor in world affairs. Therefore, China embarked on the path of market socialism or socialism with Chinese characteristics. This essentially meant the subordination of ideology to economic pragmatism and politics to economics. Therefore, the achievement of modernization, peace and development became the official objectives. Again, with economic modernization, ideology lost its dominating influence. Instead, China has resorted to appeals to nationalism. The post-Cold War brought tremendous and perceptible changes in the world balance of power. However, the key aspects of Chinese foreign policy - nationalist spirit and national security - remained dominating themes for they are the primary determinants for China's economic growth and modernization.

Since peace and security were the linchpin of China's economic modernization, therefore, the priority of China's foreign policy was to maintain a stable world order. Therefore China's foreign policy took basically a defensive posture, posing no threat to world peace.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTEMPORARY CHINA THREAT DEBATED

The historical analysis of China's perception of the world order gives us insights into the recent China threat theory. The post-Cold War era has fundamentally altered power equation in world politics. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, resulted in a unipolar world represented by the U.S. and on the other, raised considerably the profile of China as a great power. In fact, in the Deng and post-Deng eras China has registered rapid economic growth and prosperity and this has intimidated not only the Western powers but also China's Asian neighbours. The argument often made is that a strong China would pose a threat to world peace. In fact, the protagonists of the threat theory base their view on the so called "power hegemony linkage" theory. According to this theory, an enhanced Chinese economic power would be followed by the increase of military power. Hence it is likely that China would use its military power to impose its interests and aims on other countries.¹

¹ Rizal Sukma, "China's Defence Policy and Security in the Asian Pacific," The Indonesian Quarterly, Vol.XXIII, No.1 (First Quarter) 1995, p.85.

According to Wang Zhongren the China threat theory emerged in the early 1990s. It was Minai Tomohide, Professor at the Defense University in Tokyo, who raised the theory in his article entitled "On the Potential Threat of China". He described China as a potential adversary in view of its comprehensive national strength and long term development.² In general the China threat theory has three aspects : The apprehension of economic, military and civilizational threat. The analysis of each of the aspects will answer the three questions raised in the introductory chapter : first whether China really is a threat and to whom; second, is the threat perception grounded in the region's reality or is it only a Western perception; third, whether the Western perception of China threat includes the entire West. For better understanding we have divided the threat perception into Western and Asian perceptions.

WESTERN PERCEPTION OF THE CHINA THREAT

It was under Ross Munro, coordinator of Asian Programme of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia that 'China Threat' industry prospered. In fact, the frenzied uproar of threat theory is mainly the contribution of American China watchers and the

² Wang Zhongren, "'China Threat' Theory Groundless," Beijing Review, Vol.40, No.28 (July 14-20), 1997 p.7.

American media who view China as an economic, military and civilizational threat.

Economic Threat

The economic growth of China in the present century and its projected position as the second largest economy after the U.S. by the first quarter of the next century is seen by some American scholars as presenting an economic threat to America. Greg Mastel, trade specialist at the Economic Strategy Institute, predicts that China's economy will overtake the U.S. by 2009 to become the largest in the world. Such a robust growth of the Chinese economy is definitely looked upon as a threat to the Western economies. Martin Crutsinger writes that 60% of all shoes sold in the U.S. are made in China. More than half the toys bear the 'Made in China' label. In fact, not only shoes and toys but household gadgets, telephones, computer and fax machines sold commonly in the U.S. are made in China. In all, America imported \$51.5 billion worth of products from China in 1996.³ In fact, in recent years China has registered a huge trade surplus with the U.S. In 1996 America exported just \$11.9 billion in manufactured good and farm products to China, a tiny 1.9% increase compared with the 13% surge in Chinese products coming into America. That pushed

³ Martin Crutsinger, "Deng's China an Economic Giant," Times of India, (February 22), 1997, p.12.

the U.S. - China trade deficit up to \$39.5 billion in 1995, "the biggest America has ever suffered with any country other than Japan."⁴ This deficit, in fact, affected the job market in the U.S. Half a million workers lost their job owing to closure of plants because they could not compete with China's lower wages. In 1993, the IMF released a report that used the purchasing power parity method and put China's GNP at U.S. \$1.66 billion, 6% of the global economy and listed it as the third largest economy in the world after the U.S. and Japan.⁵

Military Threat

"The U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen warns of students of Sun Tzu (the Chinese strategist philosopher, who lived two millennia ago) and his 'Art of War' posing threats to the U.S. through strategies of asymmetric conflict."⁶ In fact, China's defence policies have been revamped, particularly after the Gulf War which demonstrated the backwardness of Chinese defence capabilities. On the one hand, the basic aim has been to improve the quality of the troops, reform the defence industry, "give importance to defence - oriented scientific research and upgrade the army's defence and

⁴ Ibid., p.12.

⁵ Wang Zhongren, p.8.

⁶ K. Subramanyam, "China and the U.S. Snapping at the Dragon," Times of India (April 27), 1996, p.10.

combat capabilities."⁷ On the other, the allocation for the defence forces has been stepped up from last years Yuan 80.57 billion to Yuan 90.99 billion in 1998, a rise of 12.9%. This is in confirmity with its policy of 'active defence'.⁸ This modernization of China's defence policies poses a threat to the Western powers. To America, the Chinese military threat is worrisome. "Thirteen missiles are reported to be aimed at American cities and Chinese anti-ship missiles are supposed to pose a threat to our navy writes Henry Kissinger.⁹ Clinton's visit was at pains to get an undertaking from the Chinese that the missiles would no longer be targetted at the U.S. The signing of the U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on security in April 1996 and America's support to the extension of NATO are seen as directed at containing the Chinese military threat.

Civilizational Threat

The civilizational threat theory mainly came from Samuel P. Huntington who in his controversial book The Clash of Cvilizations and the Remaking of World Order outlined that the post Cold-War era world order world be based on civilizational lines and that "the rise of

⁷ Ibid., p.10.

⁸ M.V. Rappai, "A new breed of Pragmatists in China," The Hindu (April 5), 1998, p.18.

⁹ Henry A. Kissinger, "No Room for Nostalgia," Newsweek (June 29), 1998, p.39.

China is the potential source of a big intercivilizational war."¹⁰

Huntington's theory is premised on the idea that Western interests, ideas and values have little resonance in the Eastern world. So the West is pitted against the East and therefore, China is a threat to Western civilization. Therefore, the West should stick together as one liberal democratic culture and resist the 'other'.

ASIAN PERCEPTION OF THE CHINA THREAT

The Asian perspective on the China threat theory is not uniform. In fact, it varies from region to region. Therefore, a region wise study would be helpful to arrive at a comprehensive idea of the "China Threat" in Asia. The regions may be divided into East Asia, south East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Economic Threat

In South East Asia the Chinese economic growth has always found a positive response. In fact, on the arena of economy, China and South East Asia have increasingly come together and there has been a spurt of trade and investment links between ASEAN and the P.R.C. In fact, economic relations between ASEAN and the P.R.C. have been

¹⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, New York:Simon and Schuster, 1996, p.209.

further cemented in the aftermath of the financial crisis in South East Asia after China extended monetary help to Thailand of \$1 billion.

However, it was the devaluation of the Chinese currency three years before that set the basis for the South East Asian economic crisis of July 1997.¹¹ Yet China threatens to devalue its currency which is sure to create another bout of economic crisis in Asia. This threat basically was behind Washington's sudden decision "to help bolster the Japanese Yen."¹²

Military Threat

China fundamentally revised its military doctrine in 1985 when the Central Military Commission called for 'limited local war.' Such local wars would involve combat operations either on Chinese territory... or in area close to its territory.¹³ This meant Taiwan, the Spratly and Senkaku (Diaoyu) islands would be the targets of China. Further the territorial disputes over the Spratly constitutes the most important problem confronting China and the ASEAN states -

¹¹ See Gerald Segal, "Clinton's China visit : A grand but vacuous affair", Times of India (July end), 1998, p.11.

¹² Editorial, "A Quickening Thaw", Asia Week, Vol.24, No.26, (July 3), 1998, p.18.

¹³ Derek Da Cunha, "South East Asian Perceptions of China's Future Security Role In Its Background," in Jonathan D. Pollack and Richard H. Yang (eds). In China's Shadow, Washington D.C. : Rand., 1998, p.118.

Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. Allen S. Whiting's interviews in 6 ASEAN capitals (Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Hanoi, Manila, Jakarta, Singapore), revealed rising concerns over the PRC's foreign policies in East Asia. On the basis of interviews Whiting marked out certain common features about their reactions towards China :¹⁴

- First, the P.R.C's words and actions during 1995-96 fomented apprehension over the Taiwan straits and the South China Sea centering on the Spratly islands;
- Second, the P.R.C's encroachment on Mischief Reef in the Spratlys in February 1995 which the Philippines has claimed, and its joint forces exercises opposite Taiwan in November 1995 revealed China's increasingly assertive claims;
- Third, ASEAN members called for a show of solidarity in order to oppose any use of force by the PRC;
- Fourth, in December 1995 the Indonesia-Australia military cooperation agreement came about in opposition to PRC;

¹⁴ Allen S. Whiting, "ASEAN eyes China : The Security Dimensions," Asian Survey, Vol.XXXVII, No.4 (April 1977), p.299.

- Fifth, the June 1996 Philippines - Great Britain military co-operation understanding pledged to support Manila with the presence of British naval forces in the region;
- Sixth, the ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) is seen as a means to engage China in "military lateral security dialogue";¹⁵
- Seventh, the ASEAN states support the presence of the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific area to play a role of balancer in the Asia-Pacific region.

These features reveal that ASEAN is quite concerned with China anti-status quoist stance.

Civilizational Threat

South East Asia has long and extensive historical ties with China. In fact, it had borrowed much of the Confucian Chinese tradition and enriched itself. However, in South East Asia, though the Chinese population comprise a minority, they control much of the wealth. For instance in Indonesia ethnic Chinese comprise about 4% of Indonesia's 200 million people and yet they control 60% of the country's assets.¹⁶ In the context of the currency crisis in South East Asia, the problem of riots against the Chinese has become an acute

¹⁵ Ibid., p.300.

¹⁶ Susan Berfield, "Looking for Social Justice," Asia Week, Vol.24, No.11, (March 20), 1998, p.26.

and hazardous problem. Ethnic rifts between Malays and Chinese and Indonesian Chinese in times of economic distress are not a new feature. However, in the face of a newly resurgent China the current ethnic riots exacerbate cultural divisions and fear of cultural/economic hegemony. However, much of the threat theory is a creation of existing states policies of exclusion of the Chinese population and will remain unless the South East Asian governments carve out fair policies by including the Chinese minority into the military and civil services and thereby reposing faith in the minority ethnic community. In this context, however, Huntington's thesis of monolithic Confucian culture thus stands disputed.

EAST ASIA

Economic Threat

Japan and North & South Korea, the major East Asian countries, however, confronted no economic threat from China until the present currency crisis. For long China has got official assistance as well as bilateral aid from Japan. In turn, China provided Japan enormous natural resources and a vast Chinese market. In the wake of the economic crisis, the Japanese Yen has had to be propped up. China, meanwhile is seen to be supporting the stricken economies by not

devaluating its own currency even if its exports are affected and is hailed as an economic saviour rather than a threat.

As regards China's relations with South Korea, the urgency for reform and modernization in China after 1978 mitigated China's hostility against South Korea. China followed the 'Two Korea Policy' and it has emerged as one of the Rok's principal trading partners in a very short period of time. Their bilateral trade reached \$ 8.2 billion in 1992 - the year diplomatic relations were established and doubled over the next 3 years to \$ 16.9 billion in 1995, and is projected to surpass the \$50 billion mark by the year 2000.¹⁷

Military Threat

It is China's military direction that has concerned Japan the most. China's military development, arms and technology transfer from Russia posed potential threats to Japanese security. This concern impelled Japan to enter into an alliance with the U.S. by signing a joint declaration in April 1996. Japan is also concerned about its maritime security for it is dependent on sea lanes in the south China Sea for trade and communication. Therefore, China's

¹⁷ Taehokim, "Korean perspectives on PLA Modernization and the future East Asian Security Environment", in Jonathan D. Pollak and Richard H. Yang (eds.), In China's Shadow, Washington D.C.:Rand, 1998, p.52.

exercises in the South China Sea are a growing concern for Japan as well as for most Asian nations.

For South Korea, the Sino-North Korean military relationship remains a constant source of concern. Further, potential tension between China and South Korea may escalate into a maritime conflict on the issue of securing maritime resources and sea lanes of communication (SLOCS) in the Yellow Sea region. Also the row over the issue of the dividing line in the Yellow Sea between China and South Korea has remained unresolved. This unresolved situation instigated quite a few maritime disputes over illegal Chinese fishing and obstruction of South Korea oil exploration and drilling operations.¹⁸ The fourth concern of South Korea, however, remains China's growing military capability. China's growing strategic partnership with the U.S., a long time military ally of South Korea, has helped to allay South Korean fears. As well, China's role in mediating the North Korean nuclear inspection standoff has also cast China in the role of peace-keeper instead of peace-breaker.

Civilizational Threat

For Japan and Korea China poses no civilizational threat since much of their cultural traits were drawn from China and were

¹⁸ Ibid., p.54.

assimilated in the culture of these two states. For South Korea and North Korea, China has historically been less of a cultural or political threat than Japan which has coveted Korea as a gateway to the Asian continent.

CENTRAL ASIA

The disintegration of the Soviet Union "has reopened the ancient contest for influence in Central Asia, a region three times the size of Western Europe."¹⁹ The Central Asian region comprises of Afghanistan and the ex-Soviet states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkeministan and Ujbekistan. In fact, the Central Asian States are politically unstable, economically impoverished although rich in natural energy resource such as oil and natural gas and ethnically fragmented. This creates a very fluid situation and invites outside influences - the primary potential influences are India, Russia, Turkey, Iran and China.

Military Threat

As regards the attitude of the Central Asian states to China, basically they do not see China as a threat. Instead, China's position in Central Asia is precarious because of its possessions of Xinjiang - a

¹⁹ William H. Overholt, China The next economic Superpower, London: Nicholson, 1993, p.238.

Muslim dominated area affected by "nascent Islamic secessionist movement in the region."²⁰ In April 1996, China, Russia and the three former Soviet states - Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan signed a historic treaty in Shanghai on demilitarizing the nearly 8000 km long former Sino-Soviet border. This bound the five nations to build military confidence along the old Sino-Soviet border which was the scene of tension and armed clashes in the past.

Economic Threat

To CIS China does not pose any economic threat but is rather an economic opportunity. In fact, as W. Overholt writes, "China is attractive because it has merely sought to trade and in contrast with Iran and Turkey, has not made assertive efforts to obtain political influence."²¹ In fact, Beijing's political interests have been defensive in order to avoid disorder that would spread to Xinjiang. China instead shows greater interests in the economic development of Xinjiang and Central Asia.

Civilisational Threat

China does not present a civilizational threat to Central Asia but Central Asia does present one because of its potential to export

²⁰ K. Warikoo, "Ethnic Religious Resurgence in Xinjiang", Eurasian Studies, Vol.2, No.4, (Winter), 1995-96, p.32.

²¹ Overholt, p.240.

Islamic fundamentalism to China's Muslim populations. In fact, the Uighur Liberation Front was formed by the Uighurs in Kazakhstan. This aimed to liberate the Uighur motherland from the Chinese rule. Therefore, China was increasingly cautious, particularly after an abortive fundamentalism uprising on 5th April, 1992 that left 21 dead in the town of Barren in Xinjiang. For a while China closed down the Karakoram Highway and Khunjerab pass which crosses into Pakistan to stave off Islamic fundamentalism.²²

SOUTH ASIA

Economic Threat

Both China and India are pursuing the policy of liberalization and modernization. Both are vying for the same markets and wooing the same investors from abroad. Therefore, economically both are pitted against each other and the relationship is therefore, bound to be competitive if not conflictual.

Military Threat

But it is the issue of military threat that is the major irritant in the Sino-Indian relation. This military threat had two aspects - conventional and nuclear threat.

²² Ahmed Rashid, The Resurgence of Central Asia : Islam or Nationalism?, London:Oxford University Press, 1994, p.222.

Conventional military problems are by far the key problems between India and China. Both share a boundary of 2000 km which is disputed and over which the two countries went to war in 1962. A major section of the border on the Chinese side lies in the Tibet area which constitutes the "single most complicated issue between the two ancient civilizations."²³ The recent pronouncement by Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes of the BJP led government in India reflected India's concerns over China's activities.²⁴ In spite of the offensive and undiplomatic statements by the Defence Minister, the ground realities reveal reason for India's concern. The strengthening of China's military position in Tibet, the increasing Chinese military, economic and political presence in Myanmar (a region of strategic importance to India) and the virtual conversion of it into a 'strategic backyard' of China, are cause for alarm in India.

The nuclear issue is yet another irritant. It has two dimensions. Viewed from the bilateral dimension, the China factor "weighs heavily on Indian security considerations... India's own nuclear

²³ Swaran Singh, "Sino-Indian Relations", World Focus, Vol.19, No.1, (January), 1998, p.18.

²⁴ Inder Malhotra, "Defence Minister on Chinese Threat", The Hindu, 8th April, 1998, p.10.

development owes a great deal to the perceived threat posed by Sino-Pakistan military ties.²⁵

Viewed from the multilateral dimension, India is "quite sensitive to China's increased co-operation with Pakistan on Islamabad's nuclear plant."²⁶ Besides China's persisting supplies of M-11, M-9, CSS-5 nuclear capable missiles, American intelligence agencies also confirm China's supply of 5000 ring magnets and a furnace plant both of which are required to enrich nuclear weapons.

The result of such a military threat from China in fact, provided the logic behind the recent May 11 and May 13, 1998 nuclear tests by India at Pokhran. The subsequent retaliatory testing of device by Pakistan again suggests that without Chinese help the Pakistani Bomb would not have come about.

The net effect of such nuclear testing is the generation of nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan and setting back improvement in Sino-Indian relations.²⁷

²⁵ Abu Taher Salahuddin Ahmed, "India-China Relations in the 1990s", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.26, No.1, 1996, p.111.

²⁶ Ibid., p.111.

²⁷ J.N. Dixit, "Pokhran and our neighbours", The Hindu, June 27, 1998, p.10.

Civilizational Threat

Interestingly, though China and India represented two great civilizations yet they have never clashed along civilizational fault lines. The clashes in 1962 were the legacy of colonial rule and not in any way a civilizational clash. The spread of Buddhism to China did not follow military conquest, nor was it part of a concerted effort to proselytise and convert. Buddhism spread to China through the efforts of individual rather than through state sponsored policies and the process was spread over centuries as the accounts of China's travellers and pilgrims attest. It coexisted, for the large part, peacefully with Confucian Chinese concepts and practises.

From the survey of the two perspectives of Western and Asian nations we find a somewhat complex picture. While there are no commonly hold perceptions, East and West, on all three areas from which a threat may emerge, there is ample grounds for perceptions of threat from China. The question that needs to be asked, however, is : how valid is this threat perception. An investigation of China's place in world politics in the post-Cold War era provides us with some answers.

In Shee Poon Kim's opinion China's strategic thinking represents a holistic outlook. It includes not only military but

economic political and security concerns as well. China's external strategic thinking is linked to its internal political, economic and security needs. In fact, in the post Cold War era "China's primary concern is internal rather than external security."²⁸ The emphasis on internal security is grounded in China's historical past.

From the time of the European intrusion and the First Opium War of 1840 the fundamental issue dominating the Chinese mind was the survival of China and, therefore, the regeneration of its national wealth and power by adopting the path of modernization. This urge for national wealth and power permeated, in the 20th century the Chinese national movement and the Communist revolution. This theme was preeminent in Mao's perspective on the need for China to achieve economic independence and self-reliance. This was also the emphasis in pre 1989 Dengist China but this time the quest for modernization of China found its answer in China's integration with the world's capitalist economy. In the post Cold War era it is the same motivation that guide Chinese foreign policy. One may say that right from the Opium War to the Post-Cold War era China's aim of achieving national wealth and power has been an ongoing process. In

²⁸ Paper presented by Shee Poon Kim, "China's Strategic Thinking and Policies Towards the South China Sea", in International Conference on Conflict and Order (17th August to 21 August), 1997, Seoul, Korea.

fact, the path adopted to achieve this goal is economic modernization. Therefore, peace and development have become the cornerstones of Chinese foreign policy under Deng, for without a peaceful environment no development would materialize. Therefore, internal security has primacy in China's foreign policy.

This internal security could be achieved by resolving external conflicts and tensions. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the consequent collapse of bipolar politics definitely aided in easing much of China's external tensions in global politics. More importantly "since the mid-1980s there has been a significant change in Chinese thinking and China's approach toward the idea of Confidence Building Measures".²⁹ The main reason for such a shift in Chinese thinking again points to the primacy of economic pragmatism that has made China willing to resolve territorial disputes and political problems through peaceful means including CBMs. In the mid 1990s the Sino-Russian agreements were the first to establish CBMs between the two sides. These were followed by multilateral agreements with Russia, China and the Central Asian Republics. On November 10, 1997 China and Russia signed a historic demarcation treaty ending their

²⁹ Xia Ping, "The evolution of Chinese Views Toward CBMs", in Michael Krepon (ed.), Chinese Perspectives on Confidence Building Measures, Report No.23, May 1997, p.16.

300 years old dispute along their 4,300 km long eastern border.³⁰

Again on Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to China in September 1993, the two countries signed an "Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the line of Actual control in the India-China Border Areas", which stipulated that before the border question between India and China is finally settled, both sides should strictly respect and observe the line of Actual control and that each would keep their respective military forces along the line of Actual control to the lowest level, in accordance with good neighbourly and friendly relations between the two countries.

However, branding China as the potential threat number one by Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes jolted Sino-Indian relations. Second, in the post Pokharan II period, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's letter to Mr. Clinton invoking the China factor (apart from the Pakistan threat) in defence of the nuclear tests set in further deterioration in Sino-Indian ties.³¹ To contain the adverse diplomatic effect of Pokharan II, however, the Indian government has shown keenness to have 'the best of relations with China'.

³⁰ Hindu, 17th November, 1997.

³¹ K.K. Katyal, "Glory and Gloom", The Hindu, Monday, (May25), 1998, p.10.

In the Post-Cold War era the major concern of China is two fold: First, territorial integrity and second, sovereignty. On these issues China is not willing to compromise at any cost. From this perspective the question of Tibet and Taiwan loom large. China occupied Tibet in 1950 on the basis of its sovereign rights and territorial integrity. Further if China wants Taiwan to revert back to the mainland, it is again on the question of sovereignty.

In fact, the issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity are again rooted in the demands of internal stability and domestic development. It is widely held that the loss of Taiwan would imply loss of legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party. Also it would instigate secessionist movements in Xinjiang and Tibet. Therefore, the unification of Taiwan is the most important security problem for China and it also implies that the unification of Taiwan is a necessary step to establish China's sovereign territorial integrity, even encouraging the use of force if peaceful unification is thwarted. In fact, many scholars observe that China's military modernization and the shift from 'Peoples War', to 'Peoples War under modern condition' bears testimony to its willing to use force when national survival and national status is at stake. Therefore, China's purpose is defensive while its military strategy may be offensive.

But China again is a pragmatic power. If it adopts offensive measures it would only be if the very real needs of economic growth and sustenance are at stake. It views the use of force in every circumstances as counter productive. Secondly, China is aware that such offensive measures would lead to its encirclement by the U.S., Japan and ASEAN nations. Thirdly the exaggerated descriptions in the West of "China's airforce and navy also project defence expenditures that are no where near reasonable estimates of its defence budget even taking into account the patterns of hidden expenditure and annual increases."³² Therefore, if China employs large scale force projection in the South China Sea to lay claim over the region, it would entail diversion of enormous resources from its economic development porogramme which would in turn cause tremendous domestic unrest.³³

The view of China as an economic threat emerges from its booming rate of economic growth and its favourable balance of trade ratios especially with the U.S. Today when the age of imperialism is over, direct warfare to subdue a nation economically is not possible, trade wars and economic sanctions and linking trade to social clauses

³² Madhu Bhalla, "Review Article : East beats West", Sunday (14-20 September), 1997, p.47.

³³ Ibid., p.47.

in global institutions are often used as curbs. Therefore, issues such as human rights and environmental laws gain predominance. China, as a sovereign nation, has retaliated against the U.S. pressure by arguing that the concept of human rights is defined differently in the Western and Chinese tradition. Hence China regards the U.S. judgement on Chinese human rights as an infringement in its internal affairs.

The question of human rights brings us to the question of civilizational threat perception shared by the Western powers. The civilizational threat harks back to the American missionary Samuel Wells William's, 'the Middle Kingdom' published in 1848. The underlying purpose of the book was to 'know' China in order to aid the West in controlling it. The picture of an old and moribund Chinese civilization as opposed to the modern and dynamic civilisation of the West created a specific way of knowing that became the basis of Western arguments for carving it up in the 19th century. What William's did was to frame a methodology to define another culture so as to ensure its political subjugation. In the similar vein, Samuel P. Huntington's controversial 'The Clash of Civilizations and the Remarking of World Order', (1996) defines a paradigm by which Western powers can "understand" the basic features of the Eastern world. To Huntington, "primary adversary of Western civilization is

Islam and Confucianism which have formed a coalition challenging Western values, interests and power."³⁴ Precisely China is seen as an emergent power whose interests lie in opposition to the West and therefore, the West must find ways to contain the 'hegemon'.

Thus both S. Wells William in the 19th century and Huntington in the 20th century undertook significant projects for 'knowing' China in order to confront in the first instance an obdurate and in the second a resurgent China. The manner in which they confronted China revealed less the culture of China than their motivation for knowing China. Therefore, the seeds of the threat theory lie in the basic assumption of Western scholarship that cultures necessarily confront, conquer and assimilate rather than that one cultures can also accommodate inform and provide insights into another.

In view of this analysis, Clinton's visit to China in June 1998 can be looked upon as evidence of a growing U.S. apprehension and its acknowledgement of China's growing power. Therefore, for U.S. policy-makers engaging and constraining China is the best policy in order to cope with China's rising power. As Joseph Nye in the Economist sums up, "if the U.S. treats China as an enemy new, it will

³⁴ Wang Zhongren, Beijing Review, p.7.

guarantee an enemy now the future."³⁵ So China must be constrained and engaged.

³⁵ Joseph Nye, "Clinton in China", The Economist (June 27), 1998, p.23.

CONCLUSION

China the "Rising Power", "China's Challenge to Asian Security", "The Awakening Dragon" are among the numerous captions splashed across current affairs magazines, newspapers, books and academic journals. The frequent and popular use of these captions raises questions about the reason for the current phobia over China's economic and political rise.

Scholars have come up with variants of threats from China. The robust economic growth of China is being regarded as an economic threat. China's massive military build up is being viewed as a military threat. Again China is being looked upon as a civilizational threat.

This charge of threat raises crucial questions about, first, whether China really is a threat and to whom. Second, is the threat perception grounded in the region's reality or is it only a Western perception. Thirdly, whether the Western perception of China as a threat is a homogenous one or whether there exist various shades of threat perceptions of China. These three questions, in effect, question the validity of the Western conception of the Chinese view of the world order. This Western conception is based on the notion of Sino-centrism that dominated Chinese perceptions until the 19th century.

Though the notion of Sino-centrism no longer enjoys an overt appeal, the basic assumptions of the Sino-centric world view still characterize recent studies on China. However, Sino-centrism is a distorted tool to explain China's perception of the world order and has largely produced a distorted picture.

It is in the Asian perception of China and its role in world politics that the Western heuristic tool of Sino-centrism can be tested. The growth of regional blocs like ASEAN in South-east Asia, which seek to engage China on regional issues, may be seen as a positive response to the growing power of China.

China's perception of the world order also contradict threat theories. Chinese leaders vociferously insist that there is no cause for alarm. They regard the basic purpose of the China threat theory as containing China's development. For long China considered itself as the centre of its civilizational world - the Middle Kingdom. This concept of Middle Kingdom, however, disintegrated with the Western onslaught when a redefinition of the Chinese world became imperative. The Chinese concept of Middle Kingdom was transformed into a distorted western notion of Middle Kingdom to Vindicate Western dynamism and justify mercantilist intervention, on the one hand, and emphasize Chinese weakness, stasis and obstructionism

on the other. The Middle Kingdom concept, as understood by the Chinese, was woven around a specific view of three principal elements - the state, power and security.

Within China's partially conceived geographical "world" notions of civilizations took on a universal definition. The Son of Heaven was responsible not only for the security of the Chinese State but for "civilization" defined as a whole. Therefore, implicit in the Son of Heaven concept was a definition of the State as a civilizational state. But Chinese culture was relatively accommodationist. Therefore, the Chinese state while acknowledging that the culture of the "other" was different allowed the "other" to coexist. In contrast Western culture was absolutist and hence confronted and dominated the "other" and therefore, was coercive in nature.

China was indeed a superior power yet it was not a hegemonic expansive power. For China security matters have reigned supreme. The strategy of Ssu-ma highlighted the Chinese aversion for expansion and domination and at the same time maintained that at the time of peace the nation should not forget the possibility of war. The Western descriptions of the Tribute System as one through which the Chinese worked out their imperial designs on neighbouring powers is faulty and open to question as well. The Tribute System led

to intermeshing of the societies of the Central, East and South-East Asia. It was a highly institutionalized system incorporating economic, political cultural dimensions. The basic purpose of the Tribute system was to secure peace and order. Through the Tribute System the Chinese State devised a scheme of engagement whose primary objective was to accommodate the non-Chinese powers and co-exist peacefully. Therefore, the Tribute System subsumed China's accommodationist policy.

In the 1840s China failed to engage with the new mercantile powers of the West. The Chinese state which was already in the throes of socio-economic crisis and dynastic decline could not meet the new challenge of Western intrusion. This gave a blow to the Chinese Middle Kingdom concept and saw the virtual degeneration of China into a semi-colonial appendage of the West.

Europe's definition of China was linked to its own views on the nature of the state, of power and of security. The Western notion of the state was grounded in specific political and economic philosophies that outlined the nature of power, the location of sovereignty and the relation of the individual to the state. Underscored by the location of sovereignty the establishment of a

secular republican power in the 18th century upheld the rights of the individual.

The economic changes such as the end of feudalism saw mercantile and free trade principles take hold. These were geared to encourage individual development and to enhance national growth through expansive mercantilist endeavour.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the state - that is, the protection of the nascent nation state safeguarding individual rights and enhancement of economic growth - the states of Europe built up a strong military power. Externally European international relations had to be regulated by a new system of international law. In fact, the security system of the Western power was based on the principle of the Balance of Power. And diplomacy in the Western concept was basically a system to avoid conflicts. Security in Europe, internally, aimed at protecting the private property of the individual and the property of the state. In China internal and external order rested on "traditional standards of goodness, rather than on ... any legal precepts of behaviour."¹ The five Confucian relationships often provided the vocabulary for specific Tributary relationships. Such differences, in effect, created the foundation for Western perceptions

¹ Adda B. Bozeman, Politics and Culture in International History (Princeton:Princeton University Press, 1960) p.137.

of the Chinese World view - a perception of the Chinese world view that persisted into the 1960s and which found its manifestations in the Sino-centric view of the Chinese world order.

The primary assumptions of Sino-centrism were, first that China perceived itself as a centrally located paramount power. This central locus of power also defined the periphery over which China exerted varying degrees of control. Secondly, China represented an ethno-centric power with a strong sense of cultural superiority and regarded other nations not just as unequal but also inferior.

It was around this concept of Sino-centrism that the present notion of the China threat has emerged. China has been projected as an unsatiated power, trying hard to retrieve her lost greatness. Therefore, China's primary goal is to expand and dominate the world. It's massive arms and armaments build up and its high rate of economic development are therefore, regarded as inputs into its expansionist zeal.

If one is to seek an alternative to the Sino-centric framework to present Western constructs of China one has only to look at China's relations with the non-western world. In fact, it is in Asia that china's world view is most clearly manifested giving as an understanding of it that is clearly contrary to the West's definition.

In the South East Asian states the dual and complementary forces of politically weak states and strategic Locii constituted its development. This enabled China to influence the region as a stabilizing actor. The tributary relationship with China gave the south East Asian States "recognition of their legitimacy and trading status."² Even when Vietnam, Laos, Combodia, Malaya and Java were all "subordinate" or "dependent" states, the concept of dependent state could only be understood in the "context of the traditional Confucian cultural relations rather than by the Western legalistic concept."³ This rendered stability to the relationship between China and the South Eastern countries. The Confucian code of conduct was assimilated and adapted to the South East Asian region and China acted as balancing power.

From Central Asia for more than 2000 years down to the 19th century the Chinese rulers confronted the perennial threat of nomadic raids. The policy that was evolved to control the Inner Asian tribes was both defensive and offensive with war, the tribute system and economic aid as a form of containment all playing a vital role.

² Kenneth R. Hall, Maritime Trade and State : Development in Early South East Asia (Honolulu:University of Hawaii Press, 1985) p.43.

³ Chun-tu-hsueh, Dimensions of China's Foreign Relations (New York:Praeger Publication, 1977) p.39.

In East Asia, for strategic reasons at various times Korea came under direct Chinese control. Korea, being threatened by Japan, preferred to hold fast to China which was strong and stable. China's relations with Japan in the pre-modern era were limited to the adoption of significant aspects of Chinese culture and were thus of little political importance except for precluding Japanese influence on Korea. In South Asia, China's relations with India were confined to cultural and economic ties and saw no political or diplomatic ties. In fact, two great civilizations co-existed side by side.

A few inferences can thus be drawn. First, China did not exhibit any imperialist designs, "cultural expansion and migratory settlement in new lands should not be associated with particular policies or with contemporary regimes."⁴ China intervened in the interest of the security of the Chinese empire.

A consideration of various terms of Chinese foreign policy namely national interest, security and state in the backdrop of the three major periods of modern Chinese history namely, the Western intrusion, the Post Civil War period and Maoist China, and the Post Cultural Revolution era and Dengist China also indicate that the threat theory is essentially flawed.

⁴ C.P. Fitzgerald, The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People (Delhi:Vikas Publications, 1972) p.XV.

During the period of Western intrusion, the notion of national interest, state, power and security in Chinese history were all linked to one common objective - the survival of China. Through several reform processes China attempted to resolve its 19th century crisis and find a niche for itself in the world arena. It's aim was to rise again to the great heights from which it had fallen. Therefore, China sought cultural transformation to overcome the cultural crisis that it viewed as responsible for its predicament. Since the emphasis was on cultural regeneration rather than on emerging as a military power, the concept of the Chinese state, national interest, power and security were yet to become major political themes. These themes in fact, came into focus after the May 4th movement when resistance to imperialism received preeminence in Chinese political thought and culture. However, "the bottom line was the survival of the state, while the long term objective was national wealth and power."⁵

In the post Second World War era when the People's Republic of china (P.R.C.) was established, it confronted dilemmas over security, national interest and power in a newly defined state. Politically Chinese unification was incomplete. Economically, China was vulnerable. Militarily, it faced American military bases in Japan,

⁵ Colin Mackerras, Eastern Asia : An Introductory History (Melbourne:Longman Cheshire, 1992) p.171.

the Philippines and Taiwan. Mao's conception of the state was based on the experiences of the Chinese revolution. The ultimate goal of the Chinese state was to transform China from a "new democracy" into a socialist and communist society. In the new state, sovereignty was located, theoretically with the people but in reality with the party and the object of the state was to create a strong and prosperous China by implementing an inclusive "common program".

National interest was based on issues of sovereignty and economic interest. Mao's conception of power envisaged China as a regional and global power. Initially constrained by the cold war environment China from the 1970s began to implement policies that would fulfil these objectives. China's admission in the U.N. as a permanent member of the Security Council in 1972 "marked the recognition of China as a legitimate state in the international community."⁶

For Mao's china the issue of security gained primacy in view of the emergence of Cold-War politics and a weak domestic political-economic situation after the civil war period in China. During the Cold War China's position was rather vulnerable to super power conflicts.

⁶ Sui Sheng Zhao, Power Competition in East Asia : From the Old Chinese World Order to Post-Cold War Regional Multipolarity (London:Macmillan, 1997) p.190.

Hence Chinese foreign policy perceptions reflected a defensive posture.

China in the aftermath of the cultural revolution and during the first decade of Deng Xiao Ping's leadership exhibited an urge to play the role of a major actor in world affairs. Therefore, China embarked on the path of market socialism or socialism with Chinese characteristics. This essentially meant the subordination of ideology to economic pragmatism and politics to economics. Therefore, the achievement of modernization, peace and development became the official objectives. Again, with economic modernization, ideology lost its dominating influence. Instead, China has resorted to appeals of nationalism. The Post-Cold War brought tremendous and perceptible changes in the world balance of power. However, the key aspects of Chinese foreign policy - nationalist spirit and national security - remained dominating themes for they are the primary determinants for Chinese economic growth and modernization.

A historical analysis of China's perceptions of the world order gives us insights into the recent China threat theory. The Post-Cold War era has fundamentally altered power equations in world politics. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, resulted in a unipolar world represented by the U.S. and on the other, raised

considerably the profile of China as a great power. In fact, in the Deng and post-Deng eras China has registered rapid economic growth and prosperity and the argument often made is that a strong China would pose a threat to world peace.

However, from the survey of the perspectives of Western and Asian nations we find a somewhat complex picture. There are no commonly held perceptions, East and West, on all three areas - economic, military and civilization - from which a threat may emerge but the validity of the threat theory is consistently questioned by the evidence from the survey.

TH-7303

China's primary concern is internal rather than external security and this concern grounded on China's historical past. The Chinese conviction is that internal security could be achieved by resolving external conflicts and tensions. In the Post-Cold War era the major concern of China has been twofolds - territorial integrity and sovereignty rooted in the demands of internal stability and domestic development. Many scholars observe that China's military modernization and the shift from "Peoples War" to "Peoples War under modern condition" bears testimony to its willingness to use force when national survival and national status is at stake.

Therefore, China's purpose is defensive while its military strategy may be offensive.

The argument for China as a civilizational threat creates a paradigm by which Western powers can "understand" the basic features of the Eastern world whose interests lie in opposition to the West. The seeds of the threat theory, lie in the basic assumption of Western scholarship that culture necessarily confront, conquer and assimilate rather than that one cultures can also accommodate inform and provide insights into another. Therefore, this study also unveils, in part, the major constructs that have influenced past scholarship on China.

For long the study of Asian civilization and culture has been understood by borrowing and applying "analytical concepts from Western derived schemes"⁷ and to fit Chinese history into Western models prompting a very distorted idea of China. Thus the notion that China represents a "Threat" has gained strength because the basic concern lies in China's emerging power and anticipated challenges to the U.S.'s policy of "constraint" - a combination of engagement and constraint - to deal with China. Such a policy, again, carries the seeds of confrontation and the Western nation's urge to dominate

⁷ Philip C. Huang, "The Paradigmatic Crisis in Chinese Studies : Paradoxes in Social and Economic Studies", Modern China, Vol.17, No.3 (July 1991), p.335.

globally. Therefore, the threat theory is viewed by Chinese analysts as built up in order to demonize China, inhibit its growth and isolate it in the world. Dai Xiaohua traces the key reason behind the American China threat theory as safeguarding U.S. national interests which are dominated by its "hegemonic inclinations for foreign aggrandizement and maintenance of its position as the sole super power in the world."⁸

In conclusion, in the Post-Cold War era peace and development have become the cornerstones of Chinese foreign policy. The two objectives are geared to attain stability and sustainable growth and prosperity in China. Therefore, China has embarked basically on two mechanisms to achieve these ends.

Internally, in order to maintain stability it has intensified economic modernization and reform programmes and increasingly integrated itself with the world capitalist economy. At the same time, in order to do away with the basic contradiction of a Socialist market economy arising out of handling the relations between planning and market regulations in a Communist State, Deng pointed out in 1992 that planning and market regulation were both only means of controlling economic activity. This laid to rest speculation over the

⁸ Dai Xiaohua, "Why and how the U.S. Media work to Demonize China", Beijing Review, Vol.40, No.31, (August 4-10, 1997) p.8.

possibility of debates on political change in China. From the perspective of China's political leadership such debates on the nature of the Chinese state would lead to internal instability.

Externally, China reiterated the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence in building a new and just international order. At the same time China has favoured a multipolar world with no single dominating power. This concept of multipolar world, in fact harks back to Mao's Three Worlds Theory. In 1992 the emphasis on multipolarization was reflected in the Chinese leader Jiang Zemin's Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China held in September 1997.

Therefore, economic reform and modernization, the reiteration of multipolarization and five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence are all inputs into the creation of a peaceful world order. Hence, China instead of being a threat to world peace is in many ways a guarantor of a stable world order since its own sustainability and growth depend on just such international order.

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