

# Dealing with China in a Globalized World: Some Concerns and Considerations

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# **Dealing with China in a Globalized World:**

## Some Concerns and Considerations

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Published by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. 2020  
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Cover page image, design, and typesetting by Kriselle de Leon  
Printed in the Philippines

Printed with financial support from the German Federal Government.

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Edited by Marie Antoinette P. de Jesus

eISBN: 978-621-96332-1-5

*In Memory of Dr. Aileen San Pablo Baviera*

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# Foreword

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## Stefan Jost

Dear Friends of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Philippines,

It is with great pleasure to be able to present this new publication with you. This comprises the various topics that were conferred in our recently held international conference, entitled “Changing the World Order? China’s Long-Term Global Strategy”.<sup>1</sup>

We live in a world of constant change. This simple statement has set the series of developments throughout the years to a common denominator. However, this statement has also hidden the reality of the drama behind the actual situation.

Long-standing and preserved structures have changed or are in the process of changing. Instabilities have increased. International crises and challenges have emerged to which individual nations are incapable of solving by themselves. I will mention the keywords: migration, climate change, and terrorism.

We experience day-to-day changes in the international system in terms of its conceptual and institutional foundations. Given the current circumstances, the questions of how the international community reacts towards the rapid change; how relevant actors approach the situation; and how they evaluate their perspectives towards the development are of much significance.

In the past years, we have seen without any doubt that China has been one of the actors whose role in the global arena has

emerged. Hence, there is one thing certain: every participant in international politics, be it in the context of global economic development; the question of how regional peace and global security should be structured; the question of how to shape international cooperation; or even the question of how the powers and principles work in the so-called New World Order; each and every one will have to deal with China.

We should however note that worldwide debates on China’s developments are characterized by disillusioned hopes and expectations. Over the years, there was an anticipation that through China’s economic development, the country would strive towards democracy. Unfortunately, this has not occurred.

In Europe, as well as in other countries, the perception has changed. This is evident

through the analyses made by scientific institutions, the press, and political debates. Even the policy brief of the European Union last March 2019, “EU-China: A strategic outlook”, has evidently shown the change in perspectives and assessment towards China. For the European Union, China is considered both a “cooperation partner, a negotiating partner, an economic competitor, but also a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance”.

The message set here is clear. It is no longer economic competition but rather a political one. This is without a question a new dimension, which can be connected to China’s 2049 goal. The centenary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 2049, at which point China will have become a “strong, democratic, civilized, harmonious, and modern socialist country”.

China’s increasing powers should be taken seriously. It requires intensive study and analysis in all aspects to enable us to understand and assess its development.

It is significant to understand China’s decision-making process, its strategies, its policies, and what other countries should expect from their development.

This is not just a matter of depicting the gathered information in black and white. It is more of putting an emphasis on a clear and realistic assessment of the current situation. This, in return, will become the foundation for a political evaluation to which we can derive political approaches.

I am persuaded by the fact that the various articles encompassed in this publication will not only contribute to discussions among experts, but concurrently a significant benefactor to public discussion.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Ms. Tonette De Jesus, Senior Program Manager of KAS Philippines, who exerted exemplary efforts in organizing both the conference and this publication.

I hope you enjoy your reading!

**Prof. Dr. Stefan Jost**  
**Country Director**  
**Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Philippines**

1 This conference was made possible through KAS Philippines’ partnership with the Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, Inc. (APPI), the Asian Institute of Management Rizalino S. Navarro Policy Center for Competitiveness (AIM RSN PCC), and the De La Salle University Southeast Asian Research Center and Hub (DLSU-SEARCH).

# Globality and Its Adversaries in the 21st Century

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## Xuewu Gu

Academic and societal discourse has witnessed a growing trend to differentiate between three core terms of the 21st century: *globalization*, *globalism* and *globality* (Schäfer, 2007). While globalization and globalism are understood as a process and an ideology (or ideational perspective) respectively, globality is conceived as a condition. Despite this analytical distinction, the three concepts share common ontological points of reference and even awareness: the global-spatial dimension of human (co-)existence is not only continuously increasing on the whole, but also on multiple levels, with local, national and regional levels becoming ever more global.

However, the three concepts of globalization, globalism and globality do not receive the same amount of attention, whether in society at large or in academia. Instead, there is a substantial asymmetry with respect to how frequently the three key terms are used within globalization debates. Academic literature, government documents and media reports concerned with 'globalization' by far exceed those dealing with globalism and globality. Moreover, usage of the term globality in particular remains far behind its sister concepts. This imbalance has been previously

discussed. Already on 23 April 2007, Wolf Schäfer conducted a Google-search of these three terms that produced the following results: 88,400 hits for globalization, 5,920 for globalism and 2,460 for globality (p. 7). More than thirteen years later, I conducted the same search on February 8, 2020, only to confirm that, while the absolute number of hits for each of the three terms had increased drastically, a large asymmetry in the frequency of usage persists: 62,800,000 for globalization, 2,870,000 for globalism and 731,000 for globality.

## Globality: A new epochal phenomenon of the 21st century

Schäfer affirmed Martin Albrow's attempt to draw a semantic parallelism between modernity and globality. The latter postulated the emergence of a Global

Age in light of the waves of worldwide liberalization of international trade under US President Bill Clinton: "Globality is to the global, the Global Age and globalism as

modernity is to the modern, the Modern Age and modernism – at least grammatically” (Albrow, 1997, p. 82). On the other hand, while it is common knowledge that modernity coincided with and was driven by industrialization and urbanization, there is still not much known, at least in academics and research, about what constitutes the substance and content of globality.

This begs the question of whether it is a bold claim that globality represents an extension of modernity in times of globalization. Or do modernity and globality rather pose two fundamentally different phenomena? If the semantic parallelism between modernity and globality is applicable, would it also be plausible to presume parallels between the content and substance among the drivers of both phenomena? Or does it run the risk of becoming tautological to claim that globalization, in the sense of “extension, consolidation and acceleration of cross-national relations” [*Ausweitung, Verdichtung und Beschleunigung weltweiter Beziehungen*], (Osterhammel & Peterson, 2003, p. 10) represents the driver of globality?

Stanley J. Paliwoda and Stephanie Slater have pointed out that it was the German-American Harvard professor Theodor Levitt who introduced the term globalization into the academic discourse (2009, p. 374). Indeed, his article “The Globalization of Markets”, published in the Harvard Business Review (Levitt, 1983, pp. 92-102), proved path breaking, even though, as The Economist has shown in reference to the New York Times, that the earliest usage of the term globalization stems from as early as at least the middle of the 20th century (2009).

Nevertheless, first, the discovery of this market process, in which originally locally operating companies began to expand not only with their products but also their production into diverse geographically, culturally and historically organized markets and accordingly to flatten differences (Levitt made particular reference to Coca-Cola and McDonald's), second, the incorporation of this discovery into one comprehensive, yet understandable concept named globalization – this achievement was pioneered by Theodor Levitt, the son of a German cobbler, who immigrated to the USA with his parents at the age of ten. His essay, The Globalization of Markets, can certainly be deemed a work of discovery of globalization that has triggered controversies on globalization<sup>1</sup> which persist into the present.

While globalization for scholars such as Levitt, Giddens (2003), and Parker (1998) represents a process to be explained and thus an object of intellectual inquiry, globalism is to be viewed as an ideational reflection on globalization. It tends to present globalization in an apologetic manner. In this regard, Wolf Schäfer argues: “Globalism is the ideology of globalization” (2007, p. 6). This apologetic perspective of globalization, according to Schäfer, serves the function of simplifying the complexity of the world by applying at least the four following methods: reducing the contradictions inherent to the inequalities of societies and multidimensional cultures; easing of tensions between local cultures; homogenizing diversity of globalizing processes; and exaggerating the flattening power of technology towards others domains of civilization.

Until now, Jagdish Bhagwati, Martin Wolf and Thomas L. Friedman have emerged as the most fervent among apologetics of globalization. Wolf for instance suggests that there is an utter lack of alternatives to globalization. His perhaps main contribution, *Why Globalization Works*, is geared particularly toward convincing people of the political necessity and economic sensibleness of globalization. According to him, all good things – liberty, wealth and prosperity, participation, growth – can only be achieved through a globalized free market. In this spirit, he asserts a critique that far too many people are still “effectively outside the world market”. “The pity”, by Wolf’s account, “is not that there has been too much globalization, but that there is too little” (2005, p. 95).

The book *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman also reflects a profound admiration toward the comprehensive flattening or equalizing power of globalization, which was already detected by Theodor Levitt, who had previously claimed for instance: “Gone are accustomed differences in national or regional preferences”.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, quite proudly, Friedman presents the parallels between Christopher Columbus’ discovery that the world is round in 1492 and his own discovery of the globe as a flat platform in 2000. The difference between both discoveries, as Friedman confides to the reader of his essays, is: “Columbus reported to his king and queen that the world was round, and he went down in history as

the man who first made this discovery. I returned [from Bangalore] home and shared my discovery only with my wife, and only in a whisper.” (Friedman, 2005, p. 5). In a similar vein, Bhagwati argues in his work, *In Defense of Globalization*, published in 2004, that globalization has a social face. This also earned support from Joschka Fischer, the former German Minister of Foreign Affairs, who contributed a foreword to the German language edition. There he states that demands for globalization to develop a humane face has become a popular platitude, deteriorating meanwhile even to a dangerous cliché. Such claims raise false alarms since globalization *already* has a humane face, it just needs to become more likeable.<sup>3</sup>

However, neither the process-related term *globalization* nor the ideology of *globalism* can express anything measurable or tangible about the quality or the condition of the world confronted by ‘expansion, consolidation and acceleration of cross-national relations’. Such potential is only possible with a concept that is linguistically and semantically configured to determine the condition and the development of things objectively and free of ideology. The cognitive meaning and epistemological function of the concept of globality should be viewed and acknowledged precisely in this context. It has the semantic potential to stimulate intellectual discourse about the qualitative and quantitative condition of our world – be it modern, global, or both.

## Understanding the conditional and spatial referentiality of globality

Globality, which refers cognitively and terminologically to a condition, can, by definition, be influenced by human action

or inaction. It constitutes an abstract category referring to the ascertainable quality and quantity of a particular element

of human (co-)existence and its spatial extension across the planet. In contrast to globalization as a transpiring process and to globalism as an affirmative set of ideas (and even ideology) with a teleological perspective, globality refers to a temporal-spatial condition that is contingent and changeable. Thus, globality as a condition is empirically identifiable, observable and comprehensible. Its principle reference to conditions renders globality accessible for working with methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses. With the concept of globality, the condition of a category can be determined in reference to its spatial extension across the globe. Because every condition of an element of human (co-) existence obviously can be changed by human action, globality is thus shapeable.

At the same time, globality always manifests itself typically in reference to space. Globality can only be defined with reference to a geographic space, constituting its defining and distinguishing characteristic. Globality means thus to be cross-continental. Globality is the expression of degree and level of cross-continental extension. As such, it refers to the geographical 'reach' of an ideational, material or institutional element of worldly

human (co-)existence across the globe. The degree of this global extension is pivotal. In light of the global proliferation of liberal democracies, Pieter Meurs, Nicole Note and Diederik Aerts for instance equated the globe terminologically with the world. The ideally highest globality of democracy would be a spatial condition of democratic ideas and institutions "penetrating every inch of the surface of the world" (Meurs et al., 2011).

Accordingly, a large spectrum and diversity of terms can be applied depending on the object of analytical inquiry: e.g. globality of democracy, globality of beer, globality of 5G-technologies, globality of computers, globality of the German language, globality of Chinese cuisine, globality of fresco painting, or globality of Bauhaus architecture. Because any expansion process can be accelerated or throttled by human activities, the degree of globality can be shaped and managed by human action. The question remains unclear however as to where globality begins and where it ends. Does the globality of an ideational, material or institutional element of human co-existence indeed end with its total spatial penetration and proliferation around the globe?

### Globality and its local origins

Any ideational, material and institutional element of human co-existence has the potential to become globality, that is, to expand globally from a local level across regions and continents. This implies that the origin of globality lies in locality. No category or element that can be deemed globality is by nature so. It becomes globality when it globalizes, i.e., when it expands globally

and is accepted and practiced globally. This applies for instance to the medicine aspirin, the system of majority decision making, the internet platform Facebook (and its concept), the market economy, free trade, as much as for nuclear threat. In this regard, Wolf Schäfer's claim is inspiring that "almost all globalities start from scratch" (Schäfer, 2007, p. 7). Globality encompasses a dimension

referring to origins, which opens up countless possibilities for people to shape the globality of any matter, which originates in a local context or is limited to local character.

Even when increasing the globality of elements of local origin or character is viewed as desirable and worthwhile, globality as such still remains free of norms. A basis of norms does not pose a category for capturing globality. Rather than normative desirability, it is concerned with the capacity to capture, describe and explain the temporal condition (the 'is') of anything that originally emerged locally element and its spatial expansion. Subsequently, globality lacks any claim to general validity (certainly in any normative sense) or general applicability of ideational, material and institutional elements. It rather serves as an analytical concept with reference to the condition of an element regarding its spatial extension and trajectory. Consequently, globality as a category departs fundamentally from universality: universality, as demonstrated by Ludger Kühnhardt, is a cognitive principle that assumes the general validity of ideas, concepts and norms. But this does not in turn necessarily implicate

that universal ideas, concepts and norms are accepted or even present globally.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to universality, globality comprises an 'undemanding', norm-free concept. It does not presume a general validity, incontrovertibility or permanence, but rather assumes that any idea, product, institution, movement or activity has the potential to be or become globalitary. It does not preclude, conversely, that categories or elements once they have attained a high degree of globality under certain conditions can revert to locality or even disappear from the globe altogether. Thus, there is no expectation of irreversibility.

Indeed, the history of societies as much as humanity reveals numerous instances of such cases. The virtual disappearance of typewriters (aside from exemplars in museums), the displacement of German as a globally leading language of science out of international academic journals, the decay of the Mongolian empire into the geographical periphery, the decline of the British pound sterling from a world currency to an insular legal tender, are only a few of the most well-known examples.

### Is globality measurable?

Globality concerns the condition of something, and conditions are measurable. Accordingly, Wolf Schäfer points to possibilities to measure globality "quantitatively from 1 to 100 or qualitatively from low to high". Basing on Humphrey Tonkin's analysis (2007, pp. 711-717), his example of the English language in this context is exceptionally informative: "English has become the most popular language

in the transnational linguistic space of the Internet, where it commands 68.3 percent of the languages, more than two-thirds of Internet space. This measure of the high globality of Internet English points to the comparatively low globality of the other languages on the Web: Japanese, German, Chinese, French, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Portuguese, and Korean range from 6.9 to 1.3 percent (4.6. percent for all 'other'

languages). Thus, on a scale from 1 to 100, the globality of English ranks 68 with regard to the Internet.” (Schäfer, 2007, p. 1ff).

The same logic may apply to other phenomena as well. One could study and measure the degree of globality of social legislation introduced by Otto von Bismarck in Germany in the 19th century and the extent to which it was expanded and practiced across the globe; in a similar vein, the globality of Chinese martial arts could be examined as well as compared with other disciplines. At the same time, there are certainly countless examples of low globality for things that enjoy high popularity on a local level but remain unknown or popular globally. This applies, not the least for cuisine and many delicacies.

An illustrative example is the delicacy of fermented and spiced bean cheese that enjoys high popularity in certain regions of China, but has never attained national recognition, not to mention global popularity. Problems of global expansion confront the idea of same sex marriage as well, which is becoming increasingly protected in Europe but, as of current, maintains a low level of globality. The rapid expansion of this right across Europe and other Western countries still appears hardly imaginable in countries with more Confucian and Islamic traditions.

However, a low level of globality today must not mean a low level of globality tomorrow. Delicacies like Chinese fermented bean cheese could reach high globality, for instance, if their positive attributes (taste, nutritional value, etc.) become better well-known outside of China. The same could happen for the idea of same-sex marriage,

the more its practice demonstrates that such partnerships are conducive to individual and societal needs and happiness. Above all, it becomes clear that people have the high potential to shape the globality of their ideas, products and institutions through action. And the measurability of globality allows us to communicate where these things stand in a global context.

Thus, in contrast to the economic and technological globalization processes, people are at the center of the term ‘globality’. This thesis is grounded in the idea that globality is a condition of reality created by people and can only be captured in connection with tangible results of human activities. As such, examining and dealing with globality amounts to nothing less than a temporal capturing or measuring of the condition of ideational, material or institutional elements in relation to their spatial expansion across the globe – irrespective of whether we are dealing with a product, an institution, a principle, a philosophy, a pedagogical concept or a medicinal advancement.

As a result, it would be fitting to define globality as: ‘a temporal account of the spatial condition of an ‘identifiable element’ in an ideational, material and institutional context of humankind across the globe’. Because the reference points of globality are ideational, material and institutional elements brought forth by people, it is evident that people themselves possess the power and potential to shape the extent, speed and direction of globality. For instance, they can use the process of globalization to increase the globality of countless technical norms, patterns of behavior, production processes and cultural



practices; they are likewise free, as already observable in the context of globalization, to develop a set of principles and beliefs or

even counter-ideology to globalism in order to influence the intensity of globalization and thus the degree of globality.

## Dangerous adversaries of globality

Indeed, globalization is currently confronted with an anti-globalization movement taking various forms.<sup>5</sup> Against this backdrop, Meurs, Note and Aerts delineate “three overlapping but distinctive waves in globalization theory: [T]he (hyper-) globalist, the skeptical and the post-skeptical or transformationalist perspective” (Meurs et al., 2011, p. 12). They attribute a large responsibility to the latter two groups for the spread of Anti-Globalism. John Gray, who views globalization already as having failed and postulates a post-globalization age, depicts globalization as a daydream: “It is worth reminding ourselves how grandiose were the dreams of globalizers. The entire world was to be remade as a universal free market. No matter how different their histories and values, however deep their differences or bitter their conflicts, all cultures everywhere were to be corralled into a universal civilization.” (Gray, 2001).

Expansion and consolidation of cross-national relations, which were to be solely dictated by a demand-supply rationale, were confronted by ‘alternative globalists’ and viewed as a process or system of ‘exclusion’, ‘marginalization’ and ‘exploitation’ and thus categorically rejected by many. The opponents, many of whom refer to themselves as the ‘alter-globalization movement’ (Meurs et al., 2011, p. 19ff), see great threats in an increasing intensification of globalization as economic relations geared toward endless accumulation of

capital and maximization of profit. As a core critique, globalization from this perspective renders people powerless toward the foreign interventions by market dominating multi-national corporations, neoliberal oriented governments, or international organizations like the IMF, World Bank and WTO. Especially their insistence on freedom to self-determination of own lifestyles and profound fears of becoming overwhelmed as people by the market like capitalized consumer goods have emerged as guiding motives of an energetic fight for an ‘alternative globalization’ (Evans, 2008, pp. 271-305). Protests with mass participation such as the ‘battle of Seattle’ in 1999 or against the G-20 summit in Toronto in 2011 and in Hamburg in 2017 have undoubtedly illustrated that people have substantial possibilities to influence the extent, intensity and pace of globalization and hence the degree of globality of many globalizing processes. Accordingly, that the world is still far removed from a single global labor market despite the increasing expansion of free trade demonstrates clearly the potential for shaping globality.

But the most dangerous enemy of globality drives from the dramatizing geopolitics of the 21st century demonstrated by the open escalation of great power competition between the People’s Republic of China and the United States of America. The takeover of the White House in Washington by President Donald Trump on January

20, 2017 accelerated the ending process of the engagement policy with China, a process which was already introduced by his predecessor President Obama. It took, however, the Administration Trump only several months to change the fundament of the US policy towards China pursued by all US governments since President Jimmy Carter who established diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1979.

As Peter Mattis pointed out, the United States is just on the way “from engagement to rivalry” with China. “The U.S. *National Security Strategy*, published in December 2017, marked a historic break in U.S. policy toward China”. “The White House explicitly judged the policies of previous administrations to be a failure and closed the door on engagement as the primary mode of U.S.-Chinese relations” (Mattis, 2018, pp. 81-82).

Indeed, President Trump and his advisors have wasted no time, so far, to exhibit its determination to adapt the US to a more assertive, if not a more confrontational course toward Beijing. Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia, numerates “a long line of authoritative statements and policies from the Trump administration” underscoring theses profound changes in the US China-Policy: The October 2018 speech delivered by U.S. Vice President Mike Pence at the Hudson Institute “accusing China of unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft, increasing military aggression, and interference in the United States’ domestic politics”, the December 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy, the January 2018 new U.S. Defense Strategy, the September 2018 Department of Defense report on the future of U.S. defense manufacturing, as well as the

trade war on China declared by President Trump in June 2018 (Rudd, 2018, pp-1-4).

Observing these mind-boggling developments, Kevin Rudd, who is by himself an excellent China expert and experienced politician, feels a strong break in the relationship between China and the US. His assessment is daunting: “This series of doctrinal statements by the United States has formally declared an end to a 40- year period of U.S. strategic engagement with China, and its replacement with a new period of strategic competition” (2018).

While the power competition between China and the United States intensifies, the cellular industry is quickly dashing into the so called “5G Era”. Derived from 2G, 3G, and 4G networks, the new generation of 5G is marked by ultra-fast, low latency, and high throughput communication between people to people, people to machines and machines to machines. As Brett Simpson, Co-Founder of Arete Research, an international research consultancy based in London, pointed out, “with 5G, we will have network infrastructure that enables mainstream AI and connected machines ... on a scale we have never seen before.” (Kuo, 2019).

Particularly in the zero-sum mentality of the Trump administration (Sanger et al., 2019), 5G in particular has therefore become a major field of competition between the United States and China (Tham, 2018). In fact, the U.S.-Chinese foot race in 5G exhibits remarkable parallels to the United States’ Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union, right down to the alleged missile gap. As observers stress the current backlog in U.S. 5G technology towards China and other major

competitors (Chin et al., 2018), policymakers thus strive to frame the issue accordingly.

Senator Michael Bennet (D-Col.) hence declared on January 14, 2019, "If we are not careful – they are going to deploy 5G a lot more quickly than we will. That is what the rest of the world is doing while we are shut down." (Bennett, 2019, p. S183). Not without reason, therefore, has 5G become a recurrent issue for the 115th U.S. Congress, which measures meanwhile including the introduction of four bills addressing matters of cyber security as well several Congressional hearings on the "Race to 5G" (Gallagher & DeVine, 2019, pp. 30-32).

It is this coincidence of US-Chinese power competition and the global race for 5G that complicate the business surroundings facing companies working in the cellular industry and communication branch. Indeed, any actor, be it an individual, a company, or a government, can hardly escape the geopolitical pressures of power competition between China and the US, if they are identified as a potential factor able to influence the outcome of the global race for 5G, which could, in return, affect the balance of power between China and America substantially.

Huawei, the Hi-Tech company from Shenzhen, is increasingly perceived by Americans as China's 5G flying ship with the potential to put the US into an uncomfortable situation while racing for 5G. Brett Simpson who has carefully observed the US perceptions toward Huawei for years, views the US anxiety over Huawei founded in its concern [...] that China will lead the world in 5G [...] and that potentially could mean a raft of new technology disruption

(AI, IOT, etc) not defined by Silicon Valley's giants, but by Chinese companies like Huawei who can drive costs down and export this know-how overseas." (2019).

Based on the argument of national security, the Trump administration has launched several campaigns in Europe over the last months to prevent European countries from using Huawei equipment for building their 5G networks. But so far, all of these efforts have failed, obviously due to its inability to lure the European allies into believing that Huawei poses an uncontrollable security threat. Even the overt threat of Mike Pompeo, the secretary of state, to "withhold intelligence from nations that continue to use Chinese telecom equipment," went awry. The same is true for Richard Allen Grenell, the American ambassador to Germany, who warned *Peter Altmaier*, the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy in the cabinet of Chancellor Merkel that "the United States would curtail intelligence sharing" if Germany used Huawei (Barnes & Satariano, 2019).

Whether and to what extent the Trump Administration will prevail with its strategy to ban Huawei from the global 5G networks remains to be seen. Clear is it only that globality of the 5G technology has already been harmfully damaged by the geopolitical power competition between the two big powers. Indeed, 5G technology has become as much as a litmus test for the standpoint and reliability of different countries today – especially vis a vis China and the United States (Tham, 2018). 5G technology, therefore, has become a matter of allegiance far exceeding the immediate issue. Just as the Eurasia Group noted, "A bifurcated 5G ecosystem would force third countries – and developing markets in particular – to

make some tough choices. Many countries more sensitive to cost will probably opt to go with Chinese equipment. While they are likely to come under pressure from the US and allies to avoid dependence on China for 5G over time, China's lower-cost and equal or higher-performance offering is likely to maintain serious appeal, particularly if bundled with other enticements as part of the Belt and Road or similar infrastructure initiatives." (Eurasia, 2018, p. 18f).

### Conclusion

Globality is in itself a result of the global implementation of an originally local element. It may constitute a product, an idea, an institution or an organization. It is rare that these sorts of things expand independently or automatically. On the contrary, an idea, product or institution by and large can only expand and be implemented when it is driven by a certain force or power, be it hard power, soft power or by 'structural power' in terms of networked leverages. The high globality of the English language for example would hardly have been possible without the previous colonializing power of the British Empire. The iPhone has attained globality on account of a series of patented key technologies of the company Apple that have helped monopolize its position. The globality of the US dollar as the dominant world currency would not be politically or economically explainable, were it not for the international political and global economic structures that were established under the leadership of the United States after World War II.

If this prediction really comes into reality, that would mean the end of the globality of 5G with the huge potential to spill over to other globalized technologies, standards and rules. Against political pressures from Beijing and Washington, third countries – in Asia as well as Europe – would ultimately have to show their colors (Tham, 2018; Sanger et al., 2019). In this context, the factor "GEOPOLITICS" has proven to be the most dangerous enemy of globalization and globality.

These examples lecture us that globality of any issues needs powerful supports of forces that are interested to create new quality of life with global dimension. The same is true if forces, conversely, have no more interest to deepen the global connectivity of ideas, goods, services and institutions. The concept of "decoupling" preferred by some high officials in Washington presents one of the striking examples for looming dangers to the existing high degree of globality of economics, industries, cultures and societies among nations from Asia to America, and from Africa to Europe. People who want to "decouple" the links between the nations should recognize that it is a fantasy to return to the time of national autarchy. To phrase with Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman, "hawks in Beijing and Washington may talk about a new Cold War, but there is today no way to split countries into competing blocs. Countries remain entangled with one another, despite the dangers that their ties produce – bringing a new era of what might be called "chained globalization". Farrell and Newman's new "chained globalization" shares a high degree

of similarity with globality addressed above in that “states will be bound together by (global) interdependence that will tempt them to strangle their competitors through

economic coercion and espionage, even as they try to fight off their rival’s attempts to do the same.” (Farrell & Newman, 2020, p. 71).

1 This claim may seem to be a pretentious and a historic provocation for those viewing the global intensification of economic relations as a much older phenomenon. Indeed, the world came to be viewed as a possible unified economic space already by various thinkers, entrepreneurs, politicians and academics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For instance, the volume edited by Tilman Mayer and colleagues documents that the banker Baron Meyer Carl Rothschild (1788-1855), revolutionaries Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), and the philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) recognized in their lifetimes the worldwide links between technical and economic issues; see Tilman Mayer et al. (eds.), (2011, pp. 9ff). While acknowledging their intellectual foresight of a world growing ever closer as well as increasingly vulnerable together, the phenomena were not captured under the ‘rubrum’ (p. 10) of ‘globalization’. The analysis at hand is concerned primarily with pinpointing who invented the term ‘globalization’ and since when it has emerged in scientific literature, not with capturing when economic relations between countries commenced to intensify and interconnect more. That is, the chief analytical concern is not the practice of consolidation and networking in economic life itself, but rather their intellectual and terminological conceptualization. Gauging by Levitt’s discovery, these are rather young phenomena, not older than thirty years.

2 Quoted in The Economist.

3 See foreword by Joschka Fischer in Bhagwati (2008).

4 See the article by Ludger Kühnhardt in this volume.

5 See Farrell & Newman (2020, pp. 70-80); Held & McGrew (2007); Steger (2012, pp. 1-16); for an analysis of globalization critique from Latin American perspective, see e.g. Haslam (2012, pp. 331-339).

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# China's Intentions: A Historical Perspective

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## Kerry Brown

What does China want? For a country whose current leaders are keen to talk of its long and complex history, the answer to this question is going to be dependent partly on what identity it derives from this history, and partly on what sort of actions that identity and sense of history justifies. History for the People's Republic of China, only in existence since 1949, and founded after revolution, is as much a burden as a resource. Under Xi Jinping, too, the country has a new level of influence and capacity because of the vast and growing size of its economy. The key question is to what extent the past is a key to understanding China's future. This essay will examine this, trying to work out what framework might be best by which to understand the current standpoint of the country as it moves towards a greater and more central role in global affairs, which will involve understanding clearly the very large differences between China under Mao and China now, and also realising the crucial thing that links them – a clear commitment to an almost transcendental notion of a unique vision of a Chinese nation.

### Getting the parameters right: What China are we talking about and in which way?

The question of what China wants, and how its past behaviour might give a clue to this is an oft asked one. Part of the problem in trying to answer these questions is to know where to start. As the philosopher Thomas Nagel pointed out in 'The View from Nowhere', for all intellectual endeavours, one has to start from somewhere – but where one starts is an issue over which one has choice and agency. There are many places from which to start in looking at this issue of China's intentions. Some of the most important and complicated aspects of this

are to be clear about what we mean when we even use the word 'China' (Nagel, 1986).

In the elite discourse of leaders like Xi Jinping, current Party Secretary of the Communist Party and president of the country, the answer to this seems straight forward enough. China is a great civilisation, a country which has the largest population on earth, with 5,000 years of continuous history. Speaking of his signature concept of The Chinese Dream early in his period in power, he stated that 'China's history

stretches over thousands of years, and patriotism has always been a stirring theme and powerful force inspiring the Chinese of all ethnic groups' (Xi, 2014, p. 63). Talking even more mellifluously in May 2013, he said, 'the Chinese Dream pertains to the past and the present, but also the future.... [It is] the dream of the country and the nation but of every ordinary Chinese' (p. 53). In his language, as that of predecessors like Hu Jintao, Jiang Zemin, and those before them, the China they speak of has an almost static, monolithic quality. It sits above ethnicity, economics, regions and culture, as something that operates solely on its own terms.

Even in domestic discourse outside of the world of professional politicians, however, this settled notion of what China is has plenty of different perspectives and diverse voices. Ge Zhaoguang, from Fudan University in Shanghai, has written a whole book simply titled, 'What is China?'. His chapters range over historical, ethical, linguistical, and cultural questions. They range from the earliest recognised dynasties from over three millennia before, to the present, and into thorny issues about which ways those with such different languages, ethnic identities, and religious practices, like the Tibetans and Uyghurs, are now labelled 'Chinese' and belong within the boundaries of this geographical entity called 'China' is a part of this community being asserted. Reading Ge's work makes even a novice on issues around Chinese affairs appreciate the simple conclusion: this is a complicated issue. The simple acceptance on its own

terms of the sort of highly stable notion of 'China' presented therefore by a figure like Xi deserves some scepticism and analytic caution (Ge, 2018 and Duara, 1995).

We cannot go too far into deep history, however. The question is to what extent the geographical entity that exists today – the People's Republic of China (PRC), founded in 1949 – has a set of intentions about the world around it and its role in that world. Even here, however, we have to confront a number of initial questions. Simply because of the stark disparity in economic size and developmental status, the country that Xi Jinping leads in 2020, despite having the same name as that which Mao Zedong was supreme leader of from 1949 to his death in 1976, is a very different place. This can be evidenced by simply looking at issues like life expectancy, wealth levels, urbanisation and levels of poverty. In 1949, China was a place with limited transport infrastructure, only ten per cent of people lived in places designated as cities, the average life lasted only 32 years (largely because of the statistical impact of so many dying in infancy), and regarded as one of the most impoverished places on the planet. Xi presides over a place where life expectancy as close to 80 for males and females, wealth levels stand at mid-income country levels, more than 60 per cent live in cities, and there is more high speed rail infrastructure than the rest of the world put together. Many wonder, and some believe, that these are so different as almost to be two places. All they share is a single name.

## Contrasting intentions: China before and after 1978

In practical terms, a country with high levels of poverty, limited industrial and technological development, few diplomatic allies and a primitive military is obviously going to be a different kind of actor than one which is rich, well connected, has high levels of technology, and has one of the world's most advanced armed forces. The capacity of the PRC in 2020 is significantly different from that of the PRC seven decades earlier. Indeed, one could argue that before and after 1978, when government policy changed and economic development became the key objectives, the PRC has important differences. This means that because of the difference in capacity, China's intentions before 1978 were different to those after, simply because, increasingly after 1978, it had greater ability to operate on the outside world and further its own interests.

This is the cause of significant conceptual confusion. Xi Jinping and the leaders around him will not acknowledge that there is a significant difference over this period. For them, the Communist Party of China has been consistent in its rule, meaning that the narrative of development since the foundation era, down to the current time, is a coherent one. For Xi, the Party is almost like a knowledge community – an entity which has learned through its stewardship of the country since 1949 a vast amount about what works and doesn't work. The Party, in this account, has made mistakes, but ones which were well intended, and guided by the overarching vision of creating a strong, powerful country, one only realisable by the ideology of socialism (latterly with the addition 'with Chinese

characteristics' tacked to it.) The unity of vision means that differences are simply ones of execution and implementation. The Party under Xi and the Party under Mao are more united than disunited, because of this grand common purpose.

For many observers, however, including the current writer, the difference between the PRC before and after the reform era needs a more thorough and searching account. After all, the very term used in official discourse about post-1978 – the Reform Era – implies that something more profound than a simple change of tactics happened. To reform means to admit something was lacking, or inadequate, and then to remake it. Why remake something that was largely working okay? For the sake of political expediency, the Deng leadership immediately after Mao did not want to raise too many questions about what Mao had done, and what sort of comprehensive critique they could make of his leadership. The most they conceded was that in issues like the Cultural Revolution from 1966 he had presided over mistakes, but that the general direction of his rule was correct. To this day, that remains the official position. Mao has not been removed from political life as Stalin was in the USSR. Even so, in the area of China's relations with the outside world, something that is much easier to quantify and see enacted (in ways domestic policy is often more opaque), there is plenty of evidence to show that China's intentions in the Mao era and afterwards were significantly different. This means that when we speak of the PRC, we do have to disaggregate these two eras, even though the language, the structures

of Party rule, and the grand larger historic narrative of achieving great nation status

that serve to justify everything, do remain the same – at least on the surface.

## China's intentions in the Maoist era

The PRC was born from international war (against the Japanese in the 1937-1945 Sino-Japanese War) and then domestic war (the Civil one between the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists under Mao from 1946 to 1949). The Communist Party's road to power was a hazardous one, and was achieved as much through a combination of the mistakes of others (in particular the Nationalists), as the opportunities offered by the anti Japanese war. A marginalised political force in the 1920s, under Mao's increasingly influential leadership from 1927, it adopted guerrilla tactics and a Leninist organisational model. It survived internal and external purges and struggles in the 1930s into the 1940s, but even as late as 1945, it would have looked an unlikely candidate for national leadership. As Rana Mitter and others have shown, it was the Nationalists whose forces mainly fought, and won, the epic struggle against the Japanese (Mitter, 2014). The Communists were militarily and organisationally much weaker in 1946 when the Civil War commenced. But the collapse of moral authority of the Nationalists through corruption, and their inability to bring about decent economic outcomes (hyper inflation rose to astronomical heights under their leadership) meant that by 1949 they had lost the support of most Chinese people (Eastman, 1984).

The Communist Party, which came to power in 1949 was one of revolution, not governance. And while its initial work

was to try to remedy some of the terrible destruction that a decade and a half of war had caused to the physical infrastructure of the country, and the human development levels (with the appearance of the Three Anti's Movement in 1951, followed by the Five Antis a couple of years later, and then the Anti-Rightist movement from 1957), it became clear that one phenomenon of Communist rule would be maintained from its period prior to power – the enforcement of discipline and ideological purity through mass mobilisation campaigns. Land reformation, and then attacks on capitalists and intellectuals, showed that Mao's Party had a clear line between those it considered its allies, and those it regarded as enemies. The recent history of the country had intensified divisions, and a sense of lack of trust verging on the paranoid. With the Cultural Revolution from 1966, where the Party as an organisation fragmented and turned in on itself, these social mobilisation campaigns reached their peak. Arguably, China was not to fully emerge from them till Mao's death. His insistence as supreme leader on waging class struggle in order to cleanse the social order in China, and his belief in Utopian socialist goals, which made the huge costs of aiming for them justifiable, created a very particular kind of politics.

The impact of this domestically was, of course, huge. But it had a clear set of implications for the country in its relations with the outside world. Subscription to Marxist Leninist ideology meant that in

1949 the PRC belonged to the camp of the USSR. The USSR was amongst the earliest to diplomatically recognise it. It was the giver of a great amount of aid and technology, and signed a treaty alliance with Beijing – one of the very few (the only other one was with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1961) that were ever agreed to by the Chinese. The list of diplomatic allies of the PRC however in its early era were few. In 1949, these only amounted to 12. In the 1950s, 24 were added – though some of them, like that of the UK, were not full diplomatic status. It was only in the 1970s, with conferral of full UN membership on Beijing rather than the Republic of China on Taiwan in 1971, that the majority of countries formally recognised the PRC.

This formal lack of status was compounded by the divisions created internationally as the Cold War deepened. The PRC occupied a niche area in this, not only ostracised because it was part of the Soviet Bloc, but, with estrangement from the USSR itself after the death of Stalin and his repudiation under Khrushchev in 1956, moving into a period where it was even alienated from most other countries with one party socialist systems. By 1967, and the Cultural Revolution, the PRC's sole ally in the Eastern bloc of Europe was Albania. It was not a member of the UN, and occupied a lonely and distinctive space. All of this was compounded by the impact of the period's unrest on institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which meant that even the functionality of the diplomatic service was impacted.

In addition to its diplomatic isolation, the PRC under Mao was a relatively bellicose nation. It fought in three major conflicts – the

Korean War from 1950 to 1953, the border fight with India in 1962, and the clash on the north east border with the USSR in 1969. These were clearly examples of China's sense of insecurity in this period. As a new nation, with a particular and increasingly isolated political model, it took over stewardship of a country with numerous border disputes and lack of clarity about the location of its land and maritime boundaries. There were extensive arguments with the USSR, Pakistan, Vietnam, and India. As M Taylor Fravel has shown, through the Maoist era there were times in which Beijing was willing to buy more security and certainty for itself by negotiating settlements to these issues with its neighbours – sometimes strongly in their favour (Taylor Fravel, 2009). Periods of domestic unrest and uncertainty such as the early 1960s were particular times when deals with neighbours were done, as though the PRC were searching for stability around its borders at a time when this was lacking within it. But its deployment of over one million People's Liberation Troops to the defence of North Korea, at a time when it was just emerging from its own serious war, and had manifold problems to deal with at home, shows just how much it wished to ensure that the US and its allies did not create space right up against its borders. The defence of the Kim Il-Sung regime in Pyongyang is particularly striking, because almost certainly had this distraction not occurred, the PRC would have been able to make a concerted attempt, one which may well have been successful, to invade and take the island of Taiwan (Garver, 2015). As it was, and despite significant ideological and strategic differences with the Kim regime (differences which were to intensify as the decades proceeded) this

opportunity was never taken. The Korean War led to huge numbers of fatalities, leaving a peninsula that remains divided to this day, and with two entities (North and South Korea) still technically at war.

China's bellicosity under Mao is shown in the clash with India at the border between the two countries – a conflict which China won, at the cost of alienating its vast western neighbour. The border area where the fight occurred is still disputed to this day. In 1969, with tensions rising between the two nuclear powers (China's successful testing of a bomb in the early 1960s had largely been due to technology, ironically earlier gifted by the USSR in a friendlier era), the Red armies of Moscow and Beijing clashed on the Heilongjiang border with Russia. While fatalities were modest, the event was enough to prompt an ageing Mao to consider rapprochement with the US, something that was to happen a couple of years later. The threat from the socialist USSR was regarded, according to testimony given to the then National Security Advisor under President Nixon, Henry Kissinger, as far greater than from the capitalist US. Significant amounts of industrial capacity were removed deeper inland to avoid annihilation, were Moscow to contemplate a nuclear attack. The final act in the era of China's bellicosity occurred at the dawn of the reform era in 1979, when the PLA launched a punitive attack against Vietnam. This was interesting on a number of levels. Vietnam was also a fellow socialist country. It was one which had enjoyed huge logistical and material support from the Chinese during the struggle between the North and the South during the Vietnamese War. It also offered a strategic opportunity for the newly emerging

leadership of Deng Xiaoping to point out the institutional and technological weaknesses of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Finally, Maoist China was proactive in its support ideologically and financially of left wing revolutionary causes and parties in the outside world. The history of this phenomenon is only just being properly understood. Despite formal diplomatic isolation for much of the post 1949 era, Maoism as an ideology was promoted in Latin America, Asia, and even in Europe as a socialist alternative to that version propagated by the USSR. Delegations from what the PRC has labelled the Third World (as opposed to the first aligned with the US, and the Second with the USSR) visited Beijing with figures like Che Guevara being received by top level leaders. Beyond its borders, as Julia Lovell has shown in a history of Global Maoism, the doctrine of Mao Zedong Thought, with its disturbing invocation to adopt violence against enemies and its support for subversion and covert operations to destabilise existing government systems, was proactively supported. This gave birth to the Shining Path Maoist group in Peru, and the Maoist government in Bhutan. It reached even into the political and academic life of western Europe, with the School of African and Oriental Studies in London having a number of figures like Malcolm Caldwell (who was tragically killed in Cambodia while there to interview Pol Pot in 1978). It is ironic that in 2020, claims of Chinese influence in similar institutions are intensifying, in view of the earlier iteration of this panic. Maoism took off, with devastating impact, in the Kampuchea of the Khmer Rouge. It did not have much traction in Europe or North America. But it certainly did have

some impact, and contradicts the idea that Mao's China was an introspective, self-absorbed place (Lovell, 2018).

We could characterise the PRC under Mao therefore as a highly exceptional actor. Diplomatically isolated, and yet trying to promote its own version of universal truth, the doctrine of Maoism, it was also insecure geographically and willing to protect itself by the proactive use of military force, despite the fact that it was technologically and economically very weak. Mao's China was a place with high levels of instability domestically, due to the social mobilisation campaigns being waged, and externally, because of its lack of any other means other than force to protect itself. It had no strong economic links to the outside world, through investment, trade flows, or flows of people. Mao's China was a place it was hard to enter or leave, hard to do business with, and very hard to gain access to commercially via Hong Kong, then under the rule of the UK. Trying to summarise these characteristics into any coherent description of the PRC's intentions would not be easy, as they display the same love of contradictoriness that Mao subscribed to in his own Daoist influenced philosophy. The country seemed on the one hand to be afflicted with insecurity and instability, but on the other, interested, and willing, to wage

campaigns on other countries on the grounds that it stood for the interests of all non-aligned, former colonised, and oppressed countries. This gave it, therefore, a moral mandate to stick up for the group it labelled the 'Third World', despite its protestations from the mid-1950s that it subscribed to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, of which one of the most important was non-interference in the affairs of others.

Maoist China almost made inconsistency a virtue, due to its other inherent weaknesses economically and politically. It balanced the US with the USSR, and carved out a place which managed to be both ambitious about its ultimate global leadership, but also careful to ensure it was seen as being a highly particular actor. Marxism Leninism was adapted to Chinese characteristics, and often unrecognisable to its practice in the USSR. What was clear was that Mao's China subscribed to a strong sense of nationalism. Its leadership believed they were creating a country which was emerging from its long period in modern history as a victim and underdog to being a strong, powerful place, which was able to defend itself, and show others it would never again be pushed around. This last feature at least, as we shall see, is that which links the very different periods in China before and after 1978.

## China since 1978: All change?

With the different set of attitudes adopted from the death of Mao, and in particular from 1978 onwards, we can see a transformation of the PRC's international role, and its mode of operation in all of the areas mentioned above – diplomatic alliances, use of force beyond its borders, and export of its own

ideology. The context to this change can be found in conceptualising clearly what the changes from 1978 involved. They did, of course, mean a significant readjustment in policy terms. Things like foreign capital, the market, and entrepreneurialism, which had been anathema under the almost



wholly centralised, autarkic model of Maoism, were accepted. By the mid 1980s, China had a domestic free market, and private businesses, and allowed foreign companies to operate within its borders – all with specific limitations, but all utterly impossible before 1978. But these policies were underpinned by a change in attitude and culture amongst Party officials and the most senior leadership. For them, the Cultural Revolution, and late Maoism, had been a searing, catastrophic experience, and one that had made them reappraise their fundamental beliefs. Figures like Deng had had moments of epiphany, where they needed to question their practices and underlying values when exposed to the wide spread levels of poverty and lack of development despite almost three decades of socialism in the country. Their critique of the entity they had served all their life – the Communist Party – was not undertaken to weaken its privileged place in society, but to ensure that it was not at risk and could continue enjoying its monopoly on power. That involved a change in attitude, to one which was typified by less dogma and ideology, and more pragmatism and focus on empirical reality. 'Let Practice be the sole criterion of truth', 'liberate thinking', and 'seek truth from facts' were three of the many slogans embodying this disposition, which were used at the time. While they had existed before 1978, they become much more densely deployed, and linked to a set of practices which flowed from them.

The impact of this change of disposition had clear domestic results. But it also caused a change in China's international posture. Admission to the United Nations, and political rapprochement with the US, had all happened in the late Mao period.

But the realisation of their full implications can be seen from 1979, when Washington under Carter shifted formal diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing. From that moment, a raft of other countries also formally recognised the PRC. It also ushered in a period when China was increasingly willing to be part of multilateral bodies, from the World Bank, to the International Monetary Fund, and, in 2001, after 14 years of negotiations, the World Trade Organisation (WTO). China was willing to sign, even if it did not ratify, most UN conventions. It was willing to be involved in bodies like the UNESCO. All of this effectively ended the era in which, institutionally at least, the country was isolated. It became easier for non Chinese to visit, and impediments for foreigners such as the use of specific currency for them, was phased out in the early 1990s. For business too, China became more accessible. Bodies which had been disallowed before like the Peace Corps from the US, or Voluntary Service Overseas from the UK, were allowed to operate in the PRC.

The Reform impact had the great strength of having tangible and measurable outcomes – particularly GDP and income growth. Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, with a couple of set backs because of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, the PRC posted double digit growth. Its physical landscape began its great transformation, with new buildings and skyscrapers appearing. China in the 1990s was a place where people were materially increasingly better off, and had things like cars, fridges, and electrical appliances. While this was to accelerate dramatically after 2001 and WTO entry, it marked the formal start of the era of Chinese enrichment. From the low tens, China started its ascent, overtaking the UK,



France, Germany, and then, in 2010, Japan, to be the world's second largest economy. The political and geopolitical impact of this is still being worked out today. But it meant a country with far more levers of influence, and with a major role in a number of international fora, on issues like climate change, combatting financial crises, and dealing with security issues. Militarily too, China's wealth meant it has been able to construct the world's second largest military, and for the first time in modern Chinese history, a viable navy. Under General Liu Huaqing who sat on the Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party in the 1980s, the country for the first time decided on the importance of having naval capacity. Devoid of any real naval assets before the 1990s, by 2017 the PRC had more vessels than the US fleet, despite their technological weaknesses. It had two aircraft carriers, one of which it had devised on its own, and an ability to project power deep into the Pacific and South China Sea area around it.

The significance of the PRC's military assets in the era in which it has been growing richer and more capable of developing these is something that has been exhaustively written about. Claims that China's spending on military is in fact far higher than publicly stated have been made by, amongst others, the US Pentagon. The assumption is that the rapid development of this sort of asset must mean something, and signal some clear intent. It has been married to China's claims on issues like the South and East China sea, and its claims over Taiwan, which it still says is part of its sovereign territory and needs to be reunified with it. Despite this, there is one inconvenient fact which the more hawkish critics of China have to reckon with: despite its immense new military (paraded before

the world during the huge celebrations in 2015 in Beijing to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Pacific where over 75 per cent of the kit on show was brand new), the PRC has not fired a single shot beyond its borders since 1987. That event too was a low level skirmish with Vietnam. The PRC's last real combat beyond its borders was the debacle with Vietnam, which it emerged from humiliated in 1979. Despite the violence in 1969 with the USSR, and with India in 1962, these can best be described as border skirmishes. The bottom line is that the last full international conflict the PRC was a part of was the Korean War, seven decades before.

Maoist China was impoverished, and diplomatically isolated. But it was far more aggressive than the PRC in an era when its economy is immeasurably larger and its global reach far greater. A weak China, modern history tells us, is a far more actively aggressive actor than a strong one. And while this may well change, and change quite quickly, as of 2020, this rule holds.

This brings us to the final of the three characteristics of the Mao era – export of its ideology through promotion of Maoism for foreigners. While much has been written about Chinese attempts under Xi Jinping to influence politicians and other actors in the West, these lack the coherence and political commitment of the Maoist attempts. Confucian Institutes, often partly funded by the Chinese state Han Ban organisation, have proved particularly contentious since the first were set up in the early 2000s. But the kinds of interference imputed to them revolve more around the ways in which the Chinese government, directly or via proxies, seeks to influence a set of issues

that matter to it – attitudes, statements, and involvement with Taiwan, for instance, or around Xinjiang, Tibet, human rights issues in China, and criticism of its international relations practices. The general disinterest, verging even on disdain, for Sinified Marxism Leninism means that there is little evidence that the Chinese party state is trying to promote a world view which competes with, or even supplants, that of host countries in Europe, North America, and other environments. In this context, the PRC is more an opportunist, and self interested. It does not particularly care what political systems others use. It does care about a narrow set of issues that matter to it. It is not in the business of ideological re-education and proselytising. It is in the business of getting agreement on things that matter only about it. This also explains the trenchant language under Xi Jinping of pushing back against Western universalism and values. These are not relevant in China, and, by logical extrapolation, Chinese values are, in being anti-universalist, not universal, and therefore not suitable for export.

This is not to deny that post-1978 PRC is a place with an ideology. But this is one that is related tightly to specific conditions in

the country, and stakes out a much more exceptionalist space. Socialism, capitalism, and a host of other ideas, are all modified by the phrase 'with Chinese characteristics'. This has been the case since the 1980s, when the idea of a properly indigenous belief system was strengthened, partly to reinforce the Party against the rising tide of ideological competition being brought in from the US, and others, as the country opened its doors. In this era, it was not so much about China's intentions towards the world beyond its own domestic space, but much more about how it intended to use the outside world within itself in ways that worked for it, while seeing off the potential disruption their access to China might bring. 'Opening the window lets in flies', Deng himself admitted. So Bourgeois Spiritual Pollution campaigns were waged. The 1989 uprising, brutally quelled by the Party and its military, proved to elite leaders who remained in power that China could not be relaxed about allowing foreigners free play in its own ideosphere. Even so, its larger economy and greater global role mean that increasingly, it is China in the outside world now wielding influence. The tables, in that sense, have turned. And the noisy complaints by many outside of China show that this is having a very unwelcome impact.

### China's intentions under Xi Jinping

Since 2012, and Xi's rise to power, we have seen a PRC which is now enjoying the benefits, and some of the brickbats, of having an increasingly important and powerful economy and far greater geopolitical space. The PRC under Hu Jintao was often criticised for not being communicative enough about its intentions. Attempts were

made to spell out, to a sometimes sceptical world, the answer to the question of what China wanted. State Councillor in 2009, Dai Bingguo, started to talk of the country's core interests. He said: 'to maintain its fundamental system and state security; next is state sovereignty and territorial integrity; and third is the continued stable

development of the economy and society (Dai, 2009).’ These are noticeable because of their focus on domestic stability and regime security. They indicate an awareness that the very specific and localised form of governmental system the country had, run by one party, subscribing to socialism with Chinese characteristics, are a sense of both strength and vulnerability. The PRC under Communism had proved viable, in ways which the USSR and its system had not. But the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was not a source for celebration in China. It had left China initially as the sole major power trying to succeed in practicing Communism. As the years have gone on, and the regime has not only survived but seemed to prosper, this weakness has increasingly figured as a source of strength. China has the system that works only for it, and as a unique nation with an exceptionalist outlook and self identity, this, perversely, is appropriate. It is not a democracy as much through these issues of identity as through political imperatives. Being Communist is now part of the PRC’s image. This can work for it, but not for others.

In essence, despite the talk of assertiveness and rising geopolitical ambitions, the PRC under Xi has simply intensified this sense that it is a self-interested actor, and one that privileges its own interests above all others. This is partly fuelled by the history of victimisation the country has, through its often traumatic modern history from the Opium Wars of the mid 19th century onwards. Its experience of foreign involvement in its affairs, culminating in the Japanese partial colonisation and invasion, has left a deep memory stain. This has been exacerbated by the state sponsored patriotic education campaigns and the

national humiliation narrative adopted since the 1990s. Never again, the attitude goes, will the PRC be subjected to this kind of vulnerability and helplessness in the face of others. Complaints about its harder attitude to the outside world and its pushiness, while they sound critical beyond the country’s borders, figure as proof of success in home territory. China is once more being taken seriously. It is worried about and feared. This is better than being seen as a pliant actor, one that is ordered about rather than able to resist and stand its ground. The almost obsessive focus of the Trump presidency on China is proof of this: that the world’s most powerful country now sees China as its most significant competitor is a mark as much of success as being a source of problems.

A prime intention of Xi’s China therefore is the very prosaic and uncomplicated one of standing its ground, and setting its own agenda. There are a range of softer issues, from climate change action to working on peacekeeping through the UN, to promoting economic development, where China is more easily able to find at least some level of alignment with the outside world. Even in these areas, there are plenty of challenges. On climate change, it is accused of doing too little, too late. On economic development, the Xi signature foreign policy idea of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been accused of being more about debt traps than sustainable development. Despite these complaints, there is at least some space granted to China where it is seen as having legitimacy in acting. On other issues, like its position on the South China Sea, on Taiwan, and on the way, it promotes its security interests in the region and more broadly, alignment

is hard to impossible. This is as much because of the lack of consensus amongst the US, Europe, and other key players in what to make of China's new role under Xi, both within and between themselves.

Taking each of these issues in turn we can illustrate the question of what China's intentions now might be, and how they have been shaped by history and evolved from that history. The South China Sea claims are linked to earlier notions of statehood, and a belief in China having had unique rights derived from its history in the region. As has become clear in the arguments, particularly with the Philippines, and the case undertaken by the Permanent Court of Arbitration from 2013 to 2015, there is a clear difference between China's largely historic based claims, and those of other parties in the dispute who appeal to the more modern concepts of international law. A similar issue occurs in the dispute over the East China Seas territories with Japan. With its insistence on the Nine Dash line reaching deep into the Indian Ocean, China shows an almost premodern understanding of maritime territory. While not explicitly stated, it seems that in the 21st century, the Chinese government subscribes to a notion of China as an imperial entity from ancient times, having a unique role in the Asian region, and occupying a privileged space. Such a tributary state kind of mindset is betrayed in the Confucian style patriarchal attitude that Beijing holds toward its neighbourhood – an era where it can accept modern notions of sovereignty, but often slips into the language of suzerainty. Westphalia 1648 applies to it – as a great state. But it applies in a weakened form, particularly in maritime issues, to its smaller neighbours.

A more charitable explanation of the PRC's uncompromising attitude to the South China Sea dispute however is to accept it is more opportunist in its actions. As the world's second largest economy now for its status and security, it feels that it should have the right to control the strategic space around it. It does not want the US, and its allies, to have the freedom to move unfettered in waters so close to its own shores. The US, for instance, would be deeply resistant to Chinese naval assets not only being able to operate freely a couple of hundred kilometres from its coast (something they can legally do), but actually willing to do this. It is hard to think of the PLA being able to move around the US in the way the American Seventh Fleet does around China, fortified by large numbers of military personnel and assets in South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines. China's behaviour in this area therefore betrays strategic expediency. It feels that for its greater security, it needs this space, and will not back down on its claims to it. History is simply a good excuse to promote and enforce these.

On Taiwan, history is an even larger factor. Enjoying *de facto* independence since 1949, scholars like Su Beng and others have shown that from the early part of the Qing era in the mid 17th century, the island of Formosa was a separate, distinctive place, often run by colonial governments like the Dutch or the Spanish, or as part of the Qing empire but regarded as special territory, neither wholly in or outside the jurisdiction of the imperial empire (Su, 2017). While Taiwan was incorporated more formally into the Qing era towards the final decades of its period in power, with the victory by Japan in the Sino Japanese war of 1894, the Treaty of Shimonoseki ceded Taiwan as a colony, one run by Tokyo for half a

century till it relinquished this right after its defeat in 1945. For four years, under the Nationalists, Taiwan was part of a unified China. But in their defeat in the Civil War, it became the sole home of the Republic of China, and one that continues to this day.

Taiwan's history is complex. It involves taking into account the Han settlement from the last few hundred years, but the long history before this when the island and its satellites were the home to indigenous peoples. In the last 125 years, the simple fact is that Taiwan was part of a larger entity called China for only four years. For the rest of the time, it was a colony, or had defacto independence. This does not prevent the Beijing government from being unmoving in its commitment to 'reunification' and its insistence that Taiwan is, and always was, part of the larger China. The most recent deployment of this came in early 2019 when Xi Jinping declared that reunification was now urgently necessary. This has occurred at a time when polls show that amongst the 23 million population of Taiwan, an increasing majority see their identity as Taiwanese, or Taiwanese Chinese. There are less than 3 per cent who say they are simply Chinese (Brown & Wu, 2019). Once more, there is a complex entwining of claims derived from appeals to historic legitimacy, and simple opportunistic pragmatism. For the PRC under Xi, it remains a consistent strategic problem that a mere hundred kilometres from its southern coast line there is a such a significant entity, which is a major political, military, and strategic ally of the US. Taiwan has been armed by the US, and enjoys a very close relationship with it. For Taiwan, this makes absolute sense in order to defend its long term interests. For the PRC, however, it also makes sense to seek to undermine and

change this. Unjust and irritating Beijing's position may well be – but it is not illogical. On its broader security role in the wider region, too, history casts a shadow over the proactive Xi administration. The BRI manifests Beijing's capacity and its vision for the whole central, south, and south east Asian region. But despite the great excitement about this idea, it is also clear what sorts of ruptures and fissures it creates as it gets rolled out. China has history with almost every party involved now. Some of this history is not easy. With India and Vietnam, it has had fractious relations, some, for a long time. With Japan, a country which has not shown much eagerness to the BRI idea, there are constant tensions that continue to arise from the Second World War and its aftermath. For Central Asia, countries are divided between the new potential opportunities being offered by working with China, against their political loyalty to partners like Russia, and their suspicion about China's long term intentions. With Russia, a country China enjoys largely positive relations with because of the good chemistry between Putin and Xi, the complex and often confrontational era prior to the 1980s may have been put on silent, but it has not wholly vanished. Moscow continues to remain suspicious of Chinese long term intentions towards the energy rich Siberia region, and watches warily as China becomes more active in areas which are its own traditional theatre of influence – the Stans in central Asia in particular. The simple fact is that while China since 1978 has acquired a powerful economic narrative, its security one is far less understood. The distinctiveness of its political system means that its alliances are pragmatic, based on self interest, and largely skin deep. It does

not share its value system with others, and while this means it can honestly say it is not in the business of promoting ideologies

to change the identities and behaviours of others, it also lacks a deeper shared strategic language with the world around it.

### China's intentions: The point of unity between the Maoist and Xi eras

While there are very significant points of difference between the PRC of Mao and that of Xi, some of the most striking of which have been spelled out in this essay, there is one great point of commonality. This is the commitment to the almost transcendent notion of a great, powerful, resurrected China – a place which existed in the pre modern time through its great imperial history, but which was subjected to terrible indignities in the 19th and 20th centuries, and which is finally on its way back to global status and prominence.

Historians like Timothy Brook have posed plenty of questions about the origins of this powerful idea of a China based on a centralised bureaucracy and a cultural and political cohesion (Brook, 2019). In his account, the notion at best is traceable to the Yuan Dynasty 800 years before, rather than to earlier eras where the features of a centralised strong state grow much more amorphous and hard to describe. China's current leaders would certainly contest this. Mao and his successors point to the First Emperor more than two centuries before the Christian era as the first properly unified Chinese empire. But whether 800 or 2200 years old, the simple fact is that the notion of a great coherent, powerful Chinese statue underpinned by a complex and rich set of values, and a unique, remarkable culture, has an almost religious fixation. This was true in the Maoist era, and remains true today.

The main difference between the two eras before and after 1978 is one of tactics, not of ultimate destination. Mao was a nationalist, who believed in the integrity and uniqueness of China as a nation. His posture was to smash the chains of Confucian, traditional culture with its hierarchy, intellectual conservatism, and feudalism. Smashing the old society was a mantra of the Cultural Revolution. The means were destructive and rebellious. But despite this, the end was to see a great China with its prowess and powers and authority restored to the way it had figured in the past – as a truly respected, global power.

This dream is as potent for Xi as it was for Mao, with one very significant difference: its realisation is much more imminent. For Mao, China's renaissance was a dream, its realisation pushed into the distant future. For Xi it is a reality, something that is already happening, with the first centennial goal in 2021 marking the achievement of a Middle Income Country, with levels of wealth unimaginable even by those present at the start of the Reform era four decades ago. Nationalism, and its historic root, were crucial for Mao, and remain crucial for Xi. This is a reality, however contested the notion of a coherent Chinese nation historically might be.

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# A Balanced Foreign Policy for Thailand?

## Readjusting Arms Deals between China and the USA

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### Paul Chambers

This study examines the evolution of Thai foreign policy until 2020, with a particular emphasis on security relations. In particular, it looks at Thai external policy-making within the parameters of relations with the United States and China. The study focuses on whether or not Thailand in 2020 has become a security ally of China or whether Thailand continues to balance the United States and China to maximize its own security interests. It argues that Bangkok today has not simply readjusted to become an ally of China rather than of the United States. Instead, in its foreign policy today, Thailand practices omnidirectional balancing, “bending with the wind” and most importantly the preservation of royalist-nationalism.

Various actors and factors have affected Thailand’s foreign policy across time, occasionally creating opportunities, but at other times, parameters for the kingdom. Since 1851, across time, the number of elites deciding on foreign policy has generally expanded from being only the palace, to involving civilian and military bureaucrats, as well as aristocrats, to including elected politicians.

As a country never colonized, Thailand has tended to exhibit a foreign policy which is a function of maximizing the aims of a Thai “royalist-nationalist” narrative, but also to some extent, allying with specific external great powers when they possess great clout in Southeast Asia. Each aim mutually reinforces the other. Royalist-nationalist

(rachachatniyom) discourse views the Siamese/Thai monarchy as the hero, guider, redeemer, preserver, and even epitome of the Thai nation and identity. “Royalist-nationalism takes, at its core, the irredentist pride of Thainess and especially its post-1957 oscillation around monarchy” (based upon Strate, 2015, p. 9; Chachavalpungpun, 2012a, p. 89; Winichakul, 2016).

Meanwhile, the latter policy, dubbed “bend with the wind,” has involved a calculated foreign policy effort to remain independent of any super-power. Thus, despite appearing to ally closely with Britain at the end of the 19th Century, Japan in World War II or the United States during the Cold War, “Thailand has carefully avoided anything more than temporary arrangements with foreign

powers (Kislenko, 2002, p. 537).” However, from 2001 until 2020, Thai-US security relations have been in flux. This period witnessed multiple changes of government in both countries; the relative ascent of Chinese power in Asia; the growing geopolitical rivalry between China and the US in Southeast Asia; and finally, a sudden heightening of Thai-US frictions followed by a rapid thaw.

Why has “royalist-nationalism” and “bending with the wind” guided Thai foreign policy for so long? What accounts for the post-2001 rollercoaster changes in Thai foreign

policy? How has US policy toward Thailand changed especially from the Obama to the Trump presidency? Has this change returned Thai-American relations to their pre-2014 levels? How has Thailand sought to balance security cooperation and defense capability building efforts between the US, China, and other countries? What has been the US reaction to Thailand buying arms from China? Under present conditions and amid great power competition, is there a prospective role for Thailand and the Thai-US alliance in regional security and stability? This study will address these questions.

### Siamese/Thai foreign policy (1851-1947)

From 1851 until 1932, foreign policy-making was limited to the monarchical family alone.<sup>1</sup> It was at this point that “bending with the wind” (also called “bamboo diplomacy”) and royal-nationalism became key drivers in the formulation of policy toward external affairs. With the ascension to power of King Mongkut (Rama IV) in 1851, Siam began to adopt a more internationalist worldview. Yet “bending with the wind” was seen as necessary for the country to survive. As such, Mongkut acceded to Britain’s 1855 Bowring Treaty, an unequal agreement helpful mostly to London: duties on British goods became limited; British citizens in Siam could not be tried by Siamese courts (extraterritoriality); and the Siamese could not outlaw British opium coming into Siam (Ingram, 1971, p. 34). But by agreeing to this Treaty, the Siamese gained support from the British against French designs to colonize Siam altogether. With the initial modernization of the Siamese army after 1851 and as the kingdom became more internationalized, King Mongkut and the Siamese kings following him, hired

military and diplomatic advisors from England, France, Italy, Denmark, Germany, Russia, and the US.<sup>2</sup> Siam also sought greater military and economic linkages from these countries. One objective of this policy was to achieve closer relations, but also greater balance in relations with, external powers.

At the same time, it was necessary for royal legitimacy that the king not give away any part of the kingdom. That is what happened in 1893. In that year, France humbled Mongkut’s successor King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) when French warships steamed up the Chao Phraya River to Bangkok and pointed their cannons at the royal palace to back up territorial demands for Thai-controlled lands on the northern side of the Mekong River. The subsequent “Lost Territories” represented Thailand’s “National Humiliation,” dubbed “RS 112”, given that these areas had been taken from a victimized Thailand by a bullying imperialist Western power (Strate, 2015, pp. 6-7).<sup>3</sup> A growing number of Thai statesmen became adamant

that this humiliation be avenged and the monarchy seemed too weak to safeguard national sovereignty alone—the nationalist military could do a better job. Thus, under the country's post-1932 military-led regime, all of the previous unequal treaties were renegotiated (thus ending extra-territoriality) and nationalist Prime Minister Field Marshal Phibun Songkram (serving 1938 until 1944)<sup>4</sup> waged a 1941 war against French colonial forces in Laos and Cambodia and British colonial forces in northeastern Burma to “recover” “lost territory (Ibid, pp. 61-62).”

Thailand's alliance with Imperial Japan during World War II seemed to be a perfect marrying of bamboo diplomacy and royalist-nationalism. First, Japan at least initially seemed to prove itself to be the single-most powerful external actor in Southeast Asia. Thus, again bending with the wind, Thailand allied with Japan. Second, Japan's foreign policy was partly based upon Japanese (and Asian) nationalism. Thailand's foreign policy, likewise, deriving from Thai nationalism, supported Asian

nationalism. But only with the help of Japan was Thailand actually able to win the 1941 Indochina War and, as a result, make territorial gains at the expense of European colonial powers. Meanwhile, both Japan and Thailand gave backing to independence movements throughout the region toward the building of a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” (Strate, 2015, pp. 94-122).

But by the end of World War II, Thailand had already bent with the wind to again support a new powerful external power in Southeast Asia—the United States. From then until the end of World War II, Thailand and the US generally maintained close relations. However, until 1947, governments in Thailand also continued to support Asian independence movements (in line with US policy during World War II). However, the beginning of the Cold War meant that Washington saw “red” in these movements with the result that the US implicitly supported the 1947 coup d'état in Thailand (Aphornsuvan, 1987, p. 208).

### Early cold war Thai foreign policy (1947-1973)

From 1947 until 1952, relations between Washington and Bangkok were tight and based around anti-communist security prioritization. The 1950 US Griffin Mission recommended economic and technical aid to shore up Thailand against communist pressures. Also in 1950, the Melby-Erskine Joint State-Defense-MDAP Survey Mission recommended military assistance for Thailand. From then on, the country was to receive millions of dollars in annual economic, military, and technical assistance from the United States. During this period,

many of the senior military officials during World War II came to hold powerful political positions, including Phibun Songkram who was again Prime Minister during 1948 until 1957. Washington was satisfied that Thailand's military leadership was anti-communist, and in fact, beginning in 1946, Thailand's purchases of military hardware were almost entirely from the United States (See appendix). Because Prime Minister Phibun Songkram wanted to obtain more US backing and military hardware, he made sure to align Thai policy

close to Washington, as exemplified by his late 1949 decision for Thailand to recognize the French and US-supported Premier Bao Dai of Vietnam (Fineman, 1997, p. 106).

The decision irked many nationalists within Thailand's foreign ministry who had developed their vision from the 1930s. They were inclined to support neutralism or what became known as "omnidirectionality," meaning to look in all foreign policy directions (Cheow, 1986). Though Thailand and the US seemed to be close allies, appearances could be deceiving. Indeed, Phibun, who had from 1938 until 1944 espoused an Asian nationalist foreign policy, began in 1955 secretly attempting to draw Thailand closer to Communist China, even sending Thai naval officials to Beijing in 1957 (Fineman, 1997, p. 234). In this respect, he was to some extent, simply following the moves of other Asian leaders participating in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) who sought balanced ties between the East and West.

However, a US-supported 1957 military coup put an end to this agenda and Thailand

returned to a close Cold War relationship with Washington. This could again be viewed as "bending with the wind." Under coup-leader Field Marshal Gen. Sarit Thanarat, the palace was returned to the forefront of Thailand's national identity and the kingdom saw a resurgence of royalist-nationalism albeit one backed by the military. Under these auspices, the US and Thailand signed the 1962 Rusk-Thanat communique, a military security pact between the two countries. Though Sarit died in 1963, his military subordinates Gens. Thanom Kittikachorn and Praphas Charusatien tightened US-Thai relations even further. In 1964, Thailand gave its approval to the stationing of thousands of US troops at Thai military bases. US aid to Thailand reached new heights. Nevertheless, Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman—a definite royalist-nationalist who supported omnidirectionality—was critical of the United States and recommended that Thailand build closer ties with China. At Washington's instigation, Thanat was removed, following the Thai junta's 1971 self-coup (FRUS, 1971). Not until the 1973 fall of Thailand's unpopular dictatorship did Thai foreign policy change again.

### **Moving toward omnidirectionality (1973-1980)**

From 1973 until 1980, though it remained dependent upon US military supplies, Thailand mostly followed a policy of seeking to achieve at least the appearance of greater balance among the US, Russia, and China to advance Bangkok's own interests. By 1975, Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Laos had all fallen to communism and the United States had failed or appeared unwilling to prevent the advance of communist regimes in Southeast Asia. Partly as a result, Thailand's

1975-76 democratically elected then-Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj began to publicly espouse "omnidirectionality." Kukrit was himself a royalist-nationalist. His Foreign Minister Pichai Ratakul and Permanent Foreign Minister Anand Panyarachun were also in the mold of Thanat Khoman. Thailand's military, weakened by the 1973 ouster of the military dictatorship, reluctantly went along with the civilian governments' policy preferences. In a popular 1976 move,

the elected government of ex-Foreign Minister MR Seni Pramoj ordered all US troops out of the country (New York Times, 1976). Though a vehemently pro-US, ultra-royalist regime briefly held power during 1976-1977, it was not there long enough to change Thai foreign policy. Instead, a 1977 coup brought to power a progressive military junta headed by Gen. Kriangsak Chomanand, which continued the policy of "omnidirectionality." Under Kriangsak, China became an ever-closer security ally of

Thailand, reflecting the post-1971 relations between Beijing and Washington as well as the fact that China diminished its support for communist insurgency in Thailand. Though Bangkok did not support the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, following the Vietnamese toppling of that regime in 1979, Thailand cooperated with China and the United States to support insurgency against the Vietnamese occupiers and their Cambodian proxy regime (See Conboy, 2013).

### Resurrection of close Thai-US ties (1980-1992)

But it was a Thai palace-pressured change-of-government in 1980, in which Gen. Kriangsak was replaced as head of government by Gen. Prem Tinsulanond that changed Thai foreign policy once again. Prem drew Thailand closer to the United States while maintaining cordial relations with China. Indeed, all three governments continued to support insurgency against Vietnamese-occupied Cambodia throughout the 1980s. Perhaps the tightening of Thai-US relations was symbolized by the beginning of the annual "Cobra Gold" joint military exercises which commenced in 1981. Arguably, the Prem regime's rationale for changes to foreign policy owed to the need to "bend with the wind." In the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Soviet Union-supported Vietnamese soldiers were in Cambodia and Laos: The United States appeared to be the only country willing and able to perhaps stand up to Vietnam. In 1984, on several occasions, Vietnamese soldiers chasing Cambodian insurgents crossed the Thai-Cambodian border. Perhaps responding to these incursions, to send a message to Hanoi, and because communist insurgency had

been crushed in Thailand in 1983, in 1985, Thailand for the first time purchased military hardware from Beijing (See appendix).

Prem stepped down as Prime Minister in 1988 and was succeeded by elected Prime Minister Gen. Chatchai Choonhavan (an earlier Foreign Minister under Kukrit). Chatchai wanted to show that Thailand had a more balanced global foreign policy. As such, he veered away from a national security state in close alignment with the United States. Instead, Chatchai attempted an independent foreign policy in mainland Southeast Asia which involved "turning battlefields into a marketplace," pursuing "Constructive Engagement toward Myanmar, and making economic agreements with former Cold War foes Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. US-Thai frictions grew regarding US intellectual property rights and Chatchai worked towards closer relations with China (Chambers, 2004, p. 461). In 1988, Chatchai diversified national weapons procurement, purchasing more Chinese military hardware than Thailand had ever bought previously: including 4 frigates for the Navy as well as 23 Type-69 tanks and

40 Type-85 armored personnel carriers to replace aging and more expensive US heavy weaponry. Nevertheless, Bangkok continued to procure large amounts of US arms for its air force. Let one forget however, the United States retained very close ties with both Thailand's monarchy and military. Moreover, the 1991 military coup against Chatchai

ensured that security prioritization and an affinity with Washington would trump his renewal of nationalist omnidirectionality—even though internationalist Anand Panyarachun (who had been Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry) served briefly as Prime Minister during 1991-1992 (Chambers, 2004, pp. 461-462).

### Omnidirectionality again (1992-2001)

Following a military massacre of demonstrators in May 1992, Thailand's military-dominated government became immediately tainted and fell from power. In September 1992, elected governance under Democrat Chuan Leekpai returned to Thailand. Guided democracy, under the palace, would continue on for 14 years. At the same time, with the Cold War over in 1991, the United States seemed interested in disengaging from Southeast Asia. The US Clinton administration (1993-2001) followed a policy which has been called "benign neglect" toward Asia, placing most of the region on the back-burner of US interests, except in terms of sometimes criticizing Asian leaders for human rights abuses or corruption (Wall Street Journal, 1998). Still, given that the palace, Privy Council, and most of the senior military brass remained adamantly pro-US, Thai-US relations remained quite friendly. Thai cooperation with the US continued, joint military operations under Cobra Gold were renewed, and in 1995, annual exercises between the Thai and US navies under Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) began. In 1993, Thailand and the US signed a logistics agreement making Thai facilities available to US forces when necessary.

But Thailand's Foreign Ministry (true to form) exhibited a hankering for omnidirectionality and initiated policies reminiscent of Prime Ministers Chatchai and Kukrit. As such, Thailand became a member of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1993 to demonstrate, at least officially, a foreign policy independent of Washington. Also, Bangkok moved to solidify economic ties with China, Russia, India, and the ASEAN, taking a leading role in bringing Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia into that organization. To the consternation of the US, Chuan turned down a US request to pre-position its naval vessels in the Gulf of Thailand. Clearly, though Thai-US cooperation continued, the Chuan government increasingly sought greater balance toward other countries, especially China (Chambers, 2004, p. 462).

Under Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, US-Thai relations hit a new low. Chavalit had long supported a policy of maintaining equilibrium between China and the US. In 1996, Bangkok received military assistance (worth US\$3 billion) from Beijing.<sup>8</sup> Chavalit also long had close ties with Myanmar's military. Against the US's wishes, Prime Ministers Banharn Silpa-archa (1995-96) and Chavalit (1996-97), as proponents of "constructive engagement",

visited Yangon to shore up ties with its regime (Chambers, 2004, p. 463).

The 1997 Asian financial crisis precipitated the fall of Chavalit's government and the accession to office of a coalition under Democrat Chuan again. But US-Thai tensions persisted. Thais were incensed at Washington's support for International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionality that demanded strict austerity measures and allowed foreigners majority ownership over Thai assets. Thais were appalled when the US blocked the choice of a Thai to head the World Trade Organization. Finally, tensions rose over US opposition to an Asian Monetary Fund (Ibid).

Nevertheless, Bangkok needed US assistance to weather the economic crisis.

Partly as a result of this, the second Chuan administration (1997-2001) accepted IMF conditionality and, as a reward, Washington granted Bangkok an additional US\$1.7 billion. Moreover, when Thailand was unable to pay for several F-18 aircraft it had committed to purchase, the Clinton administration contractually absolved Bangkok. Second, the Chuan government continued supporting a close US-Thai military relationship despite differences with Washington. By 2000, Thailand's economy was in tatters and many blamed PM Chuan. The 2000 general election campaign saw telecommunications tycoon and Thai Rak Thai party leader Thaksin Shinawatra defeat Chuan in a landslide. Thaksin's populist, nationalist, anti-foreign platform portrayed Chuan's Democrats as puppets of the IMF and even Washington (Greenfield, 2006).

### Thaksin Shinawatra: A more proactive foreign policy (2001-2006)

An earlier Foreign Minister of Chuan, Thaksin came to office extolling a new pro-active foreign policy which he called "Forward Engagement," actually no different from Chatchai's earlier "Constructive Engagement." It was business-driven and de-emphasized human rights considerations. He promoted what he called the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). This Asian-centered, commerce-driven initiative became the center-piece of what Thaksin called "the new Asian realism" (ACD, 2004).

He also sought to move Thailand more toward China. In May 2001, Thaksin visited Hong Kong and met with Chinese officials, after which Beijing granted Thailand US\$2 billion in Chinese assistance. Thaksin also sought to show himself as

a mediator between Chinese and US differences: in April 2001, tensions between Washington and Beijing boiled over after China forced the landing of a US EP-3 spy plane in Hainan, China. Thaksin's refusal to take the US side angered American authorities as did the visit's timing. His foreign policy behavior demonstrated his attempt to "omnidirectionally" reposition Thailand between the US and China. Nevertheless, Thai-US security relations appeared to remain robust, consisting of Cobra Gold, CARAT exercises, joint counter-drug efforts, and United States weapons transfers (Chambers, 2004, p. 465).

The events of 9/11 shifted Thaksin's foreign policy. In the immediate aftermath of the carnage, his administration stated that



Thailand would remain “neutral.” But as countries ranging from Japan to India to China began taking the side of Washington, Thaksin finally committed to doing the same. He also ordered Thai troops to be sent to fight in the US-led wars against terrorism (most notably in Afghanistan and Iraq) while in 2002 allowing Thailand to be used as a venue for CIA “enhanced rendition” tortures. For these services, Washington bestowed upon Thailand the status of a Major-Non-NATO-Ally (MNNA). Such a status offered several benefits including eligibility for US EDA (Excess Defense Articles [e.g. used military ships and aircraft]); the stockpiling of US defense materials; depleted uranium anti-tank rounds; the participation in military R&D efforts with Washington; military training, among other things (Chambers, 2004, pp. 468-469). In terms of weapons imports, Thaksin also revitalized a large influx of US arms in the country, though Thailand did purchase one frigate from China (See appendix).

By the beginning of Thaksin’s second term in 2006, his security policy toward

the United States had made a partial U-turn. He had moved Thailand into close collaboration with Washington in its war on terror and in Iraq. Indeed, Bangkok had taken the lead in supporting US positions with regard to counter-terror proposals in ASEAN, APEC, and the UN. Bangkok had even joined Washington’s “coalition of the willing in Iraq”. The US rewarded Thaksin’s compliance with MNNA status. Such intimacy between Bangkok and Washington seemed an anathema to the nationalist Thaksin of 2001. September 11 had partly determined the Thai Prime Minister’s course of action; at the same time, he clearly gambled on the potential payoffs. Nevertheless, Thaksin simultaneously attempted to cozy up to Beijing with even Chinese diplomats in Bangkok regarding Thai-China ties under Thaksin as a “close relationship” (Wikileaks, 2006). Meanwhile, regarding Thai policy towards its neighbors, Thaksin prioritized trade deals over nationalistic frontier claims and unfounded allegations by his foes that he was simply selling out national security for personal gain (Chachavalpongpun, 2010, p. 241).

### From coup to coup (2006-2014)

An arch-royalist 2006 putsch overthrew Thaksin but it also created friction and distancing between Thailand and much of the pro-human rights international community. To erase its lack of democratic legitimacy, the coup-appointed regime of Gen. Surayud Chulanond practiced a foreign policy which Pavin Chachavalpongpun has called “ethical diplomacy” whereby an “authoritarian demon” had been substituted for a “royalist angel” (Chachavalpongpun, 2010, p. 281). However, though the US

continued Cobra Gold exercises with Thailand, under Section 508 of the US Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, Washington was legally compelled to suspend its US\$24 million in military assistance. Moreover, Washington’s criticisms of the 2006-2008 military junta distanced the Thai military from Washington. Indeed, Thailand’s regime moved closer to China, which presented US\$49 million in military assistance (twice the amount suspended by the US but with no conditions for such aid), offered



to increase the number of Thai exchange students at Chinese military schools, and increased joint special forces exercises (Lohman, 2011). Also, in 2007, Thailand purchased 60 Chinese-made C-802/CSS-N-8 anti-ship missiles worth US\$48 million (See appendix). Finally, China and Thailand signed a Joint Action Plan which, among other things, increased bilateral cooperation in military training, military exercises and defense industry research (Storey, 2008). When Thailand returned to democracy in early 2008, the country's military had now increasingly diversified its sources to include not only the US and China but also Sweden and other countries. Since 2007, Chinese and Thai Special Forces have conducted joint counter-terrorism exercises. 2009 saw the beginning of joint Chinese-Thai yearly army "Strike" exercises. In 2010, Chinese and Thai marines initiated joint "Blue Strike" annual training drills (Nguyen et al., 2013).

A December 2007 election returned civilian governance to Thailand in February 2008. Nevertheless, deep political acrimony over Thaksin divided Thailand and the country witnessed political turbulence until the 2014 coup. Washington's legal (Leahy Amendments) inability to deliver weapons to coup-born regimes, unwillingness to take sides in Thailand's political debacle, and the rise of China in 2013 (which provided Bangkok with an alternative patron to Washington) were three important factors in this distancing. When pro-Thaksin party (Palang Prachachon) won the election, Thaksin "nominee" Samak Sundaravej became Prime Minister and US assistance resumed. Indeed, Washington sought to bolster its share of Thailand's arms imports, for example selling discounted Bell 214 Helicopters and TH-28/480 Light helicopters (See appendix).

But Thailand, still chafing from the 2006 aid cut-off, was already seeking to rely more on China. In July 2008, Samak visited Beijing, urging more Chinese investment in infrastructural projects for Thailand. Samak also met with China's Defense Minister and the two agreed to improve military ties (Storey, 2008). As a result of Samak's China visit, Beijing sold to Thailand 15 Weishi Multiple Rocket Launchers (See appendix).

The following year, Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vechachiwa visited China to request a US\$400 million soft loan (which Beijing gave to Thailand). Abhisit also sought to buy more weapons from China. His amity toward Beijing partly owed to the fact that when he became Prime Minister in 2008, China had become Thailand's second largest trading partner (Royal Thai Embassy, 2009). Nevertheless, Abhisit, a graduate of Oxford University, had long "cultivated relations with the US embassy." This proved to be a boon for the US Obama administration which in 2009 had initiated a "Pivot to Asia" policy and which, in 2010, sold a new supply of Bell 214 Helicopters and TH-28/480 light helicopters to Thailand. At the same time, Abhisit often proved to be an irritant to China. For example, Abhisit expressed implicit criticism at Beijing's building of dams in upstream tributaries of the Mekong River. Still, US condemnation of the Thai military's 2010 bloody repression of protestors in Bangkok (China did not criticize the Thai government) temporarily chilled relations between Abhisit and Washington (Chachavalpongpun, 2012). US denunciations especially vexed the Thai military leadership.

In 2010, while looking for a cheap arms deal but perhaps seeking not to provoke either Chinese or US arms suppliers, the Royal

Thai Army turned to a third source for major weapons: Ukraine. The Abhisit government purchased six BTR-3U Guardian Infantry Fighting Vehicles. Then, in 2011, Bangkok bought from Ukraine a mother lode of 75 BTR-3 armored personnel carriers, 46 BTR-3 armored personnel carriers, 1500 anti-tank missiles, and 49 T-84 Oplot Tanks all at a cost of US\$240 million dollars (See appendix).<sup>5</sup> But cheap Chinese weaponry was soon high on Thailand's agenda.

Following a landslide victory, Thaksin's new Puea Thai party took office in 2011. His sister Yingluck became Prime Minister. It is interesting that China did not deliver military hardware ordered by Samak in 2008 until 2011—Yingluck's first year in office (See appendix). This perhaps owed to uncertainty by Beijing about Thai domestic politics as well as Abhisit. But under Prime Minister Yingluck, in December 2011, China and Thailand signed six historic agreements, including a US\$11 billion currency swap agreement, high-speed train project. Then in April 2012, Yingluck visited Beijing. Perhaps more importantly, in late April, all Thai armed forces commanders, as well as Thailand's Defense Minister, visited Beijing for the first time since 1996 (Nanuam, 2012). From this meeting, Thailand ordered (and China delivered in 2013) four SR-5 self-propelled multiple rocket launchers and 82 WS-3A 300mm guided rockets (See appendix).

Yet, despite a further warming in relations with China, Thailand and the United States continued to collaborate closely under Yingluck. Such Thai-US cooperation included joint intelligence and anti-terrorism operations, and joint military exercises (e.g. Cobra Gold and CARAT). Finally, in terms of arms procurement, Yingluck relied on the US more than any other supplier. From 2012 until 2014, her elected government purchased millions of dollars of US weapons and equipment primarily for the air force, including APG-68 Combat aircraft radar, S-70/ UH-60L helicopters, and AIM-120C AMRAAM BVRAAM missiles. Beyond China and the US, Thailand's military under Yingluck principally relied upon the UK, France, Germany, South Korea, and Ukraine (See appendix).<sup>6</sup>

In early 2014, as Thai domestic politics appeared to be more violent and divisive, the United States and China adopted a wait-and-see policy regarding security relations with the Thai government. After all, it was hard to be sure whether a coup would overthrow the elected government or not. Only the US sold weapons to Thailand in early 2014, an indicator of the fact that US President Obama recognized Yingluck as the legitimate Thai leader (Walker, 2012). But with Thailand's palace and senior military brass increasingly opposing her, Yingluck's days as Prime Minister were numbered. A putsch seemed to be just around the corner.

### Thai foreign policy and strategic balancing since 2014

In fact, 2014 witnessed another successful military coup in Thailand (the country's 14th) which this time toppled Yingluck's elected government. The coup's leadership

then established a junta, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), which was chaired by Army Chief Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha, and remained in power until

2019, though it remains in power today in the form of a junta-created political party above a ruling coalition (iLaw, 2019).

The reactions of the US and China to the putsch were predictable. As in 2006, Washington criticized the coup, suspended US\$4.7 million in military programs and banned Thai soldiers from most joint exercises with the US (the 2015 and 2016 Cobra Gold military exercises were reduced in scope). The US reaction was expected, given that US law forbids US security assistance to countries which have experienced coups until democracy is restored. But the Obama administration seemed to go too far for Thai coup leaders. In January 2015, senior US State Department official Daniel Russel visited Bangkok and publicly criticized the military regime while meeting privately with former Prime Minister Yingluck. Despite the criticism, after 2014 Washington spent US\$460 million to help upgrade four Thai military bases and sold Thailand close to US\$437 in military hardware (Ehrlich, 2019).

In comparison, as in 2006, China refused to denounce the coup, which earned Beijing much praise from Thailand's new junta. In response to Russel's condemnation, NCPO leader Prayuth rebuked him and then hosted the Chinese Defense Minister, where the two discussed expanding security relations to include annual joint air force drills (which in fact commenced in November 2015) (Bangkok Post, 2015). At the same time, Thailand discussed allowing China, rather than the US, to lead in the modernization of Thailand's strategic Sattahip naval base (Crispin, 2015).

After 2014, China increasingly worked with Thailand to enhance military cooperation in terms of more exchanges of military officers, greater provision of Chinese military education for Thai soldiers, a larger Chinese role in the development of Thailand's defense industry, and joint intelligence cooperation (The Nation, 2015). Moreover, China-Thailand military exercises have increased, with China's Defense Minister offering to expand the countries' recently-commenced joint military maneuvers to include an air force component.

In terms of weapons procurement, the NCPO initiated a defense modernization program. But in terms of military sourcing, Thailand, under the NCPO, noticeably tilted toward China. Burned by Obama administration criticism, the NCPO in 2016 opted not to replace aging US M-41 tanks purchased in 1971 with new US tanks, instead replacing them, as well as older Chinese T-69 tanks<sup>7</sup> with 28 new Chinese VT-4 tanks (See appendix). The VT-4 (the cheapest tank deal for Thailand on the market) out-competed Russia's pricier T-90 tank (Gao, 2019). At the same time, Thailand gave a "thumbs-down" to more Ukrainian T-84 Oplot tanks given the delayed delivery of earlier Oplots purchased in 2011. The VT-4 tanks will include readily-available spare parts and maintenance facilities at Sattahip naval base, an army base in Nakhon Ratchasima, and an air force base in Takhli (Nanuam, 2019).

Thailand's army also ordered 34 Chinese VN-1 armored personnel carriers given their relatively cheap price, access to the new Thai-based Chinese military maintenance facility, and the fact that Western countries had decided to limit weapons sales to

Thailand's military government. The VN-1 was ordered to replace outdated US V150 and M113A3 APCs used for 40 years already (Bangkok Post, 2017).

For the navy, the NCPO bought three S26T submarine at a cost of 36 billion baht (US\$1.6 billion), with the first boat to be delivered in 2023, while payments to China were to continue until 2027. This was the most ambitious Thai military procurement for the Navy since it had purchased subs from Japan in 1938 (these had been decommissioned in 1951, in the aftermath of a 1951 navy-led coup attempt). Thai navy teams were also sent to China to receive training in powering the subs (Boonbandit, 2020). The success of the navy in acquiring such a large procurement owed at least partially to the influence of Admiral Luechai Ruddit, who served as Navy Chief of Staff and then became Navy Commander. Luddit's older brother is Gen. Kampnat Ruddit, a member of the King's Privy Council.

Finally, Thailand's air force moved toward replacing some earlier US aircraft and helicopters with hardware from Sweden, South Korea, and Russia. Regarding the latter, the NCPO contracted with Moscow in 2016 to buy six more Mi-17 transport helicopter for a total of 11 purchased since 2008 (Defense Industry Daily, 2019).

The Obama administration's negative reaction to the Thai coup was a clear reason for the NCPO to purchase more military hardware from China and other countries. As Nanuam (2017) stated, "The military government...boosted ties with China to balance the US's geopolitical influence" (Nanuam, 2017). Moreover,

according to an anonymous Thai defense ministry official, "Bilateral relations are a key factor that prompted the US, which once strongly opposed the coup, to pay more attention to its relations with Thailand under this military government (Ibid.)."

Another area of Chinese interest in Thailand has been with regard to the long-planned (over 60 years) Kra Canal, which would be constructed across the narrow Isthmus of Kra in southern Thailand. Though the US\$30 billion mega-project has been supported by Thai businesspeople and senior retired military, China began to back the proposal beginning in 2014 as an alternative to the Straits of Malacca to boost the projects along its Belt and Road Initiative and might be willing to fund it. At the same time, a proposed Chinese high-speed rail line which would pass from China through Laos to Thailand would connect southern China to the Kra canal itself (Storey, 2019).

Further, Thailand committed to Mekong River law enforcement operations with China, Laos, and Myanmar. Security vessels from all four countries have patrolled the river, working especially against drug lords since 2012. The patrols have enabled Chinese riverine security forces to engage in activities at the Thai border continuing beyond 2020 (Abuza, 2020).

The NCPO dubbed its foreign policy as a "complex engagement," which means that Thai foreign policy would recalibrate a balancing act in political, economic, and security dimensions with the US, China, Japan and other countries (Bangkok Post, 2018). Complex engagement was closely synonymous with the earlier policy of

omnidirectionality and as such, seemed to suggest that Thailand was shifting back to a preferred policy of balancing relations with the great powers. But despite the appearance of a middling approach, this new policy effectively tilted the country increasingly toward China.

The NCPO's consternation at what it perceived as the Obama administration's high-handed finger-waving regarding the Thai state's retreat from democracy and human rights mostly disappeared when Donald Trump was elected as US president in 2017. Trump's ascendance marked the most recent change in Thai-US relations, one which saw renewed amity. The thaw was reflected in almost immediate US weapons sales, including 8 Boeing AH-6i attack helicopters and related hardware (worth US\$400 million) and 140 Stryker ICVs (deal worth US\$175 million) (See appendix). Indeed, the US Strykers replaced the Chinese VN-1 IFVs (Poejar & Pjaicharoen, 2019; Defense World.net, 2019). While the resurgent US-Thai friendship under Trump might appear as though Trump has re-solidified US-Thai relations, what is in fact the case is that Thailand has moved to practice strategic balancing by not favoring any single foreign military patron over others.

The NCPO held a general election on March 24, 2019. The electoral process was unsurprisingly biased in favor of parties supportive of the armed forces. The electoral result was also favorable to the NCPO given that the military proxy party Palang Pracharat (PrtP) was the winner and its candidate, junta leader Prayuth, became the head of a new ruling coalition in July 2019 (Yuda, 2019).

Complex engagement remains Thailand's policy of preference. As if to underline this, in November 2019, Thailand signed separate yet ambiguous security statements with both China and the US. Such security relations include joint exercises as well military education programs with the two superpowers. China certainly provides cheaper military equipment while US hardware is higher in quality. Thailand's navy seems to have come to prefer China while the air force remains committed to the US for hardware sourcing. Thailand's army seems to be in the center of the US-China sourcing conflict, especially with regard to the recent clash about Stryker ICVs versus VN-1 IFVs. Even Ukraine remains among the army's sourcing countries. In 2019, Kiev announced a partnership with Thailand through which the Southeast Asian country will build a new command version of the BTR-3 8×8 armored fighting vehicle (UNIAN Information Agency, 2019).

In the end, the Prayuth government appears to be trying to keep friendly ties and obtain military equipment from China, the US, Russia, and other countries rather than to become dependent on any single one. According to Raksak Rojphimphun, director general of policy and planning at the Thai Defense Ministry, "It's about creating balance—we can't choose sides, we have to be friendly to everyone (Bangkok Post, 2019)." In 2020, Prayuth and the PrtP-led coalition remains in office. Ultimately, the same formulators and implementers of Thai foreign policy 2014 are still driving it in 2020.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, seven questions were asked. Why has royalist-nationalism as well as “bending with the wind” guided Thai foreign policy for so long? What accounts for the post-2001 rollercoaster changes in Thai foreign policy? How has US policy toward Thailand changed especially from the Obama to the Trump presidency? Has this change returned Thai-American relations to their pre-2014 levels? How has Thailand sought to balance security cooperation and defense capability building efforts between the US, China, and other countries? What has been the US reaction to Thailand buying arms from China? Under present conditions and amid great power competition, is there a prospective role for Thailand and the Thai-US alliance in regional security and stability?

In answer to the first question, because Thailand is dominated by monarchy and monarchist ideology, preservation of its king has almost always taken priority in terms of national security concerns. Preservation of monarchy as the epitome of national survival has necessitated “bending with the wind.” The country’s ruling elite—including businesspeople and senior military—accrue legitimacy from their proximity and oscillation around monarchy. Under the absolute monarchy, Siam sought to balance England, France, and other great powers, but France’s 1893 seizure of what Siam saw as its “provinces” aggravated royalist nationalism and distrust against European countries. Such Asian nationalism became embedded in Thailand’s alliance with Imperial Japan during World War II (a period during which monarchy was of mere token importance), though eventually, because of the presence

of Japanese troops in Thailand, Bangkok had little choice but to do Tokyo’s bidding.

After World War II, royalism-nationalism remained alive in Thailand in the sense that many within Thailand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to retain positive relations with leaders of Asian independence movements. Following China’s 1949 Revolution, Thailand secretly sought to maintain linkages with Beijing. At the same time, post-World War II (mostly military) Thai officials “bent with the wind” to become a close ally of the United States to legitimize Thai military regimes but also to obtain US military hardware. Indeed, after 1946, Thailand (especially the Thai air force), became dependent upon US military equipment and related spare parts. Nevertheless, royalist-nationalism never disappeared from Thai foreign policymakers, given that most leading Thai foreign ministers or their deputies from 1946 until 1980 adamantly sought to pursue a more balanced foreign policy and did not want the world to perceive Thailand as a mere US lackey. For these officials, greater balance meant opening up more to China. During most of the Cold War, US opposition to Thailand’s building bridges with China, as well as Chinese support for communist insurgency in Thailand, prevented a thaw in Thai-Chinese ties. But in 1980, Thailand began to work with the US and China in support of guerrilla groups fighting a Vietnam puppet government in Cambodia, Thai-Chinese relations began to blossom. In 1984, China made its first official arms sales to Thailand.

In 1988, the Chatchai government moved even closer to China while retaining close ties to the US. In 1992, with the end of the

Cold War and the beginning of 14 years of democratic governance in Thailand, Bangkok increasingly diversified its relations with other countries, including China, though the US remained a dominant source of military hardware (especially for the Air Force). Following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the Thai people's perception that Washington had been slow to assist them contributed to a nationalistic reaction, which helped to bring Thaksin Shinawatra to office as Prime Minister in 2001.

In answer to the second question, Thai post-2001 foreign policy certainly appears as a roller-coaster. Thaksin began his term wanting an even more balanced policy among great powers and to increasingly diversify the sources of weapons imports. Such a policy preference was, however, disrupted by 9/11: Thaksin subsequently bent with the wind to become part of the US-led war on terror, even sending soldiers to Afghanistan and Iraq. Thai-US relations improved remarkably. But the 2006 military coup against Thaksin was, in general, negatively received by Washington. US legal restrictions on coup-born regimes automatically diminished US arms sales to Thailand. Only after democracy returned to Thailand in 2008 did US arms sales begin again in earnest. Similarly, the 2014 putsch saw the US distance itself from Thailand, though the latter's 2019 election (as well as the 2017 accession to office of US President Donald Trump) saw Thailand and the US draw closer to each other once again. The two coups allowed China to increasingly fill the vacuum that the US created when it chose to distance itself from junta-led Thailand. Ultimately, both the agency of promoting Thai nationalistic identity and the structure of outside events

contributed to the rapid changes in Thai foreign policy from 2001 until 2020.

In answer to the third and fourth questions, US policy toward Thailand has certainly changed from the Obama to the Trump presidency, but this change has not necessarily returned Thai-American relations to their pre-2014 levels. The Obama administration was adamant about prioritizing values of democracy-promotion and human rights while simultaneously seeking to further US geopolitical and economic interests. The Trump administration makes claims to support democracy and human rights, but has demonstrated a clear preference for US geopolitical and economic interests in its relations with Thailand. This is illustrated by Trump's meeting with then-junta leader Prayuth Chan-ocha at the White House in October 2017 and re-opening the spigot of US aid to the Thai military. Obama's distancing of the US from Thailand following the 2014 coup in Thailand certainly damaged relations between the two countries. The advent of the Trump administration and a half-elected government in Thailand has meant that Thailand is now balancing the sources of its military hardware, preferring new Chinese tanks over those from the US, but also prioritizing US armored personnel carriers over those from China. Such balancing was an objective of Thaksin Shinawatra back in 2001. With the rise of China since 2013, Thailand can finally work to achieve such omnidirectionality in 2020.

In answer to the fifth question, Thailand in 2020 is certainly seeking to balance security cooperation and defense capability building efforts between the US, China, and other



countries. Achieving such balance rather than becoming dependent or mostly dependent upon one superpower has always been an objective of Thailand as it strives to preserve its royalist-nationalistic identity. Indeed, as this study has shown, Thai foreign policy has traditionally sought to bend with the wind in order to achieve balance in its relations with great powers, except when doing so might undermine the kingdom's national security. Attempts at such balancing have often been reflected in the evolution of Thai weapons purchases up until 2020. Thailand today has not tilted into China's orbit. But neither is Thailand part of a US-led bloc. In fact, Thailand does not "belong" to one side or the other. Thailand is rather seeking to bolster its own interests and identity.

In answer to the sixth question, the US's reaction to Thailand buying arms from China has become increasingly negative. This should come as no surprise, given that Washington and Beijing are involved in an intensifying bipolar geopolitical competition in Southeast Asia. But the Trump administration has offered more enticements of military and economic aid to resuscitate US-Thai relations.

In answer to the seventh (final) question, under present conditions and amid US-Chinese great power competition, there is indeed a prospective role for Thailand and the Thai-US alliance in regional security and stability. Thailand is today engaging in security cooperation with the US, but also with China, as well as with other countries. Such a posture helps Thailand remain friends with all sides rather than becoming a perceived enemy of one and tool of another.

In the end, Thailand is not a country that will slide into the orbit of either China or the United States. As history has shown, while Thailand does bend with the wind except when dire need arises, it will otherwise seek to maximize its own interests as a sovereign country seeking to avoid dependency. At the same time, regime type (democracy versus dictatorship) in Thailand does not correlate with close relations with Washington versus Beijing. Indeed, in Thai history, some dictatorships have been closer to the US (e.g. Sarit) and others to China (e.g. Prayuth), while the same has been true for elected Thai governments (post-9/11 versus pre-9/11 Thaksin).

Judging by the history of Thai foreign policy, its future could increasingly involve Thai attempts to balance great powers off of each other—unless (as in the past) some perceived national security crisis compels elite policy-makers to draw close to one great power or another. The competition between China and the United States in Southeast Asia offers Thailand clear opportunities, in the sense that she can take the best deal offered by each country to promote her preferred interests. At the same time, China and the US will increasingly be forced into using "carrots" rather than "sticks" to encourage Thailand to adopt particular policy positions: simply cutting aid would likely push Bangkok toward the other superpower. But as the geopolitical "Great Game" in Southeast Asia intensifies between China and the United States, Thailand's attempts at balancing (in terms of weapons imports and other related factors) could become fraught with growing parameters in the sense that this strategy could increasingly be interpreted by one or the other power as a threat to its own



interests. The future of Bangkok's royalist-nationalist foreign policy thus portends

of both opportunities but also rising and potentially dangerous parameters.

## Appendix

### Major Arms Transfers to Thailand by Country (1930-2020)

Sources: SIPRI, [http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade\\_register.php](http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade_register.php); <https://sites.google.com/site/pankungtest/wiwathnakar-rth-thang-thiy>; <http://thaiseafarer.com/museum>

Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
UK	X	X		10,20	1930,1930	1933,1931	10,20	Carden Lloyd Mk VI light tanks, Avro 504 strafing aircraft
UK	X			2,10	1933	1933	2,10	Vickers-Carden-Lloyd Light Amphibious Tank, Vickers light tank
US		X		12	1933	1934	12	Vought O2U Corsair
UK	X			14, 30	1934	1935	14, 30	Carden Lloyd light tanks
US		X		48	1934	1935	48	Curtiss P-36 Hawk fighter
Italy			X	2	1935	1937	2	escort vessel
Japan			X	2, 4	1936	1938	2, 4	gunboats, submarines
US		X		6	1937	1938	6	Martin B-10 Bomber
Italy			X	2	1938	0	0	light cruisers (requisitioned)
UK	X			12	1938	1939	8	Vickers light tanks
US		X		6	1940	No	0	North American P-64 (embargoed)
Japan	X		X	50, 18	1940	1940	50, 18	Type 95 Ha-Go light tanks; Nakajima E8N
Japan		X		9	1941	1941	9	Mitsubishi Ki-21
Japan		X		12,24	1942	1942	12, 24	Nakajima Ki-27; Tachikawa Ki-36
Japan		X		24	1943	1943	24	Nakajima Ki-43
US			X	4	1946	1950-52	4	PC-461 Patrol Craft
US			X	2	1947	1950-51	2	minesweeper
Canada		X		18	1948	1950	18	DHC-1 Chipmunk aircraft
US		X		8, 63	1949	1950-53; 1950-51	8,63	DC-4/C-54; T-6 Texan
US		X		6, 169, 10, 6	1950	1952, 1951-1953, 1951-1955, 1952	6, 169, 10, 6	Cessna-170; F8F Bearcats; Hiller-12/OH-23 Raven helicopters; SB-2C Helldiver
UK		X		48,12,4,30	1950	1950, 1951-54, 1950, 1951-53	48,12,4,30	DHC-1 Chipmunk, Firefly FGA aircraft, S-51/H-5F helicopter, Spitfire
US		X	X	5,2	1951	1952-53, 1951	5,2	F-24 aircraft, Tacoma frigate
US		X		6,3,6,10	1952	1953	6,3,6,10	Beech-18/C-45, DC-3/C-47 Skytrain, L-5/U-19, PA-18 Super Cup

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Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
US		X		4	1953	1954	4	Cape Patrol Craft
France		X		38	1954	1954	38	F8F Bearcat (US)
UK		X		4	1954	1954	4	Spitfire
US	X	X	X	50, 50, 6, 4, 3, 6	1954	1955	50, 50, 6, 4, 3, 6	M-3/M-5 Half-track APC; M-8 Greyhound armored car; O-1/L-19 Bird Dog; RT-33A T-Bird; SC-497; T-33A Shooting Star
US		X		13,75	1955	1956,1957	13,75	S-55 helicopter, T-6 Texan aircraft
US		X		34	1956	1957	34	F84 Thunderjet
US		X		4,4	1957	1959-61	4,4	FPS-20, FPS-6
US	X		X	100,1	1958	1959	100,1	M-24 Chaffee light tanks; Cannon-class Destroyer Escort-746
US		X		2	1959	1960	2	Cessna 310
US	X	X		200, 36, 4, 40, 100, 38	1960	1962-63,	200, 36, 4, 40, 100, 38	AIM 9B SidewinderSRAAM, C-123B Provider, DHC-2 Beaver, F-86F Sabre, M-3A1 Scout Car APV, O-1/L-19 Bird Dog
US		X	X	17,4,1, 2, 88,7,8	1961	1962	17,4,1, 2, 88,7,8	F-86D Sabre, HU-16B Albatross MP/transport, LSM Landing ship, S-62 helicopters (for police), T-28D, T-33A Shooting Star, T-37B
Japan		X		6	1962	1963-64	6	KH-4 helicopter
US	X	X	X	8, 4, 10, 1, 3, 1, 2202, 200, 30	1962	1962-1967	8, 4, 10, 1, 3, 1, 2202, 200, 30	Adjutant Minesweeper, Bell-204B/UH-1B Helicopter (for police), Commander light transport ac, HH-43B/F Huskie Helicopter, LST-1 Landing ship, M-101A1 Towed gun, M-41 Walker Bulldog Light tank, T-6 Texan
US		X		5,4	1963	1964	5,4	Courier, DC-3/C-47 Skytrain
Japan	X			3	1963	1964	3	Vertol-107/CH-46A Transport helicopter
US	X		X	18,10	1964	1965, 1966-70	18,10	M-42 Duster SPAAG, PGM-71 gunboat
Japan		X		7	1964	1966	7	KH-4 helicopters
US	X	X	X	14,1,200	1965	1966-67, 1966, 1967	14,1,200	F5-A Freedom fighter, LSSL Gunboat, M-113 APC
US		X	X	6,15,1,1, 10, 65,13	1966	1967-1970	6,15,1,1, 10, 65,13	Bell-205/UH-1H Helicopter, FH-1100 light helicopter (for Border Patrol Police), LST-1 landing ship, RT-33A T-Bird reconnaissance aircraft, S-2E Tracker ASW aircraft, S-58/H-34 Helicopter, T-33A Shooting Star aircraft
US		X		1,25	1967	1970,1968	1,25	Hawk SAM missile, Mk-44 ASW torpedo
Canada				3	1967	1968	3	DHC-4 Caribou Transport aircraft (police)
US		X		19, 120, 4, 40, 7	1968	1969-71	19, 120, 4, 40, 7	Bell-205/UH-1D Helicopter, Bell-205/UH-1H Helicopter, King Air Light transport ac, MIM-23A Hawk SAM
Japan		X		7	1968	1969	7	KH-4 Light helicopter
UK			X	1,15	1969	1973	1,15	Rajakumarn Frigate, Seacat SAM
US		X	X	7,14,16,1,6	1969	1970-72	7,14,16,1,6	C-123K Provider transport aircraft, Courier aircraft, OV-10 Bronco Ground attack ac, PF-103 Corvette, T-37B aircraft

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### Readjusting Arms Deals between China and the USA

Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
UK	X			20,32	1970	1971-72	20,32	Saracen APC, Shorland APV
US		X		125, 20, 16, 58,	1970	1971-74		AIM-9E Sidewinder SRAAM, Cessna-172/T-41, F-5A Freedom Fighter FGA aircraft, O-1/L-19 Bird Dog aircraft
US		X	X	14, 4, 21, 4, 4, 1, 2	1971	1973-74	14, 4, 21, 4, 4, 1, 2	AU-23A Peacemaker Ground attack ac, Bell-206/OH-58 helicopter, Cessna-172/T-41, CH-47C Chinook helicopter, DC-3/C-47 Skytrain aircraft, PF-103 Corvette, PL-1B aircraft
Italy		X		12	1972	1973-74	12	SF-260 aircraft
US		X		17,14,3	1972	1972-73	17,14,3	A-37B Dragonfly Ground attack ac, AC-47 Dragon Ship ground attack ac, Cessna-180 Skywagon
Germany			X	3	1973	1976-77	3	TNC-45 Fast Attack Boat
Israel			X	30	1973	1976-77	30	Gabriel-1 Anti-ship missile
US		X	X	1,23,16	1973	1973, 1974	1,23,16	LST-1 Landing ship, Model-300 helicopter, OV-10 Bronco
Israel	X			44	1974	1975	44	M-68/M-71 155mm Towed gun
UK		X		1,3	1974	1976, 1975	1,3	BN-2 Islander Light transport ac, Skyvan Light transport ac (for Border Patrol Police)
US		X		20,12,4	1974	1975-78 1974	20,12,4	AU-23A Peacemaker Ground attack ac (incl 5 for police), Bell-206/OH-58 Light helicopter (for police); EC-47 SIGINT aircraft
France	X			200	1975	1976-80	200	MO-120-RT 120mm Mortar
Italy	X			1	1975	1976	1	PLUTO Air/sea search radar
US			X	1	1975	1975	1	LST-1 Landing ship
Italy			X	3	1976	1979-80	3	Ratcharit FAC missile
US	X	X			1976	1977-78	120,13, 20,21	AIM-9J/P Sidewinder SRAAM, Bell-205/UH-1H Helicopter, F-5E Tiger-2 FGA aircraft, LVTP-7 APC
US		X		1,14,2	1977	1977-81	1,14,2	Beech-99 Light transport ac, Bell-205/UH-1H Helicopter, Bell-212/UH-1N Helicopter
UK	X			154	1977	1978-84	154	Scorpion light tank for Border Patrol Police
Australia		X		2	1977	1978	2	CL-215 Transport aircraft
Germany			X	1	1978	1979	1	Thalang Support ship,
US	X	X		8, 2, 215, 4, 150, 2, 3	1978	1978-83	8, 2, 215, 4, 150, 2, 3	Bell-212/UH-1N Helicopter, Bell-214 Helicopter, BGM-71 TOW Anti-tank missile, CH-47A Chinook Transport helicopter, Commando V-150 APC, Metro-2 Transport aircraft, TPS-43 Air search radar
US	X	X		239, 3, 29, 600, 71, 30, 34, 55, 6	1979	1979-81	239, 3, 29, 600, 71, 30, 34, 55, 6	AIM-9J/P Sidewinder SRAAM, C-130H Hercules Transport aircraft, F-5E Tiger-2 FGA aircraft, 600 FGM-77 Dragon Anti-tank missile, M-101A1 105mm Towed gun, M-113 APC, M-114 155mm Towed gun, M-48A5 Patton Tank, T-37B aircraft
Germany			X	9	1979	1983-84	9	MTU-538 Diesel engine

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Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
Italy			X	2	1979	1983	2	Chonburi Patrol craft/FAC
Singapore			X	1	1979	1980	1	Chula tanker
US	X	X		2000, 6, 40, 24, 2	1980	1981-90, 1981, 1980	2000, 6, 40, 24, 2	BGM-71 TOW Anti-tank missile, Cessna-337/O-2, M-113 APC, M-163, VADS SPAAG, Queen Air Light transport ac
Israel		X		3	1980	1980-1982	3	Arava Transport aircraft
Italy		X	X	1, 6	1981	1984, 1982	1, 6	Patrol craft/FAC, SF-260 Trainer aircraft
UK		X		100	1981	1982	100	Blowpipe Portable SAM
US	X	X		2,1,100	1981	1982-83	2,1,100	Bell 412 helicopter, C-130H-30 Hercules Transport aircraft, FIM-43C Redeye Portable SAM
Canada	X			3	1982	1984	3	APS-504(V) MP aircraft radar
France		X		12	1982	1983	12	T-33A Shooting Star aircraft
Germany			X	2	1982	1983-86	2	DSQS-21 ASW sonar
Italy			X	4	1982	1983-87	4	Compact 76mm Naval gun
Malaysia		X		2	1982	2	2	F-5A Freedom Fighter FGA aircraft
UK	X	X		100,6,4	1982	1983-85	100,6,4	Blowpipe Portable SAM, Dart Turboprop, Shorts-330 Transport aircraft
US	X	X		12, 12, 2, 148, 34, 24, 18, 12	1982	1982-86	12, 12, 2, 148, 34, 24, 18, 12	AAV-7A1 APC, Bell-205/UH-1H Helicopter, LA-4 Light aircraft, M-113 APC, M-114 155mm Towed gun, M-167 Vulcan AA gun, M-198 155mm Towed gun, R4E Skyeye UAV, TPQ-36 Firefinder Arty locating radar
Australia		X		148, 34, 24, 18, 12	1982	1982-86	12, 12, 2,	Nomad Light transport ac
France	X			148, 34, 24, 18, 12	1983	1984-85	2,60	Exocet CDS Coast defence system, MM-40 Exocet Anti-ship missile
Germany	X	X	X	2,47,4	1983	1984-91	2,47,4	DSQS-21 ASW sonar, Fantrainer aircraft, MTU-1163 Diesel engine
Italy			X	2,2	1983	1986-87	2,2	Albatross Naval SAM system, Compact 40L70 Naval gun
US	X	X	X	9, 100, 1, 44, 2, 30, 4, 1	1983	1984-87	9, 100, 1, 44, 2, 30, 4, 1	TPQ-36 Firefinder Arty locating radar, FIM-43C Redeye Portable SAM, King Air Light transport ac, M-198 155mm Towed gun, Rattanakosin Corvette, RGM-84 Harpoon Anti-ship missile, T-37B aircraft, patrol craft
US	X	X	X	1, 8, 2, 4, 43, 2, 1, 2	1984	1984-86	1, 8, 2, 4, 43, 2, 1, 2	patrol craft, Bell-212/UH-1N Helicopter (for Border patrol police), Bell-214ST Helicopter, Cessna-337/O-2, 43 Dragoon APC, M-88 ARV, TPS-43 Air search radar
France			X	1	1984	1987	1	Landing ship
Australia		X		1	1984	1985	1	Nomad Searchmaster-L MP aircraft
Germany			X	2	1984	1987	2	M-48 MCM ship
Italy		X		75	1984	1986-87	75	Aspide BVRAAM/SAM
UK			X	60	1984	1986-92	60	Sting Ray ASW torpedo
Canada		X		1	1985	1987	1	APS-504(V) MP aircraft radar

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Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
China (Beijing)		X		18	1985	1985	18	Type-59-1 130mm Towed gun
France	X			2	1985	1986	2	DRPT-5 Rasit Ground surv radar
UK				2	1985	1987	2	Dart Turboprop
US		X			1985	1986-88	2, 200, 75, 7, 4, 12, 4, 4, 2	A-37B Dragonfly Ground attack ac, AGM-65 Maverick ASM, AIM-9J/P Sidewinder SRAAM, Bell-206/ OH-58 Light helicopter (for police), Bell-212/UH-1N Helicopter, F-16A FGA aircraft, LAADS Air search radar, TPQ-37 Firefinder Arty locating radar, TPS-70 Air search radar, Cessna-208 Caravan Light transport ac, Model-300 Light helicopter
China (Beijing)		X		18	1986	1985	18	Type-59-1 130mm Towed gun
Italy		X		24,1	1986	1988	24,1	Aspide BVRAAM/SAM, Spada SAM system
US		X		10,24	1986	1986-87	10,24	Cessna-208 Caravan Light transport ac, Model-300 Light helicopter
US	X	X	X	40, 5, 6, 3, 40, 6	1987	1987-91	40, 5, 6, 3, 40, 6	AIM-9J/P Sidewinder SRAAM, Bell-214ST Helicopter, F-16A FGA aircraft, Learjet-35/36 Light transport ac, M-48A5 Patton Tank, RGM-84 Harpoon Anti-ship missile, Stingray Light tank
UK			X	3	1987	1992	3	Khamronsin Corvette ships
Italy			X	3,3,1	1987	1988-92	3,3,1	compact 30mm naval gun, Compact 76mm Naval gun, PLUTO Air/sea search radar
Germany	X		X	8,3,6	1987	1988-92	8,3,6	Arrow 30mm AA gun, DSQS-21 ASW sonar, MTU-1163 Diesel engine
France		X		6	1987	1988-89	6	ATLIS Aircraft EO system
China (Beijing)	X			500,30, 410, 60, 5	1987	1987-90	500,30, 410, 60, 5	HN-5A Portable SAM, Type-69 Tank, Type-85 APC, Type-85 130mm self-propelled MRL, W-653/Type-653 ARV
China (Beijing)	X		X	50, 650, 4 18, 23, 40	1988	1988-92	50, 650, 4 18, 23, 40	C-801 Anti-ship missile, HN-5A Portable SAM, Type-05/Jianghu-1 Frigate, Type-59-1 130mm Towed gun, Type-69 Tank Type-69-II version, Type-85APC
Germany			X	20	1988	1991-95	20	MTU-1163 diesel engine
Israel	X				1988	1988	32	M-68/M-71 155mm Towed gun
Italy		X		1	1988	1989	1	RAT-31S air search radar
US	X	X		4, 8, 100, 3, 3, 8, 28, 24, 10	1988	1988-92	4, 8, 100, 3, 3, 8, 28, 24, 10	AH-1F Cobra Combat helicopter, Bell-212/UH-1N Helicopter, BGM-71 TOW Anti-tank missile, C-130H-30 Hercules Transport aircraft, CH-47D Chinook Transport helicopter, F-5E Tiger-2 FGA aircraft, M-113 APC, Model-300 light helicopter, T-33A Shooting Star aircraft
Israel		X		40	1989	1990	40	Python-3 SRAAM
UK			X	36	1989	1992	36	Sting Ray ASW torpedo
US		X	X	10,1,4,3	1989	1994-95	10,1,4,3	Bell-205/UH-1H Helicopter, C-130H Hercules Transport aircraft, LM-2500 Gas turbine, APS-128 MP aircraft radar

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Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
China (Beijing)			X		1989	1994-95	2	frigate
UK				1	1989	1989	1	Corvette ship (for police)
Canada		X		20	1990	1991-92	20	PT6 turboprop/turboshaft
Germany		X		3	1990	1991	3	Do-228MP MP aircraft
US	X	X	X	3, 3, 75, 53, 20, 2, 50, 16, 3	1990	1991-95	3, 3, 75, 53, 20, 2, 50, 16, 3	APS-128 MP aircraft radar, CH-47D Chinook Transport helicopter, M-48A5 Patton Tank, M-60A1 Patton-2 Tank, M-88 ARV (M-88A1 version), Mk-45 127mm Naval gun, Paveway Guided bomb, RGM-84 Harpoon Anti-ship missile, TPE-331 Turboprop
US	X	X	X	25, 2, 20, 28, 20, 30	1991	1992-95	25, 2, 20, 28, 20, 30	AIM-7M Sparrow BVRAAM, C-130H-30 Hercules Transport aircraft, M-109A5 155mm Self-propelled gun, M-992 FAASV ALVs, M-113A3 APCs, MX-7 Light aircraft, RGM-84 Harpoon Anti-ship missile
Canada		X		2	1991	1993	2	PW100 Turboprop/turboshaft
China (Beijing)	X			25,122	1991	1991-92	25,122	Type-311 Fire control radar, Type-74 37mm AA gun
UK		X		2	1991	1992	2	Martello Air search radar
US		X	X	2,18,2	1992	1993-97	2,18,2	C-130H Hercules Transport aircraft, F-16A FGA aircraft, Knox Frigate
Germany	X			18	1992	1993	18	Condor APC
Ukraine		X		36	1992	1993-94	36	AI-25 Turbofan
Canada	X			30	1993	1994	30	ADATS LOS-FH SAM
China (Beijing)				1	1993	1996	1	Similan Support Ship
US		X	X	20, 2,2,2,3,6	1993	1996-2000	20, 2,2,2,3,6	Bell-212/UH-1N Helicopter, LAADS Air search radar, LM-2500 Gas turbine, MTU-1163 Diesel engine, P-3A Orion ASW aircraft, S-70B Transport helicopter
Italy				6	1994	1995	6	G-222 Transport aircraft
US		X			1994	1995-97	18,1	A-7E Corsair-2 FGA aircraft, SPS-52 air search radar
France	X			285	1995	1996-97	285	M-101/30 Towed gun
Germany		X		3	1995	1995-96	3	Do-228MP MP aircraft
Israel		X		5	1995	1996	5	Litening Aircraft EO system
UK		X		3	1995	1995-96	3	Jetstream-41 Transport aircraft
Spain			X	1	1996	1997	1	Chakri Naruebet (CVH-911)
US	X	X		6, 6, 3, 215, 3, 12, 52, 125, 18, 6, 6	1996	1995-97	6, 6, 3, 215, 3, 12, 52, 125, 18, 6, 6	AAQ-13 LANTIRN Combat ac radar, AAQ-14 LANTIRN Aircraft EO system, APS-128 MP aircraft radar, BGM-71 TOW Anti-tank missile, FPS-130, Air search radar, M-106A3 self-propelled mortar, M-113A3 APC (Part of \$85 m deal; incl 9 ambulance, 12 M-577A3 CP, 21 M-125A3 81mm mortar carrier and 10 ARV vM-60A3), Patton-2 Tank, M-901 ITV Tank destroyer, S-76 Helicopter, TPE-331 Turboprop

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### Readjusting Arms Deals between China and the USA

Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
Canada		X		16	1997	1998-99	16	PT6 Turboprop/turboshaft
Israel		X		1	1997	1998	1	EL/M-2032 Combat ac radar
US	X			30	1997	1998-2000	30	M-113 APC
US	X			6	1998	2000-2001	6	M-88A2 HERCULES ARV
China			X	28	1999	2000	28	C-801 Anti-ship missile
Germany		X		20	1999	2000-2001	20	Alpha Jet Trainer/combat ac
Israel	X			4	2000	2001	4	Searcher UAV
US		X		16	2000	2002-2003	16	F-16A FGA aircraft
US		X		8,30,3,4	2001	2001-04	8,30,3,4	AIM-120C AMRAAM BVRAAM (\$6.1 m deal; for F-16 combat aircraft; acquired as reaction to Myanmar order for MiG-29 combat aircraft; stored in USA until 2003 when delivered to Thailand after China and Viet Nam introduced similar AA-12 missiles in 2002/2003), Bell-205/UH-1H Helicopter, S-70/UH-60L Helicopter, T-800 Turboshaft
Italy	X			12	2001	2002	12	Model-56 105mm Towed gun
Sweden	X			75	2001	2002-2005	75	RBS-70 Portable SAM
UK		X		2	2001	2002	2	Super Lynx-300 Helicopter
Italy		X	X	2,2	2002	2005-06	2,2	Compact 76mm Naval gun, RAN-30X Air search radar, TMX Fire control radar (for Chinese frigates)
China			X	2	2002	2005-06	2	Pattani OPV/frigate
UK			X	2	2002	2005-2006	2	RK-27 Diesel engine (for Chinese frigates)
US		X		1,4	2003	2004-05	1,4	APS-128 MP aircraft radar, S-70/UH-60L Helicopter
US		X	X	3	2004	2005-06	3	SeaVue MP aircraft radar
Singapore		X		7	2004	2004	7	F-16A FGA aircraft
UK	X			22	2004	2006	22	L-118 105mm Towed gun
US		X		4	2005	2011-12	4	AH-1F Cobra Combat helicopter
France	X			6	2006	2009	6	CAESAR 155mm self-propelled gun
US		X		2,1	2007	2011-12	2,1	S-70/UH-60L Helicopter, TPS-77 Air search radar
Canada		X		6	2007	2009	6	PW100 Turboprop/turboshaft
China			X	60	2007	2009-14	60	C-802/CSS-N-8 anti-ship missile
France		X		3	2007	2009	3	ATR-72 Transport aircraft
South Africa	X			87	2007	2008	87	Mamba APC
Italy			X	1	2008	2012	1	Super Rapid 76mm Naval gun
Russia	X			36,3	2008	2008	36,3	Igla-S/SA-24 Portable SAM, Mi-8MT/Mi-17 Transport helicopter
Singapore	X		X	10,1	2008	2010-2012	10,1	Bronco APC, Endurance AALS
Sweden		X		6,1,1	2008	2010-11	6,1,1	JAS-39C Gripen FGA aircraft (Part of THB18.4 b (\$570-600 m. deal), Saab-340 Transport aircraft, Saab-340AEW AEW&C aircraft



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Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
Ukraine	X			96, 1000	2008	2010-12	--, 1000	BTR-3U Guardian IFV (delivery delayed after German refusal to export engines and redesign for other engines), R-2 Anti-tank missile
UK			X	2	2008	2012	2	RK-270 Diesel engine
US	X	X		10,6	2008	2010-11	10,6	Caterpillar-3126 Diesel engine, F404 Turbofan
China	X			18	2008	2011-18	15	WS-1 302mm Self-propelled MRL
Italy	X			1	2008	2012	1	Super Rapid 76mm Naval gun
US		X		1	2009	2009	1	Aeros-40 Sky Dragon Airship
UK			X	1	2009	2013	1	BVT-90 OPV ship
Germany	X		X	102,2	2009	2010-13	102,2	MTU-6R-106 Diesel engine, RK-280 Diesel engine
Italy			X	1	2009	2013	1	Super Rapid 76mm Naval gun
Malaysia		X		3	2009	2009	3	Cyber Eye-2 UAV
Germany		X		40	2010	2012-2013	40	IRIS-T SRAAM
Israel		X		4	2010	2011	4	Aerostar UAV
Singapore	X			15	2010	2011	15	LG-1 105mm Towed gun
South Africa	X			120	2010	2011-13	120	Mamba APC
Sweden		X		6,25,1	2010	2012-13	6,25,1	JAS-39C Gripen FGA aircraft (SEK2.2 b [\$320 m] deal), RBS-15M Anti-ship missile, RBS-15F version, Saab-340AEW AEW&C aircraft
Ukraine	X			6	2010		6	BTR-3U Guardian IFV
US				2,6,16	2010	2011-13	2,6,16	Bell214 Helicopter Second-hand, F404 Turbofan, TH-28/480 Light helicopter
France		X		8	2011	2013-14	8	AS-350/AS-550 Fennec Light helicopter
Germany	X			121	2011	2012-16	121	MTU-6R-106 Diesel engine
Italy		X		2	2011	2015-16	2	Kronos air search radar
Sweden	X	X		4,2	2011	2015-16	4,2	CEROS-200 fire control radar, Giraffe AMB air search radar
Ukraine	X			2, 75, 46, 1500, 49	2011	2012-18	2, 75, 46, 1500, 49	BREM-84 Atlet ARV, BTR-3 APC, BTR-3 APC, R-2 Anti-tank missile, T-84 Oplot Tank (THB7.2 b [\$240 m] deal)
France		X		8	2012	2015	8	EC725 Super Cougar Transport helicopter
China (Beijing)	X			4,82	2012	2013-18	4,82	SR-5 Self-propelled MRL, WS-3A 300mm Guided rocket
Israel	X			6	2012	2014-15	6	ATMOS-2000 155mm Self-propelled gun
Italy				2	2012	2013-14	2	AW139 Helicopter
Sweden				1	2012	2014	1	Giraffe AMB Air search radar
UK	X			80	2012	2013	80	Starstreak Portable SAM

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Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
US	X	X		21, 18, 54, 3, 3	2012	2012-17	21, 18, 54, 3, 3	6BT Diesel engine, APG-68 Combat ac radar, M-198 155mm Towed gun, S-70/UH-60L Helicopter, S-70/UH-60L Helicopter, Saab-340 Transport aircraft
Germany	X	X	X	1,1,6,21	2013	2015-18	1,1,6,21	ACTAS ASW sonar, (for DW-3000 frigate from South Korea), ASO-712 ASW sonar (for 1 DW-3000 frigate from South Korea), EC145 Light helicopter, UH-72A version, MTU-6R-106 Diesel engine
Italy			X	1	2013	2018	1	Super Rapid 76mm Naval gun
South Korea			X	1	2013	2018	1	DW-3000 Frigate
Sweden				2,1,1	2013	2018	2,1,1	CEROS-200 fire control radar (for 1 DW-frigate from South Korea), Giraffe-4A Air search radar (for 1 DW-3000 frigate from South Korea), Giraffe AMB air search radar
Ukraine	X			21	2013	2016-17	21	BTR-3U Guardian IFV
US		X	X	1,1,1,9,1,2	2013	2015-18	1,1,1,9,1,2	LM-2500 Gas turbine, Mk-15 Phalanx CIWS, Mk-41 Naval SAM system, RIM-162 ESSM SAM, S-70/UH-60L helicopter, TPS-70 air search radar
US		X		5,50	2014	2015-17	5,50	AAQ-33 Sniper Aircraft EO system, AIM-120C AMRAAM BVRAAM
France		X		2	2014	2016	2,5,100	EC725 Super Cougar Transport helicopter, EC145 Light helicopter, IRIS-T SRAAM
Italy		X		1	2014	2017	1	P-180 Avanti Light transport ac
Russia				2	2014	2015	2	Mi-8MT/Mi-17 Transport helicopter
Sweden	X			1	2014	2017	1	ARTHUR Arty locating radar
UK			X	1	2015	2019	1	BVT-90 OPV
Canada		X		2	2015	2016	2	PW100 Turboprop/turboshaft
China	X			2	2015	2016	2	RA-3 Arty locating radar
Germany				1,1,6	2015	2019	1,1,6	ACTAS ASW sonar, (for DW-3000 frigate from South Korea), ASO-712 ASW sonar (for 1 DW-3000 frigate from South Korea), EC145 Light helicopter
Israel	X			12	2015	2017-18	12	ATMOS-2000 155mm Self-propelled gun
Italy				8,1	2015	2016-17	8,1	AW139 helicopter, super-rapid 76mm naval gun
South Korea		X	X	1,4	2015	,2016	0,4	DW-3000 Frigate (selected but not yet ordered by 2020), T-50 Golden Eagle Trainer/combat ac
Sweden	X	X	X	1,2,1,1	2015	2019	1,2,1,1	ARTHUR Arty locating radar, CEROS-200 Fire control radar, Giraffe-4A Air search radar, Giraffe AMB Air search radar
UK	X			160	2015	2016-17	160	Starstreak Portable SAM
US	X		X	4,1,1,1,14	2015	2019	4,1,1,1,14	F404 Turbofan, LM-2500 Gas turbine, Mk-15 Phalanx CIWS, Mk-41 Naval SAM system, RIM-162 ESSM SAM
China	X			1,50, 28	2016	2016-17	1,50, 28	KS-1A SAM system, KS-1A SAM, VT-4 Tanks

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Supplier country/ies	Army	Air Force (since 1936)	Navy	Number Ordered	Year of Weapon Order	Year of Weapon Delivery	# Delivered	Comment
France				2,50,1	2016	2019	2,50,1	EC725 Super Cougar Transport helicopter, MICA BVRAAM, VL-MICA SAM system
Germany			X	2	2016	2019	2	RK-280 Diesel engine
Israel	X			10	2016	2018	10	CARDOM 120mm Mortar
Italy		X		5	2016	2018	5	AW149 Helicopter
US		X	X	5,2	2016	2017-18	5,2	Mk-54 MAKO ASW torpedo, Saab-340 Transport aircraft
China	X		X	?,1, 10,?	2017	2023 (submarines), 2018 (tanks)	?,1, 10,?	C-708UNA anti-ship missile, S26T Submarine (THB13.5 b [\$390 m] deal; delivery planned 2023; 2 more planned for purchase and delivery over 11 years), VT-4 Tank (THB2 b [\$58 m] deal), Yu-8 533mm AS/ASW torpedo
Israel		X		14,8,4,14	2017	2018-20	1,0,4,1	EL/M-2032 Combat ac radar, EL/M-2032 Combat ac radar, Hermes-450 UAV, Litening Aircraft EO system
Russia		X		6	2017	2018	6	Mi-8MT/Mi-17 Transport helicopter
South Korea		X		8	2017	2020-2021	8	T-50 Golden Eagle trainer/combat ac (RTAF upgrade--THB8.8 b [\$259 m])
US	X				2017	2018	50,8	BGM-71F TOW-2B Anti-tank missile, F404 Turbofan
China	X			34,14	2018	2019	34,14	Type-07P/VN-1 IFV (THB2.3 b [\$57 m] deal), VT-4 Tank THB2.3 b
France		X		4	2018	2019	4	EC725 Super Cougar Transport helicopter
Germany		X		42	2018	2018	21	IRIS-T SRAAM
Israel		X		14,6,2	2018	2019	14,6,2	Litening aircraft EO system (for modernized F-5E combat aircraft), ATMOS-2000 155mm Self-propelled gun (\$26 m deal; assembled in Thailand), Dominator-2 UAV
China	X		X	41, 14, 1	2019	2021	41,14	Type-07P/VN-1 IFV, VT-4 tank, tank repair vehicle (China beat out the Russian T-90 tank) <sup>8</sup>
US	X	X		8,70	2019	2019	8, 70	Boeing AH-6i attack helicopters and related hardware (deal worth \$400 million), Stryker ICVs (deal worth \$175 million). <sup>9</sup> (Stryker AFV beat out China's VN-1 IFV)
Ukraine	X			?	2019	?	?	Ukraine announced partnership with Thailand through which the Southeast Asian country will build a new command version of the BTR-3 8x8 armored fighting vehicle (AFV). <sup>10</sup>
US	X	X			2020	2020	50	Stryker ICVs

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- 1 For example, Kings Rama IV, V, VI, and VII and their advisors were in the same family. Thailand's first formal Minister of Foreign Affairs, HRH Krommuen Devawongse Varopakarn (serving 1881 until 1932), was the son of Rama IV and half-brother of Rama V. HRH Drommuen Devawongse Varothai (1924-1932) succeeded his father in the same post.
- 2 For example, Siam's early military educational institutions in the late 1800s were overseen by advisors from England, Italy, and Denmark (Battye, 1974, pp. 270-276).
- 3 Treaties in 1893, 1894, 1904, 1907, and 1909 ceded (under duress) parts of modern Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia to either France or Britain.
- 4 Phibun simultaneously served as both Minister of Defense and Minister of Foreign Affairs for part of his prime ministerial term, entrenching a policy of ultra-nationalism across each bureaucracy. In the latter ministry, he appointed successive nationalists Direk Jayanama followed by Vichit Wichitwathakan.
- 5 Another alternative source was South Africa from which in 2010 Abhisit's government purchased 150 Mamba Armored Personnel Carriers (See appendix).
- 6 The Yingluck government in 2013 bought from Ukraine 21 more BTR-3U Guardian Infantry Fighting Vehicles.
- 7 The Thai navy dumped the Chinese Type-69 tanks purchased in 1988 into the sea in 2010 because of a lack of spare parts.
- 8 Gao, C. (2019, October 2). China is selling its new ZTZ-99 tank, but is anyone buying? *The National Interest*. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/china-selling-its-new-ztz-99-tank-anyone-buying-84876>
- 9 Poejar, A. (2019, May 12). Thailand gets more tanks, armored vehicles from China. *Benar News*. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/thailand-china-12052019171249.html>.
- 10 UNIAN Information Agency. (2019, July 30). *Ukraine partners Thailand on production of BTR-3KSH AFV*. <https://www.unian.info/economics/10635834-ukraine-partners-thailand-on-production-of-btr-3ksh-afv.html>

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# China's Expanding Military Power in Africa

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**Miwa Hirono<sup>1</sup>**

What is the nature of China's expanding military power in Africa? Literature is largely divided into two camps. One claims that a rapid expansion in China's military power in Africa means that the continent is a theatre for a "new scramble", in which China and other great powers compete to secure natural resources and a position of dominance. Countering this claim, the other camp argues that China is primarily an economic actor in Africa, as China's military and political power in that continent is limited. This paper argues that both claims are misleading. China is presenting itself, as not only an economic actor but also a security actor in many African countries. However, the "new scramble for Africa" thesis is simplistic and distorted. An alternative view, it argues, is that China has a two-pronged approach to enhancing its military presence—increasing its contribution to, and therefore its presence in, the UN-led international security order, while simultaneously strengthening its military presence by acting unilaterally and bilaterally in relation to African states. Its more comprehensive approach to strengthening its global economic influence rather than simply "grabbing" natural resources and building public infrastructure in Africa, suggests China's actions go well beyond what the "new scramble for Africa" thesis conceptualizes. A consequence of any growth in China's influence across the globe is a heightened sense of rivalry between China and the US. While such rivalry may conduce to the development of Africa by presenting plural visions of how great powers can engage and support African states, policymakers should manage any perception of rivalry in a way that does not adversely affect Africa's stability.

China's foreign policy on Africa and military expansion on the continent have attracted wide-ranging attention since the beginning of the 2000s, as they may afford a glimpse into possible contention over which great power might come to dominate Africa. China began its "go abroad" policy in 2001, and significantly increased its economic profile on the continent by investing in a variety of sectors, and by building much

public infrastructure. The increase in China's economic profile has continued within the bounds of Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, which began in 2013. Simultaneously, one can observe an expansion in China's military activity, including in UN peacekeeping operations, in military support to humanitarian aid (especially to counter an Ebola outbreak in West Africa), the building of a military base in Djibouti, training offered

to Africa military officers, and reciprocal base and port visits by Chinese and African military officers. Since the late 2000s, China has also engaged in political activity with various African countries to resolve intra-state conflict, thereby offering political support to security challenges in Africa.

Analysis of such expansion in military activities abounds, and is divided broadly into two contrasting assessments. First, many analysts assess China's engagement in Africa as a contemporary reincarnation of the nineteenth-century scramble for Africa, and accuse China of using its power to exploit Africa's resources (Poplak, 2016; The Economist, 2019). An expansion of China's military power adds to that narrative by suggesting that China's quest for natural resources and its position of dominance on that continent is now supported by China's military might. Unsurprisingly, such a view has become more prominent in the literature amid the deteriorating relationship between China and the United States. In contrast, the second assessment is that China is still primarily an economic actor in Africa. This assessment comes from different angles. The Chinese government often emphasizes the non-political nature of its economic engagement in Africa, as is the case with projects conducted in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Many African governments look to China as a valuable partner in boosting their economies, while they continue engaging with the US and European states as primary partners on cooperation in the security sector.

Despite the popularity of both these views, a closer look at the nature of China's military activities in Africa suggests that they are

inaccurate and misleading. For the last decade or so, the way China has expanded its military presence in Africa suggests that China is now presenting itself as not just an economic actor, but also as a military actor. That said, the "new scramble for Africa" argument is simplistic and distorted. China has a two-pronged approach to enhancing its military presence—increasing its contribution to, and therefore its political presence in, the UN-led international security order, while simultaneously strengthening its military presence by acting unilaterally and bilaterally in relation to African states. Its more comprehensive approach to strengthening its global economic influence rather than simply 'grabbing' natural resources and building public infrastructure in Africa, suggests China's actions go well beyond what the "new scramble for Africa" thesis conceptualizes. In other words, rather than a mere quest for resources, the nature of China's military involvement in Africa is more nuanced, reflecting China's multifaceted approach to protecting and expanding its national interests overseas and increasing its presence in the existing UN-led international order.

To elaborate this claim further, this paper will demonstrate firstly how China's military engagement in Africa has undergone a transformation as a result of which China is now able to present itself as a military actor. Secondly, it will analyze the nature of China's military presence in Africa and explain the five key features of China's military engagement. Finally, it will conclude by identifying complexity in China's military engagement in Africa. The complexity matters to our assessment of the implication of China's growing military presence there

with regard to change in the international order. It also matters to how the Chinese

and US policymakers need to engage with each other in a way that benefits Africa.

## China's evolving military presence in Africa

The idea that China serves primarily as an economic actor in Africa is widely shared among Chinese officials. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the Chinese government has been emphatic that its "go abroad" policy consists primarily of economic development projects that are detached from any geopolitical strategy, let alone from any hegemonic quest based on military might. That emphasis continues today in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. The image of China as being primarily an economic actor was also shared by many African states until the first half of the 2010s. According to a 2009 interview conducted by the author, for example, a high-ranking diplomat of the Republic of Liberia stated that he would like to see China as an economic actor only, rather than a political, let alone military, actor. "We share the same values of human rights and democracy as the United States", he said, "we do not want to involve China in human rights discussions because the latter has a different conception of human rights". Nonetheless, Liberia views China as an inseparable economic partner and would, therefore, prefer that China focus on economic cooperation instead.

However, since the late 2000s, China's foreign policy in Africa has undergone a transformation. China has begun presenting itself as a military actor in African states by taking a more proactive approach to enhancing its military presence in that continent, undertaking the many

activities mentioned in the introduction to this paper. Among these activities, UN peacekeeping, non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian assistance, and the building of the naval base in Djibouti, show that China has taken a step closer to revealing its military presence in Africa since the middle of the 2010s.

China's contribution to UN peacekeeping in Africa has steadily increased since the beginning of the 2000s. It has maintained its position as the largest contributor among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (except during short periods when the French contributions surpassed those of China). Until the early 2010s, China's contribution to UN peacekeeping consisted of so-called "force enablers", such as engineers, medical and transportation companies, as well as police forces, military observers, experts and staff.

In January 2012, however, China added to its list of peacekeeping contributions the deployment of infantry forces to missions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This contribution was first seen in South Sudan in January 2012, when China deployed a "guard" unit, consisting of some 50-strong infantry, to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (Hartnett, 2012). The unit was assigned to protect China's own noncombatant troops (Murray, 2013, p. 2). This was followed by a deployment of 35 soldiers (together with 35 engineers and 65 medical workers)

to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in December 2014. This increased to 395 peacekeepers the following month, and now includes a 170-strong “guard unit” and 155 sappers (Xinhua, 2018). Since January 2015, China has dispatched 700 military-equipped combat troops as peacekeepers to UNMISS (Smith, 2014). The deployment of these infantry forces indicates a significant shift in China’s previous peacekeeping missions from missions that have relied mostly on force enablers to ones containing more robust forces that can address insecurity on the ground.

As of February 2020, China has provided the UN with more than 2,500 peacekeeping troops, more than 80% of which are currently stationed across Africa (one major non-African operation is the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, to which China dispatched 419 troops) (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2020). This makes China the largest troop contributor of the five permanent members of the UN, and tenth largest contributor overall. In addition to troop contributions, China has also substantially increased its financial contribution over time, overtaking Japan as the second largest monetary sponsor of UN peacekeeping in 2016, just behind the United States. In fiscal year 2019, China’s financial contribution to peacekeeping made up over 15% of the United Nations’ total peacekeeping budget (United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d.).

Also, China has expanded its military involvement in Africa to protect Chinese nationals and assets through anti-piracy operations and non-combatant evacuation operations. Since December 2008, for example, China has deployed a naval

task force to the Gulf of Aden to combat piracy in the region. Over the past decade, the Chinese navy has dispatched 26,000 officers and soldiers to escort over 6,500 Chinese and foreign ships in the Gulf, successfully capturing three pirate ships and rescuing more than 70 ships from pirate harassment in the process (Guo, 2018).

The most notable of China’s non-combatant evacuation operations in Africa was in 2011, when China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) deployed a PLA Navy (PLAN) frigate and four PLA Airforce IL-76 transport aircraft to Libya during the Libyan civil war, to evacuate more than 35,000 Chinese citizens from that war-torn country (Chase, 2013; Zerba, 2014). While not quite in Africa, the Chinese military has continued its evacuation operations, most recently in Yemen in March 2015, where the PLA Navy evacuated over 600 Chinese nationals (Beauchamp-Mustafaga, 2015).

The Chinese military was also used to deliver humanitarian assistance to West Africa during the Ebola virus epidemic. In efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak, China provided Sierra Leone with medical care, infection-control measures, and health promotion by rotating three Chinese Military Medical Team (CMMT) deployments comprising “115 military medical professionals, including doctors, nurses and public health experts” (Lu *et al.*, 2016, p. 198). Notably, this was the first time China had mobilized military forces in humanitarian assistance on such a large scale. The Chinese military’s engagement in medical humanitarian aid is likely to continue in the current COVID-19 crisis. At the time of writing this paper in early May 2020, there are some 34,610 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus in Africa, about 1% of confirmed cases across the world (World

Health Organisation, 2020). However, a severe shortage of health facilities, basic infrastructure, such as water systems and social safety nets, particularly in conflict-affected areas and refugee camps, as well as medicines, health professionals and medical equipment means that many conflict-affected or poverty-stricken areas are extremely vulnerable to outbreaks and the spread of the new coronavirus. The Chinese military has already begun its military diplomacy by sharing its own in-country experience in how the PLA participates in what the Chinese government calls anti-pandemic operations, and by providing some masks and gloves to various defense ministries (e.g., see the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in South Sudan, 2020).

The building of a military base in Djibouti demonstrates China's intention to maintain a military presence in Africa in the longer term than in previous cases where its military personnel have been dispatched temporarily. To enhance the efficiency of all such operations, and of its military training in Africa, China inaugurated its first overseas naval base in Djibouti in 2017. This military facility hosts fewer than one thousand occupants on an 88-acre site, and is located seven miles northwest of the United States military base in Djibouti, Camp Lemonnier, where approximately 4,000 military personnel are stationed (Commander Navy Installations Command, n.d.).

Finally, China's engagement in conflict-affected areas in Africa, although not conducted by Chinese military forces, has a significant implication for African security also. China engages in conflict mediation, for example in South Sudan. It joined an extension of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)—which came to be known as IGAD-Plus—in June 2015. Essentially, IGAD-Plus was an initiative on which China worked together with the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom as conflict mediators in South Sudan. On this initiative, China went beyond the traditional government-to-government approach to diplomacy, by conducting talks, with not only the South Sudanese government, but also with rebel forces. All of these transformations may carry several political implications, particularly with respect to the doctrine of non-interference which has been one of China's main foreign policy principles for decades (Hirono et al., 2019).

In short, China's military engagement in Africa underwent a transformation in the latter half of the 2010s, by increasing the quantity and quality of its military operations. While the Chinese government calls all these military activities "military operations other than war" (MOOTW; *fei zhan zheng junshi xingdong*), the expansion of China's military activity in Africa raises some questions about the future of a broader US-China relationship, and about the future of the international order.

## The features of China's military presence in Africa

The literature on China's military presence in Africa focuses on analyzing China's motivations behind this policy shift.

Offensive realists take the view that China is attempting to replace US hegemony on the continent, while defensive realists, and those

who focus on China's need to defend its state security, point out that China takes seriously its duty to protect its citizens and assets abroad (e.g., Hirono et al., 2019; Hirono & Xu, 2013). China's evacuation operations in Libya in 2011, as briefly mentioned in the previous section, were regarded as high-profile in this regard (Parello-Plesner & Duchâtel, 2014). Further, China has many overseas assets to protect as a direct result of its "go abroad" policy and the Belt and Road Initiative. Also, others claim that China's military operations in Africa are used by China as an experiment to assess the expansion its own military capabilities (Li, 2015). Many military officers in China do not have any on-the-ground experience because China has not fought any wars since the end of the Sino-Vietnamese War in March 1979. Thus, aside from providing China's military officers

with necessary training and experience, these operations also serve to develop and sustain China's military capability.

While it is important and useful to analyze China's motivation in relation to its African presence, such analysis must be tempered with caution, realizing that it is always extremely difficult to ascertain with any fine degree of accuracy the precise motivation of a state, particularly when one does not have the luxury of available data. The discussion that follows deliberately stays away from a discussion of motivation. Instead, it identifies five key features common to China's military engagements in Africa. The five key features can help reach a nuanced assessment of the nature of China's increasing military power in Africa.

### **China supports a UN-led international order**

China's military presence in Africa carries implications for the current international order in two ways. Firstly, it strengthens the UN-led international security order by participating in multilateral efforts to address various security challenges. China's peacekeeping operations and policies, anti-piracy operations, some parts of its response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and its support for IGAD-Plus, are founded on the UN mechanism, or the UN Security Council's authorization.

This is based on a Chinese foreign policy that aims to strengthen the UN-led international order. The UN, as asserted by China's former Vice Foreign Minister, Fu Ying (2016), China firmly supports a UN-led international system because it considers itself one of the

founders, beneficiaries of, and contributors to, the UN and its institutions. This makes sense because the fundamental unit of the UN is the idea of a sovereign state, and the veto power of each of the five permanent states on the UN Security Council is an exceptional power. What China is against, however, is a US-centric international order that is based on a US-led military alliance and globally promoted Western liberal values (Fu, 2016). This indicates that what China desires is not the unraveling of the current international order, but what China calls "the democratization of international relations", such that the international system is not dominated by great powers, particularly the US. China's military expansion in Africa reflects its foreign policy of promoting and preserving a UN-

led international order, and China seeks to enhance its leadership role within that order.

Yet, amid growing concerns over the rise of China in the contemporary international system, literature has shown skepticism and pessimism towards China's approach to the United Nations. Conforming to the popular conception of China as challenger and a threat to the global liberal order, some analysts have expressed concern that China's expanding involvement in the UN could result in the normalization of an "authoritarian" form of world governance in which the promotion of human rights and democracy would be excluded from the UN agenda. Its expanding profile in UN peacekeeping is one example of how China

is seen to be changing the UN peacekeeping agenda in a way that minimizes its human rights components. For example, China is reported to have proposed to cut eight posts related to human rights from the mission in Mali, and more than one dozen jobs related to human rights and gender affairs in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Gladstone, 2018). However, the majority of these posts have been unfilled—some for nine months—and China's proposal was a response to United States budget cuts. While analysts are quick to reach some conclusions based on skepticism with respect to China's approach to the UN (e.g., Lynch, 2018), whether these job cuts actually mean that China is trying to alter the UN's peacekeeping agenda needs more careful examination.

### **China supports regional organizations**

Other than the UN, China's force projection in Africa is also connected to China's attempts to promote multilateralism in the form of regional organizations. The African Union, for example, plays an important role in China's engagement in Africa. Indeed, while it is apparent that China has increased significantly its troop contribution to UN peacekeeping operations, its decision to support a particular peacekeeping mission in Africa is not independent of the opinions of the African Union. As far as China appears to be concerned, gaining the approbation of the African Union is essential because it lends legitimacy to China's claim to be democratizing international relations. In addition to the African Union, China has also emphasized the importance of using multilateral regional forums such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in the context of China-Africa

relations. Indeed, as a triennial gathering of Chinese and African leaders, FOCAC serves as a useful and valuable framework for promoting China-Africa cooperation in various sectors, including trade and security (Institute of Developing Economies, 2009). Additionally, China also offers bilateral defense diplomacy with African states based on the framework established by FOCAC, which includes capacity-building, as well as training programs for defense officials. Further, Xi Jinping offered US\$100 million in military assistance to the African Union over five years to support the establishment of an African Standby Force and African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

Interestingly, in a way reminiscent of how China uses the African Union to gain



legitimacy, China also uses regional forums such as FOCAC to embed the narrative that China is different from other great powers. During the opening ceremony of the Coordinators' Meeting on FOCAC in June 2019, for example, the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (2019) repeatedly

set China apart from other great powers by emphasizing the shared identity that China and Africa have as victims of colonization, and by asserting that China's approach to development is based on a regime-neutral "win-win cooperation" that does not carry any political obligation.

### China also takes unilateral or bilateral action

Concurrent with China's support for multilateralism is China's unilateral and bilateral engagement with African states. China's non-combatant evacuation operations, most notably in Libya in 2011, are unilateral in nature, in the sense that China conducted evacuation operations without the full consent of the Libyan government (Parello-Plesner & Duchâtel 2014; Shesterinina 2016). As well as establishing its naval base in Djibouti, major parts of China's humanitarian assistance (including delivery by both military and non-military actors), and its military exchanges with African states, are based on bilateral agreements with those respective states (see the following section on the Djibouti base). More than 30% of China's humanitarian assistance provided to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa used a bilateral government-to-government channel (i.e., from China to Sierra Leone,

from China to Liberia, and from China to Guinea), rather than a multilateral channel.<sup>2</sup>

Military exchanges are offered as part of a package in the context of bilateral diplomacy between China and various states in Africa. Such packages include aid, loans and grants, debt relief, personnel training, student scholarship grants for the local military, assistance and training in energy development, infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing, and arms sales (Eisenman, 2007, p. 37). The reason for such bilateral actions varies. It is related to not only gaining natural resources but also seeking "friendship", which can be utilized for political ends in UN politics (e.g., to avoid human rights condemnation of China) or more broadly to contain US power and enhance China's "military soft power" (*junshi nuanshili*).

### A linkage between China's military presence and economic activity in Africa

Another notable feature of China's military involvement in Africa is that it is directly and indirectly connected to China's economic activity. A direct connection can be seen in the case of the naval base in Djibouti. The construction of China's military base in Djibouti was offered alongside a set of BRI-related economic benefits as a single package (Benabdallah, 2018). These benefits include

investment deals and infrastructure projects amounting to US\$1.4 billion in worth, which is equivalent to 75% of Djibouti's GDP (Hurley et al., 2018; Shuo, 2018). In addition to funding the construction of roads, railways, banks, and industrial parts, China is also paying the Djibouti government US\$20 million a year to rent the military base in Djibouti (Dahir, 2017). This does not necessarily



mean that the BRI is a militarily motivated project, but it is important to pay attention to the relationship between the military and economic aspects of China's engagement in Africa because to some extent they appear mutually interdependent. For example, China's military and defense cooperation with African states could help stabilize countries into which China has poured, not insignificant economic investment, thus ensuring the success and profitability of that investment. On the other hand, China's economic investment also has the potential to change the dynamic of conflicts in Africa. Non-combatant evacuation operations and anti-piracy operations are another activity in which China's military presence and economic activity are intricately related. The Chinese government is obliged to protect Chinese citizens and assets, particularly when those citizens go to conflict zones under the banner of China's "go abroad" policy or its Belt and Road Initiative. This is "not only because overseas economic interests are crucial to the health of the Chinese economy, [and thus] to the legitimacy of the communist regime, but also because the state has faced domestic criticism when it was viewed as failing to protect its assets and especially citizens, including

workers, officials, business people and peacekeepers" (Hirono et al., 2019, p. 583).

Peacekeeping operations are *indirectly* related to the protection of China's economic activities, and people who promote such activities in Africa. Many UN peacekeeping operations conducted in conflict zones—often the recipients of Chinese economic investment—aim to stabilize the states, contain terrorism, and protect civilians. China needs a stable environment in which to undertake its business activities. Peacekeeping operations are conducive to creating such an environment. This, however, should not be confused with the speculation that China is sending peacekeepers simply to protect its oil resources directly, as has been discussed in relation to South Sudan (e.g., Bariyo, 2014). In the case of South Sudan, China included the protection of workers on oil installations in the UN Mission in South Sudan mandate of May 2014 (United Nations, 2014), but Chinese peacekeepers have been working in Juba, Wau and Kuacjok, none of which has China's oil installations. The link between China's military presence and its economic activity in the context of peacekeeping should be understood in an indirect manner.

### Heightened sense of rivalry amongst great powers

China's rise in the international system and its increasing military expansion in Africa—whether through unilateral, or through bilateral or multilateral channels—has undoubtedly intensified the sense of rivalry between China and the United States. In 2018, the commander of the United States Africa Command, General Thomas D. Waldhauser, spoke in

response to the establishment of China's military base in Djibouti, reaffirming the United States' strategic interests in the country and asserting the importance of the United States' military presence in Africa and its commitment to fulfilling the desires of the African people (U.S. Africa Command Public Affairs, 2018).

This heightened sense of rivalry is not limited to China and the United States, however. Other powers also, including Japan, have important strategic interests in Africa. As asserted by the then Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono, Djibouti holds significant importance for realizing Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, which attempts to enhance the connectivity and stability of Asia and Africa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2017). Japan has owned an "activity hub" in Djibouti, essentially a military base but described as an activity hub to avoid violating its Constitution, since 2011. Although this activity hub is rather limited in scale, with a contingent of only 180 troops on a 30-acre site, serving primarily on short-term anti-piracy operations, Japan has recently made efforts to extend the function of the hub to include long-term non-combatant evacuation operations and humanitarian assistance (Hirono, 2019; Mainichi Shimbun, 2018). With regard to this, one Japan Self-Defense Force official has stated that Japan needs to gain greater influence in Djibouti in response to China's increasing military presence and its infrastructure projects in

the country (as cited in Kubo, 2016). However, aside from serving as a strategic naval base for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, Djibouti is also regarded by Japan as a valuable ally in realizing Japan's UN Security Council ambition. Djibouti has become a firm supporter of Japan's permanent membership in the UN Security Council due to Japan's bilateral cooperation with the Djibouti. Needless to say, both of Japan's interests in Djibouti are in conflict with China's foreign interests. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and a victim of Japan's past imperial ambition, China is arguably the largest obstacle to Japan's bid for permanent Security Council membership. Furthermore, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Geng Shuang, has also expressed concern over Japan's military expansion in Djibouti, advising that Japan should learn from history and pursue peaceful development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2016). In addition, China's Defense Ministry spokesperson Ren Guoqiang has also asserted China's opposition to Japan's mention of China regarding the Djibouti base issue (as cited in Huanqiu, 2018).

## Conclusion

This paper has addressed and debunked some popular misconceptions prevalent in the recent literature on China's military expansion in Africa. By highlighting the evolving nature of China's military engagement in Africa, it demonstrates that China is no longer just an economic actor developing African states but also presents itself as a reliable and indispensable military actor. In addition, this paper has also argued against the

"new scramble for Africa" argument which mis-conceptualizes the nature of China's military engagement in Africa as nothing but the means to exploit Africa's resources. It is more accurate to view China's military engagement in Africa as being multi-faceted, nuanced, complex, and inter-linked with other issue areas, as that engagement reflects China's attempt to protect and expand its national interests overseas.

Such complexity in the nature of China's military engagement matters to the broader question of how China's military expansion in Africa affects change in the international order. As discussed above, China's approach is multifaceted in that its military expansion supports the UN-led international order, while it attempts to increase its power within and beyond the UN context. The complexity matters also because it suggests ways in which Chinese and US policymakers need to engage with each other to benefit Africa. An increase in Chinese power leads to a heightened sense of rivalry among the great powers—particularly between China and the US. While it may be conducive to the development of Africa to present plural visions of how great powers can engage and support African states, policymakers should manage the sense of rivalry in a way that does not adversely affect Africa's

stability. A key to a healthy rivalry may lie in the recognition that China and the US share some benefit in supporting the UN-led international order and African multilateral institutions. Also important is the recognition that China and the US are central to Africa for markedly different reasons. China is the largest producer and market for many products, and its military presence in Africa is directly and indirectly related to supporting its economic activities. The US still controls the largest military forces in the region. Although the Trump Administration's approach strains the upholding of the international order in places such as Africa, the US military in Africa can also secure and stabilize African countries, and quite clearly security and stability are the irreducible basis of peace and prosperity in the current international order.

- 1 The author is grateful for Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's invitation to attend the international conference in Manila, and for the support of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science KAKENHI in the form of a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) under grant number 17K03606 to conduct the research of this paper. Special thanks goes to Yujia Fan and Joe Tien Ce for their excellent research assistance.
- 2 Author's calculation from UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service. Data available at <https://fts.unocha.org>.

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# China's 5G Network Development: A Security Concern?

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## Ewan Lawson

At the beginning of 2020, the UK government finally announced its long awaited decision regarding its approach to selecting technology providers that would be permitted to contribute to the development of the new national 5G network. Albeit only applying to that one small state, the British decision had global reverberations. Indeed, President Trump was described as being apoplectic with rage in a phone conversation with Prime Minister Johnson and American officials have regularly suggested that such a decision could put arguably the world's closest intelligence sharing relationship at risk (The Independent, 2020).

However, this was not just a decision about a piece of technical equipment in a telecommunications network. While the announcement referred to 'high risk suppliers,' no one was in any doubt that the particular provider being referred to was the Chinese technology business Huawei. The growing domination of the telecommunications sector by Chinese businesses has been a growing concern for a number of years, although it is the roll-out of 5G mobile networks that has brought it to the fore. In particular, some states have expressed concern that giving these businesses central roles in national networks is providing an open door to espionage, and

possibly disruption by the Chinese state. This paper will argue that while there are clearly significant security risks associated with giving Huawei a role in 5G networks, with an appropriate risk management approach, these can be mitigated. It will first outline the geopolitical context in which this debate is taking place before moving on to outline the specific challenges associated with 5G. It will then review what security threats 5G networks might face and then look in more detail at why concerns have been raised specifically about Huawei. Finally, it will briefly review some of the approaches being adopted by states to manage the issue, contrasting in particular the difference between the UK and Australia but also highlighting some of the responses from ASEAN states.

While this paper focuses on the particular issue of 5G networks, it is important to recognize that this is only the first of what are likely to be a series of discussions regarding security, technology and sovereignty. While not all states will be able to develop sovereign industrial capacity in all technologies, that global 5G networks are, in essence, reliant on only three providers should be a concern to all governments. So why has this issue come to the fore at this particular time in such a strident manner?

## Context

While it is not the function of this paper to analyze China's dramatic economic growth and its geopolitical implications, it is important to recognize this as the background to the current debates about 5G networks. Since opening its economy 1979, China has grown to become the world's second largest economy after the United States. While the initial growth was based on manufacturing, since 2012, the focus has been on technology research and development with spending up by 70% and the government encouraging and supporting industrial parks and start-ups. Companies are increasingly investing in developing robotics, artificial intelligence and data science (Charlton, 2019).

China's dramatic growth came against a geopolitical background where the United States had been the dominant global power

since the end of the Cold War. Inevitably this led some to speculate that this was leading to a hegemonic transition with China surpassing the US as the leading global power and conflict inevitable (see for example, Allison, 2017). While there are continuing tensions particularly over Taiwan and the South China Sea, so far the primary venue for competition has been in the economy and in particular over issues of trade. Since the election of President Trump in 2016, this trade war has intensified with the US placing tariffs on Chinese products and complaining about the theft of intellectual property. This last continues to be a source of concern with the US Department of Justice indicting officers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) for cyber enabled data theft as recently as February 2020. Recognizing this background of technological competition, what are the particular issues with 5G networks?

## 5G and technology

Firstly, it is important to recognize that while the technology developments in 5G networks are evolutionary rather than revolutionary, their capabilities will transform many aspects of day-to-day living. They are expected to deliver speeds that are some 10-20 times faster than existing legacy networks, with significantly reduced latency and the ability to connect many more devices due to ultra-high bandwidth and being virtually ubiquitous (NIS Cooperation Group, 2019). While there has been much focus on its role in enabling the 'internet of things' (IOT) such as connected fridges, it will also be a key enabler to the delivery of new technologies

such as driverless cars and is also essential to recognizing the ambitions of automation, robotics and the 4th industrial revolution, as well as smart cities (watch video for explanation, Oxford Information Labs, 2019).

Having said that the technological changes are evolutionary, 5G is not so much an upgrade but a substantially different approach to delivering mobile digital telecommunications. At heart, it is a software driven approach, which delivers functionality and differentiation through software rather than previously being built upon specialized hardware and software. This, in turn, will

enable 'network slicing' which will allow the separation of different services as layers on the same physical network and thus differentiated services across the whole network. Lastly, 5G networks will make use of 'edge computing' and hence a less centralized network than was previously the case, allowing services to be provided nearer the use, contributing to the decrease in latency (NIS Cooperation Group, 2019, p. 6).

However, there continue to be debates amongst experts as to the significance of any divide between the core and periphery. A recent report emphasizes that 5G networks consist of multiple layers that deliver parallel functions across the network, with each layer transporting data packets to other layers in the network. Within each layer, individual components transmit and receive different amounts of information depending on access rights. This goes on to argue that there is a core element to the network that has greater control over the functionality of the network than edge components. These core components include routing and switching functions on base stations where failure or compromise would have a high impact. It should be noted that 5G networks will have more cores than legacy systems. In contrast, edge functions will be at the periphery of the network although this is not precisely defined. The report notes that the UK National Cyber Security Centre suggests that edge components only exist at the access layer of the network and thus, compromise of a component at the edge only affects a small area of the network and can therefore be relatively easily isolated and hence mitigated (Sullivan & Lucas, 2010).

However, other researchers argue that this core-edge distinction is not the case. They

argue that to realize the benefits of higher speeds and reduced latency of 5G networks, some sensitive functions need to be at the edge of the network closer to the customer. Further, distribution of these functions will be dynamic and therefore impossible to govern with any confidence (Gilding, 2020). It is interesting to note that these two contrasting perspectives come from the UK and Australia, respectively, two states with very different approaches to the Huawei question.

It is also important to recognize the range of actors involved in setting up these networks, including the mobile network operators, the suppliers of those operators, as well as the manufacturers of connected devices from phones to fridges, and related service suppliers. All of these have a role to play in ensuring the security of the new 5G networks as was demonstrated by the compromise of a range of IOT devices by the Mirai botnet that brought down significant parts of the internet on the eastern seaboard of North America in 2016 through a distributed denial of service (DDOS) attack (for an explanation of how the Mirai botnet worked, see Fruhlinger, 2018). It is therefore important not to just focus on a single issue, that of Huawei as a high-risk supplier, and in so doing, lose sight of other cyber security challenges.

Lastly, when considering the technology aspects of establishing a 5G network, it is important to recognize the relative paucity of suppliers in the market. While there are other suppliers in the market for 5G network equipment, it is dominated by three companies: Huawei, Nokia and Ericsson. Of these, Huawei is apparently the cheapest. However, the international tensions and trade conflict mentioned previously may be changing the picture, as companies such as

Samsung find opportunities to increase their market share (Shin-Hyung, 2019). It should be noted however that whatever the national

identity of the company, component supply chains are international and complex.

### Risks and threats

Having assessed the technology aspects of 5G networks and in particular the debate about core and periphery, where do the risks and threats to these networks come from? When considering the cybersecurity risk, it can be thought of in terms of availability, integrity and confidentiality; specifically, the availability and integrity of the network, and the confidentiality and integrity of the data. Thus, a malicious actor might initiate an attack to disrupt a network impacting its availability, it could attempt to access data, thus breaching its confidentiality or it might use the network to attack a connected device, compromising the integrity of the data and indeed the operation of the connected device. Clearly as societies and economies become more reliant on these new 5G networks, the potential impact of any of these actions could be significant.

So, who might these malicious actors be and what might they be seeking to achieve? The range of potential threat actors in cyberspace is varied from individual hackers, through hacktivists and criminals to state and indeed non-state terrorist type groups. The *Mirai* botnet mentioned previously was the work of an undergraduate at an American university who was looking for ways to make money and initially targeted his own university and online game servers with DDOS attacks. Probably as part of an effort to cover his tracks, he then released the *Mirai* source code onto the internet where it was developed

by another as yet unidentified actor leading to the internet outage in 2016 (Fruhlinger, 2018). Indeed, a development of *Mirai* was used by a young British hacker, allegedly in the pay of a rival company to disrupt the service provided by a telecommunications provider in Africa, which took the country of Liberia offline in 2016 (Casciani, 2019). It should be noted that there is significant blurring amongst these categories of threat actors with states employing criminal groups and those recruiting individual hackers in turn. Indeed, at times, malicious actors may be undertaking attacks without realizing who their ultimate employer is.

However, in its recent report and assessment on cyber security in 5G networks, the EU assessed a range of threat actors through analysis of the combination of capability/resources and intention/motivation. It concluded that states and state backed actors presented the most significant threat to the security of 5G networks as, at least in the context of EU member states, they had the motivation, intent and capability to undertake persistent, complex and sophisticated attacks. Further, it noted that state-initiated attacks on those networks, as well as being the most likely, were also those which would have the most impact, having the potential to have major impacts on essential services (NIS Cooperation Group, 2019). The report also noted that insiders or sub-contractors, if leveraged

by states, could be used by those states to gain access to critical network assets (p. 14). It is this combination of a state and a contractor that is the context for concerns regarding Chinese companies' participation in establishing 5G networks.

In addition to malicious actors conducting cyber-attacks, it is also important to

recognize what has been called product risk. This is the risk that a component does not perform as the provider describes and/or that it has vulnerabilities that, as well as potentially affecting reliability, could also be exploited by hostile actors (Uren, 2019). This situation is exacerbated where there is dependency on a limited range of suppliers.

## Huawei: The concerns

The concerns about Huawei as a key supplier of 5G network components are more about the nature of it as a business and its links with the Chinese state, rather than any specific evidence of malicious cyber activity on its part. Firstly, it is important to recognise that it is not an enterprise akin to many of the businesses in most ASEAN or western countries. It has been described as a product of the unique Chinese political and economic ecosystem which constrains, influences and at least to a certain extent, provides it with direction. Whilst it has publicly described itself as a private business, it is not publicly listed and its ownership and management structures it is argued have lacked transparency. In 2012 it refused to provide details of these structures to a committee of the US Congress arguing that to do so might breach China's state secrecy laws (Seeley et al., 2019). Investigations into its ownership suggest an unusual model. It appears to be 98% owned by a trade union committee with less than 1% owned by its CEO and founder Ren Zhengfei (Balding & Clarke, 2019). In the PRC, trade union officials are paid by the state and are ultimately answerable to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

As a business, Huawei has grown dramatically moving from some US \$4.6bn of sales revenues in 2014 to some \$105bn some 4 years later in 2018. Positively, it reinvests much of this back into the company for R&D, but the growth of the company has also been built on substantial loans from the state banking system, primarily from the China Development Bank. Whilst the amounts of these loans are disputed, it seems clear that Huawei's expansion is built on substantial state support. This in itself is perhaps unsurprising given the nature of the Chinese economy, but it is but one factor that causes some commentators concerns about the extent to which the company is controlled and directed by the state (Seeley et al., 2019, p. 21).

Aside from the nature of Huawei as a business, another factor that has attracted significant attention and concern has been China's National Intelligence Law of 2017, which places a legal requirement on all Chinese businesses including Huawei to cooperate with the state's intelligence and security agencies both inside and outside the PRC (Uren, 2019). In response to these concerns, Huawei

provided a 37-page legal opinion from a Chinese law firm that argued that:

- there is no law requiring Huawei to implant backdoors in its equipment,
- there are safeguards in Chinese law that protect businesses legitimate interests,
- Huawei's subsidiaries are not subject to Chinese law outside China,
- and, Beijing can only demand assistance to achieve clear and reasonable counter-espionage goals.

While some commentators have reported that Chinese companies might 'go slow' on any requests for support from the state, they have also noted that it would, in practice, be impossible to say no (2019).

As noted previously, despite these concerns about the nature of Huawei's ownership and its relationship with both party and state,

there has as yet been no real 'smoking gun' in the form of Huawei's knowing involvement in some form of cyber operation. Huawei products were involved in what appears to have been a major espionage effort on the African Union Headquarters from where data was exported to Shanghai every night between 2012 and 2017, but there has been no substantial evidence that the company was knowingly involved (Sherman, 2019). However, the arrest of Huawei's CFO Meng Wanzhou in Canada in 2018 for extradition to the US on charges of bank fraud and sanctions busting was met with the arrest of two Canadian citizens by the Chinese government and the imposition of tariffs on Canadian products, which seemed a little too coincidental, and implied the sort of close links between the company and the Chinese authorities that had been repeatedly denied (Pearson, 2019).

## Responses & actions

Having noted the criticality of 5G networks for the next stage of the digital revolution including the 4th industrial revolution, where do these concerns about the involvement of Chinese telecommunications manufacturers and in particular, Huawei, leave states who are seeking to roll out new systems? The USA made its position clear with a complete ban of Huawei and other 'high risk suppliers' from its 5G network. This is perhaps unsurprising given the ongoing trade conflict with China along with continuing US concerns about the overlap between Chinese national security espionage and commercial intellectual property theft through cyber means despite the 2014 agreement (Bing & Martina, 2018). Another state that has imposed a total ban is

Australia, although the roots of its concerns about Huawei go back almost a decade to the planned roll out of its National Broadband Network (NBN). In the face of continuing concerns expressed by the Australian government about state-sponsored cyber espionage and intellectual property theft by China, Huawei unveiled a localization strategy designed to give the company more of an Australian face and hence a chance of competing for the multi-million dollar tenders. It recruited three independent directors with strong political, government and military links and committed to funding research and education in Australian higher education (Seely & Hemmings, 2019, p. 42). However, this localization strategy

ultimately failed in Australia and in 2012, Huawei was banned from tendering in the NBN as a high risk vendor (Polites, 2012). This ban survived a change of government in 2013 as politicians noted the compelling nature of the briefings provided to them by the Australian security agencies.

The issue resurfaced in 2018 when the Australian government started to consider the shape of its policy position on the forthcoming development of the national 5G network. It has been argued that there was an extensive public debate over the year about the implications of engaging with Huawei in this network, but ultimately the outcome was a further ban (for the debate, see Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2018). While the ban does not specifically name Huawei or indeed any specific vendor, it refers to those 'who are likely to be subject to extrajudicial directions from a foreign government that conflict with Australian law', clearly pointing at Chinese suppliers and Huawei in particular (Australian Ministry of Communications, 2018). The decision seems to be based on three key factors. Firstly, the Australian security agencies highlighted the continuing nature of state-sponsored espionage by China both against Australian targets, including universities and more globally. Secondly, the control exerted over Chinese businesses by the CCP and the government as mentioned previously in this article. Lastly, the vital part that the 5G network will play in critical national infrastructure and the need to increasingly collapse ideas of core and periphery (Seeley et al., 2019, pp. 43-45).

A former official in the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) described how it has attempted to put together a 'a suite of

cybersecurity controls that would give the government confidence that hostile intelligence services could not leverage their national vendors to gain access to our 5G networks' but that they had failed (Gilding, 2020). In contrast, the UK has adopted a markedly different approach, announcing early in 2020 that Huawei would be allowed to contribute to its 5G network, albeit not in key parts of the critical national infrastructure, core parts of the network, or at sensitive military or nuclear sites. It has also limited Huawei to no more than 35% of the total, although it is a little unclear as to how this is measured (Burgess, 2020). The rationale for this decision was published by the UK National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) as advice to the telecommunications companies (NCSC, 2020). It does not differ from the Australian analysis in recognizing the potential threat arising from using equipment from providers with close links to governments that are already linked to cyber espionage and who could be hostile in the future. However, rather than a ban, it believes that the mitigations it has put in place represent a sensible risk management approach. As well as those measures noted above, this also includes the Huawei Cyber Security Evaluation Centre (HCSEC), established in 2010, where Huawei equipment is assessed for cyber security vulnerabilities by staff of GCHQ. Although HCSEC has been very critical of the standard of Huawei's engineering, it has not apparently found any deliberate efforts to create back doors to allow Chinese government access (HSCEC Oversight Board, 2019).

If the assessment of the risk to 5G networks is the same, why does the UK government feel its risk management approach to high risk vendors such as Huawei is better than a



complete ban? The main reason seems to be the potential for a ban to negatively impact on the speed of the roll out. One source has suggested that the ban on Huawei could cost Australia up to AU\$12 billion in GDP out to 2035, although that figure is disputed (Gilding, 2020). It would appear that the UK policy seeks to balance the undoubted additional costs however large those are, with its risk management approach.

If such a disparity in approach exists between two states with some of the closest intelligence and security relationships where does this leave the consideration of others such as those in South-East Asia? The tension is between the need to ensure the security of critical national infrastructure

while ensuring that the costs associated with excluding Huawei do not substantially impact the economic benefits associated with 5G roll out. One way to achieve this is through maximizing the diversity of supply rather than relying on a single vendor. This is in essence the approach adopted by a number of EU states and is also the position of Thailand and the Philippines, while Singapore is expected to adopt a similar policy. Other states such as Cambodia and Myanmar with closer ties to China have engaged actively with Huawei while Vietnam has sought opportunities with Nokia and Ericsson (Kaushik, 2020). This range of approaches clearly reflects the need to balance the realities of regional geopolitics as well as those security and economic concerns.

## Conclusion

The next generation of telecommunications technology, 5G marks a significant advance in speed, latency and availability. This will underpin the increasing digitization of economy and society and successful roll out will underpin everything from smart cities and driverless vehicles to the 4th industrial revolution. Those states that are able to access these advantages quickest will potentially have a significant advantage in the next wave of digitally enabled economic growth.

However, the market for suppliers of some of the key components of these new networks is limited to three main companies: Huawei, Nokia and Ericsson. Some western states have expressed concerns about the cyber security implications of using Huawei products. While there

is no publicly available direct evidence of Huawei being involved in nefarious activity, its links to the Chinese state are at the heart of those concerns, given the latter's continuing involvement in cyber espionage and intellectual property theft.

Some states, most notably Australia and the USA, have taken the straightforward position that the only way to completely manage the risk from Huawei is to ban it from any involvement in their national 5G networks. This clearly comes with an economic cost, but also has potential geopolitical consequences, which might be less palatable to smaller states. In contrast, the UK, some other EU states, and indeed some in South-East Asia, have adopted more of a risk management approach. While the details vary, the key has been ensuring diversification of



vendors and limiting where in the network Huawei products can be deployed. Other states have either argued that there is no risk or have decided to focus on the economic benefits and have fully embraced Huawei as their key provider for 5G.

The outcomes of these various approaches have clearly yet to be seen as roll out of 5G is still underway in most states.

However, 5G is only the first in a series of technological developments such as artificial intelligence that will raise similar questions about security, sovereignty and supply. Perhaps rather than wait until the next Huawei debate, this is the point in which states should be considering their industrial policy and how they encourage companies to develop the capacity to compete in the global technology market.

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# Benefits and Costs of the Philippines' Paradigm Shift to China

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## Rommel Banlaoi

When President Rodrigo R. Duterte assumed his post on 30 June 2016, his major foreign policy decision was to pursue friendly relations with China. This coincided within the same period when the International Arbitral Tribunal acted in favor of the Philippines on the legal case lodged against China on the maritime disputes in the South China Sea. The arbitral ruling declares that Beijing's nine-dash line claim has no legal basis under international law and that China should respect the Philippines' maritime rights under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

During his first cabinet meeting in his first day in office, Duterte enunciated his administration's foreign policy when he instructed Philippine officials to promote friendly ties with China and not to put Beijing in an awkward position because of the arbitral ruling. Rather than continuing the adversarial China policy of his predecessor, Duterte pushed back by pursuing a China-friendly policy. Duterte stressed, "If we can have peace with China, I will be very happy" (Duterte, 2016). He even urged his cabinet officials not to taunt or flaunt the ruling with China (Alvarez, 2016).

Duterte's foreign policy strongly demonstrated the great paradigm shift in Philippines-China relations. This paper describes Duterte's paradigm shift to China. It examines the benefits and costs of this paradigm shift to the Philippines.

## Duterte's paradigm shift to China

Duterte's paradigm shift in Philippine foreign and security policy officially took shape when he went to China for a state visit on 18-21 October 2016 and met his counterpart, President Xi Jinping (Banlaoi, 2017, pp. 357-262). Duterte's first visit to China was a game changer in Philippines-China relations. From the lowest moment of Philippines-

China relations during the leadership of President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, the two countries' bilateral ties reached newest heights under Duterte who opted to promote cooperation rather than competition with China. This paradigm shift ushered in "a new era of closer friendship" between the Philippines and China and it signaled the

"new age of cooperation" between their two governments (Sadaondong, 2017).

To emphasize his seriousness to strengthen its friendship with China, Duterte even ambiguously expressed his willingness to separate with the United States, the Philippines' erstwhile colonial master and Manila's only security ally in the world (Rauhala, 2016). The Duterte administration further challenged the Philippine-American alliance when the Philippine defense department called for the review of the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), the main legal foundation of the said alliance (Cepeda, 2018). In February 2020, President Duterte terminated the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with the United States, a landmark decision considered by Western analysts to be favorable to China. But in June 2020, President Duterte suspended the VFA revocation for a period of six months causing wariness in China about the intention of the United States to reassert its influence on the Philippines.

Since the end of the cold war, the United States has been the major source of China's external security anxieties. Challenges in the Philippine-American alliance under Duterte have provided opportunities for China to strengthen comprehensive bilateral relations with the Philippines, particularly in the area of defense and security.<sup>1</sup> Duterte's decision to mend ties with China arguably created a favorable climate of cooperation between the two countries.

In stark contrast to the policies of his predecessor, Duterte has pursued a foreign and security policy that is cautious, pragmatic and reconciliatory towards China.<sup>2</sup>

His paradigm shift to China restored all official channels of communication from the lowest to the highest levels between the two governments. China cut those channels of communication as a protest against the Philippine government under Aquino III who lodged the arbitration case against China.<sup>3</sup> But under Duterte, high-to-low level Chinese officials resumed their frequent visits to the Philippines to strengthen bilateral relations in various fields, not only in infrastructure, trade, investment, agriculture, education, and tourism, but also in defense, law enforcement, and counterterrorism.<sup>4</sup> A main highlight of these visits was on 20-21 November 2018 when Xi made his reciprocal and historic state visit to the Philippines.

Xi's visit formally opened the new "golden age" of Philippines-China relations. The first golden age occurred in 2005 during the visit of President Hu Jintao to the Philippines under the administration of then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (Mercado, 2019).<sup>5</sup> Xi's visit also established the strong foundation for the major "turnaround in bilateral ties", as the Philippines and China opted to strengthen an "all around relations" that aimed to "rejuvenate centuries old friendship" between the Philippines and China (Tan, 2019). Days before his visit to Manila, Xi already described Philippines-China relations under Duterte as a "rainbow after the rain." In his statement published in several newspapers prior to his state visit to Manila, Xi stressed:

*Since President Duterte took office, China and the Philippines have reengaged in dialogue and consultation for the proper handling*

*of the South China Sea issue. Our relations have now seen a rainbow after the rain. In just a little more than two years, China has become the Philippines' largest trading partner, largest export market and largest source of imports, and the second largest source of tourists. There has been a surge of interest for private investment in each other's countries, and interactions between our cultural groups have been frequent. More and more Philippine fruits are coming to the dining table in Chinese households, and a growing number of Philippine scenic spots are being included in the itinerary of Chinese tourists. China firmly supports the Philippines' fight against drugs and terrorism and its post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Marawi, thus contributing to peace in the country. In the face of disasters, our two peoples have stood together and come to each other's help, writing new chapters of friendship between our two countries (Xinhua, 2018).*

During his arrival to Manila, Xi reiterated the two countries' centuries old friendship. He pointed out, "For centuries, our two countries have stood together through thick and thin and written splendid chapters of friendly exchanges. Since President Duterte took office, thanks to the joint efforts of our two sides, we have reopened the door of friendship and cooperation to each other, bringing real benefits to our peoples and making an important contribution to regional peace, stability, and prosperity" (Xi, 2018).

Thus far, Xi's visit marked the highest moment of Philippines-China relations where the two countries made the deliberate effort to engage in a "comprehensive strategic cooperation" (Corrales, 2018). Duterte described this kind of bilateral relation as the "blooming of a big beautiful flower" (Xinhua, 2018). Scholars and analysts describe Duterte's paradigm shift to China as a "pivot to China" (Ibarra, 2017). What are the economic, political, financial, costs and benefits to the Philippines' "pivot" or paradigm shift to China? Do the benefits outweigh the costs?

## Benefits of friendly ties with China

Pursuing friendly ties with China offered some economic benefits. Xi reciprocated Duterte's friendly gesture by encouraging more Chinese trade and investments with the Philippines. China also offered various forms of assistance to the Philippines, not only access to China's Official Development Assistance (ODA), but also access to humanitarian aid during complex emergencies like the Marawi siege. Friendly relations between the Philippines and China also triggered the influx of Chinese

tourists and workers to the Philippines, which in turn propelled other forms of economic activities that were necessary for the Philippine government to achieve key goals of Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 (National Economic and Development Authority, 2017). There were political and strategic benefits too. By being friendly with China, Duterte helped calm the overall security situation in the South China Sea (SCS), allowing greater rooms for maritime cooperation between the two countries.

## Economic benefits: Increased trade, investments and economic assistance from China

With Duterte's China-friendly policy, China became one of the Philippines' most important economic partners. Duterte's paradigm shift made China the Philippines' top trading partner and the largest source of imports with a trade volume reaching close to US\$56 billion in 2018 alone (Department of Trade and Industry, 2019). China also became the Philippines' largest foreign investment origin, reaching at least US\$67 million in 2018 and the largest source of net equity capital allocation of around US\$100 million in 2019 (2019).

Under Duterte, China served as the Philippines' third largest export destination and the largest export market for Philippine bananas, bringing income of US\$345 million to the Philippines. In the first half year of 2019, around 798 thousand tons of Philippine bananas have been exported to China. Since 2016, China has imported more than 2 million tons of tropical fruits (worth nearly US\$2 billion) from the Philippines (Chinese Embassy in Manila, 2020).

Because of the friendly environment, Chinese investors increased their operations in the Philippines. As of the end of 2019, there were more than 40 Chinese enterprises that invested in the Philippines, directly employing close to 20,000 workers and indirectly generating 26,000 job opportunities (2020).

Duterte also received various economic assistance from Beijing to support its national development projects under its *Build Build* (BBB) Plan. China has provided

RMB2.75 billion (around US\$398 million) of grants and nearly US\$500 million of soft loans to the Philippines to support its BBB Plan. At least 75 projects under the BBB Plan were identified for China's funding. Another RMB3 billion (around US\$421 million) grant was earmarked for the period of 2019-2022. Thus, China became the Philippines' largest source of foreign assistance to support the infrastructure projects of Duterte under its BBB Plan with a total of at least US\$24 billion investments and credit line pledges from China to support the following projects planned as early as 2016:

1. Subic-Clark railway project by Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and China Harbour Engineering Co.;
2. Bonifacio Global City-Ninoy Aquino International Airport Segment of Metro Manila Bus Rapid Transit-EDSA project by the BCDA and China Road and Bridge Corp.;
3. BCDA-China Fortune Land Real Estate project (memorandum of understanding);
4. Safe and Smart City projects for BCDA by BCDA and Huawei Technologies
5. Transportation and logistics infrastructure at Sangley Point by Cavite Holdings, International Container Terminal Services Inc. and China Harbour Engineering;
6. Joint venture agreement of Jimei Group of China and Expedition Construction Corp. for infrastructure projects;



7. North Negros biomass and South Negros biomass project by North Negros Biopower and Wuxi Huaguang Electric Power Engineering;
8. Globe Telecom projects to improve network quality and capacity;
9. Jin Jiang hotel room capacity expansion from 1,000 to 2,000 by Double Dragon Properties and Hotel of Asia Inc.;
10. Joint development project on renewable energy by Columbus Capitana and China CAMC Engineering;
11. New Generation Steel Manufacturing Plant by Mannage Resources and SIIC Shanghai International Trade HK;
12. Joint venture on steel plants by Global Ferronickel and Baiyin International;
13. Renewable energy projects by Xinjiang TBEA Sunoasis;
14. Davao coastline and port development project by Mega Harbor Port and Development and China Harbour Engineering;
15. Manila Harbour Center reclamation by R-II Builders Inc. and China Harbour Engineering;
16. Cebu International and Bulk Terminal project by Mega Harbour Port and CCCC Dredging Company;
17. Cabling manufacturing facilities by MVP Global Infrastructure Group and Suli Grp Ltd.;
18. Manila EDSA Bus Transportation program by Phil State Group and Yangtse Motor group and Minmetals International;
19. Hybrid rice production by SL Agritech and Jiangsu Hongqi Seed Inc.;
20. Bus manufacturing facility by Zhuhai Bus and Coach Co.;
21. Banana plantation project by AVL B Asia Pacific and Shanghai Xinwo Agriculture Development Co.;
22. 300MW Pulangi-5 Hydro Project by Greenergy Co. and Power China Guizhou Engineering Corp.;
23. Pasig River, Marikina River and Manggahan Floodway bridges construction project by Zonar Construct and SinoHydro;
24. Ambal Simuay sub-river basin flood control project by One Whitebeach Land Development and Sino Hydro;
25. Nationwide island provinces link bridges by Zonarsystems and PowerChina Sino Hydro; and
26. Railway project (study) by MVP Global Infrastructure group and China Railway Engineering Corp. (Salceda, 2016)

Aside from these projects, China agreed to fund the New Centennial Water Source Kaliwa Water Dam Project worth US\$211 million. China also started the construction of the Chico River Irrigation Project worth US\$186 million, an amount intended to support the project that aimed to irrigate more than 8,700 hectares of agricultural land in the Kalinga and Cagayan provinces of Northern Philippines. Through the BRI, China also gave the Philippines a grant of US\$75 million for the construction of Binondo-Intramuros and the Estrella Pantaleon bridges across Pasig River in Metro Manila.

With Duterte's paradigm shift to China, the Philippines became an integral part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Through the BRI, China agreed to fund

the 12-big ticket priority infrastructure projects in the Philippines worth a total of US\$167 billion. These 12-big ticket priority infrastructure projects were the:

1. Mindanao Railway
2. Bohol-Leyte Link Bridge
3. Cabadbaran Small Reservoir Irrigation Project
4. Camarines Sur-Catanduanes Friendship Bridge
5. Cebu-Bohol Link Bridge
6. Dinagat (Leyte)-Surigao Link Bridge
7. Ipo Dam No. 3
8. Luzon Eastern Seaboard development
9. Luzon-Samar (Matnog-Alen) Bridge
10. Negros-Cebu Link Bridge
11. Port Irene Development-Navigational Channel
12. River basin and watershed management project in Camarines Sur (National Economic and Development Authority, 2018)

In other words, China, through the BRI, supported major Philippine infrastructure projects nationwide from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, including major industrial park projects in Clark, Subic and Cagayan Valley. During the visit of Xi to the Philippines in November 2018, he signed 29 agreements to pursue comprehensive strategic cooperation between the Philippines and

China. Areas of cooperation included oil and gas exploration, agricultural modernization, education, information technology, humanitarian assistance, and infrastructure to be implemented nationwide.

During the 2nd BRI Forum in Beijing on 25-27 April 2019, China and the Philippines signed five additional agreements covering cooperation in education, anti-corruption and drug rehabilitation. During his 5th visit to China in August 2019, Duterte signed six bilateral agreements covering cooperation in higher education, science and technology, mutual assistance on custom matters, general customs administration, container inspections, and utilization of concessional loans.

Economic benefits from China had a spillover to counterterrorism. At the height of the Marawi siege that started in May 2017, China immediately provided the Philippines a counterterrorism assistance of RMB50 million (US\$7 million) covering the delivery of 3,000 assault rifles and RMB6 million (US\$1 million) worth round of ammunitions to support the Philippine military in its urban battle against ISIS fighters. The Marawi siege demonstrated the importance of counterterrorism cooperation to improve the overall bilateral relations between the Philippines and China (Banlaoi, 2019).

### Benefits from Chinese tourism and other business activities

Duterte's conciliation with Beijing drastically resulted in the massive influx of Chinese nationals in the Philippines to enjoy tourism, conduct business or seek employment.

One major immigration decision of Duterte as soon as he assumed office was the relaxation of visa requirements for Chinese nationals visiting the Philippines.

The Philippine Bureau of Immigration (BI) implemented the Visa Upon Arrival (VUA) program for Chinese nationals landing at Manila International Airport (MIA), Clark International Airport (CIA), Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA), and Kalibo International Airport (KIA) (Dezan Shira and Associates, 2017). The VUA privilege was also offered to Chinese travellers arriving at the Manila, Puerto Princesa, Subic, Laoag, and Caticlan seaports (2017).

As a result, around 5.2 million Chinese nationals visited the Philippines from 2016-2019 (Department of Tourism, 2020). The highest arrival was recorded in the whole year of 2019 with 1.7 million visitors followed by the whole year of 2018 with 1.2 million travellers from China. Though Chinese tourism arrivals to the Philippines were dwarfed by Thailand with more than 10 million Chinese tourists in 2018 alone, the increase in the Philippines was very dramatic and truly historic, considering that Chinese visitors only recorded 491,000 arrivals in 2015. Arrivals from China started to increase at the start of the Duterte administration in 2016 with 675,000 visitors. Arrivals continued to rise in 2017 with almost a million visitors from China creating a “Chinese wave” as a result of tremendous economic and social presence of Chinese visitors and immigrants in the Philippines (Rabena, 2019, p. 4).

In 2019, China became the largest source of foreign tourists in the Philippines, surpassing South Korea, United States, and Japan. Chinese tourists propelled the enormous growth of tourism in the Philippines from 2016 to 2019. In 2019, Chinese tourists represented around 20% of the total tourist arrivals to the Philippines. In other words, 1 in every 5 foreign visitors in the Philippines was

from China. The Philippine government only suspended the VUA to Chinese nationals in January 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The avalanche of Chinese tourists to the Philippines encouraged many economic activities that generated local employments and incomes. According to the Philippine Statistics Office, the tourism industry contributed an average of 12.7% to the growth of the Philippine economy between 2016 and 2019 (Philippine Statistics Office, 2020). Sectors that benefited from Chinese tourism were transportation (air, land and water), hotels, restaurants, convenient stores, malls, souvenir shops, and other tourist spots all over the country.

Increased Chinese presence in the Philippines also increased government revenues, particularly from economic activities associated with online gambling or the Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations (POGOs) mostly involving Chinese nationals. POGOs contributed P551 billion or US\$10 billion to the Philippine economy annually from 2016 to 2019 (Rivas, 2019). This represented almost one third of annual remittances of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), reaching US\$33.5 billion in 2019 (Rivas, 2020). This amount was also close to the 2019 proposed budget of the Department of Education (DEPED), amounting to P659 billion (Department of Budget and Management, 2018) and much higher than the 2019 proposed budget of the Department of National Defense (DND) amounting to P183.4 billion (Department of Budget of Management, 2018).

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) reported that POGOs generated licensing and royalty incomes

to the Philippine government amounting to P14 billion in 2019, P8 billion in 2018 and P6 billion in 2017 (Ibon Foundation, 2020).<sup>6</sup> Other sources indicated that royalty incomes generated from POGOs reached P22.4 billion in 2018 and 2019 (Panti, 2020).

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), on the other hand, said that withholding taxes of Chinese and foreign nationals working in POGOs gave the Philippine government a total collection of P24 billion in 2018 (Leyco & Chipongian, 2019).

### Political and strategic benefits: Calming the security situation in the SCS

Pursuing friendly relations with China not only provided the Philippines economic benefits but also some political gains. The most obvious outcome of Duterte's China policy was the great improvement in government-to-government relations that facilitated robust bilateral economic activities. These economic activities also increased people-to-people contacts, particularly from tourism and academic exchanges. Most importantly, Duterte reached a mutual political understanding with President Xi to deliberately avoid conflicts in the SCS and to promote peace through functional cooperation for mutual benefits (Banlaoi, 2014, pp. 228-240). One major political and strategic benefit of this mutual understanding between the two leaders was the calming of the overall security situation in the SCS.

Filipinos benefited from the calm situation in the SCS as they resumed their fishing activities in the Scarborough Shoal. During the time of Aquino III, China prevented Filipinos to fish in the Scarborough Shoal as retaliation against the arbitration. But Duterte was able to reach an understanding with Xi for Filipinos to continue their fishing activities, not only in the Scarborough Shoal, but also in other parts of the Spratlys. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), on

the other hand, resumed their regular supply and personnel rotation missions in the KIG with less fear of harassment from Chinese maritime patrol vessels. More importantly, the AFP was able to continue the improvement of its facilities in Pag-Asa Island by repairing its runway and constructing a pier for effective docking of Philippine ships.

To maintain the calm situation in the SCS, the Philippines and China established the Philippines-China Bilateral Consultative Mechanism in the SCS (BCM). This bilateral mechanism aims "to increase mutual trust and confidence and to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities in the SCS that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability." The Philippines benefited from BCM as it compelled China to be more cooperative.

The Philippines and China held their First BCM in Guiyang, Guizhou Province, China on May 19, 2017. It was during this period when security experts, particularly from Vietnam, raised serious concerns on China's "expansive" construction activities on Fiery Cross, Subi, and Mischief Reefs in the Spratly Islands and on North, Tree, and Triton Islands in the Paracel Islands. But the BCM, as a pioneering bilateral mechanism, contributed enormously to the warming of friendly

relations between the Philippines and China, which in turn helped in calming the overall security situation in the SCS under the first year of the Duterte presidency. The first BCM was a milestone in Philippines-China relations as it opened practical channels of communication between the two countries in dealing with the many issues in the SCS (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2017).

On February 13, 2018, both countries held the Second BCM in Manila amidst international criticism of China's increased "militarization" in the SCS. But during the meeting, the Philippines and China leveled up the nature of their agenda by discussing "ways to manage and prevent incidents at sea, promote dialogue and cooperation on maritime issues, and enhance mutual trust and confidence." They also discussed "ways to strengthen cooperation in areas such as marine environmental protection, fisheries, marine scientific research, and oil and gas, without prejudice to their respective positions on sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction" (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2018).

On October 18, 2018, the Philippines and China held the Third BCM in Beijing despite reports of China's "continuing militarization" in the SCS such as landing of China military transport planes on Mischief Reef, deployment of advanced jamming equipment in Fiery Cross Reef, and installation of surface air missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles in Spratlys (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2018). Thus, during this meeting, the Philippines and China reiterated the need to promote "cooperation on joint exploration and development of maritime oil and gas" in the SCS. Both

countries also "reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of freedom of navigation in and over flight above the SCS, freedom of international commerce and other peaceful uses of the sea, addressing territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or directly concerned and the exercise of self-restraint, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea" (Xinhua, 2018).

Results of the Second and Third BCMs provided meaningful inputs to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Oil and Gas Development in the SCS signed by the two countries during the state visit to Manila of President Xi in November 2018. The MOU was a breakthrough in their bilateral ties, as it demonstrated two countries' serious efforts to promote practical cooperation through joint development, which has been viewed as the way ahead in the SCS (Banlaoi, 2014). Though opposition groups in the Philippines criticized the MOU, both parties assured their public that the signing of the MOU is "without prejudice to the respective legal positions of both governments (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2018).

On April 2-3, 2019, the two countries held the Fourth BCM in Manila amidst controversies pertaining to the alleged strong presence of Chinese maritime militias near Pag-Asa Island. During the meeting, the Philippines and China "reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate and to continue to find ways forward to strengthen mutual trust and confidence" (Department of Foreign Affairs,

2019). Both parties reiterated, “that the relevant differences between China and the Philippines in the SCS is only part of the bilateral ties and should not affect the mutually beneficial cooperation in other fields.” They also reaffirmed “the importance of maintaining and promoting regional peace and stability, freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the SCS.” More importantly, both parties reaffirmed “their commitment to address their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to or threatening with force, through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned” (2019).

To sustain the achievements of the BCM, the Philippines and China held the Fifth BCM on October 28, 2019 in Beijing. They held the BCM while China and Vietnam were having a standoff in the Paracels over the issue of oilrigs in the area. During the 5th BCM, both parties reaffirmed “the importance of the BCM as a platform for regular dialogue that can play a significant role in the enhanced and stable development of bilateral relations and peace and stability in the South China Sea” (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019). An important outcome of the 5th BCM was the creation of the Working Group on Political Security, Fisheries Cooperation, and the Working Group on Marine Scientific Research and Marine Environmental Protection. These two working groups are deemed important for the promotion of functional cooperation

in the SCS. These working groups all contributed to the strict implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the immediate conclusion of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

Through the BCM, the Philippine government was able to directly deal with China on the SCS. The BCM allowed both countries to discuss with each other their existing differences as well as their common interests on the SCS. The Philippines benefited from the BCM and it provided greater clarity and transparency on some details of their respective national positions, now made known candidly to each other, unlike before, where details of their national positions are deliberately kept secret away from each other. The BCM not only strengthened confidence-building measures between the Philippines and China, it also improved the political and diplomatic aspects of their bilateral relations that were essential for the promotion of preventive diplomacy in the SCS. The BCM also strengthened the role of the Philippines as the country coordinator of China-ASEAN relations, particularly in the context of negotiations for the conclusion of the COC.

In short, Duterte's paradigm shift to China had economic, social and political benefits.

But at what cost?

### Costs of friendship

President Duterte's paradigm shift to China undoubtedly reaped some benefits. Most of these benefits are economic in nature with

some political gains, particularly in calming the SCS situation. However, these benefits seemed to be short-term and were largely

dependent on the presidential term of Duterte expiring in 2022. Unless sustained beyond 2022, these short-term benefits could generate long-term costs. Duterte's China-friendly policy also unleashed some unintentional social, cultural, political and security costs. Most of these costs were associated with POGOs and current

Chinese migration in the Philippines arising from the influx of Chinese tourism and increase in Chinese investment and trade in the Philippines.<sup>7</sup> There was also cost to Philippine sovereignty claims in the SCS. These costs could have far-reaching consequences for the long-term pursuance of Philippine national interests.

### **Social and cultural costs**

Paradigm shift to China had unintended social and cultural costs, especially those associated with recent Chinese migration to the Philippines. Social costs included human trafficking, sex trafficking and prostitution, kidnapping, torture, commission of major index crimes, labor disputes, and many forms of transnational organized crimes. Cultural costs referred to tensions that occurred among Chinese nationals and Filipino citizens in the workplace and social media exacerbating "anti-Chinese" sentiments and "Sino-phobia" including stigmatization against Chinese-Filipinos suffering the unintended "collateral damages".

China-friendly policy of the Duterte government encouraged, not only the sudden influx of Chinese tourists, but also the avalanche of Chinese workers to the Philippines. Chinese migrant workers "flooded" the Philippine labor market, particularly in Chinese-run POGO firms and China-funded construction projects (Beltran, 2019). Though President Duterte asserted that Chinese investments would bring more jobs for Filipinos, Chinese investors preferred to employ Chinese workers in order to overcome the language barrier.

Increased Chinese workers in the Philippines created disputes with Filipino workers.

Chinese migrant workers to the Philippines caused enormous worries to Filipino workers who felt that the Chinese were stealing jobs from Filipinos. Some even viewed the situation as a form of Chinese invasion of the Philippines, which was further politicized when applied to the context of the South China Sea disputes (Collas-Monsod, 2019). The situation prompted Philippine labor groups to stage protest rallies against the influx of Chinese workers in the Philippines being unfair and unconstitutional. The National Union of Lawyers in the Philippines even stressed in its position paper that the massive entry of Chinese workers in the Philippines "is inequitable and harmful to Filipino enterprises and violates the constitutional preference for Filipino labor" (Beltran, 2019). These protests also included demonstrations against China for its continuing "aggression" in the South China Sea, making China and the presence of Chinese workers in the Philippines unpopular in the country. This exacerbated the surge of anti-China sentiments among Filipinos.

In a survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) in September 2019, 70% of Filipino respondents expressed strong worries about the surge of Chinese nationals working in the Philippines (Gita-Carlos, 2019). Filipinos who raised serious concerns over



Chinese workers' presence in the country was the highest in Metro Manila (75%), followed by the Visayas (71%), Mindanao (67%), and Balance Luzon (28%) (2019).

Social costs associated with the increased presence of Chinese in the Philippines also unleashed some cultural tensions. Current Chinese migration in the Philippines revived the old patterns of cultural conflicts involving the Chinese and Filipinos. The Chinese wave in the Philippines intensified existing anti-China sentiment or Sino-phobia first associated with territorial disputes and now with labor disputes, as well as other social issues associated with Chinese presence. Confusing the Chinese government with the Chinese people, some Filipinos accused China of stealing, not only Philippine territories in the South China Sea, but also Philippine jobs in its own territory. In the July 2019 SWS survey, 51% of Filipinos expressed their distrust of China and doubted China's friendly gestures to the Philippines (ABS-CBN News, 2019). Filipino distrust of China affected even the situation of Chinese Filipinos, whose political and cultural loyalty to the Philippines was cast in doubt. Chinese Filipinos became the collateral damage in the political and cultural conflict between the Chinese and the Filipinos.

Even academic and columnist Solita Collas-Monsod, wrote a controversial piece explaining why Filipinos distrust China (Collas-Monsod, 2018). Monsod accused China of "taking away what is ours" and insinuated that Chinese Filipinos were part of it (2018). Fellow columnist, Boying Pimentel, challenged Monsod for writing "a racist rant" and for being "confused, incoherent, dangerous" (Pimentel, 2018). Another academic, Caroline S. Hau, disagreed

with Monsod for being racist with a narrow understanding of China, the Chinese and the Chinese Filipinos (Hau, 2018).

Social activist and academic Teresita Ang See, warned that Monsod's racist view might target Tsinoy (Chinese Filipino) as an ethnic group (Ang See, 2019). Ang See also expressed her disappointment with Philippine National Artist Sionil Jose for sharing this racist view with Monsod and argued that they might have been misinformed and misguided about "our intense love and loyalty to the Philippines and equally intense pride in our ethnic Chinese heritage. We are Tsinoy or Tsinong Pinoy, Chinese Filipinos whose blood may be Chinese but whose roots grow deep in Philippine soil and whose bonds are with the Filipino people" (2019). Another Chinese Filipino academic explained, "The view that recent Chinese immigrants and Chinese Filipinos identify more with China is one, that is, unfortunately, shared by many Filipinos. This is mainly due to ignorance. But I had not expected this type of ignorance from someone like Solita Monsod, who, as an educator should know the importance of doing one's homework to avoid perpetuating such an erroneous view" (Chiu, 2018).

In social media, some Filipinos described China and the Chinese in pejorative ways like "bullies", "land grabbers", "job stealers" and the like. On the issue of Chinese migrant workers, others even demanded the Philippine government to immediately deport all illegal Chinese workers back to China, prompting the Chinese Embassy in Manila to urge the government to treat Chinese workers humanely (CNN Philippines, 2019).



## Political costs

Social and cultural costs associated with Duterte's China friendly policy that encouraged current Chinese migration also reached the Philippines' domestic political dynamics. Social and cultural issues associated with anything Chinese in the Philippines have inevitably been politicized. In fact, opposition leaders used Chinese workers in the Philippines and China's actions in the South China Sea as their favorite rallying political issues against the current government.

For instance, Senator Joel Villanueva, Chairman of the Philippine Senate Labor Committee, called for a series of congressional inquiries on the influx of Chinese workers in the Philippines. He questioned the preference of POGOs in hiring Chinese nationals and described the existing practice as unconstitutional. He stressed, "Section 12, Article 12 of the Constitution is sacred. It guarantees preference for Filipinos in any job. Filipino first before foreigners" (ABS-CBN News, 2019). In his privilege speech, Villanueva even claimed that some Chinese nationals were working illegally in the Philippines and asserted that the influx of illegal foreign workers in the Philippines posed a threat to Philippine sovereignty (Villanueva, 2019). Senator Risa Hontiveros also delivered a privilege speech specifically describing illegal Chinese workers as an assault on Philippine sovereignty and economy (Hontiveros, 2018).

Thus, the Philippine Senate urged concerned agencies of the Philippine government to pursue a crackdown against illegal Chinese workers particularly those working in POGOs.

This encouraged various labor groups in the Philippines to organize mass rallies to denounce the situation. Some rallies even articulated anti-China sentiments associated with South China Sea disputes.

Current Chinese migration in the Philippines, therefore, became a big political issue creating different political cleavages that exacerbated political conflicts between the opposition and the government in power. It even created diplomatic irritants between the Philippines and China. The Chinese Embassy in Manila expressed serious concerns on the involvement of Chinese nationals in online gambling. In its official statement, the Chinese Embassy lamented, "The fact that the Philippine casinos and POGOs and other forms of gambling entities are targeting Chinese customers has severely affected the Chinese side" in the following aspects (Remarks by Chinese Embassy Spokesperson on Issues of Chinese Citizens concerning Gambling in the Philippines, 2018):

*First, huge amount of Chinese funds has illegally flown out of China and illegally into the Philippines, involving crimes such as cross-border money laundering through underground banking, which undermines China's financial supervision and financial security. A conservative estimate shows that gambling-related funds flowing illegally out China and into the Philippines amounts to hundreds of millions of Chinese Yuan (Renminbi) every year. There are analysts who believe that part of*

*the illegal gambling funds has flown into local real estate markets and other sectors in the Philippines.*

*Second, the fact that a large number of Chinese citizens are lured into illegal gambling has resulted in an increase of crimes and social problems in China. In particular, some gambling crimes and telecom frauds are closely connected, which has caused huge losses to the victims and their families.*

*Third, many of the Chinese citizens working illegally in Philippine casinos or POGOs and other forms of gambling entities are subjected to what media described as "modern slavery" due to severe limitation of their personal freedom. Their passports are taken away or confiscated by the Philippine employers. They are confined to live and work in certain designated places and some of them have been*

*subjected to extortion, physical abuse and torture as well as other ill treatments. At the same time, dozens of kidnappings and tortured cases of Chinese citizens who gamble or work illegally in gambling entities in the Philippines have taken place. Some Chinese citizens were physically tortured, injured or even murdered (2018).*

The Philippine Senate also conducted public hearings on reported involvements of Chinese nationals in various criminal activities linked with POGOs. On 5 March 2020, the Blue Ribbon Committee of the Philippine Senate conducted a public inquiry on the involvement of Chinese nationals in money laundering, human/sex trafficking, illegal gambling, cybercrimes, bribery of Philippine government officials, and even espionage (Rappler, 2020). Thus, current Chinese migration in the Philippines created serious law enforcement concerns and security challenges.

## Security costs

For the security sector, particularly from the Department of National Defense (DND), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the National Security Council (NSC), and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), the influx of Chinese nationals in the Philippines and the proliferation of POGOs in the country have concomitant security challenges. Some of the main security challenges associated with POGOs and illegal activities of Chinese nationals in the Philippines were the following: 1) espionage, 2) interference in domestic affairs, and 3) assault to Philippine sovereignty.

Espionage. National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana admitted that the spread of Chinese-run POGOs in the Philippines could make the country vulnerable to Chinese espionage activities, especially those online casinos located near military and police camps (Gotonga, 2019). POGOs located in Cubao and Eastwood in Quezon City could be used to spy on military headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo and police headquarters in Camp Crame. Those located in Bonifacio Global City in Taguig could be used to spy on the Philippine Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio. POGOs at Resorts World

Manila and in Pasay could be used to spy on the Philippine Air Force headquarters in Villamor Air Base while e-casino hubs in Cavite City could be used to spy on the Philippine Navy base in Sangley Point. POGOs in Clark and Subic could also be used for Chinese espionage. Lorenzana argued that the Chinese government could mobilize some of their Chinese workers in POGOs to collect intelligence information. Intelligence experts agreed that China could deploy their intelligence agents in POGOs to gather information about the Philippines (Romero, 2020). Senator Panfilo Lacson claimed that around 2,000 to 3,000 Chinese intelligence agents reached the country on "immersion missions" and still "unknown purposes" (2020). Chinese intelligence agents might not be as high as 3,000 as alleged by Senator Lacson, but they could be really around us (Gotinga, 2020). Nonetheless, Senator Gordon believed that agents of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) already penetrated POGOs and pointed out that "the Chinese spies were probably out to determine invasion areas and to ascertain the location of Philippine military bases, among others" (GMA News Online, 2020).

President Duterte also considered the possibility that POGOs could serve as springboards for Chinese intelligence agents to operate in the Philippines. But he explained that Chinese spies could still conduct espionage activities even away from military or police camps arguing, "you don't even have to be near any military camp if you want to gather intelligence" (Punzalan, 2019).

Interference in domestic affairs. If POGOs could be used for Chinese espionage, Philippine security officials exclaimed

that they could be utilized to interfere in Philippine domestic affairs. National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. was in fact the first official who considered POGOs in the Philippines as a national security threat not only because some of them worked illegally, but because they would also interfere in Philippine internal affairs (Andrada, 2019). With the increasing presence of Chinese in the Philippines, "we must not let our guards down," said Esperon (2019). Though PAGCOR maintained that POGO workers in the Philippines posed no threats, Esperon stressed that undocumented and illegal POGO workers could pose serious security risks (ABS-CBN News, 2019). Esperon also cautioned that while some POGO workers could create security problems, to say that they were part of a Beijing army could just be from a wild imagination (Esguerra, 2019).

Assault to Philippine sovereignty. Philippine opposition forces emphasized that POGOs and illegal Chinese migration in the Philippines could be "direct assaults" to Philippine sovereignty. Senator Hontiveros warned that online gaming and illegal Chinese workers could undermine the national integrity of Filipinos, as the Chinese could take advantage of the weakness of Philippine tax laws and the negligence of the Philippine government (Galvez, 2018). She said, "As a country with a large number of citizens working abroad, we are not against foreign workers. What we oppose is the government's negligence and timidity on this issue that has made our people, particularly Filipino workers, second class citizens in their own country" (2018).

But China assured the Philippine government that it would respect

Philippine sovereignty on POGOs. Though China regarded online gaming illegal, it acknowledged Philippine sovereignty over

POGOs where some Chinese nationals gained their employment (Leyco, 2019).

### Costs on Philippine sovereignty claims in the SCS

Duterte's paradigm shift to China led to the softening or relaxation of Philippine sovereignty claim in the SCS by setting aside, if not abandoning, the arbitral ruling. Duterte's acquiescence to China provided Beijing a free rein in the SCS, particularly in the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) of the West Philippine Sea (WPS). This acquiescence was in exchange for China's promise of economic aid, which had not been fully delivered. In fact, China's US\$24B pledge to Duterte has not materialized to date despite Manila's softening of position in the SCS (Business Times, 2018). Duterte's reconciliatory approach to promote economic cooperation with China was said to have undermined the Philippines' position in the SCS (Fernandez, 2019).

Thus, critics claimed that the Philippines already lost its full control of the WPS because of Duterte's China policy (Esmaquel, 2018). Despite Duterte's friendly relations with China, Beijing continued its military and paramilitary activities in the SCS, particularly in the WPS where China constructed several artificial islands that gave the Chinese military extended forward presence at the expense of the Philippines (Soursa, 2020). In Scarborough Shoal alone, China already established full tactical control of the area through regular patrol activities of the China Coast Guard (Le Fevre, 2019). The National Security Council (NSC) insisted, however, that the Philippine government did not lose control of the WPS under Duterte (Esguerra, 2019).

## Conclusion

There were benefits and costs to the Philippines from Duterte's paradigm shift to China. Most of the benefits were economic in nature through dramatic improvements in bilateral trade, investments, aid, and tourism, which somehow helped improve, not only government-to-government ties, but also people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Political benefits were associated with the calming of security situation and the promotion of functional cooperation in the SCS.

Benefits from Duterte's China-friendly policy appeared to be short-term in nature

as they were largely contingent on the presidential term of Duterte due to expire in 2022. There remain uncertainties on whether these benefits can be sustained beyond Duterte's presidency. In fact, these short-term benefits have ironically produced some unintended costs that could affect the Philippines in the long-term.

For example, huge economic benefits from online gambling involving Chinese nationals also resulted in enormous social, political, and law enforcement problems like human trafficking, prostitution, money laundering, kidnapping, loan sharking, extortion and

bribery leading to other crimes like murder, homicide, and arson. Increased presence of Chinese workers in the Philippines arising from increased Chinese investment, trade and assistance also unleashed labor tensions with Filipino workers that received the ire of Filipino politicians from the opposition who associated all these issues with the so-called “Chinese invasion” of the Philippines. These issues were further complicated when applied in the context of the South China Sea disputes, fanning even more the anti-China and anti-Chinese sentiments of some Filipinos.

Do the benefits from Duterte’s paradigm shift to China outweigh the costs?

Answering this question requires a more rigorous and scientific application of a benefit-cost analysis. But from the foregoing, there are indeed benefits from being friendly to China. It is the urgent task of the Philippine government and the Filipino people to make sure that these benefits will far accede the costs. Ironically, the Philippines can only maximize the benefits and surmount the costs of being friendly with China with the full cooperation of China.

- 1 For my earlier argument on this issue, see (Banlaoi, 2007).
- 2 For more discussions, see (Banlaoi, 2017, pp. 99-110).
- 3 For more discussions on Philippines-China relations during the administration of President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, see (Banlaoi, 2012). Also see (Banlaoi, 2015).
- 4 See various articles in (Banlaoi, 2019).
- 5 For a study of Philippines-China relations under Arroyo Administration, see (Banlaoi, 2007).
- 6 Also see (Leyco & Chipongian, 2019).
- 7 This section is based largely on Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Current Chinese Migration in the Philippines: Law Enforcement Concerns and Security Challenges in Philippines-China Relations" (Lecture delivered at the Second Carlos Chan Lecture Series on Philippines-China Relations organized by the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies and the Chinese Studies Program of Ateneo de Manila University at Faber Hall 101 of Ateneo De Manila University on 8 April 2019). Updated version was delivered at the Second Benito Lim Memorial Lecture Series on Chinese Studies organized by Kaisa Para sa Kaunlaran, Chinese Filipino Friendship Association, and PACS at Bahay Tsinoy, Intramuros on 13 July 2019 and at the Third World Conference on Chinese Studies organized by the World Association for Chinese Studies (WACS) held in Germany and France on 24-29 August 2019. The most updated version of this lecture was delivered at the 10th International Conference of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) held at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China on 9-10 November 2019.
- 8 Updated version was delivered at:  
Banlaoi, R.C. (2019, July 13). Second Benito Lim Memorial Lecture Series on Chinese Studies organized by Kaisa Para sa Kaunlaran, Chinese Filipino Friendship Association & Philippine Association of Chinese Studies, Bahay Tsinoy, Intramuros, Manila, Philippines.  
Banlaoi, R.C. (2019, August 24-29). Third World Conference on Chinese Studies organized by the World Association for Chinese Studies, Germany & France.  
  
Most updated version was delivered at:  
Banlaoi, R.C. (2019, November 9-10). 10th International Conference of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, Guangzhou, China.

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eISBN: 978-621-96332-1-5



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