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US–China relations in the shadow of the future

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China is often seen as a rising power challenging the dominant position of the United States in the international system. Theory and history suggest that this is a dangerous situation, and Chinese leaders have called for a new type of great power relations. This article applies some of the concepts developed at SCICN in an effort to see how the risk of war might be mitigated. Four questions, relating to the future, to trust, to loss, and to equity, are discussed. These questions map well onto the China–US relationship and suggest ways in which the risk of war might be reduced. Past experience suggests that the challenge by a rising power can be dangerous, but the appropriate response is to focus on a shared future.

Keywords: new type great power relations; relational barriers; shared future; trust; loss; equity; China; the United States

Introduction

The work of the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation (SCICN) can be broken down into two broad approaches: the first focuses on barriers to conflict resolution; the second looks at the barriers to peaceful relationships. The first approach emphasizes that the barriers to conflict resolution come in various shapes and sizes. Conflicts are commonly about divergent interests, which can be the subject of bargaining and trade-offs. However, conflicts are often about much more than that. They can have psychological, strategic, and structural dimensions that greatly complicate the negotiation of agreements and may lead to sub-Pareto-optimal outcomes. The barriers approach directs attention to a variety of impediments to conflict resolution and to the variety of means that might be needed to tackle them. It does not provide a formula for conflict resolution, but it does underline the importance of a broad analysis of conflict and of the ways in which it might be managed or resolved (Arrow, Mnookin, Ross, Tversky, & Wilson, 1995).

The second approach focuses on what are sometimes called "relational barriers". These are barriers that impede the transformation of a relationship of enmity or hostility into a peaceful relationship. This approach suggests that there are four questions that need to be addressed if a peaceful relationship is to be created among parties who have been engaged in a violent conflict, such as the "troubles" in Northern Ireland. These questions have to do with the future, with trust, with loss, and with equity. If the first approach concentrates on dismantling barriers to conflict resolution, the second explores the ways in which peaceful relationships can be constructed (Bland, Powell, & Ross, 2012).

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This article examines the utility of the second of these approaches in understanding the current relationship between the United States and China. This is, of course, an immensely ambitious undertaking, and it will be possible to do no more than make a very preliminary exploration. Most of SCICN's fieldwork has focused on Northern Ireland and the Middle East, where there have been bitter conflicts over a long period. The US–China relationship is different. It was one of deep enmity from the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 until 1972, when Richard Nixon visited China. That is no longer the case. The relationship between the two countries has been transformed and consists now of significant cooperation as well as some serious points of contention.

China's remarkable economic growth over the past four decades has reached the point where, according to some estimates, Chinese GDP (at purchasing power parity) will overtake American GDP in 2014 (Giles, 2014). It is still an asymmetric relationship in terms of the standard measures of power (GDP, armed forces, etc.), but it has become less asymmetrical since the reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s. Moreover, it is still changing, and much of the current analysis of US–China relations focuses on the dangers that can appear when a rising power challenges a dominant power. Those dangers have been on the minds of the Chinese leadership. In order to counteract them, the Chinese leaders have called for a "new type of great power relations" with the United States. The idea was introduced by then Vice President Xi Jinping in a speech in Washington in February 2012 (Xi, 2012). Such a relationship would be characterized, in Xi's view, by "mutual understanding and strategic trust", "respecting each other's core interests", "mutually beneficial cooperation" and "enhancing cooperation and coordination in international affairs and on global issues". What exactly this might mean in practice has been a matter of wide discussion. Can SCICN's analyses of conflict resolution make a contribution to the elaboration of that concept and to the development of more peaceful US–China relations?

A new type of great power relations

Lenin (1939 [1916]) wrote one of his most important works in the first months of 1916, when he was living in Zürich in the heart of war-torn Europe. *Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism* explained World War I as the product of rivalry among the imperialist powers competing for resources and markets. Lenin saw the origins of war in the uneven development of capitalism. "Half a century ago", he wrote,

> Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, as far as its capitalist strength was concerned, compared with the strength of England at that time. Japan was similarly insignificant compared with Russia. Is it "conceivable" that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained *un*changed? Absolutely inconceivable. (Lenin, 1939 [1916], p. 119)

"Therefore", Lenin continued, "in the realities of the capitalist system … 'inter-imperialist' or 'ultra-imperialist' alliances, no matter what form they may assume … are *inevitably* nothing more than a "truce" in periods between wars" (Lenin, 1939 [1916], p. 119).

Lenin's *Imperialism* was grounded in a class analysis of the leading capitalist states at the beginning of the twentieth century, but the idea that war is inevitable when a rising power challenges a dominant power has an old and distinguished pedigree. Thucydides (1954, p. 25) wrote in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*: "what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta". He noted that the Athenians and Spartans each had grounds for complaint against the other, but he did

not see the cause of war in those disputes. The Spartans decided on war, according to Thucydides, "because they were afraid of the further growth of Athenian power, seeing, as they did, that already the greater part of Hellas was under the control of Athens" (Thucydides, 1954, p. 62). Recent commentators on US–China relations have sometimes referred to the "Thucydides trap" (Allison, 2012). Can the United States and China avoid repeating the experience of Athens and Sparta?

In his book *On China* (2011), Henry Kissinger draws an analogy between the rise of China and the rise of Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He discusses a memorandum written in 1907 by Eyre Crowe, a British Foreign Office official who argued that Germany "distinctly aims at playing on the world's political stage a much larger and more dominant part than she finds allotted to herself under the present distribution of material power" (Crowe, 1928, p. 405). Crowe concluded that it was vain to hope that a policy of conciliation would lead to better relations with Germany. Kissinger (2011, p. 522) comments that the specific complaints raised by Crowe were relatively trivial. "It was not what either side had already done that drove the rivalry. It was what it might do. Events had turned into symbols; symbols developed their own momentum." The comparison between China and Germany is frequently invoked in current discussions about US–China relations. Kissinger (2011, p. 527) fears that the rise of China might lead, like the rise of Germany, to war and hopes that that will not happen. He calls instead for a "Pacific Community", in which China and the United States "co-evolve" peacefully.

There is a great deal in the history and theory of international relations to suggest that unusual dangers manifest themselves when a rising power challenges a dominant power. That is why the concept of "a new type of great power relations" put forward by Chinese leaders is important. It points to the need to avoid repeating the pattern of violent conflict that in the past has sometimes accompanied power transitions in the international system. It has become the subject of a great deal of commentary in the last three years, with studies published by American as well as Chinese think tanks (Center for American Progress, 2014; Shanghai Institute for International Studies, 2014). Most of these have focused on the areas in which the United States and China could expand their cooperation. They have also pointed to disputes that could lead to a serious deterioration in relations. It has become common in discussions of the new type of great power relations to note that the capacity to manage disagreements and resolve disputes must occupy a central place.

The development of US–China relations

At the end of World War II, the United States was in an unusually powerful position to shape the international order. It took an active part in creating the United Nations and new international economic institutions. It drew from the interwar period the lesson that an open trading system based on multilaterally agreed rules would encourage both economic growth and world trade. In the late 1940s it adopted a policy of containment toward the Soviet Union and then created alliances around the world to implement that policy.

As an ally of the Soviet Union until the Sino-Soviet split, and as a communist country, China too was a target of the American policy of containment. Nixon's visit in 1972 signaled the beginning of change. China–US relations since then can be divided roughly into three phases. In the first phase (1972–1989) there were sharp disagreements between the two countries, but they put those disagreements to one side because of what they saw as a common threat from the Soviet Union. In 1989, the communist regimes in Eastern Europe lost power and two years later the Soviet Union broke up into 15 new states. In the second phase of their relations (1989–2008) the United States no longer had the same need

for China's support in confronting the Soviet Union. Controversies over ideology loomed large in these years, but both countries were nevertheless careful in the management of their relationship. The United States imposed sanctions on China following suppression of the Democracy Movement on Tiananmen Square in June 1989, but removed most of them within a year. There were disagreements over Tibet and human rights, as well as over US arms sales to Taiwan, but both sides took pains to avoid a rupture in their relationship. After China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, China's exports grew at an explosive rate. Trade and currency exchange rates became the focus of new disputes as the United States accumulated a large trade deficit with China. In the current phase, beginning in 2008, when the global financial crisis broke out, new areas of disagreement have emerged as China has become more deeply involved in global affairs: climate change; nuclear nonproliferation; maritime issues; and the reform of international financial institutions.

This list of the disputes and disagreements might suggest that the overall China–US relationship is one of hostility, but that would be misleading. In the first place, relations between China and the United States have become much more complex since 1972: relations between the two countries are much "thicker" than they were in the 1970s. It is not surprising that as the interactions between the two countries have grown, the number of issues on which they disagree has also grown. Disagreements and disputes are common to all international relations, and they are not necessarily bad. They can encourage problem-solving and contribute to the building of relationships. To take one example: the dispute over Taiwan – including the missile crisis of 1996 – clarified the positions of the United States and China and made it possible for them to reach a tacit understanding on the Taiwan issue.

Second, the United States and China have successfully resolved or managed many of these disputes. Several principles appear to have been especially helpful. Patience is one such principle. This has been apparent in the Chinese approach to Taiwan. It has also been apparent in the United States' willingness to wait while China adjusted its exchange rate policy and its position on climate change. China is now more willing to engage in serious talks on mitigating carbon emissions because China itself is suffering increasingly from pollution. A second principle has been that of "saving face": the US Treasury, for example, has declined to label China a "currency manipulator" while pressing the Chinese leaders in private to modify their exchange rate policy. Keeping channels open has been a third important principle. The United States and China have created several dozen intergovernmental dialogue mechanisms to help manage and contain disagreements.

Third, China has become increasingly integrated into the global economic order established by the United States. The United States has not opposed China's economic rise, and has indeed benefited greatly from it: the rise of China has not been at the expense of the United States. The US–China relationship is therefore not zero-sum. On the contrary, as Tom Fingar and Fan Jishe (2013, p.125) point out, the growing interdependence of the two countries is the strongest pillar of strategic stability in China–US relations, which they define as "the existence of conditions that make war between major powers unlikely". This is primarily economic, but it is also political in the sense that the two countries increasingly have to "cooperate to achieve political and security objectives in the international arena" (Fingar & Fan, 2013, p. 127). "Strategic stability", they assert, "is the result of multiple factors that reinforce one another and limit the deleterious effects of developments threatening specific 'pillars' that undergird the relationship" (Fingar & Fan, 2013, p. 125).

Fourth, neither China nor the United States has sought a fundamental reordering of the international system. This is different from the Cold War, when the United States and the Soviet Union offered competing models of international relations. China is not aspiring to replace the existing international order, and the United States is not seeking to prevent the emergence of a peaceful and prosperous China. Both countries have benefited from peaceful and stable relations, and neither wants to see instability. There is, nevertheless, a difference in the way in which the two countries see the current order: the United States, for better or worse, sees itself as the creator of that order and responsible for sustaining it; China, on the other hand, has focused on pursuing its own national interests within that order. Moreover, serious disagreement has emerged in recent years over the security order in East and Southeast Asia. The dispute about freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, for example, may point to a more fundamental difference about the role of law in international relations, with the United States insisting that freedom of navigation is guaranteed by international law, while China regards it as something to be granted or tolerated by a state in territorial waters it claims to be its own.

The Chinese leaders have advanced the concept of a "new type of great power relations" because they want to prevent the United States from responding to a rising power in the way that dominant powers have often done: by war or by an alliance to balance or contain the rising power. China wants an environment in which it can continue its "peaceful rise" and tackle the many domestic problems it faces.

The four questions

It may be asked why, if relative stability already exists in the US–China relationship, the Chinese call for a new type of great power relations should be heeded by the United States. There are several answers to this. The first is that the changing relationship between a dominant power and a rising power raises dangers and fears referred to above in the discussion of Lenin, Thucydides, and Kissinger. The second is that although China has become increasingly integrated into the international order, it is not entirely happy with its position in that order. It has shown a desire to change the international financial system: it is involved, for example, in the creation of a BRICS development bank to finance infrastructure and growth in emerging economies. It is also seeking to strengthen international security organizations in Asia in which the United States plays no role or only a marginal one, for example: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). China believes that its growing economic power entitles it to a greater voice in international politics and international security in Asia and particularly in the Western Pacific.

The third answer is that there are several difficult issues that have the potential to upset the overall relationship. These include the territorial dispute between China and Japan in the East China Sea; maritime disputes in the South China Sea; intellectual property rights; and missile defense. Each of these has been the focus of tension between China and the United States. The tension involves not only China and the United States but also Japan and other American allies, which adds an important element of complexity. US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel has referred to Chinese actions in the South China Sea as "destabilizing" (Baldor, 2014). In other words, if there is strategic stability now, that stability could be upset.

It is at this point that the work of SCICN may be helpful. In its work on "relational barriers", SCICN has formulated four questions that parties to a conflict need to address if they are to form a peaceful relationship (Bland et al., 2012).

- The question of a shared future: are the parties able and willing to articulate a future for the other side that it would find bearable?
- The question of trustworthiness: can the two sides trust each other to honor commitments and to take (all of) the intermediate steps necessary toward that shared future?
- The question of loss acceptance: can the parties accept the losses that a settlement will inevitably impose on them; are they truly ready to make the necessary compromises, including ones that they said they never would make?
- The question of just entitlements: can the parties work to accept an agreement that does not meet what they perceive to be the requirements of justice; also are they willing to work together to alleviate or rectify the most serious injustices that are apt to remain in the aftermath of agreement?

Building a new type of great power relations

These questions have been formulated to help in the transformation of enemy relations between conflicting parties into a peaceful relationship. They have grown in part out of work that SCICN has done with groups in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, where the ultimate goal has been to create political authorities that are legitimate in the eyes of the parties to the conflict. It may be objected that relations between great powers such as the United States and China are in a different category and that, given the anarchical character of the international system, such powers are destined to live in a Hobbesian state of nature. The call for a new type of great power relations is an ambitious one, because it seeks to avoid a danger that history and theory indicate could arise from a power transition. However, the international system is not static: nuclear weapons and US–China interdependence are among the new factors that may contribute to stability. It therefore seems to be appropriate to raise these questions to see if they can be productive in strengthening the elements of cooperation between the United States and China and lessening the danger of war.

The question of a shared future

In building peaceful relations it is important for each party to the conflict to be willing and able to articulate a vision of the future that the other can at least tolerate. Each party has to believe that even if the other side were dominant there would still be an acceptable place for it in the prevailing order. Will the United States accommodate China's expanding interests, growing economic weight, and political ambitions? Will the United States be able to maintain strong ties with its allies in East Asia if China becomes the dominant power? Such questions are central to the current debate about the shifting relationship between China and the United States. In the words of one shrewd observer, "the concern of America is what kind of world they will face when China is able to contest their predominance" (Lee, 2013, p. 4).

Even in the Asia–Pacific region, where Chinese and American interests are most likely to come into conflict, there appears to be no desire on either side to see change at the expense of stability. China has expressed criticism of the Obama Administration's "pivot" (or rebalance) to Asia, but it has made clear that it accepts that the United States has interests and concerns in the Asia–Pacific region. "The vast Pacific Ocean has ample space to accommodate our two great nations", Xi Jinping has observed (quoted in Klapper, 2014). US officials have repeatedly asserted that the US rebalance to Asia is not aimed at

China and that the United States welcomes the rise of China. It would seem, therefore, that the basic condition of a shared vision exists for a new type of great power relations. Chinese and American leaders have both put forward visions of the future that appear to accommodate the interests of the other side.

Despite this rhetoric, however, leaders on each side are suspicious of the other side's intentions. Three aspects of China's fears and suspicions can be mentioned here. First, China, as one of the few surviving communist states, is vigilant about ideological threats to its survival and stability. From the Chinese leaders' perspective, the United States promotes liberal democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law as universal values as a way of destabilizing China. Second, the dominant military position of the United States, in particular in the Asia–Pacific region, has limited China's freedom of action in dealing with issues that it regards as crucial for its sovereignty, such as Taiwan and the disputes in the East China and South China Seas. The bitter experience of crises and conflicts in the Taiwan Strait from the 1950s to the 1990s has made China apprehensive about possible US military intervention in conflicts between China and Japan or the Philippines. Third, there are strong factions in China that believe the United States is trying to thwart China's rise. That conviction has become a kind of conspiracy theory: everything bad taking place in China can be attributed to the "black hands" of the United States. Despite reassuring rhetoric from US officials and scholars, these groups believe that the US pivot to Asia is aimed at containing China. They believe, for example, that the United States is pressing China on climate change because it wants to retard China's economic growth.

The United States has similar apprehensions about China. First, it fears that it might be drawn into a war by China's territorial disputes with Japan and the Philippines, which are American allies. China, with its double-digit growth rate in defense spending, is acquiring a greater capacity to inflict losses on US forces in case of conflict in the Western Pacific, while the United States faces a decade-long cut in defense spending. This shift in the balance of military power might make it more likely that China will use military force to pursue its interests in the Asia–Pacific region. Second, the United States fears that China will continue to conduct economic and technological competition on an unfair basis. With generous support from the state and a favorable currency policy, state-owned companies have been able to turn China into the world's leading exporter. The strong American reaction to China's theft of intellectual property demonstrates clearly the fear that China is competing in an underhand way. Third, the United States is concerned about China's challenge to its role as leader in the international order. China not only competes with the United States in world markets, but also offers an entirely different economic and political system, one that at times can seem better at creating economic growth, even as it restricts human rights. Many Americans believe that, if China were to become dominant, the international order would come to reflect its hierarchical domestic politics. Expressions of this fear can be found in recent commentaries in the mass media and the blogosphere (Ford, 2013; Schuman, 2011).

To list these fears and apprehensions is not to say that they are justified. Whether justified or not, however, they inhibit the development of a new type of great power relations embodying the principles of non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win–win cooperation. One way to approach the question of a shared future would be to follow the recommendation (Atlantic Council and China Institute for International Studies, 2013, p. 17) to establish a China–US Joint "Vision Group" to examine the kinds of megatrends and global challenges identified in the US National Intelligence Council's *Global Trends* studies and the *Global Trends to 2030 and the Prospects for China–US Relations* report of

the China Institute of International Studies. This "vision group" could be complemented by more practical collaborative projects to study and make proposals on specific global problems such as energy supply, food security, and space debris. These would not be meaningless exercises. There is a great need for cooperation in tackling those global problems that cannot be dealt with by individual states.

The question of trustworthiness

Trust is an essential ingredient in cooperative relations. It is sometimes seen to depend on an understanding by each party in a relationship that they have the same interests. In other words, we can learn to trust a person or a group if we believe that their actions will conform to what we understand their interests to be, and if we believe that their interests are congruent with ours. However, Russell Hardin (2004, p. 4) has pointed to a richer understanding of trust as "encapsulated interest": "I trust you because I think it is in your interest to attend to my interests in the relevant manner. This is not merely to say that you and I have the same interests. Rather it is to say that you have an interest in attending to my interests because, typically, you want our relationship to continue." This is different from the cooperation that can follow from the two sides merely having the same interests. This is an important distinction, for if trust derives not merely from a coincidence of interests but also from a commitment to continuing the relationship, then the vision of a shared future will precede rather than follow the creation of trust.

The vision of a shared future is especially important because it implies a continuing relationship and not merely a temporary one, and it is that continuing relationship that is crucial for the formation of the encapsulated trust of which Hardin speaks. In seeking to create a new type of great power relations it is therefore important to pay attention to the long-term relationship and to the visions that each side has of a shared future. This fits in with the argument in game theory that the "shadow of the future" encourages cooperation, because repeated interaction allows players to escape from the prisoner's dilemma by adopting reciprocal strategies such as tit-for-tat (Axelrod, 1984).

The China–US relationship is changing rapidly as a result of China's growing economic and military power. In the absence of a vision of a shared future there will be greater uncertainty about the future, providing fertile ground for fear and mistrust, as the discussion above indicates. The shifting balance of power can itself generate uncertainty. It may lead a rising power to test the new balance by acting assertively. It may also lead the dominant power to view every crisis as a test of its own power and credibility. One traditional way to resolve this kind of uncertainty is to have a war to test relative military power, but that is a costly method of removing uncertainty about the balance of power; other methods need to be found.

Fear can sometimes be salutary. The prospect of mutual destruction in a nuclear apocalypse made the United States and the Soviet Union restrained in their dealings with each other. The same fear applies to the China–US case too. When debating the pros and cons of the concept of "AirSea Battle", American strategic analysts have to keep in mind the danger of escalation to nuclear war (Colby, 2013; Hammes, 2013). Fear is not always salutary, however. Sometimes it is irrational, leading to bad judgments and decisions. Sometimes fears are exaggerated, even groundless, as in some of the concerns noted above. Fear can act as a barrier to conflict resolution because it encourages – and perhaps also reflects – distrust and suspicion.

One of the striking features of the fears outlined under the question of a shared future is the extent to which they reflect domestic anxieties, betraying a lack of confidence and

security. This is a complicating factor when we think about the shared future, and it introduces an additional element of complexity into the issue of mutual trust. Lieberthal and Wang (2014, p. 6) have pointed out:

> The shadow of the future looms large in US–China relations, and the relative success of our respective efforts to implement needed domestic reforms will shape expectations of each country's future vitality and national mood. This can seriously impact our views of each other and visions of our respective roles in the world a decade from now.

By attending to their domestic needs, China and the United States can be more confident when facing external challenges. Failure to attend to those needs may well make it much more difficult to establish a new type of great power relations.

The question of loss acceptance

In any agreement to end a conflict – unless the conflict is asymmetrical to the point where one side can impose its will on the other – it is likely that the parties to the conflict will have to settle for less than they wanted to achieve. Are they ready to make concessions? Will they live with the compromises once they have been reached? These questions arise in the case of negotiations on specific issues such as controls on carbon emissions. What interests might be affected by such controls? What costs might have to be borne by the parties to any agreement? Territorial disputes may be more difficult to resolve because they raise issues of sovereignty. More generally, if China comes to play an increasingly important role in the security arrangements of the Western Pacific, that may entail losses of various kinds for other states: loss of prestige and loss of influence for the United States and loss of security for Japan, for example.

A rising power will have rising expectations about its place in the world and the respect it deserves. China's great achievements have generated, in the view of one knowledgeable observer, the "overwhelming force of a reawakened sense of destiny" (Lee, 2013, p. 2). This reawakened sense of destiny is a natural product of China's rise after a long period of weakness during which it suffered humiliation at the hands of other states. Nevertheless, there is a danger that it will generate overambitious expectations about policy, and those expectations may create pressure for political actions that provoke hostile reactions from other states, especially from allies of the United States.

Similarly, the Americans feel that they have played a stabilizing role in the Asia–Pacific region and that they need to assert their leadership in order to reassure allies in the region. They also feel, as Crowe (1928) felt about Britain, that American dominance is welcome to more states than any other kind of dominance would be. This combination of ambitions on the Chinese side and an American determination to maintain a presence in the region could prove to be volatile. It also suggests that in any new security architecture for the Western Pacific neither China nor the United States will be able to achieve everything that it wants. Both sides would feel a sense of loss in having to settle for less than they hoped to achieve. Yet the willingness to compromise would seem to be an unavoidable part of any new type of great power relations.

The idea of loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, 1995) has particular relevance here. Parties to a negotiation attach greater weight to prospective losses than to prospective gains, especially when the former are immediate and certain and the latter are distant and uncertain. Because gains and losses are weighted differently, there will be an asymmetry of assessment, leading possibly to an aggravation of mistrust and suspicion. Under these circumstances the dominant power may be willing to take risks to preserve an advantage, even though it would not have been willing to take such risks in order to gain the

advantage. It follows that the rising power should understand that this is a problem to be managed by proceeding slowly and gradually, building trust about its longer-term goals rather than insisting on some abstract principle of parity (L. Ross, personal communication, 13 July 2014).

The question of just entitlements

Even if political leaders on both sides agree on the need for a new type of relations, they will need to have the support of political elites and public opinion in order to pursue those relations in a consistent manner. If, for example, expectations on the part of the rising power outstrip the actual gains being achieved, that may lead to more assertive policies that damage the prospect of cooperative relations. If, to take another example, the dominant power believes that the values it embodies will be greatly weakened by any loss of power or prestige, it may be unwilling to make any concessions to the rising power.

Four broad positions regarding China can be identified in the US foreign policy community (Watanabe, 2014): (1) those who believe that hegemonic rivalry and military collision are likely, as a rising China increasingly challenges the United States both regionally and globally; (2) those with moderate and pragmatic positions who advocate maintaining the policy of engagement with China; (3) those who take the more optimistic view that deepening economic ties will prompt China to become a more cooperative actor in the region and the world; and (4) those who are concerned about promoting human rights and protecting American jobs in the face of China's currency manipulation and closed market. US administrations rarely pursue just one of these policies. They have to be pragmatic and flexible in their China policy in order to secure popular support in elections and Congressional support in policy implementation. Congressional and public opinion can push administrations into taking tough stands when dealing with China; conversely, pressure from business can sometimes encourage softer policies.

The process of foreign policy-making is still not transparent in China, but it is clearly becoming more diversified. More and more actors are exercising significant influence on foreign policy making, with the military widely regarded as one of the most hostile to the United States. Authors with a military background have produced a large number of books and commentaries on the security threats that the United States poses to China and on possible armed conflicts between China and the United States. Given the complex relations that exist between the military and the civilian government, the latter has sometimes to be tough on the United States to cater to hawkish views even when the leaders actually have moderate positions.

The so-called "netizens" are another increasingly influential group in China. Driven by strong nationalistic sentiment, some netizens call for tough actions against the United States whenever a minor disagreement arises. The Communist Party's legitimacy is partly based on nationalism. To keep the basis of its legitimacy intact, the Party has to pay heed to public opinion by stiffening its positions in negotiations. Foreign policy is a two-level game in both countries, and the search for agreement or compromise may incur significant costs with domestic audiences.

Domestic politics plays a complex role in foreign policy making. Its role is basically constructive because economic interdependence is now the main pillar of strategic stability in China–US relations. Interest groups in both countries can sometimes encourage the two governments to reach agreement. When the Clinton Administration asked Congress in 2000 to grant permanent normal trade relations to China, US firms investing and making profits in China launched a strong lobbying effort and exercised

significant influence on Congress. A more recent example is the revaluation of the Renminbi, which the United States had been pressing China to carry out. Financial experts in China were more ready to revalue the currency than exporting industries, which feared that they would lose export markets. The financial experts argued that revaluation would bring benefits including stimulus for industrial modernization and lower prices for imported raw materials. Convinced by the financial experts, the Chinese leadership decided to loosen controls on the exchange rate.

Important though public opinion on specific issues is, the issue of just entitlements raises more profound issues, notably the legitimacy of the international or regional order. And in the issue of legitimacy is embedded the concept of equity. It is important for each power to believe that the international order – whether affecting human rights, finance, trade, or security – serves its interests in an equitable way. The United States and China want to be sure that their positions are respected and that they receive the voice they deserve in determining the order in which it lives. (Those, after all, are the prerogatives of great powers.) This means that public opinion is of great importance, whether it is the views of the political class or of the broader society conveyed to political leaders through elections or through the blogosphere. If a "new type of great power relations" is to guide US–China relations, that concept and the policies that follow from it must command widespread support in the two societies over a sustained period. US–Soviet détente soured very quickly in the 1970s, in part because important groups in American society believed that the Soviet Union was not abiding (and indeed could not abide) by the principles on which detente was supposed to be based.

Conclusion

The call for a new type of great power relations is a response to a problem that the history and theory of international relations point to: the danger of conflict between a rising power and a dominant power. The problem is posed by our reading of history, but it is our reading of the future that has to provide the response. That is perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn in this instance from the work of SCICN. The four questions – about the future, about trust, about loss, and about equity – certainly do not provide a key to building peaceful relations, but they do identify issues that we must discuss and focus on if we wish to build peaceful relationships. This article has argued, in a preliminary way, that the work at SCICN on relational barriers can be helpful in thinking about the complex topic of China–US relations. The four questions map well onto the current discussion of China–US relations and frame that discussion in a way that highlights the importance of the idea of a shared future. It is worth noting, moreover, that the three principles that we listed as helpful in the past in resolving disputes between the United States and China – patience, saving face, and keeping communications open – all presuppose a long-term relationship with elements of cooperation as well as disputes and disagreements. (This may suggest the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that the assumption that one is involved in a long-term relationship may hinder the negotiation of specific agreements. Why hurry? Perhaps a better outcome will be available at a later date.)

This orientation toward the future suggests four lines of development for US–China relations. These lines are already being pursued to some degree, but the framework laid out in this article provides a theoretical rationale that emphasizes their importance. The first, already discussed, is the formation of a joint China–US "vision group" to discuss megatrends and global challenges. The second is to establish serious consultations about potential crises, about crisis avoidance and crisis management. Military-to-military

contacts are particularly important in that respect, but collaborative research by academic institutions into past crises, crisis avoidance, and crisis management are appropriate as well. The third is to cooperate in dealing with issues or situations that may lead to conflict. North Korea's nuclear program, for example, presents real dangers for the region; that is an issue on which the United States and China have cooperated, and that cooperation could be deepened.

The fourth approach is to think about the security architecture for the Asia-Pacific region. During the Cold War the United States developed bilateral alliances with a number of countries – Japan and South Korea, in particular – and these played an important role in maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific region and still remain in being. Since the end of the Cold War several new organizations have been created with varying membership and varying responsibilities. In spite of numerous calls for a single international security organization that would include all states in the region, no such organization has yet been created. It may be doubted whether the present patchwork of uncoordinated bodies is adequate to deal with the security problems facing the region, but gradual change seems to be the order of the day. For all the difficulties such an undertaking involves, it makes sense to have an intense discussion about the different proposals for the future security architecture in the Asia–Pacific region, because that would involve serious discussions of the crucial issue of a shared future.

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