

# The People's Republic of China's View of Security

A Working Paper produced by

Center for Strategic Studies

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

Tufts University

IPPP-WP-001



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This working paper is a product of the Indo-Pacific Perceptions Project at the Center for Strategic Studies. This effort is an attempt to leverage the knowledge and experience of the community of scholars and practitioners who study and interact with the states of the region to gain insight into how security and international relations are understood from the perspective of those responsible for conducting foreign policy in the region.

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- (1) enhance US security, sovereignty, prosperity, and territory;
- (2) respect the realities and complexities of international conflict; including human territoriality, legitimacy, and the ethnic, cultural, and religious differences of peoples; and
- (3) question the utility of military intervention given its potential perils and long-term unintended consequences; including but not limited to, the loss of life, civil liberties, and resources

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**Scott D. McDonald**

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## Preface

Ideational variables are playing a larger role both in the academic study of international relations and the policy community's attempts to understand their world. In this spirit, the Center for Strategic Studies is launching the Indo-Pacific Perspectives Project to understand why leaders in this region make the decisions they do. Over the coming years we hope to explore a range of countries and get behind their policies to the ideas that drive them.

Leaders in the United States naturally view the world through the lens of the intellectual tradition in which they were raised. In pursuing "security," the natural tendency is to treat the nature of "secure" as given. However, the Indo-Pacific region is home to an array of cultures that approach the world through varied intellectual traditions. The way national interests and security are conceived in these worldviews may not align with definitions drawn from the Western tradition. Therefore, the US may be talking past partners, allies, and adversaries as it attempts to engage in the region.

The Center for Strategic Studies seeks to assist scholars and policy makers by contributing to our knowledge of concepts of security in the Indo-Pacific. Our goal is to gather a mixture of leading academics and experienced practitioners to share ideas and insights on how leaders in the region conceive of their own security. On 8 and 9 February 2024, we gathered such a group at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University to explore how the People's Republic of China views its own security. During a kickoff dinner and a daylong workshop, these experts leveraged a Chatham House format to share ideas and opinions on the concepts used by leaders in Beijing to understand their world and act within it.

I would like to extend a special thanks to the experts who traveled to Medford and shared their insights with us. It was an invigorating event. We hope this is the first of many forums of this type, exploring the ideas that fuel the region. Moreover, we hope you find this working paper engaging and valuable in understanding the region.

Sincerely,



Monica Duffy Toft

Director

Center for Strategic Studies



## Executive Summary

This project is based on the premise that to understand policy, we must understand how those making policy think. “Walking a mile in another man’s shoes” is not enough, we must try to see the world through the eyes of the decision-makers we aim to understand. Consequently, this working paper is not an attempt to describe opinions of leaders or analysts in the United States (US). Instead, attempts to look at the world from the perspective of the leaders in Beijing and describe the current and preferred security situation accordingly. Ideally, a work such as this helps inform policy by providing a better understanding of how the world and US actions will be perceived by General Secretary Xi Jinping. Although not intended to be a scholarly document of ground-breaking research, this document is informed by the ideas and insights of a collection of scholars and practitioners who have devoted their professional lives to understanding how leaders of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) think and act. Based on years of study and interaction with the PRC’s party, state, and military authorities, participants attempted to understand and represent how those leaders view the problem of security for their state.

Over the course of a dinner and a day-long workshop our collection of experts exchanged ideas and argued about the details regarding how leaders in Beijing think. Over the course of a spirited and collegial exchange the group achieved a broad consensus—if not always unanimity—on the outlines of how security is viewed in the PRC. These ideas were discussed using the framework of sources, interests, threats, environment, and role.

At that foundational level, the *sources* of strategic thinking in Beijing include several strains of thought, drawing overwhelmingly on classical Chinese philosophy. Thus, although Leninism’s emphasis on party primacy remains, Marxism holds little sway, ceding ground to a thought system derived from the premises of Daoism, Legalism, and Confucianism. Built on the syncretic integration of these ideas the paramount *interest* that drives PRC policy is maintenance of political power by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Since regime survival is ultimate interest, *threats* must be understood in terms of this goal. Therefore, the group consensus identified key issues that are viewed as a threat to the Party’s survival. These are centered around issues that could undermine the Party’s authority and include: the irrepressible US desire to overthrow the Party, economic challenges, separatists, and, in certain contexts, instability. To ensure their survival, the Beijing leadership seeks not only to counter these threats, but to shape the *international environment* in accordance with their view of proper rules and norms. Moreover, other states should be more respectful of the PRC and more welcoming of its authority. Finally, to ensure the international system treats them appropriately, leaders in Beijing expect to fill an international *role* that is at least on par with the US as a leader of the international order.

Taken together, these views paint a picture of how leaders in Beijing view their own security. This is a lens through which they see the world and interpret inputs, including policy developed by the US. Although the perceptions or opinions of foreign leaders should never be a veto on US policy, understanding the viewpoints discussed in this document will help policymakers check themselves and their plans to ensure they understand how actions will be perceived in Beijing.





# The People's Republic of China's View of Security

## Introduction

This project is based on the premise that to understand policy, we must understand how those making policy think. “Walking a mile in another man’s shoes” is not enough, we must try to see the world through the eyes of the decision-makers we aim to understand. Therefore, in asking how the People’s Republic of China (PRC) views security, we are neither trying to calculate force ratios nor analyze equipment. Rather, we are exploring the ends to which those items are employed and how those ends are conceived by the leadership in Beijing.

Moreover, simply defining “security” is insufficient. If the goal is to understand how a state will craft policy, we must start from the conceptual foundations of its leaders and build up to the environment in which those concepts are applied. Consequently, our workshop was organized from the foundation up. We began by exploring the ideational sources of strategic thinking in the PRC to understand how policy makers conceive the world. From this basis, we then attempted to identify what the leadership considers to be their interests. This forms the basis of what the state will seek to pursue and protect. Once the interests are defined, it is possible to look for threats to those interests. However, even after dealing with threats, a state rarely feels completely secure. One of the ways it attempts to find security is by shaping the international environment to fit its concept of security. Once that is done, it is possible to consider the role a state would like in that world: one may feel secure enough to emulate Lichtenstein or chose to arm to the teeth and seek hegemony. States may answer these questions differently, and how they do will influence the policies chosen.

Throughout this process—and as you read this working paper—it is important to step away from one’s normal context and attempt to look at the world through the cognitive lens of the decision-makers under study. Incorporating how the United States (US) perceives its interests, threats, environment, or role is more than irrelevant to this exercise, it is counterproductive. Naturally, the US must pursue policy in accordance with its own concepts and ideas, but when trying to understand another state, those must be left behind so as not to pollute the analysis.

Consequently, this workshop and this paper are not attempts to describe US opinions or suggest US policy. Instead, the exercise is an attempt to look at the world from the perspective of the leaders in Beijing and describe the current and preferred security situation accordingly. Ideally, a work such as this helps inform policy by providing a better understanding of how the world and US actions will be perceived by General Secretary Xi Jinping and his assistants. It is valuable to take a pause in the policy planning process and ask if leaders in Beijing would look at the problem and US responses in the same way as US policy makers. Our hope is that the following assessment aids in this endeavor.

Although this is not intended to be a scholarly document of ground-breaking research, it is informed by the ideas of a collection of scholars and practitioners who have devoted their professional lives to understanding how leaders of the PRC think and why they act the way they do. Based on years of study and interaction with the PRC’s party, state, and military authorities, participants attempted to understand and represent how those leaders view the problem of security for their state.

Finally, it must be noted that while workshop participants provided fantastic insight and discussion, it fell to a single author to consolidate an array of notes, spanning a range of opinions, and distill them into a narrative that would have some value to the participants and other interested scholars and practitioners. Consequently, though I have tried to avoid it, I cannot guarantee that I have not downplayed or overplayed certain viewpoints. I have attempted to reflect the views of all participants, while obviously having to, on occasion, choose a dominant position to represent as the outcome. Therefore, while I provide gracious acknowledgement to all workshop participants, any errors or misrepresentations included in this document are fully my own.

## Sources

Part of the debate surrounding conceptions of security within the PRC revolves around parsing the wide variety of intellectual influences that are thought to inform the leadership in Beijing. This diversity of thought was brought out by workshop participants, who identified several key inputs important in the PRC's leadership.

Many workshop participants argued that the PRC's leadership continues to be influenced by China's classical philosophy. Both Confucianism and Daoism were referenced as influencing the thought of contemporary leadership, with several participants placing a good deal of emphasis on the tradition of Legalism. One important aspect of classical Chinese thought is that these ideas existed together and rarely in a pure form. Traditions were mixed and mingled by various dynasties, leading to a syncretic tradition in Chinese thought that leverages aspects of each school.

At the foundation of any thought system are one's metaphysical premises, the assumptions one holds about the nature of existence. One core assumption shared by many schools of classical Chinese thought is the centrality of the "Middle Kingdom." Many of our participants found that this concept continues to influence the way leaders conceive of their state. The importance of China as not just a great power, but *the* great power since ancient times, informs both its leaders' pride in the state, and the strains of insecurity that continue to plague its self-image, shape its interests, and color threats. This is tied to the PRC's narrative of humiliation brought about by imperial China's contact with the West. Some participants saw reflections of this concern in the PRC's current push to be a part of international governance. The swath of new institutions it has created, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, represent a desire to be seen as the state setting the terms of the future world.<sup>1</sup>

### *Daoist Influences*

The Daoist description of existence as a system of constant change and cycles also influences thought in the PRC. Participants noted this concept plays a role through the idea of "cycles of security." Leaders in the PRC are aware of competing forces of stability and instability that are constantly waxing and waning, leading to situations that vary in their degree of stability. This poses a political question of how one manages these forces to ensure objectives are achieved while the regime stays safe. Therefore, actors or events that cause instability or "chaos" remain a concern for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Within the leadership structure, many Party members still remember the cultural revolution and are wary of letting even supporters get carried away.

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<sup>1</sup> The PRC has changed the approved translation of General Secretary Xi Jinping's signature initiative, but the source usually cited for the change does not specify the new English translation, see Huang Yusheng [黄语生], "'Yidai Yilu' Yi Fa Chuyi: '一带一路'译法刍议 [A Brief Discussion on the Translation of 'One Belt, One Road']" *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Bao* 《中国社会科学报》 [*China Academy of Social Sciences Newspaper*], 13 August 2015, accessed 12 July 2019, [http://www.cctb.net/bygz/zzyby/byyj/201511/t20151124\\_331667.htm](http://www.cctb.net/bygz/zzyby/byyj/201511/t20151124_331667.htm). Moreover, the Chinese language name continues to be "One Belt, One Road," and the English language website is: <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn>. Thus, this author uses the Chinese name, even if Beijing does not like the negative connotations some Westerners ascribe to it.

Another specter from history is the role of dynastic cycles. Those attuned to Chinese imperial history know that no dynasty lasts forever. There was a repeated flourishing, followed by corruption, waste, malfeasance, and decline. Some in the Party are thought to apply this lens of history to their own concerns and leverage knowledge of the imperial past in exploring ways to protect their regime from the same fate. Along these lines, the collapse of Soviet Russia remains a much studied and important lesson for members of the Party trying to understand how to avoid collapse. Several participants also argued that Xi seems to be risk averse, especially as it relates to the Party's position. While not necessarily unique for a politician leading an authoritarian regime, it does provide insight into how he may be thinking about the world. If he remains conscious that many have come before him and failed, this realization may give him pause in risky situations, or rashness when there are legitimate threats to the regime.

Also originating in a Daoist metaphysics, but taking a draconian turn, is the school of Legalism.<sup>2</sup> Proscribing a set of tools and approaches to the problem of ensuring the populace conformed to proper behavior, Legalism was not only prominent in the Qin Dynasty's strict rule, but influenced the tools of state throughout the imperial period. The importance of these tools in the maintenance of order and protection of the state from threats was seen by several participants as key for understanding how the PRC interacts with the world.

### *Confucian Influences*

The ethical and political systems inspired by Confucius also appears to remain relevant. The extent to which the philosophy as a system impacts individual leaders is a matter of some dispute, but as an underlying value system that informs the way society in the PRC works, Confucianism continues to shape ideas and opinions in the PRC. Participants highlighted the importance of "Asian values" and the role Confucianism plays in legitimizing the PRC as an alternative to the West. Others mentioned "family values" and how in the Chinese context this speaks to Confucianism's influence, while also posing problems for the regime in ongoing concerns about the role and treatment of women in the PRC.

The Confucian ethical system is also directly related to its political philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of each individual acting appropriately according to the role they hold in society. This ethically mandated preference for a hierarchical society influenced governance throughout the imperial period. Integrated with the concept of "all-under-heaven" (*tiānxià*; 天下), this social structure suggests the emperor rules over the extended human family. In imperial times, this meant the hierarchy extended over neighboring kingdoms as well and legitimized the tributary system, through which imperial China viewed engagement with the outside world. Participants identified that China's historical role as the regional hegemon, which other kingdoms owed deference and respect to, continues to inform the concept of the PRC's place in the world. It is not only a source of pride, but shapes the way its leaders view the "lesser" states on their borders. Thus, although the extent to which a "tributary system" existed remains a concept of some dispute in the Western

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<sup>2</sup> The relationship between Legalism and Daoism is contentious. Legalism embraced ideas and methods Daoists would reject. However, its developers and adherents accepted the core ideas of Daoist metaphysics and epistemology, but saw a more rigorous system of incentives and punishments as necessary to bring the behavior of humans into accordance with the Way. See Fu Zhengyuan, *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 43; See also Chan Wing-Tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 254-55.

literature, it is less contentious to say either that it influenced imperial views of other kingdoms or that its historical echoes shape the PRC leadership's view of its role as the natural and rightful leader of the region.

Of course, China's role as leader of the known world was tarnished by the "Century of Humiliation," beginning with defeat by the British in the First Opium War. Participants noted this continues to be a rhetorical device for rallying the people to the cause of China's rejuvenation. This history has helped to nurture what workshop participants called a "victim complex" and a commitment to not let China be bullied again. If nothing else, the "Century of Humiliation" remains useful as an excuse for why China and the PRC were behind the rest of the world for so many decades, as well as an exhortation to stand up to external threats.

### *Communist Legacy*

Not discussed as much as other historical and ideational influences, communism did rear its head as a source of ideas at the workshop. While doctrinaire Marxism seems to be less important and is seen as serving as little more than window dressing, the role of Leninism in shaping and legitimizing leadership of the Party seems to play an ongoing role. To the extent that communism continues to play a role, it is wrapped up in what participants identified as a tension between communism, Chinese Communism, and nationalism. Over time, different interpretations of these ideas affect how the Party defines its interests and views threats to its rule. In its current incarnation, Xi has continued the work of his predecessors in making "socialism with Chinese characteristics" more and more "Chinese." Meanwhile, leaders have increasingly emphasized the Party's role as torchbearer of the Chinese nation, rather than ideological vanguard. As the role of the Party in leading the country changes, it makes sense that its leadership would view security differently as well. However, it is worth noting that although the emphasis of legitimizing statements has increasingly shifted towards the nation, leaders have continued to emphasize the Party's role as that nation's protector.

### *History*

History also informs the PRC's relationship with the many minorities within its multiethnic empire. Ethnic minorities have always been part of the empire, but the extent to which they were useful subjects or a threat varied with circumstances. It is worth noting that the concept of what it means to be ethnically "Han," the primary Chinese ethnic group, has evolved over time. In the early imperial era, "Han-ness" or "Chinese-ness" was defined primarily by acceptance of Chinese culture. Ethnicities routinely assimilated into and influenced both society and the ruling dynastic families. This poses interesting questions for the current regime, which seems more focused on ethnicity than its predecessors and is actively pursuing cultural assimilation of minority groups.

Rounding out the influences on PRC decision-making is a pragmatic vein. Harkening back to Deng's advice to "cross the river by feeling the stones," the Party takes a careful, "see what works" approach to policy. While there are core principles that set boundaries on policy, within those limits, there is a willingness to experiment with different techniques and use what works.

**In sum, our participants viewed the PRC's view of security as arising out of a *mélange* of ideas. Chief among these are the classical schools of Daoism, Legalism, and Confucianism.**

**These are viewed through the lens of historical experiences that make the Party wary of chaos, on the lookout for insecurity, and eager reinforce its influence domestically and internationally.**

## Interests

The starting point for determining security lies in understanding what it is one wants. Without a grounding in the goals of a state, it is impossible to define threats, solutions, or an environment that would benefit that state. Therefore, the workshop first attempted to identify the interests Xi and the CCP are pursuing.

### *The Core Interest*

Through a lively and wide-ranging discussion, several strains of thought gradually grew into a broad consensus that the one overriding interest of the PRC continues to be the maintenance of power by the CCP. This is important because it is not the state as such, but security of the regime that forms the standard by which security is measured. One may argue that all leaders value their own rule, but the PRC's view of regime survival is different. The Party exists, ultimately, for the sake of preserving itself as the ruler of the PRC. Its leaders think it is the organization best suited to rule China, but that is not its ultimate justification. Instead, this traces back to both its roots as a Leninist party that values the preeminence of the organization, and its grounding in classical Chinese thought, which holds there are those whose proper role is leadership, and they act morally by maintaining their proper place in the hierarchy.

Some participants suggested the preeminence of the party can lead to negative externalities. Specifically, it can fuel a sense of victimization and paranoia. When security of the party is the ultimate standard, one may start to see anything not directly supporting the Party as a threat. Participants assessed the Tian'anmen Square protests and collapse of Soviet Russia as reinforcing this paranoia and leading to tighter domestic controls. This could also be influencing a more aggressive foreign policy. Several participants argued that a psychology of "fragile superpower" can take hold and lead to a state becoming more aggressing out of fear that it is not secure.

Therefore, it is important to consider the extent to which the PRC's bluster and posturing may represent a profound insecurity. The National Security Law and violent crackdown in Hong Kong was viewed by some participants as an example of the regime seeing a threat to its security and lashing out. Another participant perceived the Party's need to constantly pursue revolution as a reaction to insecurity. Because the revolution is "unfinished" the Party cannot feel it has completely secured its position atop the hierarchy.

One problem with ruling a state such as the PRC is that authoritarian regimes require "relentless political upkeep." Xi may have consolidated power, but that does not mean the work is done. There is a constant concern that things could fall apart. One participant argued the need to constantly strengthen and consolidate the regime's position means it can be difficult to distinguish policies enacted out of fear and those based on interests. However, the consensus position of workshop participants was that this fear has roots in the Party's insecurity over its ability to maintain its interest of regime security. Therefore, while it is worth noting and being aware of the impact of fear on decision-making, as one moves into analyzing policy, fear itself is not a primary motivation.

For the CCP control is sought for much more fundamental reasons than fear. As one participant phrased it, "it is baked into the DNA of the CCP." The Party's Leninist roots lead it to seek control for control's sake. That is the role of the ruling party *qua* ruling party. Putting its "foot on the neck"

of a dissident or foreign state is not a question of ruthlessness. From the Party's perspective, this is simply applying the appropriate tool at the appropriate time. However, participants noted that sustaining a high level of control over its domestic and diplomatic policies is a Sisyphean task; there is no winning in the game of control, only constant maintenance. Therefore, the Party must remain in a position of eternal vigilance and "political upkeep."

In discussing party legitimacy, the role of nationalism was raised again. With the economy stalling, some see few sources of legitimacy remaining to Xi beyond nationalism. This helps account for the constant linking of the Party with not just the state, but the Chinese nation in statements by Xi and others. If the Party is the only interest, but nationalism the only effective tool, the Party must be a key part of, and protector of, the nation. This also encourages the vilification of foreign forces, which helps the regime highlight its importance in keeping the nation safe.

### *The Role of Expanding Interests*

Participants observed that while regime security remains the core interest, the PRC's interests have been expanding. Specifically, as its power has grown, the PRC has begun to seek regional and global influence. That being said, participants disagreed over the extent to which this could be explained by the focus on regime security. For example, one participant argued that if regime security means "making the world safe for the PRC," then there is a direct link to the regime. However, there remains a degree of contention over whether regime security could support things as diverse as establishment of the AIIB and bullying the Philippines over submerged reefs in the South China Sea. This led to a fruitful discussion as the workshop tried to parse the extent to which regime security could be tied to a seemingly diverse array of domestic and international interests.

One participant observed the PRC's relationship with the international environment has changed over time. While the classical Chinese worldview sees a natural relationship between risk and opportunity, as situations have changed, the balance of risk and opportunity acceptable to the leadership has shifted. From Deng Xiaoping through Hu Jintao, the CCP leadership's view of the international environment focused on leveraging opportunities. Participating in international dynamism could help the PRC rise out of poverty. Now that it is a "moderately prosperous society," its leaders focus on the potential for risk and chaos to migrate from the international system to their own shores. These threaten the precarious balance at home and ultimately, the regime.

Another participant suggested there is a feedback loop from the Party drumming up nationalism to an expansion of international interests. For example, if the textbooks teach kids that the southernmost point of PRC is James Shoal, then the Party must be able to defend it. Another participant noted that the PRC does not normally demand recognition of sovereignty—Taiwan is an exception here—but it does not want to see its sovereignty challenged. In other words, it does not require states to recognize that James Shoal as part of the PRC as the basis for ongoing relations. However, if the US Navy sails next to the shoal, the PRC feels it must respond. Failure to do so suggests an ineffective regime and, by extension, a lack of regime security. Consequently, nationalism leads to increased expectations on the party, such that a remote submerged reef becomes an interest of the PRC precisely because it is an important indication of Party effectiveness. The idea that international events become important when they impact the Party's interest in regime security becomes a trend when examining PRC policy more broadly. As the CCP attempts to navigate the international arena, there are signs that it can self-correct. However, in some areas it has



no room to adjust. For example, leaders cannot talk to the Dalai Lama, or organizations claiming to represent Uyghurs as a group. Doing so would undercut their position by suggesting their control is not what it should be. This is related to the position of Taiwan as well. The subjugation of Taiwan has become part of the regime's claim to legitimacy. If Taiwan becomes independent, the Party will have demonstrated failure in a matter it has framed as a core competency and the populace could cease to accept its claim to legitimacy.

One interesting comment proposed that the PRC no longer cares about legitimacy when it hinders what it wants to do. But this suggests an external standard of legitimacy. As this speaker argued, leaders in Beijing do not care about the international human rights regime, because if they did, it would get in their way. They simply sidestep it by framing the malcontents as separatists and carry out the policy the intended. However, this is less reframing, than an indication that the Party conceives of the problem of malcontents not as a matter of human security or constituent satisfaction, but in terms of regime survival. When the Party's own lens is used, and all actions are seen in terms the survival of the regime, different ends and means are justified. Another comment spoke directly to this identification: it is not that the PRC does not care about legitimacy, rather it has different audiences. Moreover, the CCP has different standards of legitimacy. Therefore, the Party does seek legitimacy, but not in the eye of the typical Western observer. The Party needs to stay in control and, therefore, must please those whom can affect that.

**If the goal is to understand what the PRC is doing and why, it is important to know why that choice occurred. The interests the Party is seeking to gain and maintain are the foundation of that puzzle. After the discussion flowed through a few twists and turns a general consensus was reached that the basis of PRC foreign policy rests in the drive for regime security. There is a fair amount of pragmatism in the details, but in terms of the principles that drive the policy and inform the tinkering, the Party seeks above all else to remain in power. As multiple participants noted, the Party is Xi, is the Regime, is the PRC. It is difficult to separate them. Regardless of how that entity is referred to, there is one overriding interest through which all policy should be interpreted—to stay in power.**



## Threats

When conducting a threat analysis, it is always important to remember that events or actions are not intrinsically threatening, but may be a threat in relation to some value. That is why it was important that the workshop discuss interests first. Therefore, when approaching the idea of threats, as perceived by the leadership in Beijing, it is necessary to hold the context of the interest driving their concept of security—regime survival. In examining the various threats to “the PRC,” therefore, they must always be discussed in terms of how they threaten the CCP’s hold on power.

In fact, the focus on regime security, what one participant called “survival primacy,” can encourage decision-makers to view nearly all opportunities and interactions as threats. This makes them likely to see threats even where there are none and possibly magnify minor threats to the CCP’s monopoly on power, leading to crackdowns and overreactions. However, it can also lead to weighing the cost of any perceived policy “failure” as greater than the benefit of policy “success.” Thus, the Party is likely to prioritize actions to prevent threats from metastasizing or intervene in a process it sees as threatening.

Before addressing specific threats, it is worth noting that the workshop spent several minutes talking through the difference between a threat and a challenge. This stems in part from the recognition of the danger that comes from labeling everything a threat. Actors or situations with the potential to prevent the PRC from gaining and maintaining its interests are threats. Those that will cause the PRC to expend more time and effort, without necessarily preventing the state from achieving its interests, may be classified merely as challenges. As one participant observed, a challenge needs to be managed, however, a threat needs to be neutralized. Challenges can produce opportunities, evolve, and be moved in a direction that is opportunistic, whereas a threat implies harm, in this case, to the regime’s hold on power. Of course, one participant noted that perception is an important part of the equation. One must evaluate the extent to which the CCP views a particular issue as threatening or challenging. Due to its tendency towards paranoia, the Party may interpret more things as threats than Western analysts normally ascribe. Keeping this distinction in mind, workshop participants identified several categories of threats that appear to be of immediate concern to the leadership in Beijing.

### *The United States*

The US remains the PRC’s largest foreign threat. It has a global, technologically advanced, and veteran military that can thwart the PRC’s attempts to regain what it deems lost territory or assist others in taking what the PRC claims is rightfully its territory. From the perspective of the CCP, the US also has a desire to remove the Party from power. One participant argued that at root, the CCP *knows* the US does not accept the legitimacy of the Party. This is because it is committed to spreading a social-political system that is antithetical to the Party’s system of governance and is on the record as preferring the PRC follow this path. As long as that is the case, the US will be seen as a destabilizing force and threat to the Party.

As one participant suggested, the US is also a threat because even when not actively opposing the Party’s rule, the Party believes US stratagems play a role in all its problems. Color revolutions, economic failure, and Taiwan independence, for example, are all issues that could bring the Party

down and are perceived as caused or manipulated by the US. This remains the perception in Beijing, even if such a charge appears highly unlikely to much of the US policy community.

### *Economics*

As one participant noted, economics has been a strength of the Party and part of its implicit bargain with the populace. Since the Party aims to control all major aspects of the economy and had promised wealth, the period of continuous economic growth helped to legitimize the Party and keep support for it strong.

Therefore, the economic model can be perceived as an analog of the political system. Because the economy must be perceived as doing well and the Party is risk-averse, even minor economic hiccups that might be seen as a normal part of a market economy, suddenly seem threatening. One participant highlighted the Party's reactions to stock market movements as an example of this. Watching it go up was fine, but it is difficult for the leadership to stomach much of a drop and will attempt to prevent it. Since the economy belongs to the Party, a falling stock market is an indication of regime ineptitude and cannot be tolerated.

As the Hu Jintao era's economic boom has subsided and the PRC economy becomes more prone to fluctuation, the Party has become increasingly reluctant to allow the market to determine economic decisions that could potentially result in downturns. This is one of the reasons the Party has been placing an increasing number of controls on the economy. It cannot afford to allow external factors to influence something so important to its position.

A related but opposing threat can arise if the market is left to decide and the economy does well. In this case there is a risk that private individuals or organizations will get the credit. This opens the door to alternative sources of authority. For example, Jack Ma was bringing both economic and reputational benefit to the PRC. However, his prominence meant innovation and economic success was increasingly being credited to him instead of the wise decisions of the CCP. When people start to wonder what Jack Ma will do to improve the economy, rather than what the Party will do, an alternative source of authority is in the making. Since the Leninist model and classical Chinese philosophy allow only one emperor, any authoritative upstart is an inherent threat to the Party's legitimacy and must be removed.

### *Insurrection*

Multiple participants also observed a palpable fear of revolutionary contagion. The Party remains concerned that the various movements that led to color revolutions could spread to the PRC. Naturally, this is tied to the threat posed by the US, because Washington is seen as instrumental in encouraging these movements. The Party sees continued US meddling in support of specific efforts aimed at tearing apart the PRC, including independence movements in Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Of course, any incidence of a group or individual claiming some measure of authority over the governance of the PRC poses a direct threat to the future of the Party's position. Consequently, they

must be quickly eliminated. Though not an inclusive list the following were mentioned: women's rights, White Paper Protests, and even young Marxists.

### *International Disorder*

Some participants postulated that Xi fears the international environment is deteriorating. This is driven, in part, by a US withdrawal from world leadership during the Obama and Trump administrations. However, that in and of itself, is not necessarily bad for the PRC. What has been troubling is the resulting “deglobalization” of the international economy. The PRC had carved out a niche in the global production chain that is now either disappearing or moving offshore. The PRC once thought it controlled this market segment, which gave it a degree of control over its own and the global economy. As the market shifts, it is losing control of both the global market and its own economy. This has been exacerbated by the purposeful decoupling or derisking following the rise in US-PRC animosity.

Although the PRC may prefer a certain type of order, which will be explored in the next section, one participant argued that what Party leaders really do not like is instability. This sparked a spirited discussion regarding how much disruption of the status quo is acceptable. Many participants suggested that a little bit of chaos far away that makes life difficult for the US is acceptable, while even a little bit of instability near the PRC's borders is seen as threatening. This is because, while instability at home challenges the Party's ability to control the situation, the PRC leadership understands the value of the opportunities some instability provides. While opinions among participants varied, the broadest consensus seems to be that the Party prefers there not be too much instability and it is best if the PRC is the one causing and controlling it in pursuit of its own ends.

For example, a participant noted that the Russia-Ukraine War has cost the PRC little, but served to make Russia dependent on the PRC, bringing economic benefits. Perhaps more importantly, participants agreed that Beijing believes every dollar and missile contributed to Ukraine is one less that must be accounted for in Taiwan. Another participant observed that even Japan's air defense is being hollowed out as its PATRIOT missile systems are sold to Ukraine. The Russia-Ukraine War has also opened a broader window for PRC influence. The ambivalent reactions in much of the developing world towards US condemnation of Russia has highlighted a wedge in worldviews that the PRC is moving to exploit. The PRC can portray itself as the honest broker, not interested in meddling in others' affairs, as well as a natural leader for states that fear traditional great powers.

One counterargument introduced regarding the international response to the Russia-Ukraine war is that it has raised the profile of Taiwan in areas outside of traditional US Pacific allies. One participant observed that Europe has taken cognizance and now sees Taiwan as an issue relevant to its own security. Even regional allies of the US that have previously been coy about their willingness to participate in the defense of Taiwan are at least taking time to investigate the issue more carefully.

This is troubling to Beijing not only for the specific threat to Taiwan, but due to lingering fears of regional cooperation to oppose the PRC in general. Beijing continually mentions containment, even though it has not been the policy of the US or its partners for decades. However, cooperation among regional states—many of whom the US has treaty commitments to defend—is threatening because it implicitly ignores or challenges the rightful role of Beijing. By attempting to wall off the region from PRC influence, they suggest Beijing is not the regional leader it imagines itself to be.

Worse, if these states begin to form groups or cooperate in ways that oppose the Party's policies, they can disrupt initiatives or undermine the PRC's growing power. Moreover, US encirclement is a situation that any great power would consider threatening.

### *The Self-made Threat*

An interesting aside revolved around whether Xi was himself a threat to the CCP. While he does not see himself as one, some in the Party may see his resumption of a cult of personality and one-man rule as a threat to their future. However, he is the one currently making policy, so from the perspective of how the PRC views the world, he is not a threat, but the only one who can combat threats. There may be a very real sense in which he is a threat to the Party and the CCP. Due to its potential to cause internal chaos that affects regional order, this scenario may be worth the US policy community considering, but it is not the way perceptions of the PRC will operate as long as he is in charge.

**Perhaps most important to US policy makers is the identification that the US is considered a threat in and of itself, as well as the instigator of many other issues. This is important because, though it may not fit the self-perceptions of Washington officials, it will color how US proposals and policies—even those that offer cooperation—are viewed in Beijing. This paper is not taking a position on the best way to deal with this perception. However, this analysis does suggest that this perception of the PRC leadership is a factor policymakers should consider when forecasting how their own actions will be understood. From the perspective of the Party, managing additional threats, such as economic weakness and interstate instability, require more control of those systems, because only the Party can ensure the solution meets the requirements of its regime security. Therefore, Xi's recent attempts to expand Party control over the economy, despite its probable deleterious effect on productivity, is not surprising and likely to continue.**

## International Environment

While the threats to security are important, states—those that survive and thrive—do not focus solely on what could harm them. They also attempt to shape the world in a manner that benefits them. Naturally, this improved environment also helps to mitigate threats. Consequently, the workshop next turned to exploring what the PRC would like the future international order to look like.

Several participants suggested that the PRC under Xi has attempted to fundamentally challenge the US-led order. Although the value of better defining the “liberal international order” was brought up, it was put aside for this workshop, because a detailed argument over this subject was not seen as necessary to examine how the PRC is reacting to it. In general, participants accept that the CCP perceives a “US-led order” where the US makes rules—even as it sometimes breaks them—and prevents others—such as the PRC—from fully pursuing their interests. Consequently, it is more important to discuss if the PRC seeks to change it and if so how.

### *A Sino-centric Order*

Fundamentally, the PRC wants to change the organizing principle of the international system. Current international relations theory is founded on the understanding that there is anarchy among states—no higher arbiter exists. The classical Chinese conception of order is one of hierarchy, with the individual most suited to rule sitting at the top making decisions. While the current system assumes anarchy, clearly some states have more weight than others. One workshop participant argued the PRC wants to change who should make the decisions and who should lead. The PRC's leaders do not think the US leads well or in a manner that comports with the interests of the PRC, the Party, or the world.

Many in the PRC leadership remain influenced by the concept of China as the Middle Kingdom and, therefore, think it is proper that they have the dominant say in the structure of the global order. It is worth noting, that many do not think this is necessarily bad for other countries, unless a state—such as the US—has an overblown concept of its own worth and seeks hegemony. In fact, the CCP leadership thinks a PRC influenced order would be better for the majority of states. Moreover, since the Middle Kingdom narrative is popular, a Party that plays an active role in leading the international order breads legitimacy at home. In fact, this idea is played up in PRC media, which routinely publicizes the important impact leaders such as Xi are having on global governance.

The PRC offers to reform the world order in a manner it believes will make it more moral and less chaotic. One participant suggested the PRC is not opposed to rules, but to a lack of leadership or good rules. However, since it also sees instability as threatening, many participants agreed that the Party seeks change through incrementalism. While it is recognized that the PRC has some fundamental changes it would like to see in the existing order, the leadership approaches change in a slow, calculating manner.

Although a little instability affecting others far away has its uses, tipping over the table of international order and spilling the pieces on the floor does not create the type of stability the Party craves. Instead, the PRC is operating within the existing order, drawing benefits where it can, and

beginning to alter the international system slowly. For example, building institutions that look and act similarly to those of the current order, but that are controlled by Beijing, allows the PRC to gradually move into a position of leadership.

In this context, it is unsurprising that new institutions, such as SCO, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), AIIB, and OBOR, look very similar to existing institutions and regimes with one key difference—they are controlled by Beijing. Although these organizations might not necessarily supplant existing institutions, they offer alternatives to other dissatisfied states. Similarly, seeking positions of influence in United Nations (UN) bodies and agencies that enable the PRC to change the way they are conceived and operate allows it to maintain the window dressings of working within the current order while building a new one that is more suited to its concept of proper governance. By creating more choices and options for other states, one participant noted the PRC increases its own bargaining power in the international system. Although the goal is fundamental revision, the method is to make changes at the margins.

Aside from “PRC Leadership,” participants were curious what the new PRC order is supposed to be based on. One participant suggested economic domination may be enough. By flooding certain markets with products, it can change the orientation of an economy towards the PRC. By demonstrating an ability to produce, it also promotes the legitimacy of the Beijing economic model of state-led development, as opposed to the Washington development model. Not only does the Party see that model as inappropriate and threatening, but it also seeks to counter the narrative by those who support the Washington model that the Beijing model is the deviant one. Additionally, the PRC is attempting to have a hand in setting the industry standards for the next generation of technology. Party leaders see the US role in standards setting during the mid-twentieth century as a major enabler of its economic dominance and wants to use that power to promote its own system and economy. Although some participants opined that the jury is still out on how effective product penetration is at building affection or affiliation to a state, economic dependence can lead to political acquiescence. Moreover, economic domination is cheaper than military domination.

### *One Belt, One Road*

It is worth considering OBOR separately as it has come to represent an integrated attempt to build an order, emplace an economic system, and set normative and technical standards. It is commonly accepted that the initiative evolved and was cobbled together over time. However, what emerged seems to be a system of interactions that suggests a new order, which de-prioritizes the Western, liberal order.

One participant argued that the quest for order building helps explain OBOR in a way that economics does not. The financial success of projects in the initiative has overall been doubtful. However, the extent to which it has oriented capital and investment markets in certain regions towards the PRC is important for shifting who builds the order and what rules are followed. Other participants pointed out that US foreign aid in the 1970s and 1980s did not have economic returns, but were not necessarily failures. Similarly, the Peace Corps initiative had no concept of generating financial returns, but did have returns in terms of prestige and influence. Therefore, OBOR should be looked at as a broader instrument than a set of economic initiatives.



Given the somewhat ad hoc nature of OBOR's development, there was some skepticism among the participants about its role in order building as opposed to "just getting things done." As the PRC attempts to survive and thrive, some actions may be purely transactional. The PRC has been in the possession of a surplus of funds—not to mention un-marriable surplus males—that can be used to influence the environment. One participant argued that some of the PRC's actions amount to experimentation—throwing a few things against the wall to see what sticks. The argument is that the Party is focused on meeting interests and combating threats, not order building *per se*. In fact, in terms of shipment, payment, standards, and customs, OBOR has for years depended on the backbone of the liberal international order to operate. Therefore, the PRC does not need to challenge rules writ-large, simply encourage others to operate in the manner it prefers.

One participant suggested that OBOR is beginning to be seen with some skepticism domestically in the PRC as giving money away when there are things it could be spent on at home. While this may be a long-term issue to consider, participants did not seem to think it is a problem at present. Much of the US population has long thought foreign aid budgets were a waste, but that unhappiness about foreign aid policies does not generally cause governments to fall or lose elections.

However, despite its experimental nature, OBOR has linked together an array of individual initiatives and transactions under a banner that seems to implicitly say "new economic order here." That new economic order comes with a normative statement that "the West cannot tell us what to do." Moreover, OBOR and supporting, Beijing-centered institutions are encouraging agreements that recognize international rulemaking is shifting to the East and increasingly take the form of bilateral treaties with Beijing. OBOR may not be pleasing everyone, but participants noted that polling suggests it is increasing the level of PRC influence in places like Africa. Combined with an array of institutions that allow the PRC to begin influencing the rules of global governance, OBOR, despite many faults, has demonstrated to the world, that there is an alternative to the liberal international order that many state leaders have found attractive.

**Although not a unanimous position, by and large the workshop participants concluded the PRC is interested in crafting a new international order. This order will both dethrone the US as the key international decision-maker and replace it with institutions and norms originating from Beijing. These new norms will validate the PRC's development model and promote international exchange that is highly transactional, but not deleterious to the PRC.**



## Role

If one accepts that the PRC seeks to change the international order, as most workshop participants did, the next natural question is to ask what the PRC views its role in that future order to be. This was the issue of largest divergence within the workshop.

However, neither multipolarity, nor even a coalition of the UN Security Council's Permanent Five seems likely to be accepted by Beijing as a solution to global leadership. Although the PRC often talks in terms of multilateralism, it only sees two viable leaders: the PRC and the US. That is not to say that that PRC policy does not leave room for others to contribute. In fact, its approach emphasizes that each state be allowed to pursue its own development pathway and encourages consultation. However, in terms of setting international norms and leading institutions, other states should know their place.

### *Bipolarity*

Many workshop participants judged that the PRC could be comfortable with a powerful, but not dominant, US. This structure is sometimes referred to in the West as a "G-2" (Group of 2) and also captured by Xi's "New-type Great-power Relations." The PRC's version promotes non-confrontation and "win-win" cooperation, but also entails US recognition of the PRC's status as a great power, its equal rights and prerogatives, and the paramount nature of PRC interests in Asia.

There are advantages for the PRC to sharing leadership. As one participant noted, not being the sole leader provides some cushion from blame and shocks. The 2008 financial crisis benefitted the PRC partly because it could play the savior, but also because it could escape responsibility for having to "fix" the system. However, the acceptability a bipolar system depends on the role the US is willing to play. In this sense it is noteworthy that the US never explicitly signed on to Xi's attempts to enshrine his "New-type Great-power Relations" framework as the global order.

One point of view is that the PRC is so large and so strong that no one can conquer it, therefore it has nothing to fear. There is a big ocean separating the PRC and US, plus the world is large enough for two great powers, meaning there is no reason to feel insecure. The US is not going to attack the PRC and therefore there is no reason to assume extra risks trying to be a sole leader.

The contrarian position does not see a necessary conflict, but an actual one. This view sees a US dedicated to sabotaging the Party's rule and keeping the PRC in a subordinate position. Therefore, the US will continue to undermine the PRC economy and promote dissension and color revolutions against the Party. Even though one participant pointed out that US policy has not advocated regime change, policy documents and statements demonstrate that many in the Party continue to view US policy this way. From the Party's perspective, each time the US advocates the spread of democracy, it is advocating regime change in the PRC.

Therefore, the root of the problem, both in terms of role and in mitigating threats to the Party, is to convince the US to view the CCP and the PRC as legitimate. What portion of the Party elite think this is achievable remains an open question, but that portion likely has grown smaller under the policies and purges led by Xi. Moreover, since the US is viewed as having a history of breaking

promises to its friends in the region, there is no reason to think it will keep a promise not to undermine the CCP.

### *Sino-centrism*

Even some participants who evaluated PRC-US coexistence as a possibility, did not consider it the PRC's preference. The very organization of the PRC, as well as the Leninist and classical thought that legitimizes it, encourages a view of the Party as paramount and China as the Middle Kingdom. International leadership is thus seen as natural, moral, and legitimate.

A more Sino-centric model of international relations would fit this view of the world. That does not necessarily mean the PRC seeks “domination.” As noted above, the PRC would prefer to allow states to manage their own affairs, as long as they accept the broad principles of PRC leadership. This includes a willingness to defer to PRC views on major issues and especially issues the PRC considers as “core,” where no disagreement is tolerated.

As an interesting aside, a participant argued that global leadership is in some sense about self-esteem. A state's—or party's—sense of its own worth is buoyed by other states recognizing it as important. This idea also plays to the classical Chinese view of the world as centered on China, and may have some appeal for a strongman, such as Xi. Some participants hypothesized that this is one of the reasons OBOR was pushed—it made the PRC important in the world economic system not just as a factory workshop, but as a norm-setter.

### *Transition*

Whether the PRC ends up sharing the top spot with the US or assuming a role as the world's hegemon, its leaders envision a transition period. As noted in the previous section, drastically changing the world today would be disruptive. Instead, the PRC will continue to make changes on the margin to steadily increase its role in international governance. Interestingly, some participants suggested the PRC benefits from continuing to play “Number Two” for a time and not incurring blame for system failures, while taking credit for improvements. Therefore, it is advisable to take its time and ensure the PRC has the requisite power, authority, and respect before seeking outright leadership.

Relatedly, the US has proved adept at undermining its own leadership and influence. As several participants argued, over the past couple of decades the US has repeatedly shown through regional policies and neglect that it is not interested in leading the region. Therefore, the PRC needs only to provide an alternative by demonstrating its steady commitment to regional peace, security, and development, thus placing itself in a position others will naturally come to when seeking leadership.

However, several participants highlighted that there is some tension in the “go-slow” option arising from the PRC's own domestic troubles. A declining economy, based on an out-of-date economic model, and demographic challenges are putting the Party in a precarious position. It seeks greater authority over its external environment, but fears the domestic drivers of international influence may be peaking due to internal issues. This leads to a tension between allowing the situation to develop naturally, or taking action to accomplish its objectives before its decline begins. The consensus of

the workshop seemed to suggest there is risk for the Party either way; the question is how to manage it. A state's security will depend on how well it can control or stay ahead of those issues. One way is through leading the system. Under Xi the PRC has made a consistent effort both to mitigate internal challenges and expand its influence over international governance. The goal is not to upend the system and cause instability, rather the Party is actively seeking gaps that the PRC can fill and roles it can assume that will help nurture international trends in a positive direction.

**Ultimately, the general consensus of workshop participants was that the PRC believes it deserves to lead and should lead. There is little doubt that going forward the PRC views itself as having a legitimate role in determining the method and rules of global governance. Differences in opinion remain regarding the Party's continued willingness to share power with the US. While it is highly unlikely the PRC is seeking to wage a hegemonic war to unseat the US, doubts remain regarding whether a "New-type Great-power Relationship" remains acceptable, or if the Party feels it must systematically undermine the US until the PRC is recognized as *the* international norm-setter. However, for the US it is important to understand that the PRC is wary about continued US leadership, because it is viewed as threatening to the Party and its position. As long as this remains its perception, the PRC will seek to reduce the ability of the US to negatively affect them and *that* means reducing the international power and prestige of the US.**



## Conclusion

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is moving purposefully to acquire more global power and authority while challenging norms advocated by the United States (US) and its allies. Consequently, US policy will be impacted by Beijing's decision-making. The goal of this workshop was to provide the US academic and policy communities with insight into how the PRC conceives of its own security. Although the perceptions or opinions of foreign leaders should never be a veto on US policy, the insight provided in this working paper will help policymakers evaluate how their actions will be perceived in Beijing and aid them in validating that policies will have the desired impact.

First, to understand decision-making in another state, we must understand the cognitive construct that is the *source* of its leaders' interpretation of the world. The PRC's leaders see the world through a lens of classical Chinese concepts, reinforced with a Leninist commitment to Party leadership:

- Daoism: for its metaphysics and political theory
- Legalism: for its political theory
- Confucianism: for its ethics and political theory
- Leninism: for the sanctity of the Party

Second, to understand other's decisions, one needs to know their values—what will each individual struggle to gain and maintain. For a state that is their national *interests*. The PRC is a party-state and its preeminent interest is for the Party to maintain political power. Therefore, they have but one interest that all others serve, and a technique to achieve it:

- Regime Survival
- Pragmatically feeling the stones to cross the river

Third, to understand why a state reacts and how it forms security policy it is necessary to appreciate what is considered a *threat* to its interests. Threats to the PRC can be categorized in four bins:

- The United States: because it seeks irrepressibly to overthrow the Party
- Economic headwinds: because Party legitimacy rests on providing economic goods
- Insurrection: because separatists are learning techniques and being supported from abroad
- International disorder: because instability endangers the economy and promotes insurrection

Fourth, to protect its interests and counter threats a state will attempt to shape the international environment to support its interests. To anticipate its policy and understand its intended result, we must know what it desires. The PRC seeks an *international environment* that:

- Provides a stable environment for the Party to maintain its rule
- Is governed by norms and rules shaped by the PRC
- Respects the PRC's status and position
- Includes a US that recognizes the sanctity of the PRC's core interests, or is unable to negatively influence them

Finally, a state may choose to be a small player in that order, a power broker, or a leader. In the world order it is trying to create, the *role* currently sought by the PRC is:

- To be seen as a co-equal of the US
- To manage institutions and have a voice in setting the norms of global governance





## Appendix: Workshop Attendees

Burgoyne, Michael	Professor, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies; Former Defense Security Officer, American Institute in Taiwan
Carlson, Allen	Associate Professor, Department of Government, Cornell University; Director of Cornell's China and Asia Pacific Studies program, Cornell University
Davis, Brian	Former DATT, Beijing, PRC; Director of China Research, BluePath Labs; Senior Advisor, China Power Project Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
Deng Yong	Professor, Department of Political Science, United States Naval Academy
Hui, Victoria Tin-bor	Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame
Jost, Tyler	Assistant Professor of Political Science, Brown University; Assistant Professor of China Studies, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University (Friday only)
Martyn, Ari	Military Fellow, International Security Studies Program, The Fletcher School, Tufts University
McDonald, Scott	Assistant Director, Center for Strategic Studies; Former Marine Attaché, Taipei, Taiwan; Ph.D. Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University; Non-resident Fellow, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies
O'Connor, Matt	Professor of International Affairs, US Army War College
Pearson, Margaret	Dr. Horace E. and Wilma V. Harrison Distinguished Professor; and Distinguished Scholar-Teacher, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park.
Ross, Robert	Professor of Political Science, Political Science Department, Boston College; Associate, John King Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University
Sampson, Gary	Northeast Asia Desk Officer & Indo-Pacific Coordinator, International Affairs Branch, HQ Marine Corps, Ph.D. Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University
Sutter, Robert	Professor of Practice of International Affairs, Elliot School of International Affairs, The George Washington University

Toft, Monica Duffy      Academic Dean; Professor of International Affairs; and Director; Center for Strategic Studies, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Vu, Khang                Hans J Morgenthau Pre-doctorate Fellow, University of Notre Dame; Ph.D. Candidate, Boston College

#### Research Assistants

Ching, Joey              Ph.D. Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Li, Tony                  Research Assistant, Indo-Pacific Perspectives Program, Center for Strategic Studies; Student, Tufts University

#### Joining for Dinner (Participants in the Sources Discussion)

Lee, Lilly                Ph.D. Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Mittal, Piyusha        MALD Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Takahata Mai         MALD Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Wang, Bailey         MALD Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Wei Hongchi          Visiting Scholar, Center for Strategic Studies, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Williams, Dustin     Military Fellow, International Security Studies Program, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Xu Man                 Associate Professor, Department of History, Tufts University

Yeo, Matthew         Ph.D. Candidate, The Fletcher School, Tufts University





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