

# **Assessing the Impact of Strategic Culture on Chinese Regional Security Policies in South Asia**

**A Monograph  
by  
MAJ Craig A. Martin  
U.S. Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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Major Craig A. Martin

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Approved by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael D. Mihalka, Ph.D.

Monograph Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
John C. Valledor, COL, IN

Second Reader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., COL, IN

Director,  
School of Advanced  
Military Studies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

Director,  
Graduate Degree  
Programs

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## **Abstract**

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF STRATEGIC CULTURE ON CHINA'S REGIONAL SECURITY POLICIES IN SOUTH ASIA by MAJ Craig A. Martin, U.S. Army, 47 pages.

Over the past 60 years, the Sino-Indian relationship has swung from a cool détente to all out war. Many Western international relations theorists applying the “realist” school of thought view China as a dangerous threat to not only the region but the world. Other experts, however, propose that China has more passive intentions and, using a strategic culture model, find these intentions to be made clear. Given these approaches, how can American policymakers best decipher Chinese security intentions towards India in order to create effective foreign policy? This monograph suggests that to understand Chinese intentions, it is beneficial to examine current leading Western international relations theories and their functional equivalence to the proposed strategic culture paradigms which purportedly influence China's strategic leaders. The theory with the most influence should seemingly dominate China's security policy decisions towards India. An assessment of these theories suggests that although China's current actions may look like challenges to India and the region, the dominant influence of the Confucian-Mencian tradition of Chinese strategic culture reveals the intent of China to maintain a hedging approach which seeks to not only build a strong and prosperous nation but also sustain regional harmony.

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## Introduction

“As two [of the] largest developing countries in the world, China and India have the same or similar stand on international issues. Cooperation between the two giants will benefit not only themselves but the whole world.”<sup>1</sup> The question is whether China views this cooperation as a temporary policy or one which will change in the short term if China were to gain strategic superiority over India either economically, militarily or both. This monograph proposes that understanding Chinese intentions towards India requires an examination of Western international relations theories as they relate to Chinese strategic culture. This then should be followed by a further examination of Chinese strategic culture and its influence on China’s leadership concerning relations with India and its neighbors in a time of war. The form of Chinese strategic culture with the most influence should be seen to dominate decisions on the development of policy towards India over time. Although China’s current actions may look like challenges to India and the region, the dominant influence of the Confucian-Mencian tradition of Chinese strategic culture reveals the intent of China to maintain a hedging approach which seeks to not only build a strong and prosperous nation but also maintain regional harmony.

Whether evaluating Imperial China, Communist China or its modern day equivalent, there is no question that China has an ancient culture. China has one of the world’s oldest and most complex cultures. Chinese written history dates back at least 3,300 years. Ongoing archeological studies provide evidence of possibly even more ancient beginnings in a culture that flourished between 2500 and 2000 B.C. in the area which is now Central China as well as the lower Huang He (Yellow River) Valley on north China. The migration, amalgamation, and development of this culture over centuries brought about a distinctive system of philosophy,

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<sup>1</sup>Ambassador Zhang Yan, “Ambassador Zhang Yan Relives China-India Relations,” *China.org.cn*, [http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2010-03/28/content\\_19702391\\_2.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2010-03/28/content_19702391_2.htm) (accessed September 25, 2010).

writing, music, art, and governmental organization that came to be uniquely recognizable as Chinese civilization. Therefore, analyzing Chinese culture may provide new insights to traditionally Western perspectives of international relations.

The predominant Western perspective is that China is a real threat and that this “China Threat” dominates perceptions not only amongst the public but within the military as well.<sup>2</sup> For example national security journalist Bill Gertz has made the assumption that:

The People’s Republic of China is the most serious national security threat the United States faces at present and will remain so into the foreseeable future. . . . The reason Americans should take the threat from China so seriously is that it puts at risk the very national existence of the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Within the United States Department of Defense, an annual report sent to Congress in 2008 concerning the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) military power expressed concern over the “uncertainty” of China’s course “particularly regarding how its expanding military power might be used.”<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report* assessed that “China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional U.S. military advantages.”<sup>5</sup> The Joint Operating Environment (JOE) 2010, published by United States Joint Forces Command, depicts China equally as a prospective partner and a potential threat—not merely concerning the US, but

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<sup>2</sup>“CNN Opinion Research Poll,” *CNN*, November 11-14, 2010, under “Opinion Research Polls,” <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2010/images/11/17/rel16f.pdf> (accessed February 26, 2011); “ABC News/Washington Post poll: Views of China,” *ABC*, January 19, 2011, under “Polling,” <http://www.langerresearch.com/uploads/1120a4%20China.pdf> (accessed February 26, 2011).

<sup>3</sup>Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People’s Republic Targets America* (Washington, DC: Regency, 2000), 199. Gertz further stated that. “This grave strategic threat [China] includes the disruption of vital U.S. interests in the Pacific region and even the possibility of a nuclear war that could cost millions of American lives. China’s hard-eyed communist rulers have set out on a coolly pragmatic course of strategic deception that masks their true goals: undermining the U.S. around the world and raising China to a position of dominant international political and military power.”

<sup>4</sup>United States Department of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2008* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2008), I.

<sup>5</sup>United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2006), 29.

to the peace and stability of the region and global status quo. The JOE elaborates that China is faced with major strategic alternatives that will decide “whether it will be ‘another bloody century,’ or one of peaceful cooperation.”<sup>6</sup> Seemingly, this uncertainty is due to the ongoing vagueness by which China approaches its foreign policy decision making.

Unlike the US, China is extremely secretive and many official documents are generally unavailable to outside sources. This secrecy means that the roots of China’s foreign policies are unknown and easily misunderstood by the application of Western international relations theories. Furthermore, current Western international relations theories may not adequately fulfill the requirements and considerations to effectively define Chinese actions.<sup>7</sup> The balance of power in the international system is by nature changed with the rise of a new great power. This rise provokes new challenges to both regional powers and other global great powers in the system, specifically, India and Japan regionally, and the United States globally. Given this challenge and the identified misunderstanding and possible distrust, there is the possibility for dire consequences in each nation’s foreign policy. As China maintains its ascendancy, it is vital that both the United States and regional policymakers alike understand how Chinese culture defines the way that nation sees the world and why it acts as it does when making foreign policy and regional security decisions.

Since India gained its independence from Great Britain in 1947 it has been involved in a number of conflicts both internally and with its neighbors, namely China. Since the late-1940s, India and Pakistan, created at the same time after the end of the British Raj, have continuously

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<sup>6</sup>United States Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), *The Joint Operating Environment 2010: Challenges and Implications for the Future Joint Force* (Suffolk: JFCOM, Center for Joint Futures, 2010), 40.

<sup>7</sup>Western international relations theories were developed by Western authors with a generally common ontological perspective. Furthermore, these theoreticians supported their concepts using empirical data from Western states to support their arguments.

feuded over a variety of issues such as territory, religion and regional dominance.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, India and China have maintained a difficult and stand-offish relationship which has in one case led to war, the Sino-Indian War of 1962, but most of the time is dramatized by a cool détente as seen in the remarks of the Chinese ambassador to India in the opening lines of this monograph. The introduction of new states to the south of China (Pakistan and later Bangladesh), where there had previously existed only one (India), created a unique environment worth studying to understand China's foreign policy towards India and the region. Furthermore, there is a known Chinese diplomatic tradition of "utilizing the barbarians to check the barbarians" (yi yi zhi yi).<sup>9</sup> It is just such a tradition which could easily lead to the promulgation of conflict between India and Pakistan in order to suit Chinese ends. Thus, defining how China maintains relations with neighbors shared by both itself and India might aid in determining China's approach to international relations.

In applying the strategic culture framework, the monograph begins with an *a priori* analysis of the Western perspectives of the international relations theories of realism and liberalism. Further analysis then examines the development of strategic culture as a theory and finally the two strands of strategic culture identified within China by Ian Johnston in his analysis of the *Seven Military Classics*. This final analysis will consider how each strand might influence the development of Chinese policy towards India. The two schools of thought are categorized by

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<sup>8</sup>The British Raj is the name commonly given to the period of British rule in the Asian sub-continent (then India but now consisting of Pakistan, India and Burma) which lasted from around 1857 until the partition of India in 1947. The Indian Rebellion, or Sepoy Mutiny, occurred in 1857 when hired Indian soldiers revolted against the British East India Company which required the British Army to step in and quell the revolt across the country. The following year the British re-organized the army, financial system and administration in India removing control from the British East India Company and placing it directly under control of the British Sovereign with direct governance being directed from the crown through a "Viceroy".

<sup>9</sup>Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 27.

Johnston as the parabellum paradigm and the Confucian-Mencian paradigm.<sup>10</sup> The parabellum paradigm resembles Western realist theory regarding conflict. The Confucian-Mencian paradigm resembles Western liberal theory regarding conflict and its avoidance. Given these differences, each strand of Chinese strategic culture will theoretically produce distinctive applications of policy in regards to the instruments of national power. This monograph will examine the application of the Chinese instruments of national power, articulated in the acronym DIME utilizing two case studies of Chinese interaction with India during periods of conflict.<sup>11</sup> It will then analyze the findings from the case studies to determine if the influence of a particular strand is seen to be more influential than the other. The final section consists of conclusions and implications for policy regarding Chinese intentions in the region.

## **International Relations Theories**

The re-emergence of China in the post Cold War landscape and by extension the foreign policy of China is something which has stimulated much interest in intelligence analysts and policy-makers across the globe. Although the continued rapid growth of China is certainly not guaranteed, the profound effects of China's growth cannot be underestimated either globally or across the orient. Given China's resurgence, many have attempted to determine the methodology and beliefs by which China has crafted its evolving security and foreign policy perspectives within that region of the world. Numerous factors likely come into play regarding Chinese policy formulation which spans the realm from economic interdependence and trade expectations to security and deeply rooted cultural beliefs. Though liberalism and realism (or neo-realism) have

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<sup>10</sup>Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>11</sup>United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, Joint Publication 1* (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2007), 1-9 – 1-10. DIME is an acronym standing for the four recognized instruments of national power: diplomatic, information, military, and economic.

been the dominant international relations theories in recent years, the concept of strategic culture has emerged as a compelling consideration when attempting to identify the logic within the statecraft and foreign policy mechanisms of a state.<sup>12</sup>

The debate between realists and followers of strategic culture centers on whether it is possible to explain/predict state behavior without taking into account the particular characteristics of the state. This includes items such as a state's historical experiences, geographical context and cultural foundations. Most individuals who apply strategic culture don't claim the concept to be a standalone theory which exists separate from other theories.<sup>13</sup> It does consider aspects that traditional international relations theories have heretofore ignored. Realist and liberalist theories appear to share similar qualities with the Confucian-Mencian and parabellum paradigms of Chinese strategic culture as defined by Johnston. This author however, posits that the former theories are too limited in scope and fail to effectively explain the actions of Chinese decision makers. Finally, it is important to consider that both realism and liberalism are international relations theories which have been developed in the West. These theories maintain the perspectives of Western theorists while strategic culture theory considers the particular cultural attributes of any particular state. Each one of these theories informs Chinese strategic decision-making and policy formulation in separate and identifiable ways.

## **Realism Explained**

Despite significant differences in the methods, approaches and formulations of the community known as realism, there is little doubt that realism comprises a significant tradition

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<sup>12</sup>Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism," *Strategic Insights* 4, no. 10 (October 2005).

<sup>13</sup>Colin Gray, *The Geopolitics of Superpower* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 42-43.

regarding the explanation of the behavior of various states. Centered on an understanding of politics as a permanent struggle for power and security, realism has continuously sought to identify and explain how these various entities have sought to preserve their existence in a global environment where it is “every nation for itself”. Thus, realism depicts a rather bleak picture of world politics. The realist perspective of international relations is based on the assumptions that the world is essentially anarchic and that there is no central (global) authority which governs the behaviors of individual states.<sup>14</sup> The interaction of these individual states creates an environment where the ambitions, security and freedoms of each state are held in check one from another. The resultant competition results in a situation characterized by the competitive efforts of states to gain and preserve power while also attempting to enhance their security. Given this brutal arena, there is little reason for any state to trust another.<sup>15</sup> Thus, though cooperation between states may occur for selfish reasons, this cooperation has its limits due to the dominating logic of the system: security competition. Inherently then, a world where states do not compete for power, a true peace, is impossible according to realism. Furthermore, this concept of security competition has been derived from observing nations as single entities without much concern for their parts. These parts might provide a better understanding of particular actions taken by leaders who could be influenced by cultural influences.

The traditional field of international security studies has not paid very much attention to the concept of culture as a relevant factor. A 1988 study of the field conducted by Joseph Nye and

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<sup>14</sup>Realist scholars generally agree upon most aspects of international politics however there are also disagreements between leading realists regarding critical points in the theory. Hans Morgenthau suggests that states have a will to power, while another leading scholar, Kenneth Waltz, posits that states merely want to survive and therefore driven to maximize security. See: Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., (New York: Knopf, 1973); and Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Van Evera, “The Hard Realities of International Politics,” *Boston Review* 17, no.6 (1992):19.

Sean Lynn-Jones concluded of the field that, “strategic studies has been dominated for far too long by American ethno-centrism and a concomitant neglect of ‘national styles of strategy’.”<sup>16</sup> Specifically then, the unique characteristics which define a state, its culture, and the resultant national style of strategy, its strategic culture, ought to be considered in the study of applied international security. In 1959 Kenneth Waltz helped lay the foundation for structural realist thought with his groundbreaking work *Man, the State, and War*. In 1979 he further invigorated realist theory with his work *Theory of International Politics*, a work that remains relevant to this day. The neo-realist theory which Waltz developed in this work paid even less attention to national identity than traditional realism. Waltz suggested that states were unitary actors with undifferentiated behavior shaped by the constraints of the system in which they operate.<sup>17</sup> Oddly, at the same time another scholar, Ken Booth, acknowledged the impact of culture but lamented that, “The fog of culture has interfered with the theory and practice of strategy.”<sup>18</sup> Booth was a staunch realist who desired to engender “purity” within the international relations field by deleting the concept of culture from theoretical efforts as well as practical strategic application. Nevertheless, Booth further acknowledged that, “An observer cannot completely eradicate his own cultural conditioning, and the structure of ideas and values which it passes on to him.”<sup>19</sup> The proponents of realism would continue along such a course, either acknowledging culture but dismissing its relevance or explaining away outlying tendencies without fully jettisoning the fundamental assumptions made by Waltz.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Joseph Nye and Sean Lynn-Jones, “International Security Studies: A Report on a Conference on the State of the Field,” *International Security* 12, no. 4 (1988): 5-27.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 116-128.

<sup>18</sup> Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979), 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Realist scholar Stephen Walt put forward the term “bandwagoning” for states that joined with, or created alliances with other powerful states rather than bolstering a weaker state or alliance which

In recent years the concept of realism has been refined into several sub-theories which include Waltz's structural realism mentioned earlier, offensive realism and defensive realism. As realism, or more specifically neo-realism, has been further defined, scholars from specific fields such as "security studies" have added their particular positions regarding the concept. With the underpinnings of Waltz's work as a baseline, neo-realists shape their ideas with the notion that states exist within a global system or structure and these states seek power to achieve a position within this system. States within the system which have the greatest amount of power attempt to maintain their position in the system by taking actions that achieve a sort of temporary equilibrium referred to as a "balance of power".<sup>21</sup> Though there are many realist scholars who concur with Waltz's assessments, it is worth considering some of the relevant perspectives which have grown out of Walt's initial impressions.

The security studies field applies realism to observe prospective threats to a particular state and the strategic approaches and policy options available to respond to these threats in order to survive within the system. According to Waltz, power is a means to achieving security by suggesting that "because power is a possibly useful means, sensible statesmen try to have an appropriate amount of it."<sup>22</sup> He also concludes that "in crucial situations, however, the ultimate concern of states is not for power but for security."<sup>23</sup> Thus, Waltz observes states as always being in the pursuit of security which can generally be defined as defensive realism. Offensive neo-

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seemingly discounts some of the general concepts of realism regarding the ideas of competition between rival states. See Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 147-180.

<sup>21</sup>Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Ch.1, 4-6. Waltz's Balance of Power theory says that (smaller, weaker) states will balance the power or preponderance of more powerful ones to ensure that the latter do not become too powerful and dominate all others. Waltz suggested that a bipolar structure, as seen in the Cold War, seems to be the best possibility to achieve a peaceful system.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., Ch.1, 4-6. Waltz argues that power maximization is dysfunctional because it triggers a counter-balancing coalition of states.

realist John Mearsheimer offers that absolute power is not as important to states as relative power and that states should pursue comprehensive strategies (diplomatic, informational, military and economic) which weaken potential enemies while increasing their own relative power.<sup>24</sup> Thus, offensive neo-realists suggest that nations should constantly be working to build every element of national power and that efforts to reduce any of these key instruments would be foolish.

Defensive neo-realists such as Robert Jervis believe that aggressive actions by states which lead to war are more costly than not employing military power given the current complex globalized international system and that, although war is sometimes unavoidable, simple military approaches to solving issues such as economic relations is problematic at best.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, as realism has evolved related scholars have begun to refine perspectives regarding the initial concept but these differing positions have left the field bifurcated. Lastly, the realist school of thought still approaches international relations theory from a national level perspective which fails to consider and account for the effects of a state's culture on strategy development and policy formulation.

Realist scholars have at times been perplexed by the actions of China regarding international relations. Edward Hallett Carr was one of the first important realists in twentieth-century international relations theory. Carr castigated 19<sup>th</sup> century China for being an example “of what happens to a country which is content to believe in the moral superiority of its own civilization and to despise the ways of power.”<sup>26</sup> Essentially, Carr is acknowledging the cultural foundations of a society as extant yet, rather than acknowledge the criticality of these notions shaping China's strategic identity, Carr belittles China for failing to see the benefit of a realist

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<sup>24</sup>John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

<sup>25</sup>Robert Jervis, “Realism, Neo-Liberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate,” *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 42-6.

<sup>26</sup>Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1939), 97-98.

approach. In contrast with 19<sup>th</sup> Century China, realist observers of current Chinese activities are less critical and actually find China to be a great threat to upsetting the balance of power both regionally and globally.<sup>27</sup>

## **Liberalism**

Though realism is generally regarded by the field as the dominant theory in international relations, liberalism is considered to be the most prominent alternative theory. Liberalist ideals have greatly impacted international relations in recent history, namely the post World War I era with President Woodrow Wilson's idealism, the post World War II era with the emergence of the United Nations and the 1990s with the end of the Cold War and its power politics. These post-conflict periods seemingly led to what Hoffman characterized as the "essence of liberalism," which he suggests "is self-restraint, moderation, compromise and peace."<sup>28</sup> This argument seems directly opposed to the realist perspective which concludes that the world is in a perpetual anarchic state thus preventing Hoffman's assertions. Given this, it is important to ascertain the origins of liberal thought in order to properly analyze this theory in relation to realism.

Classical liberalism is a theory of political thought composed of a group of practical goals and ideals. Classical liberal theorists view the individual as the most important unit of analysis whereas, as previously discussed, classical realism identifies the state as the primary unit of analysis. "The liberal outlook can be summed up in the four concepts of 'equality', 'rationality', 'liberty' and 'property'."<sup>29</sup> The most influential scholars on classical liberalism are Adam Smith, David Ricardo and their works in economics, and in the political economic realm are John Locke

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<sup>27</sup>John Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 3, no. 4 (2010).

<sup>28</sup>Stanley Hoffman, *Janus and Minerva* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 396.

<sup>29</sup>Torbjorn L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 150.

and Immanuel Kant. In attempting to understand classical liberalism, perhaps it is best to first observe Doyle's four cornerstones of the theory as he conceived them. First, all citizens are considered equal and possess certain rights; second, the legislative assembly of a nation has only the authority given to it by the people; third, citizens have a right to own property and produce; and finally fourth, a largely free-market economy with limited bureaucratic control should be in place.<sup>30</sup> Given this, there are many versions of liberalism which can be identified.

One of the most recognized forms of liberalism is that of idealism sometimes referred to as liberal internationalism. This theory has origins linking with such famous individuals as Immanuel Kant and Woodrow Wilson. Doyle suggests that this theory contains two legacies. The first being the pacification of foreign relations among liberal states and the second being an international "imprudence" in which peaceful restraints only seem to work in liberals' relations with other liberals.<sup>31</sup> Doyle goes on to suggest that Kant endeavored to teach a methodological approach that required that we study "neither the systemic relations of states nor the varieties of state behavior in isolation from each other."<sup>32</sup> Further, Kant provides the anticipation that there would be an ever widening pacification of a "liberal pacific union" essentially because the liberal states would remain pacified towards each other but are not "pacific in their relations with non-liberal states."<sup>33</sup> Kant makes the argument that perpetual peace will be guaranteed by the constant growth in the belief of three "definitive articles" of peace.<sup>34</sup> These three articles require that a state have a republican civil constitution, that these republics "establish peace among themselves

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<sup>30</sup>Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 207.

<sup>31</sup>Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (December 1986): 1156.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 1157.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

by means of a pacific federation” and that this federation should be linked through a unified cosmopolitan law.<sup>35</sup> Woodrow Wilson attempted to further this liberal internationalist thought with the attempted implementation of his “14 Points” following World War I; however, his initiative was never passed by the US Congress and generally ignored by the League of Nations.<sup>36</sup> Despite Wilson’s ineffectiveness at shaping the world of his day, his efforts at shaping a unique liberal theory have carried on into the present.

Modern liberal concepts, though linked to classical liberalism, have evolved into a unique set of concepts which are more or less related to the original theory and are in some cases linked to other theories such as realism. Neo-liberalism is just such a case where, like realism, the basis for argument is often initiated from the definition and role of the state. The state is a key element in the organization of neo-liberalist thought. Limiting state power is a priority for neo-liberals. Robert Keohane suggests that neo-liberalism is concerned with absolute gains rather than relative gains related to other nations.<sup>37</sup> This prospect identifies that states work through institutions to maximize long term gains rather than achieving short term benefits through direct competition. Regarding states, Scott Burchill suggests that “Liberal states, founded on individual rights such as equality before the law, free speech and civil liberty, respect for private property and representative government, would not have the same appetite for conflict and war...” so then

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 1157-1158.

<sup>36</sup>John Milton Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).; Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>37</sup>Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984), 205.

from this “peace was fundamentally a question of establishing legitimate domestic orders throughout the world.”<sup>38</sup>

Liberalist theory further contends that international foreign policy can be created comprehensively with cooperation and according to a shared set of standards of ethics demonstrated through shared membership in global or regional institutions. A nation’s interest would be transformed by considering the global pattern of human relations and commerce via this liberal-institutionalism. Any form of realist, self serving concepts would be voided by policy derived from a unified global outlook. Liberalism further considers a global community where the idea that a balance of power can be shared or “institutionalized.”<sup>39</sup> This concept is identified as collective security. Collective security suggests that a unified international community would confront an “out of line” aggressor, thus forcing the aggressor to back down and merge back into the globalized community.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the international community, united through a shared membership in certain institutions, would maintain the most power without necessitating a single world government. Given this global community perspective, what role does China have in this era of globalization?

Liberalist theories have not often been applied to China though this has changed in recent years with the death of Mao and China’s apparent patient and methodical approach to world prominence. China has begun to show certain characteristics in its foreign policy which resemble particular liberalist concepts. The application of liberal theory advocates a policy of institutional and economic inclusion with the intent of integrating China into the world economy. Liberal

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<sup>38</sup>Scott Burchill, “Liberalism”, *Theories of International Relations*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Scott Burchill (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 33.

<sup>39</sup>John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 115.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 111.

theory suggests that by supporting China's growth, China will eventually transform into a liberalist democracy. This transformation would then greatly limit the potential for conflict with traditional Western nations as well as Eastern democracies. Ultimately, it may be the liberal approach that has the greatest success of reducing the potential for conflict. What remains uncertain is the level of commitment to China by the West to achieve a preferred democracy and the resultant aftermath on both China and current Western powers should such a transition occur.<sup>41</sup>

China has already economically embraced capitalism. Politically China remains a staunchly authoritarian communist party run state. Furthermore, China maintains a poor record on human rights.<sup>42</sup> Liberal theory would suggest that economic and social forces ought to precipitate political change yet to date this has not occurred in Beijing. Liberals encourage a policy of economic engagement with China and a deepening of economic ties with major economic states such as India and the United States. This too should foster political development according to liberals. Liberal theorists suggest that the demand by Chinese investors for accurate economic news has resulted in the growth of underground, stock-oriented newspapers.<sup>43</sup> In this way they perceive that economic growth will facilitate the growth of non-state run media and feed the public's need for unbiased financial information.<sup>44</sup> China has firmly entrenched its position

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<sup>41</sup>Jack A. Goldstone, "The Coming Chinese Collapse," *Foreign Policy* 99 (Summer 1995): 35-52.

<sup>42</sup>Thomas Lum, Hannah Fischer, "Human Rights in China: Trends and Policy Implications," *CRS Report for Congress*, October 31, 2008.

<sup>43</sup>There are many specialized newspapers published solely for the stock market and personal finance. For example, newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal and Investor's Business Daily are dedicated to business news and the performance of various stocks and investment vehicles.

<sup>44</sup>Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1999), 155.

regarding the control of the media with its latest actions on internet control.<sup>45</sup> Thus, although there are particular concepts which point to liberalism in China it is unclear if Chinese leaders are specifically applying liberalist concepts to their foreign policy decision making.

While China has so far remained resistant to political change, the democratization of China is critical if liberalist theories are to take hold in any measure. As previously mentioned, the democratic peace theory suggests that democracies don't wage war on each other and therefore, as more countries become democratic, the potential for international conflict is reduced.<sup>46</sup> Thus, economically China has advanced in many ways towards a position which externally might be perceived as liberal in nature. Politically and militarily the nation is still in the firm grip of the ruling communist party. Ignoring all other considerations, the notion of considering liberalism as a possible foundation for Chinese foreign policy must be discarded because China is not a democracy which is a core requirement of liberalist ideology.<sup>47</sup>

## **Strategic Culture**

The concept of strategic culture was initially developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a response to identified anomalies between the nuclear strategies of the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> Scholars and analysts worked to identify the influence of the distinctive identities of each nation and the resultant impact of these unique national styles on each nation's strategy. In 1977 Jack Snyder worked specifically on the linkage between the Soviet elites and public

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<sup>45</sup>BBC News, "China Tightens Internet Controls," *BBC*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8530378.stm> (accessed January 3, 2011).

<sup>46</sup>Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 11.

<sup>47</sup>Fareed Zakaria, "When Switching Channels Isn't Enough: the Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1997): 5.

<sup>48</sup>Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.

opinion identifying what he believed to be a wider manifestation of public opinion reflected in Soviet strategic thinking. Snyder concluded that, “as a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and behavior patterns with regard to nuclear strategy has achieved a state of semi-permanence that places them on the level of ‘cultural’ rather than mere policy.”<sup>49</sup> Though Snyder was specifically focused on the Soviet nuclear problem, he offered what was to be one of the first definitions of strategic culture defining it as “the sum total of ideals, conditional emotional responses, and patterns of behavior that members of the national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other...”<sup>50</sup> Though Snyder viewed strategic culture as a critical element in determining the strategic actions of nations, he also viewed the concept as a “semi-permanent state” which would have to be re-addressed on each occasion it was considered.<sup>51</sup>

Enlightened by Snyder’s findings, numerous other scholars began exploring the concept of strategic culture. As previously mentioned, two years after Snyder published his work Ken Booth explored the topic but disregarded the concept. Colin Gray added significantly to the field with his insight, offering that distinctive national styles, with “deep roots within a particular stream of historical experience,” characterize strategy making in major powers such as the United States, the Soviet Union and China.<sup>52</sup> Gray defined strategic culture as “referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, which derives from perception of the national historical experience, from aspirations for responsible behavior in national terms” and even from “the civic

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<sup>49</sup>Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Options* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1977), 8.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Colin Gray, “National Style in Strategy: The American Example,” *International Security* 6, no. 2 (1981): 35-37.

culture and way of life.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, according to Gray strategic culture “provides the milieu within which strategy is debated” and works as an independent determinate of strategic policy patterns.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1990s strategic culture was once again viewed with renewed interest in attempting to utilize the concept to explain various perspectives of other standing international relations theories such as constructivism as well as a re-conceptualization of the concept to form an independent comprehensive theory of strategic culture.<sup>55</sup> At the forefront of this latter research were the efforts of Alastair Ian Johnston. His book, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, is often cited as one of the initial efforts to provide a unified theory of strategic culture. In attempting to apply a broad application of strategic culture Johnston defined the concept in terms much more expansive than previous scholars. He suggested that:

Strategic culture is an integrated system of symbols (i.e. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long lasting grand strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.<sup>56</sup>

By creating this definition Johnston was interested in identifying a theory which was capable of returning something back to the field. He was interested in four specific areas: firstly to present a concept that is falsifiable and distinguishable; second it should capture the essence of why strategic culture exists and the effects it has so that behavior can be predicted; third it is refined enough so that it can be identified in objects; fourth it can be identified as it transitions over time

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Constructivism is defined as the claim that significant aspects of international relations are historically and socially contingent, rather than inevitable consequences of human nature or other essential characteristics of world politics. See Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).; John Gerard Ruggie, “What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge,” *International Organization*, 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 855–885.

<sup>56</sup>Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, 36.

and with different individuals.<sup>57</sup> Those who subscribe to the concept of strategic cultural analysis generally appreciate that in order to understand a nation's strategic culture the observer must work to immerse oneself in that nation's history, attitudes and conduct: its culture. Johnston summarizes the common elements of culture regarding strategic choice as an entity that, "consists of shared assumptions and decision rules that impose a degree of order on individual and group conceptions of their relationship to their social, organizational or political environment...culture affects behavior, it does so by limiting options..."<sup>58</sup> Thus, given Johnston's endeavors, the community has been able to advance their efforts in applying strategic culture in attempting to measure its relevancy to other international relations theories not just in general but with regard to various international states.

Johnston's work contains a new method for applying international relations theory to the examination of China. In his work Johnston surmised that, prior to his efforts, previous strategic cultural arguments emphasize that "China has exhibited a tendency for the controlled, politically driven defensive and minimalist use of force that is deeply rooted in the statecraft of ancient strategists and a worldview of relatively complacent superiority."<sup>59</sup> Johnston identifies two strands of Chinese strategic thought: the Confucian-Mencian paradigm which is identified by accommodating, nonviolent strategies for dealing with conflict; and the parabellum paradigm which emphasizes offensive strategies, absolute flexibility and sensitivity to changing capabilities. Johnston then links the parabellum paradigm to realism by identifying it as "cultural realism."

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 35-36.

<sup>58</sup>Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 45.

<sup>59</sup>Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, 1.

Johnston summarizes in the beginning of his work the two strands of Chinese strategic culture that he has identified. He criticizes realists for neglecting culture and argues that China tends to practice realism but influenced by culture. He emphasizes that over time China's leaders have internalized the parabellum strand of strategic culture resulting in an offensive realist grand strategy.<sup>60</sup> He goes on to suggest that this parabellum strand considers warfare to be a “relative constant element in human interaction, stakes in conflicts with the adversary are viewed in zero-sum terms, and pure violence is highly efficacious for dealing with threats that the enemy is predisposed to make.”<sup>61</sup> Johnston suggests that the Confucian-Mencian strand of strategic culture, in contrast with the parabellum strand, underlines a life of peace and harmony. This strand detests the use of force, particularly as an aggressive means to achieve immediate gains. Therefore, Chinese leaders supporting a Confucian-Mencian approach are prone to exhibit strategic defensive rather than offensive preferences. This strand does not leave force out altogether. Force can be used in a righteous response when vital interests are threatened. The Confucian-Mencian approach, when taken to the extreme in a righteous response, would still not abandon diplomatic efforts. Thus, Johnston identifies two distinct strategic cultures within China with one, the parabellum strand, being the primary source of influence for the actions of strategic leaders.

## **Methodology**

Given these international relations theories, the rest of this monograph uses a qualitative case study approach to analyze how these two strands of strategic culture inform Chinese leaders in regards to policymaking. The Western model of “instruments of national power” is used as a

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., x. Johnston describes the principles of the parabellum strand of strategic culture, “In essence ... the best way of dealing with security threats is to eliminate them through the use of force ... the operational strategic culture predisposes those socialized in it to act more coercively against an enemy as relative capabilities become more favorable.”

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 30.

way to look at Chinese policy vis-à-vis India in the case studies. The method for analysis is the use of two case studies detailing the actions taken by China towards India during a conflict along the Chinese-Indian border. The intent of these case studies is to see if the influence of a dominant strain of strategic culture is visible. Six potential case studies were examined: the 1962 Sino-Indian War, the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War (Kashmir), the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War (War for Bangladesh), the 1999 Kargil war, the First Nepal Maoist War (2001-2003) and the Second Nepal Maoist War (2003-2006). The 1962 Sino-Indian War and the 1999 Kargil War were chosen as case studies because they all occurred on or near the Sino-Indian border and they span as much time as possible to consider the two states in their current governmental form but with different leaders.<sup>62</sup> The former is the only conflict that both states directly participated in. The latter is the closest example of a conflict with a least one state as a participant where the other is a close ally of the rival and has the opportunity and means to participate. Finally, access to the necessary literature and documentation for these two events was most readily available. It is common to view these conflicts in the context perceived through the application of Western international relations theory.<sup>63</sup> By tracing the influence of the social context on China's decisions during these conflicts perhaps an alternative more "Chinese" perspective of Chinese intentions might be attained.

Ian Johnston's work on Chinese strategic culture provides the major criterion that one can utilize to determine which strand of Chinese strategic culture has the greatest influence on Chinese security policy formulation towards India. This criterion is China's application of "grand

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid. According to Johnston, for culture to be measured and proven to exist, these preferences have to be consistent over time and across situations.

<sup>63</sup>John Mearsheimer, "Clash of the Titans," *Foreign Policy* 146 (2005): 46-49.

strategy.”<sup>64</sup> This criterion is a function of Chinese foreign policy resulting from the application of the four instruments of national power. If China’s strategic leadership is seeking to implement policies which attempt to exceed the capabilities of India or other regional states, then this is indicative of an offensive grand strategy. If China’s strategic leadership is seeking to implement policies which lead to matching Indian regional capabilities, then this is indicative of a defensive grand strategy. If China’s strategic leadership is seeking to implement policies which allow them to lag behind Indian regional capabilities, then this is indicative of a grand strategy of accommodation. The assumption of a particular strategic posture in regards to Chinese security policies toward India may aid in determining the influence of the dominant strain of Chinese strategic culture.

The Confucian-Mencian strain, which most closely resembles liberalism in the Western school of thought, advocates that China’s position towards India should be a strategy of accommodation.<sup>65</sup> The Confucian-Mencian strain postulates that a defensive stance is natural and that offensive action may only be taken in a righteous form to defend the security of the state. The Confucian-Mencian central paradigm “places non-violent, accommodationist grand strategies before violent defensive or offensive ones in the ranking of strategic choice.”<sup>66</sup> The parabellum strain, which most closely resembles offensive realism in the Western school of thought, advocates a strategically offensive posture. The parabellum paradigm “generally places violent, offensive strategies before static defense and accommodationist strategies.”<sup>67</sup> This strategy would consider war with India likely and make appropriate policy decisions to support the preparations

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<sup>64</sup>Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, 112-113.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 155.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

for that inevitability. The parabellum strain seeks to maximize every gain possible as each situation permits with regard to interaction with India. An observance of both the Confucian-Mencian and parabellum strains in Chinese strategic culture would equate to a hedging approach that would resemble defensive realism in the Western school of thought. A hedging approach postulates that a violent defensive stance is natural. This approach may advocate a strategically defensive posture towards India vis-à-vis regional states such as Pakistan, but leaves room for possibly shifting to a strategically offensive posture vis-à-vis its neighboring countries. Efforts to maintain a regional status quo may require force projection for offensive military operations or the application of the economic, political, or informational instruments of power in the peripheries of China such as Pakistan (see table 1). This table shows that Western international relations theories provide predictions similar to those attributed to strategic culture. With respect to the outputs, these theories are functionally equivalent. However, with respect to the inputs, especially how new policy is framed, these theories are quite distinct. Most importantly, the Confucian-Mencian paradigm produces predictions similar to the liberalist school yet China is decidedly not liberal. Thus, using the lens of grand strategy this monograph examines how influential the strands of strategic culture are in regards to determining Chinese security policy formulation vis-à-vis India.

<b>Chinese Strategic Culture Paradigm</b>	<b>Western School of Thought</b>	<b>Chinese Grand Strategy</b>
Parabellum	Offensive Realism	Exceed - Offensive
Hedging	Defensive Realism	Match - Defensive
Confucian-Mencian	Liberalism	Accommodate

**Table 1: Functional Equivalence between Western Theories and the Chinese Strategic Culture Paradigms**

## Case Study 1: The Sino-Indian War

In the aftermath of revolution and colonization China and India emerged in the middle of the twentieth century with the intent of developing a new relationship which sought to avoid the numerous conflicts which had been brought to their lands by Western powers. Jawaharlal Nehru, then the highly influential prime minister of India, crafted a concept known as the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence” which was formalized in a diplomatic agreement between India and China during negotiations in Delhi in 1953 and 1954. These included:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression against anyone.
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

India introduced these principles to China with the specific aim of addressing disputed territory between the two states. This accord was suitable for the time because both China and India had undergone significant recent political changes. Each nation was also acting consistent with its own interests in mind.

Even prior to these diplomatic efforts, China had shown a desire to begin demonstrating its position as a “new China” within the region. In October of 1950 China invaded and annexed Tibet a nation it had long believed to be a part of the greater Chinese sphere of influence. This invasion came at the severe disappointment of Indian onlookers as, during the period of recent independence that Tibet had enjoyed, India had developed strong economic and diplomatic relations to match the deep cultural connections that it had already shared with its neighbor to the north. Nehru acknowledged China’s long “suzerainty” over Tibet. He did not see how China could see Tibet as a “threat” and, though openly he admitted that India had to be “careful not to

overdue” in its response to the Chinese action, felt “the Chinese acted rather foolishly.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, though diplomatically China and India had agreed to maintain a peaceful co-existence among other principles, Chinese regional aggression as perceived by the Indians would open the door for further and much more serious consequences.

Re-establishing control over Tibet was the next critical step for China to establish hegemony within its own perceived sphere of influence. Tibet lies primarily in the region of the world known as the Himalayan Mountains and therefore makes access to this region difficult at best. Furthermore, the geographic boundaries drawn by Great Britain during its dominance of the area had resulted in the “McMahon Line” which restricted Chinese access and was thus seen by them as a remnant of imperialism and an imposition worth paying little attention to.<sup>69</sup> Though India was decidedly more concerned with possible Chinese aggression on the eastern side of Tibet, China was primarily concerned with the western approaches and how it could more easily gain access to its newly re-acquired territory. The border here, drawn by the British, existed between the Indian territory of Ladakh and Sinkiang on the Chinese side with an elevated tableland known as Aksai Chin in between. This flat high ground was seen by China as an excellent approach to Tibet from northwest China and thus began building a 10 ton load access road to link Sinkiang and Tibet in 1956 with its completion coming just a year later.<sup>70</sup> This road, which existed in the northeast portion of what India regarded as Kashmir, and its importance to Chinese access to Tibet would be a primary factor in the war between India and China which would shortly erupt.

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<sup>68</sup>Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1961), 302-303.

<sup>69</sup>Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 178.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, 182.

It was over two years after the completion of the road through Aksai Chin that apprehension once again grew between India and China. The Aksai Chin road was so remote and the Indian claims to this region so tenuous that it was well over two years before Indian patrols even discovered the existence of the road.<sup>71</sup> Given that, tensions were far from low that year. Earlier that year the Dalai Lama's rebellion in Lhasa, Tibet had been crushed by the Chinese and the Lama had henceforth fled to India for asylum. There had been a confrontation between Chinese and Indian troops on the eastern side of Tibet along the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA) and then ultimately, when Indian troops attempted to attack Chinese troops in Aksai Chin, the Indians were brutally beaten back by Chinese guards with a number of Indian casualties. The following year Nehru invited Chinese foreign minister Zhou Enlai to New Delhi in order to solve the "cartographic war." This meeting met with little success and in September 1962 Nehru ordered an advanced "Forward Policy" in which Indian forces would take back "all our territories" being held at the time by Chinese "aggressors."<sup>72</sup> Nehru's attempt at decisive action would lead to a swift reprisal by China which Nehru in hindsight could only be happy didn't extend any further.

War with China was something India was not truly equipped for. China was considerably more prepared both in the consideration of the tactical application of military forces and strategic approach. China had long considered and feared British and subsequently Indian desires to create a "buffer zone" between the two states through successful control of Tibet as Nehru himself had

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<sup>71</sup>Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 385.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

said that “control over Tibet was essential for mastery over South Asia and the most economical means for guaranteeing India’s security.”<sup>73</sup>

One of the most detailed Chinese accounts of the events leading up to the 1962 Sino-Indian war is by Zhao Weiwen who was a career South Asia analyst in the Chinese Ministry of State Security. Zhao’s account of events leading up to the war begins with the Tibet “issue” between India and China. She levels Indian policy moves toward Tibet as the underlying factor for the escalation of hostilities. From 1947 to 1952, Zhao writes, “India ardently hoped to continue England’s legacy in Tibet.”<sup>74</sup> The “essence” of English policy had been to “tamper with China’s sovereignty in Tibet to change it to ‘suzerainty’ thereby throwing off the jurisdiction of China’s central government over Tibet under the name of Tibetan ‘autonomy’.”<sup>75</sup> Also, Zhao identified that her ministry believed that Nehru himself “harbored a sort of dark mentality”, the precise nature of which is not made clear but which is believed to have included forceful designs on Tibet.<sup>76</sup> Contemporary Chinese scholars are generally required to maintain a factual or historical perspective of events without initiating personal perspectives which are not shared by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Thus, the writings of these scholars likely matches the thinking of Chinese leaders who concluded that war was necessary with India based upon their perception that India had aggressive intentions towards Tibet.

PRC historians identified in the research for this monograph generally believe that India wanted to seize Tibet or at least maintain its place as a firm buffer state. This position appears to

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<sup>73</sup>People’s Liberation Army, *History of the Sino-India Border Self Defensive War* (Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, 1994), 37-40. This is the official PLA history of the 1962 war. It discusses at great length to demonstrate that the aggressive intent and desires of India led to actions which precipitated the 1962 confrontation.

<sup>74</sup>Zhao Weiwen, *Record of the Vicissitudes of India-China Relations (1949-1999)* (Beijing: Shi Shi Chubanshe, 2000), 103.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 129.

have been mirrored in the positions of China's leaders in 1959 regarding the matter. The CCP leadership decided to dissolve the Tibetan local government following the uprising that began in Lhasa on 10 March 1959. Furthermore, China asserted its own direct administration, and initiated the implementation of social revolutionary policies throughout Tibet. More importantly, in March of that year key leaders met in Shanghai to discuss the Tibet situation. This was a critical meeting as Mao himself gave his views of the situation. Mao believed that India had a malicious intent in India. Mao told the assembled cadre that, despite his views of India's intent, China would not condemn India openly at the moment. Mao decided that for the time being India would be given enough rope to hang itself and that China would settle things with India later once the situation had developed.<sup>77</sup> Thus, though China seemed to be very offended by India's position regarding Tibet, Mao, and therefore China, chose to take an outwardly passive yet indirect approach to the situation in 1959. This perception of Indian aggression extended beyond the efforts of the supreme leader of China.

Other key leaders of China, such as foreign minister Zhou Enlai, shared Mao's beliefs regarding India. In his writings Zhou suggested that Nehru and people from the Indian upper class "oppose reform in Tibet, even to the extent of saying that reform is impossible."<sup>78</sup> He continued by saying that their motive in doing this was to cause "Tibet to remain for a long time in a backward state, becoming a 'buffer state' between China and India...this is their guiding mentality, and also the center of the Sino-Indian conflict."<sup>79</sup> As a long time leader in the Chinese communist party and confidant of Mao, it is likely that Zhou was key in shaping the policy of

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<sup>77</sup>Tsering Sakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 13-26.

<sup>78</sup>Zhou Enlai, *Diplomatic documents of Zhou Enlai* (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1990), 268-276.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

China towards India. Furthermore, Zhou was the primary minister responsible for dealing and interacting with the Nehru. Zhou would be responsible for maintaining the rhetoric between the CCP and Zhou and elevating the stakes when India failed to recognize China's position.

In September 1959, key Chinese leaders, including Mao and Zhou, met in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province to identify ways of avoiding further bloodshed in conflict with India. Other prominent leaders, including PRC President Liu Shaoqi, Beijing mayor and Politburo member Peng Zhen, Mao's secretary Hu Qiaomu, and General Lei Yingfu were present at this critical meeting. General Lei initiated the meeting with a report on the developing situation along the Indian border. He brought to the fore repeated requests by Chinese front line commanders for a "rebuff" of India's "blatant aggression" against China.<sup>80</sup> This point was unsettling to Mao and he cited that conflict was inevitable as long as soldiers on both sides were "nose to nose."<sup>81</sup> Mao proposed a withdrawal of 20 kilometers by Chinese troops based upon this assessment.<sup>82</sup> Mao also suggested that if India would not match China's efforts in kind then Chinese troops would unilaterally withdraw. General Lei summarized that "all meeting participants unanimously supported Chairman Mao's suggestion."<sup>83</sup> Chinese forces withdrew 20 kilometers as directed and ceased patrolling in the areas that they had previously occupied. Finally, Chinese forces went so far as to prohibit target practice, food gathering and exercising anywhere near the previously occupied zone which resulted in an easing of tensions for 23 months.

This unstable peace did not last long. Mao Zedong convened a Central Military Commission (CMC) meeting in Beijing to reconsider China's position with India once Nehru

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<sup>80</sup>Lei Yingfu, as told to Chen Xianyi, *Serving On the Staff of the High Command: Memoir of General Lei Yingfu* (Nangchang: Baihuazhou Wenyi Chubanshe, 1997), 202.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

implemented his “Forward Policy” along China’s borders. Mao likened India's Forward Policy to a strategic advance in a game of Chinese chess. This advance had pushed across the middle of the Chess board in Mao’s mind and he felt obliged to respond to such aggressive action.<sup>84</sup> At this critical point Mao still suggested a patient approach observing that “Of course, we cannot blindly eat them (capture them as in Chinese chess, known as “Xiangqi”). Lack of forbearance in small matters upsets great plans. We must pay attention to the situation.”<sup>85</sup> The commission ordered the forces arrayed along China's border to again resume patrols within the zone 20 kilometers north of the McMahon line as a result of Mao’s updated position on the matter. Chinese forces and supporting personnel began to increase their efforts to link rear areas with the forward deployed troops. As the situation appeared to be getting much closer to armed conflict, Mao took direct interest in the matter going so far as to tell the PLA Chief of Staff, Lou Ruiqing, that if China was to go to war then he, Mao, would have to personally approve the first shot.<sup>86</sup>

With the re-engagement of Chinese forces along the border and an accelerated effort to implement the “Forward Policy” by Indian forces, April 1962 saw an increase in tensions along the eastern border between the two states.<sup>87</sup> The Indian military built more outposts on high ground over watching existing PLA outposts, and increased both aerial and ground reconnaissance efforts. The Chinese foreign ministry immediately responded to these efforts. A “strongest protest” was drafted informing India that “Should the Indian government refuse to withdraw its aggressive posts and continue to carry out provocation against the Chinese posts the

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<sup>84</sup>Shi Bo, ed., *Record of Events in the Big China-India War* (Beijing: Da Di Chubanshe, 1993), 182.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>P.B. Sinha, A.A. Athale, *History of the Conflict with China, 1962* ed. S.N. Prasad (History Division, Ministry of Defense, Government of India, 1992), 415-416.

Chinese frontiers will be forced to defend themselves.”<sup>88</sup> Despite China’s pleas India continued with their actions. China made one last effort to reach a solution with this crisis. During the Geneva conferences regarding the ongoing communist struggle in Laos, Beijing made a final offer via diplomatic means which might change India’s position. Zhou Enlai directed China’s representative to the conference to seek out India’s representative and urge him to find any possible way to prevent the crisis from reaching armed conflict.<sup>89</sup> This effort did not change the Indian position regarding the Chinese border and ultimately led China to act because it felt it had no other course.

With war being the last straw, the CMC ordered PLA forces in Tibet to “exterminate the Indian aggressor forces” and on 18 October, the commission met again for a final formal approval to execute the decision for a “self defensive counter-attack war.”<sup>90</sup> Later that day Mao Zedong approved the decision for war as he presided over the expanded Politburo.<sup>91</sup> Finally, the PLA's war plan was approved. The attack began on 20 October 1962.<sup>92</sup> Two years later, while speaking to a visiting delegation from Nepal, Mao offered that the major issue between India and China was not the McMahon line, but the question of Tibet. Mao said, “In the opinion of the Indian government, Tibet is theirs.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Allen S. Whiting, *The Calculus of Chinese Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 55.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>90</sup>Xu Yan, *True History of the Sino-Indian Border War* (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 1993), 114.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Mao Zedong, “Long live Mao Zedong Thought,” in *Miscellany of Mao Zedong Thought (1949-1968)* (No. 61269, Joint Publication Research Service, 1974), 573.

## **Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic**

Though China certainly took decisive action when it did finally attack India, the numerous efforts taken by Zhou Enlai and the Chinese foreign ministry to prevent war must be considered. It is evident through the data previously mentioned that China and specifically Zhou Enlai made visible and repeated efforts to solve the border problem in Aksai Chin through diplomatic efforts. Though Chinese perceptions regarding Indian intentions toward Tibet were flawed, Chinese leaders certainly considered the actions taken by the Indian state leadership into account before launching a war. China's leaders were responding to an Indian policy of establishing military bases and outposts in area claimed by both states but which was already under the direct control of the PLA. Thus, in the mind of the Chinese, India was acting as the aggressor trying to force China from land viewed as sovereign Chinese territory. In working to understand the crucial diplomatic exchanges which preceded the conflict it is important to recognize that China had pro-actively tried to re-shape the border in 1960. One important point in this diplomatic exchange was Nehru's rejection of a Chinese proposal raised by Zhou Enlai on his visit to India in April 1960. Zhou proposed that China would drop its claims to the eastern portion of its border with India if India would drop its claims to the western portions occupied by China.<sup>94</sup> If India were to agree to this exchange then each nation could legally proclaim a settlement over rights to territories already possessed. Nehru rejected such a plan and continued with his insistence that China immediately withdraw forces from Indian territory, Aksai Chin, and abandon all other claims to Indian sovereign territory.<sup>95</sup> The repetitive and pro-active nature of Chinese diplomatic efforts (Zhou going to India and willingness to forgo claims to territory

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<sup>94</sup>P.B. Sinha, A.A. Athale, *History of the Conflict with China*, 56.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

deemed part of China) point to a consistent method on China's part to place diplomacy in front of military action.

The instrument of information seems to be effectively utilized by China during the Sino-Indian War and the years leading up to the conflict. Beyond mere communications between leaders and their subordinates, China began to indirectly deal with the Tibet problem via an information campaign aimed at the Indian leadership. The official Chinese communist daily newspaper, *Renmin Ribao*, was ordered to openly criticize Nehru by name regarding Tibet issues. Mao wanted the paper to target "Indian expansionists" who "want ardently to grab Tibet."<sup>96</sup> The polemic, which was ordered, revised and approved by Mao, was published on 6 May 1959 and titled "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy."<sup>97</sup> The polemic's main charge placed on India identified an "anti-China slander campaign" over events in Tibet directed by Nehru and being waged by the Indian media. The effort attempted to limit the situation by suggesting that Nehru's sole offense was what he was saying about Tibet and the negative way in which his position impacted China.

The Chinese often did an effective job of unifying their instruments of power in a cohesive effort. In particular, the information instrument was often interwoven through diplomatic and even military endeavors. After the period when Mao directed the PLA to fall back 20 kilometers the PLA was directed "at all costs" to have troops avoid actions that would cause a further worsening of the border situation. In regards to information specifically, PLA forces were ordered to conduct propaganda operations directed at Indian forces by calling out to them and

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<sup>96</sup>Wu Lengxi, *Ten Year Polemical War, 1956-1966, a Memoir of Sino-Soviet Relations* (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1999), 1:195. Wu Lengxi was head of Xinhua News Agency as well as General Editor of *Renmin Ribao* during this period.

<sup>97</sup>Editorial Department, "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy," *Renmin Ribao*, May 6, 1959, 6-15.

urging them to stop their aggression against China.<sup>98</sup> PLA soldiers extolled the traditional friendship between China and India and would recount how their (Chinese) government was working diligently towards a peaceful solution to the situation.<sup>99</sup>

Chinese actions before and during the Sino-Indian War represented a requirement to support PLA actions in Tibet. The actions of the PLA were reflections of the desires of the key leaders of China. Mao directed the military as effectively as he used the information campaign during the conflict. In many regards, the action, or inaction, of the PLA was meant to send specific messages to the Indian leadership. The military was just one strand in the greater fabric information fabric Mao was trying to weave. Realistically, China was focused primarily on Tibet and the PLA needs within this region. Aksai Chin was thus a critical enabler to the PLA in Tibet.

The insistence by Nehru that China abandon Aksai Chin was a non-starter in the eyes of the PLA and supreme Chinese leadership. Seemingly, China interpreted India's position on Aksai Chin as a greater message linking India's desire to a policy of an independent Tibet. The road that the Chinese had built over that desolate plateau was decisive to PLA logistical capabilities in Tibet.<sup>100</sup> Forfeiting access to this line of supply and communication would have significantly diminished Chinese military capacity in Tibet.

Economically, China had yet to openly re-engage with the world in 1962 and therefore lacked any true leverage over India or other non-communist nations at this time. China maintained a centrally planned or command economy under Mao's leadership prior to 1979. Around this time the Chinese government decided to break with its Soviet-style communist economic policies by reforming the Chinese economy according to free market principles in a

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<sup>98</sup>Shi Bo, *Record Of Events In The Big China-India War*, 184.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>John Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 79-86.

gradual manner while further opening up trade and investment with Western nations. Thus, given the period of this conflict (roughly 1959 through 1962) it is difficult to conclude any real economic influence upon India by communist China at this time.

### **Criteria Applied**

In sum, the methods by which Chinese leadership applied their instruments of power reflect the possibility of a strong influence by the Confucian-Mencian strand of Chinese strategic culture. However, given that China's final military reaction was of a violent offensive nature, it appears that the policies and actions of Chinese leaders leading up to the conflict equate to a hedging approach equivalent to defensive realism in that it appears that they apply an offensive-defensive theory approach seeking to maintain security. Sean Lynn-Jones defines this position as arguing "that there is an offense-defense balance that determines the relative efficacy of offensive and defensive security strategies. Variations in the offense-defense balance, the theory suggests, affect patterns of international politics and foreign policy."<sup>101</sup> The Sino-Indian war reflects an account of China using force to secure territory that it believed to be traditionally Chinese. The Chinese showed patience and even efforts at diplomatic accommodation with Indian leaders in attempting to resolve the border crisis. When driven to conflict the PLA only went so far as to punish India for its aggressive actions along the border and tamp down any aspirations Nehru and India might have for creating an independent Tibet. At the end of initial offensive operations the PLA was in a position to secure permanently Aksai Chin as well as territories along the eastern border believed to be Chinese territory.<sup>102</sup> Despite this advantageous gain, the PLA withdrew forces in the east to pre-hostility lines ceding these gains back to Indian forces. China's leadership

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<sup>101</sup>Sean Lynn-Jones, "Offense-Defense Theory and its Critics," *Security Studies*, 4, no. 4 (Summer 1995): 660.

<sup>102</sup>P.B. Sinha, A.A. Athale, *History of the Conflict with China, 1962*, 242-47.

seemed to be implementing policies which were indicative of a grand strategy of accommodation. This was modified to become a defensive grand strategy in the face of Indian aggression along China's perceived border.

## **Case Study 2: The Kargil War**

Sino-Indian relations have struggled since the inception of each nation in its current form. From the border conflict in 1962 through present day tensions, the two states seem to walk a tight wire of détente. In the early and mid-1990s, lacking any formal resolution, China and India signed numerous treaties to lower tensions along their shared Himalayan border.<sup>103</sup> When India conducted nuclear weapons tests in 1998 relations then turned and hit a low point. Indian minister of defense, George Fernandes declared that “China is India's number one threat” implying that India had created nuclear weapons as a defense against Chinese nuclear power.<sup>104</sup> The following year conflict would erupt between India and China's ally in the region (Pakistan) which would again test the strength of Sino-Indian relations and perhaps identify a successful heuristic for future crisis.

In the spring of 1999 around 1500 Pakistan light forces and Muslim militants or “Islamic Mujahedeen” crossed the Line of Control (LOC) which separated Pakistan from India in the disputed region of Kashmir. These forces infiltrated as far as six miles into the Kargil region. These forces occupied over 30 fortified positions atop some of the most inhospitable terrain in the world. At elevations ranging from 16,000 to 18,000 feet above sea level in the Great Himalayan range, these forces were able to over-watch Kargil and the valley below. In mid-May Indian army patrols identified these forces. On May 26, the Indian military launched Operation Vijay (victory)

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<sup>103</sup>Haisheng, “What is Fernandes up to?” *Jiefang Junbao*, June 5, 1998, 4.

<sup>104</sup>John Garver, “The Restoration of Sino-Indian Comity following India's Nuclear Tests,” *The China Quarterly*, 168 (December 2001): 865-889.

which consisted of air attacks against the bunkers. The invaders fired back at Indian army and air forces. As the conflict continued on from May 31 through June 11, the Indian army was able to clear up a few pockets of resistance while cutting off critical supply lines through a flanking operation. Communications and diplomacy increased rapidly between key players as the conflict dragged on.

On June 12, the foreign minister of Pakistan, Sartaj Aziz, visited New Delhi to attempt a solution to the current crisis but the talks failed.<sup>105</sup> India named Pakistan the aggressor purposely violated the LOC while Aziz went so far as to question the validity of the current LOC based on the 1972 Simla Agreement signed by both countries.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, Aziz called for a joint working group to settle India's claim over Kargil, which was angrily rejected by the Indians. Aziz visited close Pakistani ally China seeking support before his trip to New Delhi, but was strongly rebuffed with China calling for an immediate end to hostilities, respect for the current LOC and a peaceful solution to the overall crisis in the Kashmir.<sup>107</sup>, China was clearly in no mood to come to Pakistan's rescue collaborating closely with the US throughout the crisis. By the time the commander of US Central Command, General Anthony Zinni, was sent to Islamabad to demand in person a withdrawal of Pakistani forces from Kargil, the Pakistani government knew it had to capitulate.<sup>108</sup>

In attempting to understand China's position in the matter given the recent end to the Cold War, it is valuable to look at what President Clinton and members of his administration were espousing at the time regarding the US position. In a speech to the US Army National War

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<sup>105</sup>Pamela Constable, "India Declares 'Onus is on Pakistan'," *The Washington Post*, June 13, 1999, A27.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup>John Lancaster, "US Defused Kashmir Crisis on Brink of War," *The Washington Post*, July 26, 1999.

College in Washington, D.C., then Secretary to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, suggested that, “The world has changed, and the Cold War national security framework is now obsolete. The *Clinton Administration* is fashioning a new framework that is more diverse and flexible than the old framework that will advance American interests, promote American values, and preserve American leadership.”<sup>109</sup> Statements like this, though reflecting a changing of the guard between political parties, also speak to grand designs beyond the status quo. It is clear that, regardless of what the rest of the world had in store for the United States, the Clinton administration was intent on making sweeping changes to reflect a new American policy and address concerns that had been previously ignored during the Cold War.

What exactly did the Clinton administration envision for its foreign policy? It is helpful to look at how policy developed over the first few years of the administration and the manner in which that policy development dealt with Pakistan and China. In a statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1993, then Secretary of State Warren Christopher briefed the outline to “a foreign policy for a new era of unprecedented change, hope, and opportunity. The Clinton Administration approaches this task with the conviction that strong public support for foreign policy at home is essential to American effectiveness abroad.”<sup>110</sup> Christopher goes on to outline the administration’s new priorities to foreign policy as they tie back to the then struggling US economy. He states that the goals for the US would be outlined as such, “First, elevating national and global economic growth as a primary foreign policy goal; second, updating our forces and security arrangements to meet new threats; and third, organizing

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<sup>109</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, “Use of Force in a Post-Cold War World,” *US Department of State Dispatch* 4, no. 39 (September 27, 1993): 665 (accessed May 1, 2010).

<sup>110</sup> Warren Christopher, “Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Regarding the 1993 Administration Foreign Policy Objectives,” *US Department of State Dispatch* (May 18, 1993), (accessed May 1, 2010).

our foreign policy to promote democracy, human rights, and free markets abroad.”<sup>111</sup> As the only standing superpower in the world at the time, these statements, and the rest of the document, clearly mark a policy that is directed outward with little recognition of the problems the US was still facing at the time.

Two years later, and with a number of troubling “run-ins” with both China and Pakistan behind them, the Clinton Administration and its State Department offered a very different approach to foreign policy. The 1995 Clinton Administration Foreign Policy Agenda included five areas of emphasis with the fourth being non-proliferation.<sup>112</sup> The perspective two years later had changed immensely with Secretary Christopher stating that, “Indeed, our global and regional strategies for 1995 comprise the most ambitious non-proliferation effort in history.”<sup>113</sup> Thus, by 1995, half way through his first term, President Clinton was seemingly aware of the criticality of addressing the proliferation issue and summarily dealt with the matter in his foreign policy.

One of the key developments from this new position on proliferation was the actual fact that very little was done to reign in China from its efforts to support Pakistan’s nuclear and missile development. Pakistan would continue to pursue nuclear capability in order to counter Indian nuclear efforts while India continued to pursue nuclear means by which it could counter the possible threats of a nuclear China.<sup>114</sup> Given that China was one of the known “nuclear weapons states”, it was certainly unlikely that it would make any efforts to reduce or remove its

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<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Warren Christopher, “Overview of 1995 foreign policy agenda and the Clinton administration's proposed budget,” *US Department of State Dispatch* 6, no. 8 (February 20, 1995): 111 (accessed May 1, 2010).

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>George Perkovich, “India Explodes A ‘Peaceful’ Nuclear Device,” *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1999), 187.

nuclear capabilities. Therefore, these three nations seemed locked in a nuclear stalemate with little chance of a breakup in the diplomatic log jam.

Given the nuclear impasse in South Asia, it would seem that the US would sense the requirement to develop a different tack in its method for addressing Pakistan in order to maintain and actually strengthen a waning relationship. Had this desire been in the offing, by 1998 it was surely not to be. In a great shock to the world, India exploded five nuclear devices underground on May 11, 1998. 17 days later on May 28<sup>th</sup> the Pakistanis themselves exploded five nuclear devices underground then, as if to merely one up the Indians, they exploded a sixth device on May 31<sup>st</sup>. A Pakistani public opinion poll showed that 97 percent of the Pakistani population supported the tests. In the West, President Clinton believed that Pakistan had “lost a truly priceless opportunity to show restraint in responding to the Indian test and strengthen its own security” while also improving its political standing in the eyes of the world.<sup>115</sup> Thus, any efforts by the US to attempt conciliatory diplomatic relations with Pakistan were once again delayed.

1999 would continue to see more alarming events which would greatly transform US Pakistani relations. The spring saw the downfall of the Indian government, losing a parliamentary vote of confidence, and thus preventing the existing government from continuing any further negotiations with Pakistan. By early summer the most devastating attack on any effort at diplomatic healing was to occur. Pakistan initiated conflict in Kashmir by infiltrating forces into the Indian controlled region of Kargil.<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, India was incensed at the invasion of their sovereign territory and began to counter-attack the Pakistani directed insurgents. The pressure by the Indians on the ground and by diplomatic means from the US and China led to Pakistan’s

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<sup>115</sup> Dennis Kux, *Disenchanted Allies: The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 346.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

capitulation to withdrawal terms specified by the US. These efforts, though critical to preventing a major war between India and Pakistan, did little to change the relationships of the players outside of the status quo.

China's participation in this conflict, or lack thereof, is telling in attempting to understand China's regional security posture regarding India. China has been and remains a key ally of Pakistan yet, during the summer of 1999, China was completely unwilling to support Pakistan's advances into Kashmir. As mentioned, China supported Pakistan economically throughout this period as well as continuing to provide advanced nuclear and missile technologies which were not accepted by nations throughout the world, specifically the US. So why did China cooperate with the US in preventing Pakistan from attaining any success during its foray into Kargil? Evidence suggests that China was interested in maintaining a certain grand strategy within the region and Pakistan's offensive in the summer of 1999 risked greatly unhinging that strategy.

### **Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic**

The Kargil conflict of 1999 displays a clear effort by China to handle regional security matters primarily through diplomacy. China has been working on developing regional security relations well before the Kargil conflict and placing diplomacy first in each of these cases in order to secure priority economic factors. As China works to support its surging economy and ever-growing population, it is critical that it participate within the global community to take advantage of global markets. Conflict and the use of force would likely destabilize these efforts and upset the Chinese economy thus handling security matters with a velvet glove of diplomacy is critical for China to maintain a status quo.<sup>117</sup> Thus, China appears to be utilizing a diplomatic strategy

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<sup>117</sup>Michael Mastanduno, "The Logic of Economic Engagement Strategies," in *Economic Interdependence and International Conflict: New Perspectives on an Enduring Debate*, eds. Edward D. Mansfield and Brian M. Collins (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 8.

focused on other nations maximizing the economic benefits of engagement with China and convincing these target countries that China's continued growth will be a peaceful one that benefits its economic partners. China employs a myriad of tools to achieve this desire including high-level visits and symbolic treaties and agreements as well as numerous engagements in multinational forums.<sup>118</sup>

There is no noticeable change in China's information or military instruments of power during the Kargil conflict. China certainly utilized information means to convey diplomatic positions directly and through United Nations channels. Research fails to identify a meaningful information campaign by China during this period. Militarily, China maintained a status quo defensive posture on their side of the border but made no efforts to intervene in the conflict. It has been noted that during the Kargil conflict "PLA forces on the border with India declined to adopt the tactics of feinting, jabbing and reinforcing themselves in order to force the Indian army to avoid a thinning out of forces on its eastern border while engaging in conflict with Pakistan on the west."<sup>119</sup> This is a significant step as previously China had shown a penchant for fixing Indian forces on the border during both the 1965 and 1971 wars. These tactics were of great military benefit to Pakistan. During the Kargil conflict the PLA did not occur and Indian forces along the eastern border with China were able to move west to support operations there.

## **Criteria Applied**

As with the Sino-Indian War, the methods by which Chinese leadership applied their instruments of power reflect a strong influence of the Confucian-Mencian strand of Chinese

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<sup>118</sup>"World Sees Chance as China Pursues Peaceful Rise," *Xinhua Online*, April 25, 2004, [http://news3.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-04/25/content\\_1439345.htm](http://news3.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-04/25/content_1439345.htm) (accessed January 30, 2011).

<sup>119</sup>M. D. Nalapat, "The China Factor in Indo-Pakistani Détente," *Asia Media*, January 20, 2004, <http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/print.asp?parentid=6849> (accessed January 29, 2011).

strategic culture. The Kargil conflict reflects an account of China using diplomacy to maintain a status quo which benefits China's economic efforts in the region. The Chinese showed neutrality in attempting to resolve the conflict and efforts at military accommodation with their forces along the Indian border. When pushed by Pakistan for support while the battles were raging, China chose to rebuff Pakistan and side with the US in calling for an immediate and peaceful solution to the conflict. Though militarily China had forces in the region, it chose to remain in a neutral position behind its border. China's leadership seemed to be implementing policies which were indicative of a grand strategy of accommodation in line with the Confucian-Mencian strand of Chinese strategic culture. This position remained unwavering throughout the entire conflict.

### **Case Study Analysis**

In both of these case studies, the strand of Chinese strategic culture with the most dominant influence on regional policy related to India is most likely the Confucian-Mencian strand. However, a hedging strategy equivalent to defensive realism provides a possible perspective of how Chinese leaders approached, and altered as necessary, Chinese foreign policy. The criterion for analysis of "grand strategy" indicates that the Chinese are maintaining policy development towards India regarding the diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of power which lead to a defensive grand strategy focused on security with periods of offensive strategy to achieve balance and maintain security. Furthermore, it appears that China employs a grand strategy of accommodation specifically with the diplomatic, informational and military instruments of power in order to maintain a status quo regarding its economic instrument which could be argued is aggressively pursuing an offensive approach. In each case study China showed a position of accommodation. In the first case China observed itself to be directly threatened by Indian aggression and evoked war to defeat this Indian aggression and return the situation to status quo. In the second case, China was not directly threatened by India, did not

wish to risk a spreading conflict and threaten its economic instrument of power and therefore remained in a position of accommodation to maintain the status quo.

From this, one cannot conclude that the parabellum paradigm has no influence. The continued growth of China's military capability and its vastly improved economy suggest a heavy influence from the parabellum paradigm. The fact that China is building military capabilities such as the stealth fighter mark a program which is attempting to meet US capabilities but far outpace those of the Indian military forces.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the excessive display of stealth fighter technology occurred without the knowledge of key Chinese leaders suggests that both strands of strategic culture are at play at the same time in a way which hedges both the Confucian-Mencian and parabellum strands of strategic culture. The general orientation of China's combined policy efforts towards India reflects an overall desire to match the capabilities of India within the region in order to maintain a status quo.

## Conclusion

This monograph explores the primary aspects of China's security relationship with India, how it is coordinating its instruments of national power to achieve and sustain this security and the cultural influences which drive key Chinese leaders to formulate policy. The impetus for this qualitative study was the observed tendency of Western observers to naturally apply a realist model when considering the actions China takes in its international relations. The end result of this study was the conclusion that, although China does show characteristics of offensive realism, its strategic policy formulation toward India is driven primarily by accommodating Confucian-Mencian influences but which show hedging parabellum strains. This hedging strategy is an

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<sup>120</sup>Elizabeth Bumiller and Michael Wines, "Test of Stealth Fighter Clouds Gates Visit to China," *New York Times*, January 11, 2011, under "World/Asia," <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/world/asia/12fighter.html> (accessed January 15, 2011).

approach functionally equivalent to a defensive realist posture. The application of Chinese strategic culture to Chinese security policy formulation requires a holistic understanding of the environment China views itself in, especially with regards to India, and not how Westerners observe China or attempt to apply an international relations theory derived entirely from Western thought.

The individual aspects of China's regional security strategy when viewed independently exhibit characteristics of either a liberalist or realist approach. The application of Chinese strategic culture in many cases, makes differentiating between the two difficult at times. Viewed over time in a holistic assessment, China's regional security strategy is in reality a complex blend of unilateral action, multilateral action or, as viewed in the case studies, an abstention of action. China's instruments of power each display unique identities when observed under the lens of international relations theory, some quite different than the others and then altogether different when acting mutually. One common mistake, which is overcome by a holistic assessment over time, is a tendency to observe a particular instrument of power over a given period of time, or worse, to observe a particular instrument of power in only one particular circumstance.

Success in understanding Chinese strategy comes with understanding Chinese strategic culture. Success in understanding Chinese strategic culture requires a close holistic evaluation of all the instruments of Chinese national power in a particular scenario involving similar actors and then re-evaluating Chinese actions over time to identify similarities and evolving differences. Chinese strategy will certainly reflect aspects of realism and liberalism over time. The key ingredient which links these aspects together in a way which is uniquely identifiable to China is the existent strategic culture. China's security policies will continue to be a synthesis between the desire to achieve a respected position in the regional and international systems and an increasing enthusiasm to cooperate internationally given China's ever mounting need for resources to support its economy.

The implications of China's regional security strategy towards India are twofold for US policy makers. First, the overarching strategy is contradictory in nature and reflects no particular alignment with any traditional Western school of thought. It is shortsighted to believe that an adherence to the current international system will change the nature of China's strategy. Furthermore, it is incorrect to think that India, the US and traditional Western powers will be able to maintain control of the system well into the future. As the Chinese government becomes more participatory in the existing system, the more it will commit resources and efforts to succeed in the current system. However, it will work to aggressively change the structure of the system to suit the long term needs and intentions of the Chinese state. Lastly, it would be shortsighted to think that China's dynamic growth might be "contained," as many realists (specifically offensive realists such as John Mearsheimer) believe.<sup>121</sup>

As the economic power of China grows, so too will the power and influence of Beijing (diplomacy) and the PLA (military). These instruments, acting in unison, may become increasingly assertive in maintaining not only regional security but security of Chinese international interests and commodities. All this considered, regional and US policy must observe an intentional comprehensive approach when seeking to effectively deal with China. Policies that seek to limit the expansion of Chinese power should also consider how to reinforce multilateral goals which strengthen the regional security atmosphere while also allowing for the flexibility to adjust to Chinese economic interests. Chinese security policy will ultimately reflect an obligation to maintain a supportive role to Chinese economic and resource requirements. Maximizing Chinese accommodationist positions can benefit Western realist intentions.

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<sup>121</sup>John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History*, 105, no. 690 (April 2006): 160-162; "Clash of the Titans," A Debate with Zbigniew Brzezinski on the Rise of China, *Foreign Policy*, 146 (January-February 2005): 46-49.

Acknowledging the requirements of the day to not only win the war but win the peace, the other instruments of national power, beyond the military, are seen as valuable tools in developing the potential for success in achieving national security objectives. It seems that it is growing ever clearer that the contemporary environment mandates bringing to bear all the instruments of national power if one is going to achieve lasting success. Popular topics among certain academics include the application of the comprehensive approach and applying the implements of national power at the strategic level. This includes applying “soft power” through more public diplomacy efforts and increased financial support to allies, peacekeeping missions supported by the UN, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which provide medical support and food distribution programs.<sup>122</sup> Achieving success with instruments of power not encountering tensions will aid in areas where tensions are present. China’s strategic culture, which hedges both Confucian-Mencian and parabellum influences, appears functionally equivalent to defensive realism. This consideration allows US policymakers the ability to recognize current Chinese positions and advance certain policy efforts in the back and forth play between offensive and defensive posturing. Finally, US policymakers should look to Chinese strategic culture as a concept which motivates Chinese foreign policy and not merely as some simplistic model equivalent to defensive realism.

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<sup>122</sup>Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, Jr., *CSIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, More Secure America* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006).

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