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Sino-American Relations in the 21st Century: The Political, Social and Economic Realities of China's Rise

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SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY
THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF CHINA'S RISE

by

LARRY STEWART

(Under the Direction of Emilia Powell)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the political, social and economic realities of China's rise in an effort to better understand the potential evolution of Sino-American relations.

Engagement reasons a prosperous China will become democratic and socially pluralistic, but by observing the development of freedom and rule of law in China and comparing their relationship with economic growth, trade and investment, this analysis challenges the idea that China will have to democratize to meet the pressures of globalization.

Economic growth has legitimized the authoritarian regime in China, freedom is not related to decisions of trade and investment, and the Chinese people have not grown closer to America as their ties to the outside world have strengthened. China has changed, not in the direction American foreign policy desires or international relations theories predict. My findings confirm China's rise is uncertain and belief in the inevitability of democracy or war neglects historical and empirical data.

INDEX WORDS: American foreign policy, Engagement, China's rise, Rule of law, Freedom, Democratization, Globalization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Questions concerning the nature of China's rise, its potential evolution, and whether it necessitates America's fall, will largely shape the history of the 21st century and help form the structure of a new international order. 9/11 may have temporarily altered the framework of U.S. foreign policy and forced it to pay more attention to non-state threats emanating from the Middle East, but the sheer numerical significance of China's rise will eventually force America to assume a more definitive stance towards the Chinese. Terrorism is arguably the most pressing challenge for America today, but the fundamental truth is the United States cannot even begin to effectively combat global problems without help from the world's fastest rising superpower. America needs China, it cannot ignore or control China, and it must learn to peacefully coexist with a strong Chinese state if this century hopes to avoid another great power war.

The purpose of this study is to critically evaluate American foreign policy toward China with emphasis focused on the logic surrounding the strategy of engagement. Engagement is optimism that foreign trade, investment, integration and economic growth will directly translate into the inevitable democratization of the Chinese political system. The research question attempts to understand whether the rise of China, particularly the historically unparalleled 30 year period of economic growth, where in less than half a century China evolved from a mindset of strictly self-reliant economic thinking that shunned foreign investment and capitalist excesses to one where Deng Xiaoping declared it is glorious to be rich, has also ushered in a more free and open Chinese society and political system.

The first section begins with a brief historical analysis of U.S.-Chinese relations since 1972. The focus is on how American foreign policy toward China has evolved from a realist posture of ignoring Chinese governmental repression during the Cold War because of the necessity of counterbalancing Soviet power, to one where continued economic relations with the PRC is justified under the pretense that China will inevitably democratize. This section will also detail the reasons China opened to the outside world in 1978 and it will illustrate how both American and Chinese leaders have typically depicted the influences that are associated with foreign trade and investment.

The following section will discuss international relations theory and provide an explanation for how realists, liberals and constructivists view the future of U.S.-Chinese relations. I will then provide the reader an opportunity to review the various predictions that have been made in regard to the trajectory of China's rise. In the next section I will also explain how international relations theory affects predictions in the China field and how it has confined the terms of the debate to democratization or collapse.

I will then present my argument, which does not accept the idea that China is marching toward democracy, that a rich China means a democratic China, or that the political and social evolution of China's rise will necessarily be determined by foreign economic interests. It does accept the premise that the ties of economic interdependency between the United States and China will continue to strengthen in the future, and that these ties will help eliminate the chances of a Sino-American war. However, the most important distinction is that I argue China will not experience the political and social changes that are generally analogous with economic modernization. The central premise is that engagement operates from the misunderstanding that the nature of China's rise

will be determined by foreign economic influences. I argue the inherent danger in this attitude is that because it neglects the fact that the international economic order has become dependent on an efficient Chinese economy, engagement runs the risk of limiting policy choices designed to foster respect for democracy, rule of law and human rights in China, and further confuses the relationship between economics and politics.

Drawing from literature that emphasizes China's mode of integration into the international system, evidence showing how economic growth has legitimized the current Chinese regime, discussions of Chinese nationalism, its various manifestations, and arguments that stress the sheer immensity of the Chinese population, my analysis will illustrate why China will not democratize. This section will attempt to capture the success American foreign policy has had in affecting the desired social and political changes in China that are usually associated with economic modernization. Here I will use a simple comparison between increased foreign trade and investment, and China's relative levels of freedom, democracy and rule of law to illuminate the relationship between politics and economics in the Chinese state.

The final section will return to American foreign policy toward China and discuss areas of both convergence and divergence in U.S.-Chinese relations. I will examine the policy implications of my findings and offer a different approach to interpreting the rise of China. Because the Chinese economy largely fuels American consumerism, the United States cannot afford to use the threat of withholding trade and investment in the event China doesn't democratize. However, the rise of China does not have to necessitate America's fall, but it does mean that a certain restructuring of the international system is

in order. The age of unipolarity is arguably closing and a return to great power politics is imminent if the United States cannot come to grips with the reality of China's rise.

The findings in this analysis demonstrate that a prosperous and increasingly integrated China has not accepted Western political and social models as ideal or inevitable in the age of globalization. China's leaders are aware of the challenge to their monopoly of power and have devised a survival strategy that utilizes economic growth to gain legitimacy in the minds of the Chinese people. These findings are not entirely unique, but they do present a basic challenge to international relations theories and predictions in the China field. Because there is little evidence suggesting that China will follow the path other former communist regimes have in the post cold war era and accept the supremacy of democracy as a political system, and also because the chances of a Sino-American war have been significantly decreased through economic interdependency, then American foreign policy must learn to incorporate new thought patterns in relations with the PRC. China cannot be demonized for not democratizing, but it also cannot be expected to change without significant external pressures. The fundamental problem in Sino-American relations is affecting change is not without significant risk. American foreign policy wants to change China but cannot do such without disrupting economic relations and the international order. For now, these two great powers are indeed like scorpions trapped in a bottle, each has the ability to seriously harm one another but cannot do so without risking a fatal injury in return (Talbot 2003). The future of Sino-American relations will determine the history of the 21st century, but currently the trajectory of China's rise is uncertain and the debate between proponents of arguments that China will democratize or collapse must be expanded.

CHAPTER 2

SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

When Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger met with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in 1972 to discuss the future of Sino-American relations, a foreign policy of realism was clearly evident (Mann 2007; Schaller 1979; Talbott 2003). Communist China was synonymous with the Soviet Union and most Americans viewed the PRC as an integral member of the Soviet sphere of influence in the Cold War. But rather than allow the nature of their regime prevent discussions, the United States opted for rapprochement with the Chinese government on the grounds that China was needed to help balance Soviet power in the Eastern hemisphere. It may be true that only Richard Nixon, a staunch anti-communist, could have adopted this approach without risking domestic political backlash and being labeled soft on communism (Schaller 1979), but the main impetus behind détente cannot be attributed to any American politician.

The Sino-Soviet schism was the major motivating factor in initiating the normalization of U.S.-Chinese relations. Although Americans typically viewed China as part of a homogeneous communist culture headed by the Soviets, the Chinese and the Soviet Union never exactly acted as a single-unit. The Sino-Soviet relationship had historical tensions from disagreements over the lack of Soviet aid and from the Soviet Union forcing China to pay for almost \$1 billion in military equipment it desperately needed during the Korean War. The major issue was theoretical as Mao wanted the Soviet Union to recognize and promote the Chinese model of development as an ideal system for third world nations to adopt (Schaller 1979).

The Soviet Union, however, disagreed with the Chinese policies of communizing agriculture and “using revolutionary zeal to inspire industrialization” (Schaller 1979, 161). Instead, the Soviets were moving toward peaceful coexistence with the capitalist powers and the Chinese felt betrayed that the Soviet Union was no longer committed to aiding China and other revolutionary movements in the world. By the late 1960’s the Soviet Union became China’s main security concern as Mao labeled the Soviets the “#1 enemy” of peace and over 1 million soldiers faced the Chinese border (Schaller 1979). Then, on March 2, 1969, the Soviet Union and China became embroiled in a conflict over Damansky Island in the Ussuri River. This conflict resulted in one of the most surprising events in Cold War history, as the Brezhnev regime actually questioned the Nixon administration if the United States would tolerate a Soviet preemptive strike of Chinese nuclear facilities (Talbot 2003).

Whether or not these Soviet inquiries were serious, President Nixon capitalized on the occasion by opting to convey his request to normalize relations with the Chinese. China was unquestionably open to the idea of greater rapport with American leaders. The invitation of the U.S. table-tennis team to China in 1971, beginning what was labeled the ‘era of ping-pong diplomacy’, was a positive step towards normalization (Spence 1990). Mao was also thought to be desirous of American assistance in the face of what he perceived as Soviet betrayal and aggression. Conversely, Richard Nixon hoped to improve his own domestic approval ratings through increased diplomacy with the Chinese (Mann 2007). Thus, it was in the self-interest of both the United States and China to draw closer toward one another in the early 1970’s. China needed the United

States for economic assistance and protection now that Soviet aid was no longer reliable, and America needed China's help in counterbalancing Soviet influence in the Cold War.

This historically unique opportunity to work towards the normalization of Sino-American relations was not squandered and on February 27, 1972, in Shanghai, a Joint U.S.-China Communiqué was issued. The document enumerated both states perspectives on a number of topics relevant to the immediate geopolitical realities of the day, and both agreed to disagree over their social and political systems. However, the most important statement in the document was related to the status of Taiwan, which had long been a contentious issue in Sino-American relations. The American representatives, in a move that shocked many in the West, declared that "The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is part of China" (Marsh and Dreyer 2003, 117). To ensure there were no uncertainties the Americans added, "The United States Government does not challenge that position" (Marsh and Dreyer 2003, 118). Thus, the question of Taiwanese independence was suddenly resolved and America was charged with turning their backs to Taiwan in denying their requests for self-determination. Henry Kissinger later said "no government less deserved what was about to happen to it than that of Taiwan" (Spence 1990, 628). Clearly, in 1972 the United States refused to be guided by ideational concerns in relations with the Chinese, whether they be promoting democratization and respect for human rights, or supporting Taiwanese independence. Realism was the order of the day and the harsh truth is American foreign policy makers needed China's help in counterbalancing Soviet power more than they needed to endorse Taiwanese national self-determination.

The Chinese side intimated their desire for peaceful coexistence with the United States, sovereignty, territorial integrity and for the non-militaristic resolution of global problems. In respect to the issue of Taiwanese independence, the Chinese reiterated their consistent viewpoint, “the Government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government of China; Taiwan is a province of China which has long been returned to the motherland; the liberation of Taiwan is China’s internal affair in which no other country has the right to interfere” (Marsh and Dreyer 2003, 118). The United States and China agreed that increased bi-lateral trade offered mutual benefits and that exchanges in the fields of science, technology, culture and sports were beneficial to the health of both nations. Interesting in light of today’s international environment, the Chinese side also stated that “China will never be a superpower and it opposes hegemony and power politics of any kind” (Marsh and Dreyer 2003, 119).

Formal diplomatic recognition, and thus truly normalized relations, weren’t immediately established because it is thought that the Chinese terms could not be expediently met without the United States permanently damaging their Pacific alliances (Chang 1988). But by October 15, 1978, there were no more reservations and in both Peking and Washington, a Joint Communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Peoples Republic of China was published. Following the formal diplomatic recognition of China, American foreign policy assumed a different stance. Although the logic of international relations was still driven by the Cold War and the United States still needed China to help balance Soviet influence in 1979, there was a clear shift towards a rationale that justified the normalization of Sino-American relations under a more nuanced pretense than realism

and its strict balance of power thinking. Richard Nixon was a notable anti-communist who could easily adopt a realist approach in relations with China without fear of political consequences. Jimmy Carter, however, championed himself as an ardent supporter of human rights that would stand against political repression. To silence any criticism he might receive from those who would question his policies towards China on the grounds that he was not being consistent in establishing relations with China and simultaneously preaching the gospel of human rights and democracy, Carter advanced the premise that relations with China should be based on the reality that progress had been made since the Cultural Revolution. (Mann 2007)

This logic set the tone for an attitude toward Chinese repression that persists today and is described as ‘looking the other way’ (Mann 2007, 75). ‘Looking the other way’ evolved into engagement and soon the fact that America had normalized relations with a repressive communist regime seemed more tolerable. Engagement is generally described as the belief that increased American relations with the Chinese will provoke their inevitable democratization (Mann 2007; Gallagher 2002; Saunders 2000). This notion drives U.S. foreign policy toward China and is often used by American leaders to justify continuing relations with the PRC. Most precisely, engagement means “that rather than confronting China and containing China, what we should do is try to coax the Chinese toward the eventual realization that ours is a better system, a better way of governing a country and a better way of getting along with the world” (Talbot 2003, 5).

The reform mindedness of Deng Xiaoping meshed well with the American policy of engagement and its overt optimism that the United States could somehow convince China that it had a better system and construct an oppositional, multi-party democratic

Chinese state through increased trade, investment and integration. Deng Xiaoping was well-received in American foreign policy circles and applauded as a genuine reformer whose ideological mindset represented a pleasant departure from the dogmatism of the Mao regime. He was *Time* magazine 'Man of the Year' in 1979, and a generally positive figure in most American minds (Schaller 1979, 192). However, Deng Xiaoping did not accept the premise that the United States had an ideal system, much less one that the Chinese people should aspire to achieve. A most telling example of how Deng Xiaoping viewed the influences associated with foreign trade and investment is evident when he exclaimed, "When you open the door, flies and mosquitoes come in" (Saunders 2000, 55)

Deng Xiaoping was unquestionably aware that opening the Chinese economy to foreign trade and investment might present a challenge to the existing political order. But he was prepared for this and argued that Mao had shunned openness only because he was fooled in his old age by the conspiring 'gang of four' (Spence 1990). Deng Xiaoping argued that he did not open to the West because he realized it had a better system, his decision was motivated by the desire to strengthen the Chinese state. The Chinese were completely reliant on Soviet economic, military and technological assistance when Sino-Soviet relations turned violent and Mao was forced to seek help from the United States. Deng Xiaoping may have also sought deeper relations with the United States because he was still wary of Soviet intentions, but his most important concern was reaping the economic and technological benefits of trading with the leading capitalist nation in the world.

Deng Xiaoping believed in a policy of reform and openness because he understood that China could not rise without economic assistance from the outside world

(Chang 1988). He did not accept the Chinese model of national development that stressed strict self-reliance, and Deng further distanced himself from communism by declaring “ideology cannot supply economic development” (Spence 1990, 709). Mao Zedong was an ideological zealot that ruled over China dogmatically, and when he met with Nixon in 1972 he was driven by a genuine fear of the Soviet Union. However, at the time of the Deng-Carter normalization talks the state of Sino-Soviet relations were no where near as threatening as they had been in the past. China was not driven by fear of the Soviet Union or love of the West when it opened to the world in 1978. Fear of the Soviets may have brought the United States and China closer together in 1972, but this time the Chinese motives were entirely different.

Deng Xiaoping understood that China could not achieve economic modernization through ideological fervor and self-reliance. The Cultural Revolution was a murderous disaster that proved revolutionary zeal could not compete with foreign trade and investment. The opening of the four special economic zones probably best symbolized China’s ideological retrenchment from Mao’s strict doctrine of self reliance, but Deng also encouraged individual enterprise and used foreign investment and technology to help strengthen the anemic Chinese state. His reformist nature was not immediately popular and the policy of openness produced a trade deficit for the first 4 years (Spence 1990). However, in 1980 Deng Xiaoping finally won power over Hua Gofeng in a victory for the reformist faction of the PRC that marked China’s full embrace of change. By then the Chinese had ordered 3 jumbo 747 Boeing jets from Seattle and reached an agreement with the Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta to sell their products in China and to open a bottling plant in Shanghai (Spence 1990). Soon Peking began to resemble Western

modernity and Deng Xiaoping's strategy of economic openness proved quite effective as an average GDP growth rate of nearly 10% was sustained from 1978-88 (Marsh 2005).

The American mindset that China would inevitably adopt Western political and social norms in the face of growing economic prosperity and greater integration with the outside world persisted throughout the Reagan administration and early into the George H. Bush term. Then, suddenly the Tiananmen Square massacre and collapse of the Soviet Union presented a unique challenge to the rationale of American foreign policy (Mann 2007). Now that America no longer needed to balance Soviet influence and because media coverage of the Tiananmen Square incident proved the Chinese weren't exactly marching toward democracy, the United States was placed in the precarious position of explaining their justification for maintaining relations with a communist Chinese regime that violently crushed political dissent.

Although engagement is generally considered to have been initiated in the Carter administration, Bush was the first president to publicly use the term as a catchword for American policy toward China (Mann 2007). Bush reasoned the Chinese required normalized relations with the United States because China might become a future threat, and because this contact would serve to modify their political system. It is noteworthy that Chinese economic growth did significantly decline following Tiananmen, as foreign investors and traders began to question the idea of doing business with a reckless regime. However, when America defended the policy of engagement it set the tone for China's reintegration into the international economy as the World Bank restored the more than \$2 billion in interest-free loans it had frozen in response to the Tiananmen Square massacre (Mann 2007). Although there was a litany of congressional hearings following the

Tiananmen incident, no serious challenge to the PRC materialized and U.S.-Chinese relations eventually returned to normalcy.

Bill Clinton campaigned that he would not coddle the Chinese government and insisted that he would force their hand on the issues of democracy and human rights. Clinton also questioned the geopolitical significance of China and threatened to tie human rights concerns with trade in arguing that political repression would negatively affect American economic relations with China (Mann 2007). However, he eventually backed down from this idealistic stance, and in following the pattern established by previous American presidents and foreign policy makers, Clinton quickly endorsed trade and investment as the answer to democratizing China. This attitude is evident when Clinton campaigned for China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 1995. Here he argued "it is likely to have a profound impact on human rights and political liberty" (Mann 2007, 71) Moreover, the National Security Advisor also drew an analogy that reasoned free trade from WTO membership would end one-party rule in China just as NAFTA had done in Mexico (Mann 2007) Thus, while Clinton seemed to be tough on the PRC at first, he eventually accepted that America could somehow convince the Chinese to democratize and gave up the idea of linking trade to human rights.

Keeping with precedent, the current President Bush also chose to engage the Chinese government under the pretense that it would affect political and social change. When questioned on the development of democracy in China he offered, "I think about South Korea...South Korea opened its economy up and then political reforms followed" (Mann 2007, 87). The tragedy of 9/11 presented a complementary rationale to the policy of engagement as normalized Sino-American relations were deemed an essential

necessity to defeating terrorism (Talbot 2003). Most recently, in a move criticized by Democrats and Republicans alike, President Bush chose to attend the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Several European leaders promised they would not attend the opening ceremonies so as to convey their disapproval with China's human rights policies. However, President Bush took a stance more agreeable with the Chinese government and their repeated insistence that the Beijing Olympics should be a non-political event. Bush has responded to criticism emanating from his decision by stating that to use the Olympics to make a political statement trivializes the cause of human rights. However, this should not be surprising, especially since American foreign policy is rooted in the belief that "If you treat China like an enemy, it will become an enemy" (Mann 2007, 38). Thus, President Bush has stayed the course in relations with China and embraced engagement as the driving principle of American foreign policy because he believes that economic prosperity means political change is inevitable.

CHAPTER 3

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND CHINA'S RISE

Although it was once the most prominent theory in international relations literature, realism isn't nearly as influential today (Albright 2006). 9/11 illuminated the threat that non-state actors pose to American national security, thereby questioning the idea of a state-centered approach to world politics that focuses on traditional threats (Barnett 2004), and increasing levels of economic interdependency provide a powerful incentive for maintaining peace (Russett and Oneal 2001; Florini 2005). Mearsheimer (2001) argues realism is at odds with the optimism and morality of the American value system because it assumes war is inevitable and discourages policies aimed at spreading peace. Despite its unpopularity with the American people, realism as a theory has clear predictive value and offers a rational lens through which to view the future of Sino-American relations.

The tenets of realism are that international politics is a zero-sum game where states as the primary actors perpetually pursue power. Democracy doesn't factor into realist logic because all states are viewed the same, that is as power pursuing agents who always act in their own self-interest. Realism explains international conflict through reference to an anarchic international structure or human nature (Mearsheimer 2001). Thus, an innate desire for power and the absence of an effective arbiter to ensure peace means war is the normal state of affairs in a world where power is the key to survival. Moreover, since the zero-sum game of international politics prevents one state from increasing their power without weakening another states' relative power position, "China

and the United States are destined to be adversaries as China's power grows" (Mearsheimer 2001, 4).

Realist scholars are pessimistic about China's rise. "China cannot rise peacefully, and if it continues its dramatic economic growth over the next few decades, the United States and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war." (Mearsheimer 2005, 47) Offensive realism contends that China will seek regional hegemony because this is the best means for their survival, and that a future conflict between America and China is very probable since the United States will not permit another regional hegemon in the international system (Mearsheimer 2001, 2005). Offensive realism does not argue China has sinister intentions, only that it pursues power to be in a similar position as the United States, that is where it doesn't have to worry about Japanese or Russian military threats much in the same way America never has to worry about Brazilian or Mexican military advances (Mearsheimer 2001). But although it provides a clear understanding for why China seeks power, realism doesn't offer a framework for maintaining peace. Rather, the inevitability of conflict is central to realist theory, and the lasting impression is that "China is likely to try to dominate Asia the way the United States dominates the Western Hemisphere" (Mearsheimer 2001, 118).

Realism argues nations have other concerns than just economics, and the idea that a prosperous China will be a status-quo power overlooks the aggressive militarism of Germany and Japan during the Second World War (Mearsheimer 2001, 2005). There is growing fear that China is developing a military-industrial complex that seeks to completely eliminate American influence in East Asia. Specifically, since economic prosperity directly translates into increased power, a rich China is more of a security

threat than a poor one, meaning the best policy for America should be attempt to slow China's economic growth (Mearsheimer 2001). The most interesting aspect of this argument is that it also assumes "Most of China's neighbors...will likely join with the United States to contain China's power." (Mearsheimer 2005, 47) Thus, realism insists that not only will China's global ascension be affected by adversities with the United States, but it will also be challenged by China's closest competitors, who are equally troubled with the idea of Chinese regional hegemony.

Conversely, liberalism is the other major theory of international relations, and whereas realism views all states the same, liberalism emphasizes the importance of democracy as a determining variable in predictions of conflict in dyadic relations. The democratic peace is a quantitative finding based on mathematical modeling that utilizes an epidemiological approach to locate the causal factors of conflict. The main statistical finding from the democratic peace is that democracies are not likely to go to war with one another. (Russet and Oneal 2001) Liberalism also stresses that economic calculations have considerable influence that can help mitigate conflict. Data shows countries that trade with one another are less likely to go to war than those who do not. (Russet and Oneal 2001) Finally, liberalism argues that international institutions can fundamentally alter a states' behavior through clear delineation of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and that exchanges within these institutions and mutual membership are statistically proven to help eliminate suspicion and clarify uncertainties that might otherwise lead to war (Russet and Oneal 2001).

The most important implication from liberal research is that spreading democracy promotes peace and because the policy of engagement assumes a prosperous China will

inevitably become a democratic China, liberal theories accept the policy of engagement under the assumption that economic influences can shape the political evolution of China's rise. (Russett and Oneal 2001; Talbott 2003) Moreover, since economic interdependency means the prosperity of one nation is linked to that of another, liberals argue economic concerns should override pure power based reasoning in U.S.-Chinese relations. Liberals insist China will not be allowed to rise as a militarily powerful, non-democracy because Western traders and investors will lose interest if the Chinese do not politically reform (Russett and Oneal 2001) Specifically, because China is a member of most major international institutions, and because foreign trade and investment in China continues to grow, liberalism argues China will have to make political and social changes to meet the requirements of its increased integration with the outside world.

Theories of democratization treat economic changes as the precursor to political liberalization (Gallagher 2002). In effect, regime theories stress the importance of economic growth, foreign trade, investment and integration as influencing factors in a states' democratization (Marsh 2005). The liberal approach argues that by learning from the West in the economic realm and "...despite the best efforts of the Chinese Communist party" (Russett and Oneal 2001, 294), China will inevitably democratize. The idea is that the successes of capitalism will make democracy more attractive to the Chinese people. Instead of trying to slow China's economic growth from fear that it will rise as a power competitor to the United States, liberalism encourages economic growth in China because capitalist influences are thought to promote political liberalization (Russett and Oneal 2001).

Engagement is best captured by the idea that “if you treat China like an enemy, it will become an enemy” (Mann 2007, 38). Liberal theorists’ assume China’s decision to adopt an economic reform strategy of openness will unquestionably translate into regime change. They argue China’s most pressing concern is economic growth, and that the continuance of one-party rule in China will have a negative impact on foreign trade and investment (Russet and Oneal 2001). Liberals also disagree that China can completely push America out of East Asia, and furthermore question the realist argument that China even wants to be a regional hegemon. Their point is that if China could, “it would not want to live with the consequences” (Brzezinski 2005, 49). Liberals argue that economic prosperity will make China a status-quo power, and that the Chinese do not threaten the existing international system because they are pleased with it (Lampton 2007). The most damaging policy would be to prevent China from becoming more integrated with the outside world and slow its economic growth because this would only lead to a new cold war and strengthen the forces opposed to democracy (Gilboy and Heginbotham 2001).

Constructivism is not as historically established as realism and liberalism, but it is an increasingly popular approach to understanding international relations that provides definitive statements on U.S-Chinese relations. Constructivists stress the importance of non-material factors, particularly norms, in reconstituting identities and restraining state behavior. Norms are defined as “a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity”, and provide indirect evidence that embodies a sense of “oughtness” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891). Constructivism contends that the international order is not entirely anarchic, but that it has customary modes of operation and codified treaties and laws that define acceptable behavior. Norms matter, constructivists argue, because a

state would not have to justify inappropriate actions if we truly lived in a world where anything was allowed (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

Regarding China's rise, constructivist scholars offer similar prescriptions as liberals but do not focus as much on traditional international institutions. They argue a globalized civil society is looming in the twenty-first century, one that no state in the modern international system can resist (Florini 2005). States will converge on a number of issues, and through this process their identities and interests will be restructured (Checkel 1998). This global civil society is characterized by states adhering to international norms of non-aggression, transparency and cooperation (Florini 2005). Thus, while realism argues China's leaders aim for military modernization and regional hegemony, constructivism believes that the norms of the liberal international order will influence the direction of China's rise and help prevent another great power war.

The constructivist approach also requires engagement with the Chinese. Constructivist logic insists Chinese global aspirations can be tamed by changing China's identity and interests. This means that since China's main concern is economic growth and because the Chinese cannot rise without being a member of the globalized world, then the forces of globalization will serve as the catalyst to prevent violence in U.S.-Chinese relations. Constructivism implies that a globalized China will have different interests and a new identity because it will be forced to adjust to the pressures of a liberal world order (Florini 2005). A China concerned with economic growth simply cannot afford to threaten the United States because this would be counterproductive to political stability (Brezekinski 2005; Bijian 2005). Thus, for China to be accepted as a respectable member of the international community, and for it to continue to prosper in the future,

international norms cannot be ignored. China will have to change as its ties with the outside world are strengthened, and these changes will help develop new interests and a new identity for China. Constructivism argues normative factors will determine the nature of China's rise because traditional power politics are ineffective in an era of increasing interdependency where the ability to choose is conditioned by international norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

The Future of China

Predictions on China's future are diverse and reflect a wide ranging array of emotions. (Bernstein and Munro 1997) fear a rising China will try to dominate Asia and insist conflict is coming. (Pei 2003) is optimistic that economic modernization should translate into political liberalization and believes in the policy of engagement, but he is also worrisome that China's persistent corruption and weak political institutions might prevent this from happening and thinks China's transition to democracy is currently stalled (Pei 2006). (Chang 2001) also warns of China's corrupt political climate, and predicts a collapse of the CCP will be brought on by an inherent contradiction between the forces of globalization and one-party dominance in China. While Gilley (2004) is certain China's democratization is inevitable and argues the process will be violent.

The diversity of the predictions is testament to the contentiousness of the problem, but the debate is directly influenced by theoretical factors and can be discussed accordingly. First, the liberal belief that economic prosperity is the key to democratization provides the foundation for the policy of engagement and is critical to several predictions on China's rise. Gilboy and Heginbotham (2001) argue that China will politically reform and that this transformation is the product of economic policy.

They insist increased integration and economic growth has unleashed social forces that threaten the Chinese regime with collapse. The only means for their survival is to reform and Chinese leaders will be forced to re-legitimize their rule by granting more freedom to independent social organizations. Unemployed protestors, consumers angered by deception that could possibly turn violent if their government inspired stock market investments fail to make profit, special-interest groups and religious movements are among the many frustrated elements in Chinese society that must be allowed greater representation if China hopes to avoid internal frictions that might inspire domestic revolution.

The central element in Gilboy and Heginbothams' argument is that political transformation is 'coming'. They do temper their prediction by adding that China will not become a Western-style democracy, and by stating that this transformation could be potentially disastrous, but still insist that change cannot be resisted because collapse would be imminent. The authors argue one-party rule in China has weakened the state because economic growth and increased integration has helped establish a robust and complex society that requires political reformation (Gilboy and Heginbotham 2001). The current regime cannot last because China will have to transform to meet the demands of its increased integration with the outside world. Political liberalization is associated with economic prosperity, and the authors insist this relationship will manifest itself in the context of China's rise. The CCP and the Chinese state are one, but Gilboy and Heginbotham contend that this connection cannot hold in an era of globalization. Political liberalization will increase in the future because democracy is the most viable and legitimate system of government, and the one-party nature of the Chinese state today

cannot deal with the societal pressures associated with increased economic integration and growth.

Pei (2006) is also influenced by the idea that economic prosperity necessitates political change and argues China should be moving toward democracy, but he does not predict China will democratize, only that its transition is trapped. Although he has consistently argued in favor of engagement and believes “social and economic dynamism has gained a self-sustaining momentum that is unlikely to be reversed by reactionary policy changes by the regime” (Pei 2003, 58), Pei is appalled at the realities of China rise. His prediction is that democracy is delayed in China because the political order is legitimized by economic growth, and that the crony capitalism that the regime promotes is used to maintain a patronage system that discourages complete economic liberalization.

The crux of Pei’s argument is the absence of economic prosperity is not the reason China hasn’t democratized, he faults the neo-Leninist state instead. He argues the social elite are pampered by the government, and that under these conditions there is little impetus for political or economic liberalization. State investment to private business helps sustain one-party rule, and “social groups that are normally the forces of democratization have been politically neutralized” (Pei 2006, 40). But Pei doesn’t believe the current regime can sustain indefinitely, and warns “soon, we will know whether such a flawed system can pass a stress test” (Pei 2006, 40). However, Pei’s contention that democratic transition in China is trapped clearly demonstrates the influence the belief that economic progress necessitates political change has in his analysis. For Pei, full economic liberalization would be ideal for a globalized China because the ‘poor governance’ of the authoritarian regime has been ‘concealed’ by economic growth , and

even though the CCP has been able to maintain dominance for the last 30 years of China's rise, Pei isn't sure if China's political system can sustain a shock (Pei 2006, 40). China should be moving closer toward democracy, but Pei admits it hasn't, he is not ready to accept the premise that the regime will adapt to the pressures of globalization though, and his prediction suggests the future might be "decay" (Pei 2006, 32).

Gilley (2004) is the most bold in his prediction on China's future, and argues that democratization will be the product of a national crisis that challenges the current regimes' monopoly of power. Gilley believes this transition is inevitable, he insists there is already great potential for democracy in China and argues that a democratic elite will emerge from a violent revolution. The CCP will fall because it will not reform for fear of losing power, and a violent revolution will then ensue, which in the end will result in China's democratization.

Gilley argues that China is already moving closer to democracy and it is only a matter of time before a "national trauma" (Gilley 2004, 102) ignites democratic revolution. Gilley also believes the authoritarian regime is not capable of dealing with the pressures of globalization, and that the economic growth and integration of China over the last 30 years has helped establish forces that demand political reform. The idea here is that economic prosperity necessitates political change. Gilley envisions a democratic China because he doesn't believe an authoritarian regime is compatible with the social pluralism that emerges from economic growth and integration, that is, a rich China will ultimately become a democratic China.

Chang (2001) doesn't think China will politically reform, much less democratize, and he predicts that the current regime will collapse. He argues that China's rise is not

real, that is to say it has been fueled by corruption that is overlooked by outsiders dazzled by architectural and economic achievements. Chang doesn't discuss what might happen after China collapses, and never commits himself to predicting that China will democratize, but there are still traces of economic determinism that can be found in his argument.

For Chang, China will collapse because it is corrupt, and since the liberal, transparent rules of the WTO will expose this corruption, the CCP is destined to collapse as China's ties to the outside world are strengthened. Chang doesn't argue that China will inevitably democratize because of economic growth and integration, but he does believe the authoritarian regime is not going to last in an era of globalization, especially since China has been admitted to the WTO. Thus, Chang is also influenced by the belief that economic changes precipitate political reform and argues because the CCP will not reform it will have to collapse.

Next, Bernstein and Munro (1997) offer a prediction that is guided by the tenets of realism, and in a similar tone as Mearsheimer, the authors insist that conflict is coming. They argue the state-controlled media already portrays America as an enemy that doesn't want to see China rise. This attitude will eventually provoke violence and the future of Sino-American relations will be characterized by conflict because China wants to dominate East Asia.

But although their work is somewhat dated, and a number of things in both China and America have changed considerably since the late 1990's, the importance of their work is that it reveals how theoretical assumptions condition predictions in the China field. Bernstein and Munro predict China and America will go to war in the future

because each wants to be a regional hegemonic power. However, there is only so far America will allow the Chinese to rise before preventive measures will be taken to ensure U.S power is not threatened. The authors do not believe America would allow Chinese regional hegemony because realist logic implies that American influence would be weakened. Also, the authors do not agree that economic progress will help prevent conflict because realism teaches us that prosperity is another form of power. A rich China will not be content with the existing international order, especially with the amount of influence America has in East Asia, and it will eventually challenge U.S interests, encouraging both balance of power politics and conflict.

Finally, Nathan (2003, 2006) cannot be pinned down to any specific theoretical influence in his prediction on the direction of China's rise. His main argument is the authoritarian regime in China has been quite resilient. The focus of Nathan's prediction is that despite all the corruption and broken parts of the political and economic system in China, there is little evidence supporting the claim that China will collapse or democratize. Instead, Nathan argues the authoritarian regime has gained legitimacy through economic growth, but more importantly it has accomplished several feats that perpetuate one-party rule and help institutionalize power.

Nathan points out China's "norm-bound nature" of "succession politics" (2003, 13), an increase in merit based promotions of political elites, specialization of institutions in the regime, and the formation of centers for public political participation as indicators the Chinese regime has consolidated its power and thwarted off the influences associated with democratization and collapse (Nathan 2003). Nathan doesn't suggest how long this resilience will last, but neither does he predict that it cannot. Instead, his is different from

all of the other predictions on China's future because he argues the authoritarian regime is not destined to fail, and that it has been able to adapt to the pressures of globalization without loosening its control of power. Nathan does question whether these incremental adaptations will eventually alter the nature of the regime, but for now he argues the forces usually associated with democratization have been negated by a political system that "appears increasingly stable" (2003, 24).

CHAPTER 4

THE LIMITATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

The tenets of realism are time proven and important to understanding the historical causes of conflict. However, a closer examination of China's interests seriously challenges several realist views on the future of Sino-American relations. First, the idea that a rising China will behave like other emerging great powers from the past loses merit when considering China's most important interest is economic growth. Ever since the December 1978 Plenum, China's leaders have focused on a reform strategy of openness that endorses trade and investment as the keys for China to reach economic modernization by the middle of the 21st century (Bijian 2005). The importance here is that realist logic insists a rising China will become an inherent threat to American power, but in China the government has used economic growth to legitimize their rule (Nathan 2003). Because this prosperity is dependent on stable relations with the outside world, instead of challenging the current international system China has chosen to embrace globalization and thus become dependent on normalized relations with the United States. Moreover, since China is nowhere close to Western standards in terms of economic development, Chinese claims that for the next 50 years the focus will be strictly economic seem more than mere diplomacy. The reality is China cannot rise without America, and its global ascension will be unlike those of great powers in the past because the age of globalization discourages conflict and the goal of economic modernization cannot be achieved through traditional power politics.

Next, realist fears the Chinese have also utilized economic gain for military advantage in constructing a defense force that aims at more than just protecting their own

borders are excessively pessimistic. When viewed in light of China's concerns regarding America's continued arms-sales to Taiwan, promotion of missile-defense systems in Japan and South Korea, and its repeated calls for China's democratization, then increasing Chinese defense expenditures are reasonable (McNamara and Blight 2001). It is only natural for the Chinese to respond to what they legitimately perceive as threats by increasing military spending, and any notion that this increased spending is part of a larger plan aimed at challenging American global supremacy is entirely unfounded. China has never directly threatened American security interests and its leaders are entrenched in enough domestic problems at the time to prevent any occurrence of foreign military conquests in the immediate future.

Third, Mearsheimer's claim that China's neighbors will ally with America to challenge Chinese regional hegemony ignores the history of East Asian international relations. A constructivist analysis advanced by Kang (2007) posits a strong China has traditionally been a stabilizing force in Asia, one most other nations have respected and admired. He explains the majority of China's foreign investment comes from its Asian neighbors, and argues that from 1979 East Asia has been more peaceful than at any time since the Opium War. Thus, the realist belief that a rising China will be confronted by an alliance of its neighbors and the United States lacks an historical basis and underestimates how content other nations might be with the reemergence of a powerful Chinese state.

The most pressing problem associated with liberal theories of international relations and their treatment of China's rise is the sense of determinism they attribute to democracy in predictions of conflict. Because the democratic peace theory asserts that

democracies do not go war with one another, and because it is accepted that if China would democratize the possibility of a Sino-American conflict would be significantly reduced, it follows the policy of engagement is generally accepted by liberal theorists' of international relations. However, the complication with this approach to understanding China's rise is that because the goal is to democratize China through increased trade and investment, if China doesn't politically evolve in the manner liberal's desire the chances of conflict increase. Specifically, the democratic peace theory precludes objectivity in relations with China because non-democracies are considered inherently threatening.

Liberal theories also emphasize the importance of economic growth, increasing trade, investment and integration as influencing factors in a state's democratization. Moreover, most predictions in the China field insist the Chinese government will collapse in a manner similar to the fall of the Soviet Union because one-party rule is incompatible with modernity (Gilley 2004; Chang 2001). However, this line of reasoning ignores China's own reasons for reforming and its repeated claims that history is not over. Deng Xiaoping did not introduce economic reforms in 1978 because he believed in the superiority of Western politics and culture. In response to foreign influences that would arise from his reform strategy of openness, Deng warned "when you open the door, flies and mosquitoes come in" (Saunders 2000, 55) More recently, President Hu Jintao added "The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the CPSU is not the defeat of Marxism or Socialism...it is the final result of separation from, deviation from, and even betrayal of Marxism..." (Marsh 2005, 1) The point is China looks upon foreign investment and trade as factors that will strengthen an anemic Chinese state by establishing political stability through economic growth, not as elements that necessitate

political and social reform. The commitment to the creation of socialism that China's leaders currently display is ignored by scholars that do not accept the idea that the regime can withstand the forces of change brought upon by increased integration, foreign investment and trade.

Constructivism is not as historically established as realism and liberalism but it is an increasingly popular approach to understanding international relations that focuses on the importance of identity and norms in shaping state behavior. Normative scholars argue anarchy does not mean war is normal, but that the structure of the international system is what states make of it (Wendt 1992). In China's case, normative influences brought upon by increased integration and identity changes associated with the responsibilities of being part of the globalized world have had minimal impact on affecting the social and political changes in China that represent the rationale for engagement. The CCP has changed considerably since the dogmatic self-reliant days of the early Mao regime and many of the coastal regions in China today resemble Western conceptions of modernity. Foreign trade and investment is the lifeblood of the current regime and economic prosperity is the proudest achievement of the same government that once declared it immoral to be rich. Thus, the norm shift that has occurred in China has not been one toward political and social pluralism, but it is characterized by an acceptance of capitalism and a desire to significantly increase material wealth.

The major critique of normative research is so much emphasis is placed on demonstrating that norms matter, no one ever gets around to explaining why or how they matter (Legro 2006). While China's leaders show no evidence of disavowal of the norms of non-aggression and although the CCP has openly abandoned the communist model of

economic development, some major sticking points are transparency, human rights and democracy. Transparency is achieved when an individual government allows its policies to be judged and criticized by other states in the international system (Florini 2005). The problem is the Chinese government does not want free speech to go awry, or for it to provoke revolutionary epithets. A clear example of this fear is that every NGO must register with the state before it is allowed to operate on Chinese soil (Hamrin 2005). This means no NGO that is critical of the current regime is likely to have any significant influence in affecting domestic political and social change. This is understandable when considered in the context of Chinese politics and history, specifically in light of the longstanding idea that the legitimacy of the state is not to be questioned, but Westerners generally frown upon these policies as being inhumane and as restricting universal rights of religious expression and free speech.

The Chinese, however, do not view independent social organizations as harmless entities and further do not accept the idea that open criticism of the state is healthy. Instead, they view Western conceptions of political modernity as inapplicable to China because the significance of the extent of poverty demands an authoritarian regime that does not have to work within the channels of democratic governance to achieve its goals. Moreover, constructivism would expect China to change its identity so as to avoid public shaming and a general tarnishing of its reputation, especially since it is integrated into the world economy and aims at attracting foreign trade and investment. But the PRC is a historically consistent abuser of human rights and has not experienced enough domestic political backlash from the West for it to permit social pluralism and a civil society outside the realm of government. The fact that the Beijing Olympics were not boycotted

by the United States demonstrates the hope that one day China will change and that for now decisions of trade and investment need not be related to human rights and issues of social freedom.

Finally, democracy is still an afterthought in a nation where the GDP per capita is lower than many of its Asian neighbors. China may be a potential superpower, but it is also a developing country working toward basic economic modernization and has historically disagreed with the idea that democracy is the ideal political system (Zhao 2008; Marsh 2005). The Chinese political regime is authoritarian and will likely remain this way while China moves toward economic modernization (Nathan 2003). Any hope that prosperity will directly translate into political and social pluralism also loses merit when considering the most internationally engaged and educated elements of Chinese society defended the PRC during recent Olympic protests (Zhao 2008). Economic growth has legitimized the authoritarian regime and instead of an inevitable democratization brought upon by China's increased integration with the international community, the PRC has become an integral part of the world economy despite its political deficiencies. In the process, the CCP has won over the Chinese people while limiting the impact the social and political norms of the liberal international order have had on shaping the evolution of China's rise. The norms related to economic thinking and foreign trade and investment have affected the Chinese mind in the era of globalization, but norms of human rights, transparency, democracy and free speech are still in the very early stages of their life cycle and there is little evidence that they will be internalized by the Chinese people or government anytime soon.

Realists do not accept that China has never directly threatened American security and overlook the pacifying effect of economic interdependency and the positive relationship China has with its neighbors, while liberals overemphasize democracy in their predictions of war and assume a rich China will inevitably become a democratic China. Moreover, constructivists neglect that China has not necessarily embraced Western civil society as an ideal, and that normative influences are conditioned by Chinese history and politics. China's leaders have a long view of history and it would be wise to consider that just because South Korea and Mexico have responded in a particular way to integration does not mean China, who is entirely more important to world peace than either of these two nations, will respond in a similar manner.

My approach to understanding the future of Sino-American relations treats China as a unique nation that must be observed independently and without theoretical biases. Because no theoretical lens offers a sound prediction on the direction of China's rise it is important to consider other avenues that have contributed to China's startling economic growth. A recent MIT study shows that "labor costs are not the end all be all of globalization" (Doyle 2007, 61) Critics of China's human rights policies and scholars who insist that China has grown because it is corrupt and prospers from repression should investigate changes associated with market-institutions in China. In this regard, the International country risk guide calculates rule of law measures that are determined on a six-point scale with six representing the highest score. This measure is composed of two sub-components that represent the quantification of both law and order. Specifically, the law component captures the degree to which legal codification is developed and generally focuses on questions related to the establishment of law. The order measure observes if

the law is obeyed and the extent to which criminal offenses occur. Because a nation ruled by law is more attractive to foreign investors and traders my research will compare foreign direct investment and trade with rule of law measures in China to better understand the causes of economic growth. The importance here is that if increased rule of law measures helped contribute to China's growing levels of foreign trade and investment then optimism that Chinese politics and society will liberalize can be substantiated. Specifically, most democracies have established the rule of law and in China's case if measures have indeed increased then it could be legitimately argued that economic factors will determine the nature of China's rise and help develop the essential foundations of a democratic regime.

Next, because liberal theories see increased trade and investment as factors associated with political and social change my research will also observe the evolution of China's freedom house scores to determine what impact prosperity has had on freedom. Freedom House measures political and civil liberties associated with democracies but is not an overt quantification of democracy and will therefore capture subtle societal improvements that a strict polity measure might ignore. The reason for this approach is that because American foreign policy towards China is driven by the belief that increased trade and investment will alter China's political system then it seems appropriate at this thirty year interval to evaluate whether some of the desired changes have occurred. Specifically, by comparing the development of freedom with economic growth questions of whether prosperity will do to China what it has done for other countries can be more thoroughly understood.

Finally, hope that because China is integrated into the world economy its people will grow closer to the West and start to press their government to grant independent social organizations and protestors more influence and generally begin to question CCP social and political policies is directly related to the premise of engagement. Mann (2007) argues the idea is that if China has a Starbucks and if its people are given more consumer choices than political rights, then the carryover effect will hopefully be both demands for increased liberalization and a positive relationship with the United States. The essential desire is foreign trade, investment and integration with the outside world will draw the Chinese people closer to the United States and strengthen their relationship with the American people and government. In this respect, the 2007 C-100 survey aims at capturing both Chinese attitudes toward the United States and American feelings regarding China. This survey is administered in both China and the United States by a committee of non-partisan and non-profit Chinese Americans who aim at developing understanding between these two nations. The poll in China is conducted by Horizon Research Consultancy Group and the data from America is compiled by Zogby International. The survey measures the attitudes of congressional members, the general public, and business and opinion leaders in China and the United States. Along with the C-100 survey results, writings on Chinese nationalism and its various manifestations and other evidence demonstrating the impact American calls for human rights reform have had on Chinese attitudes toward the United States will better illustrate whether increased ties with the outside world will help eliminate fear and suspicion in Sino-American relations.

My approach also assumes war is not likely because of increased interdependency. However, rather than hope prosperity will translate into political and social change because it has in other nations, I will only observe what has happened in China over the last 30 years to determine where the future might lead. This attitude is testament to both the uniqueness of China and the theoretical limitations of international relations. Predictions in the China field are derived from theoretical assumptions and to overcome the biases associated with this approach I will use rule of law measures, freedom house scores and survey results to better understand the rise of China. If China is indeed headed down the path liberal theories imply then there should be a marked improvement in rule of law measures to help explain China's increased levels of foreign trade and investment. Second, rather than assume China will inevitably become freer as its economy grows, an observation of China's freedom house scores should better illustrate the relationship between economics and politics in the PRC. Last, because normative scholars stress the importance norms have in changing identities and attitudes, I will look at several surveys designed at capturing Chinese attitudes towards America with focus aimed at illuminating how individual Chinese citizens view the United States today. Together these sources will predict China's future on the basis of what has actually happened, rather than what traditionally occurs.

CHAPTER 5

THE REALITIES OF CHINA'S RISE

Thirty years of economic prosperity has increased consumer choices and the Beijing Olympics probably best symbolize the strength of China's integration into the international community. China has enjoyed an average growth rate of nearly 10% since 1978 and currently shows no signs of an impending economic collapse or slowdown. Today it attracts more foreign investment than any other developing country in the world and trade levels continue to increase. This prosperity is largely driven by the normalization of relations with the United States and the forces of globalization. But other factors are at the heart of China's economic growth and understanding these influences will help determine China's future.

Realism argues decisions of trade and investment are directly related to security concerns and that states will not trade with other countries they are hostile with or those that might become future threats because prosperity is another form of power. Liberals argue political factors dominate a state's thinking on matters of trade and investment, and insist because democracies are more accountable they make ideal trading partners. However, the parameters of this debate have been expanded in the age of globalization as new research emphasizes the importance of market-institutions in decisions of trade and investment (Li and Resnick, 2003; Souva, Smith and Rowan, 2005). The proper market-institutions include elements like the rule of law, protection of private property and an efficient banking system. The most important distinction in this approach to understanding the causes of trade and investment is that states do not trade, firms do, and because transactions costs drive their thinking, political concerns are not as significant.

In China's case, realist and liberal theories are irrelevant as American decisions of investment and trade have not been guided security concerns or political similarities. The Cultural Revolution was still happening when Nixon went to China and following the Tiananmen Square massacre it was the United States that led the way for China's restored access to international finance networks (Mann, 2007). Both of these events are evidence of how the policy of engagement has shaped American thinking on matters of trade and investment and illustrate the hope that economic prosperity will eventually force China to politically and socially reform. But firms will not trade and invest with the Chinese just because American foreign policy is driven by the idea that a rich China will become free, their decisions are derived from self-interest.

The most obvious factors responsible for China's growing levels of trade and investment are low labor costs and an absence of workers rights. These conditions are efficient because a lack of protection for workers shifts the balance of power in favor of business and cheap labor helps lower production costs. However, if increased levels of trade and investment are to be fully explained, and if they are to be factors that contribute to China's democratization, then rule of law, which is usually strongest in democracies, should have also improved to help justify increasing levels of trade and investment.

When trade and investment in China are considered in the context of rule of law measures it becomes clear the reason China has grown is not because it is entirely corrupt. Table 5.2 shows there has been some improvement of rule of law in China, but in truth the influence a proper legal system has had in affecting decisions of trade and investment is not as significant as cheap labor costs and a lack of workers rights. Rule of law measures from 1986-91 lingered at only 2.86 on a scale of 6, while levels of foreign

investment and bi-lateral trade with America made only slight improvements. When rule of law measures improved to 4.16 in 1992, foreign direct investment increased by \$6.6 billion in one year, a significant amount compared to the 2.5 billion increase from 1986-91. Moreover, rule of law does seem to have a positive impact as trade and foreign direct investment increased every year from 1993-98, with a 16.5 billion increase in investment occurring in 1993 when China's rule of law measures improved to 5. However, rule of law measures weakened to 4.75 and 4 in 2000-01, after which the measure increased to 4.5 in 2002 and remained until 2004. In this regard, WTO membership for China dramatically affected levels of trade and investment and probably negated the losses China might have suffered in response to their declining rule of law measures. The findings do basically support the market institutions approach to understanding decisions of trade and investment, although the distinction is the rule of law has not yet been established in China as a market institution that promotes trade and investment. The rule of law does have a positive impact, but it offers little explanatory power in China's case because the relationship between legal reform and foreign trade and investment has been affected by WTO membership, the policy of engagement and firms looking to become more efficient in labor costs.

The economic reality of China's rise is cheap and exploited labor is an attractive magnet for firms looking to trade and invest abroad. For China, the rule of law has improved compared to measures in 1986, but in recent years the importance legal institutions have had in attracting trade and investment has also diminished. China does not have an independent judiciary, rule of law measures are lower today than in 1993, and the most appropriate response to inquiries on decisions of trade and investment in

China is that the lack of legal protections have not discouraged foreign firms from investing in the PRC. Transaction costs can be lowered in a number of different ways, and in the context of China's rise the efficiency associated with cheap labor and an unrestrained regime overrides the burdens of dealing with a nation that shows little respect for the rule of law. Legal improvements were achieved in order for China to become a WTO member but once membership was acceded the focus on continuing to make progress was scaled down as lowered labor costs and a flexible regime became the most attractive elements of trading and investing in China.

Because the Chinese economy has grown consistently since Deng Xiaoping opened to the West in 1978 and seeing that China has been formally integrated into the international system through increased levels of foreign trade and investment, the general feeling is U-S-Chinese relations are moving in the right direction. Moreover, optimism that economic growth and integration will instigate demands for greater freedom is the cornerstone of American foreign policy towards China. It follows that extraordinary economic growth coupled with increased trade, investment and integration should have helped create a more free and open China as measured by freedom house because as a continuous variable it will capture subtle increases in freedom that more overt measures of democracy might ignore.

The results, however, prove that American foreign policy is misguided in assuming China will inevitably become free as its economy grows. Increased American trade and foreign direct investment has not increased measures of freedom because foreign investment was actually lowest when China was most free. Table 5.3 shows from 1985-88 China had a freedom measure of 6 on a 7 point scale where 1 represented the

highest score and foreign investment peaked at \$3.2 billion. Trade and investment levels continued to grow from 1992-1998, the period during which China was least free, and actually dropped in 1999-2000 when China's freedom rating improved. Increasing levels of foreign investment returned in 2001 with China's entry into the WTO and continued throughout 2005. Bi-lateral trade with China, both total exports and imports measured in millions of U.S. dollars, also grew steadily from 1987-2005. The only actual decline was American exports to China in 1999, which is when China's freedom rating improved. WTO membership has dramatically affected American trade with China as imports and exports increased the most rapidly from 2001-2007.

The main finding that freedom discourages foreign trade and investment is extremely problematic for proponents of the policy of engagement. The hope that a vibrant Chinese economy will provide the impetus for social and political change is not grounded in reality. However, this finding is consistent with new research that emphasizes the flexibility of non-democracies and their ability to operate without the constraints usually associated with nations that have elected officials (Li and Resnick, 2003). The point is the Chinese economy has been able to attract foreign trade and investment without making an effort to politically and socially modernize because the authoritarian regime is efficient. Firms looking to trade and invest in China are not discouraged by the absence of basic political and social rights, their focus is maximizing profit and a lack of freedom has not been detrimental for the Chinese economy because labor costs are more significant than moral or patriotic concerns.

The most reasonable explanation for the lack of social and political reforms in China is that the regime never intended to let globalization determine the nature of

China's rise. China did not open to the world because it decided to move closer to Western conceptions of modernity, instead this move was entirely motivated by self-interest. The initial desire was to strengthen China in the face of Soviet aggression and to establish normalized relations with America so as to better face the Soviet threat. Eventually this move evolved into a strategy that accepted trade and investment as the means by which one-party rule would be legitimized in China. Undoubtedly, this strategy has been quite effective as the CCP has maintained its stranglehold on power without moving closer toward democracy or collapse. Conversely, the policy of engagement has been a complete failure because optimism that economic growth will necessitate freedom is not grounded in reality. China has prospered, but this prosperity has not created the conditions for freedom and has instead legitimized the current regime.

There is another explanation for the lack of freedom in China that is also consistent with these findings. Despite the economic successes of the last thirty years, China has not politically and socially evolved because its mode of integration into the international economy is different than most other nations (Gallagher 2002). Instead of political and social reforms being implemented before economic integration happens, China has been allowed to enjoy all the benefits and privileges of economic relations with the globalized world without making serious efforts at reform because engagement reasons economic factors can influence political and social behavior. Specifically, trade and investment in China are conditioned by the premise that a non-democracy cannot survive in a transparent, globalized world of democracies. From this assumption the policy of engagement encourages trade and investment with China because it is thought

that as its ties to the outside world are strengthened China will be forced to reform. This means there is no impetus for political and social change in China because rather than have to reform first like most other nations before being afforded the rights and privileges of economic integration, in China's case the process has been reversed.

China cannot be expected to democratize because its leaders never intended to let foreign trade and investment determine their future, and because its mode of integration in the international economy was not conditioned by political and social reform. But before moving on another reason China has continued to enjoy economic growth without democratizing or facing sanctions from the rest of the world is because of its sheer importance to America and the global system of commerce. Cheap Chinese labor and goods enable American materialism and saves consumers millions of dollars annually. Moreover, the international system has also grown dependent on China as its levels of foreign trade and investment have soared in recent years and made it almost counterproductive to hope the repressive regime will collapse. Thus, the China that the world has embraced has not made significant political and social changes because to do so would be economically risky and could potentially disrupt the current regime's claim to power.

However, just because China has not moved closer toward democracy or freedom, does not mean that American foreign policy cannot make serious inroads with the Chinese people. If America could convince the people of China that its intentions are peaceful and that it intends to work with the Chinese in the future, then relations can be improved. In this regard, it is important to look at other avenues that might help determine the future of China. Survey data is very useful because as a closed society it is

difficult to gauge how ordinary Chinese view American policies. The most troubling aspect of these findings is that American foreign policy has not been successful in changing the hearts and minds of the Chinese people because most citizens are given a tainted view of the United States by a state-controlled press.

A telling survey reveals the friction that can be caused by an American foreign policy that is overtly critical of China. In a 1998 poll of 5,700 residents in eleven Chinese cities, it was reported that 27 percent cited American criticism of China's human rights record as the cause of their resentment against the United States (Hamrin 2003). The significance here is the United States is called on by voters and NGO's to pressure the Chinese regime to respect human rights, but in reality these gestures are never really genuine and only serve to legitimize CCP claims that America is an imperialistic power bent on world domination. Thus, the reality of American efforts at improving human rights in China is that criticism can discourage ordinary Chinese citizens from growing closer to the United States.

The 2007 C-100 survey on American and Chinese attitudes toward one another also questions whether U.S.-Chinese relations have improved (Committee100.org). 40% of the American general public view the economic emergence of China as a potential threat to U.S. interests and only 25% see it as a partner. Also, 55% of the Chinese general public predicts China will be the world's leading superpower in 20 years, and another 45% believe America is trying to prevent China from rising. More complicating is that only 32% of the general public in America believes it should intervene to defend Taiwanese declarations of independence, while in Chinese views Taiwan remains the issue with the most potential for conflict with America. More than 70% of the American

general public gives the Chinese government a negative rating in relations with the United States, and 58% of China's sampled population gave it a positive score. These differences of opinion also manifest themselves in attitudes regarding the direction of each nation as the vast majority of Chinese think China is headed in the right direction while the majority of Americans feel its government is not. Thus, the main finding from survey data aimed at capturing both Chinese and American views is that both nations have very different conceptions of the future, and any notion that relations today are better than in years past lacks sound evidence.

The simplicity of this study is essential to making the claim that American economic influences will not democratize the Chinese. Rule of law has not been established in China, but trade and investment levels have not suffered either because cheap labor and the flexibility of the authoritarian regime help lower transaction costs. If China's economic rise could be attributed to legal reform then improvements in human rights and democracy could rationally be considered inevitable. Moreover, American leaders could better defend the policy of engagement if China also made moves to increase freedom and transparency. The lack of freedom in China is clear to everyone, and while no one defends the regime, those who question the idea of doing business with a repressive Chinese state are often demonized (Mann 2007). Even hope that America can convince the Chinese to reform through diplomatic efforts is without a legitimate basis because most Chinese fear the United States does not want China to become powerful. The ultimate message from this study is that China is a unique nation with a long view of history, and in recent years the idea that economic changes necessitate political and social reforms have blinded America to the realities of China's rise. China is

less free today than in 1985, there is no independent judiciary, rule of law measures have recently declined, transparency is frowned upon by China's leaders as a threat to sovereignty and human rights are still an afterthought in decisions of trade and investment. The most basic certainty derived from this study is that China will continue to rise because it is already integrated into the international economy and because its increased levels of trade and investment are encouraged by the policy of engagement. But again, any notion that democracy is inevitable in China lacks concrete evidence and is merely hopeful wishing because the realities of China's rise reveal the true nature of its economic growth.

Table 5.1

Economic Growth, Trade and Investment in China 1987-2007

Year	Annual GDP Growth % For China	Chinese Imports in U.S. millions	American Exports in U.S. millions	Foreign Direct Investment in U.S. billions
1987	11.6%	6.3	3.5	2.3
1988	11.3%	8.5	5	3.2
1989	4.1%	12	5.7	3.4
1990	3.8%	15.2	4.8	3.5
1991	9.2%	19	6.3	4.4
1992	14.2%	25.7	7.4	11
1993	13.5%	31.5	8.8	27.5
1994	12.6%	38.8	9.3	33.8
1995	10.5%	45.5	11.7	37.5
1996	8.6%	51.5	12	41.7
1997	8.8%	62.6	12.9	45.3
1998	7.8%	71.2	14.2	45.5
1999	7.1%	81.8	13	40.4
2000	8%	100	16.2	42.1
2001	8.3%	102.3	19.2	48.8
2002	9.1%	125.2	22.1	55.0
2003	10.0%	152.4	28.4	53.5
2004	10.1%	196.7	34.7	60.6
2005	9.9%	243.5	41.9	72.4
2006	11.1%	287.8	55	60.3
2007	11.4%	321.5	65	74.8

Source: www.chinability.com; www.census.gov

TABLE 5.2

Rule of Law in China 1984-2004

1984	1985-1999	1992	1993-1999	2000	2001	2002-2004
2.86	3	4.16	5	4.75	4	4.5

International Country Risk Guide

TABLE 5.3

Political and Civil Liberties in China 1985-2008

1985-1988	1989	1990-2008
6	7	6.5

freedomhouse.org

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Huntington (2005) argues an American national identity was formed from the adversities the United States experienced with the Soviet Union during the cold war. Specifically, the bipolarization of world affairs offered the Soviets as an ideological enemy that the American national identity could be easily defined against. Huntington notes the role of other is causal in theories of identity formation and argues that without the Soviets to struggle against the prominence and solidity of American nationalism waned. This sentiment is best captured by John Updike when he asked, “Without the cold war what’s the point of being an American?” (Huntington 2005, 258)

Similarly, Barnett (2004) describes how military and pentagon officials were adversely affected by the Soviet demise, and how they strained to justify defense expenditures in a suddenly unipolar world. Barnett explains that defense department requests for funding were usually unchallenged throughout the cold war because of the seriousness of the struggle with the Soviets and the singularity of their threat. However, when the cold war ended and the specter of Soviet global hegemony lost all reasonable grounding, a desperate search for America’s next near-peer was initiated to help sustain defense expenditures that could no longer rely on a bipolar international power structure for their justification.

The cold war’s conclusion, then, left the American military and defense establishment in a precarious position, and it is in this very environment, one where the United States was desperately searching for a new enemy to replace the sudden and unexpected fall of the Soviets, that some Pentagon officials actually attempted to market

China as America's next great power competitor (Barnett 2004). Even more, some of the same neo-conservatives who have been credited with influencing the decision to go to war with Iraq also viewed China as a great potential threat that needed to be confronted on issues of democracy and human rights (Halper and Clarke 2004). However, in respect to both neo-conservatives and those in the pentagon who tried to promote China as the next great threat to American global hegemony, soon the logic of economic interdependency would mitigate any friction in relations that might turn violent. China's leaders understand the importance of avoiding conflict with the United States because it is American trade and investment that has largely fueled China's global ascension and helped legitimize the existing regime's power structure. Conversely, the United States cannot afford an antagonistic relationship with China because it would increase consumer prices and adversely affect the American economy.

However, the major factor that helped contribute to avoiding the polarization of Sino-American relations following the end of the cold war was the tragedy of 9/11. The war on terror understandably distracted Americans from Chinese human rights abuses, but it also seemingly saved China from a potential confrontation with the United States (Fukuyama 2005). In a hypothetical scenario where 9/11 doesn't occur it becomes interesting to predict how different Sino-American relations might be today, especially considering policy influences associated with regime change in Iraq were entirely hostile towards the Chinese before 9/11. Maybe news of Chinese industrial espionage, intellectual property rights infringements, dangerous imports, government repression, corruption, and China's growing international influence would affect the American mind differently in a world where 9/11 never happened. In respect to Huntington's argument

that an American national identity was constructed from the ideological struggle between communism and democracy during the cold war, perhaps the Chinese government would have been viewed in the same unfavorable terms as some Middle Eastern states are today, and maybe China would have been chosen for regime change and assumed the role of other to the American national identity had the specter of terrorism not affected the American consciousness first.

It does seem unlikely though, especially in light of the current levels of economic interdependency between China and the United States that neoconservative grumblings concerning the Chinese threat would have been as effective in orchestrating an invasion of China as they were in helping to develop the rationale for regime change in Iraq. But what is clear about Barnett's revelation that pentagon officials attempted to market China as America's next near-peer following the collapse of the Soviet Union is that it serves to illustrate how Sino-American relations have historically been characterized by misunderstanding.

The findings in this study demonstrate American foreign policy toward China is still affected by misunderstanding and casts significant doubt on the underlying logic surrounding the policy of engagement. The inexpensive and massive Chinese labor market is an attractive magnet for American businesses looking to operate more efficiently, and the Chinese government has been extremely effective in developing a secure economic environment that meets foreign firm's demands. Neo-liberalism reasons the relevant changes China makes to develop a favorable business climate for foreign investment and trade should also help integrate China into an international community of nations that are governed by the tenets of transparency, rule of law, democracy and

economic liberalization. Specifically, engagement holds that as the Chinese economy grows and as its people prosper, China will succumb to the underlying themes of the international system and evolve into a full-fledged free market democracy. However, the analysis presented here does not accept the idea that China is marching toward democracy, that a rich China means a democratic China, or that the political and social evolution of China's rise will necessarily be determined by foreign economic interests.

Economic interdependency between the United States and China will continue to strengthen in the future and these ties will help eliminate the chances of war. However, the most important distinction is that regardless of whether China makes the associated political and social changes that are generally analogous with economic modernization, foreign trade and investment will continue unabated. The position taken in this paper is that America cannot afford to change China because it has already grown too accustomed to the existing relationship it has with the Chinese. The disheartening truth is China's repressive political and social system helps fuel American consumerism. If China were to suddenly implement Western standards of practice in areas of labor rights, political representation and economic liberalization, then the price of Chinese imports would undoubtedly increase, as this would both adversely affect American consumers and disrupt the basis of legitimacy that the Chinese government operates from. Thus, because America has grown dependent on China, and because the Chinese government has solidified their rule through economic growth, it will be extraordinarily difficult to change the nature of the Chinese regime without also harming American economic interests and disrupting the international order.

Drawing from literature that emphasizes China's mode of integration into the international system, evidence showing how economic growth has legitimized the current Chinese regime, and data that clearly demonstrates China has not improved the rule of law or increased freedom, this analysis concludes that China will not fit the usual model of economic modernization that associates prosperity with freedom. The CCP is seriously flawed, but economic growth has lifted 300 million people out of poverty in only 30 years (Kharas 2005), and for now the successes of the regime will likely overshadow its repressiveness. Power has always been centralized in China and loyalty to the state still prevails in a nation that suffers from a century of humiliation. Hope that China's population will grow closer to the United States is yet to be substantiated as well. The Chinese people are fiercely loyal to the regime and in response to Olympic torch relay protests the most educated and internationally engaged sided with the authoritarian regime (Zhao 2008). Thus, the political, economic and social realities of China's rise are that the Chinese government has not made the slightest move toward democracy, the flexibility of the regime and cheap labor has enabled the status quo to go challenged, and rather than grow closer to the West the Chinese people have chosen to embrace the CCP as the only legitimate power in China.

These findings are consistent with the analyses of Mann (2007) and Nathan (2003, 2006). But whereas Mann wonders if China is integrating America into a new international system, my analysis accepts that it already has. America is dependent on the Chinese state that exists today and cannot expect political and social reforms because there is little incentive for China's leader's to pursue their implementation. There has even been a proposition by an American scholar to create a new G-2 that would allow the

United States to better adapt to China's growing economic influence (Bergsten 2008). He explains "China is uncomfortable with the very notion of simply integrating into a system it had no role in creating." (Bergsten 2008, 64) Moreover, Nathan demonstrates the resiliency of the authoritarian regime in China and cautions against predictions that assume it cannot survive in the age of globalization. But he also believes that if American foreign policy would separate the promotion of democracy from human rights concerns then progress could be made in areas of social reform. However, my analysis demonstrates the negative impact American criticism of China's human rights policies has on Chinese attitudes toward America and questions how the United States can affect change in China without perpetuating the popular belief that America does not want to see China rise.

The rise of China does not have to necessitate America's fall, but it does mean a certain level of consciousness is required to accept the realities associated with China's return to power. The implications of these findings are that the relationship between economic growth and integration and political and social reform will not be the same in China as it has been in other nations. However, there are numerous areas where America and China have similar interests; environmental pollution, dealing with North Korea, terrorism, alternative energy sources, and global epidemics like AIDS and SARS. If these areas of convergence can override questions related to China's human rights policies and their system of governance, then the future of Sino-American relations will undoubtedly be peaceful and mutually prosperous. If not, then American foreign policy makers run the risk of making China an ideological enemy to the United States, one that becomes the other from which America defines itself in the twenty-first century.

Gone are the days of Tiananmen Square and the Beijing Olympics are the new international image for China. But although it does seem doubtful in light of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that Americans will unite in opposition to a rising China that fails to democratize and continues to disrespect basic human rights, it cannot be entirely dismissed. American foreign policy justifies normalized relations with China by telling the American people that economic influences will determine the nature of China's rise (Mann 2007). However, judging from the obvious failures of the policy of engagement, if American economic power were to weaken in the future then maybe the blame would be placed on China. There is already angst over the loss of jobs to outsourcing and a quarter of Americans view the emergence of Chinese global economic power as a serious threat. However, it cannot be forgotten that China contributes to American materialism through cheap and exploited labor, and any tension with the Chinese would also adversely affect the United States. Thus, the most important aspect of American foreign policy toward China should be to better explain to the American people both the realities of China's rise and the United States relationship with the Chinese. China will not democratize anytime soon, in fact there is no real evidence suggesting that it ever will, and hope that the Chinese people will grow closer to America as their ties to the outside world are strengthened have yet to be substantiated. Real progress in Sino-American relations can only be made when perpetuation of the myth that China will politically and socially modernize as its economy grows is both discouraged and forgotten.

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