CHINA AND STRATEGIC CULTURE

Andrew Scobell

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FOREWORD

Culture influences the way strategists in a particular country think about matters of war and peace. Culture is especially influential in a country like China, with an ancient civilization and strategic tradition dating back thousands of years. The author of this monograph, Dr. Andrew Scobell, examines the impact of strategic culture on 21st century China. He contends that the People's Republic of China's security policies and its tendency to use military force are influenced not only by elite understandings of China's own strategic tradition, but also by their understandings of the strategic cultures of other states. Gaining a fuller appreciation for how Chinese strategists view the United States and Japan, our key ally in the Asia-Pacific, will better enable us to assess regional and global security issues.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to publish this monograph as a contribution to the public debate on China's strategic disposition.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

ANDREW SCOBELL joined the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) in August 1999 and is SSI's specialist on Asia. He taught at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, and Rutgers University, New Jersey. Since 1988 Dr. Scobell has published articles in such journals as *Armed Forces and Society*, *Asian Survey*, *China Quarterly*, *Comparative Politics*, *Journal of Political and Military Sociology,* and *Political Science Quarterly*. Recent articles and monographs have focused on China's military modernization, Asia-Pacific security, and Chinese strategic culture. Dr. Scobell holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University.

SUMMARY

China has been identified as a looming strategic threat. Considerable attention has been given to China's assertive rhetoric and militant behavior. The author uses the rubric of strategic culture to assess China's strategic disposition. Two dimensions are examined: the nature and impact of China's assessment of its own strategic culture, and the nature and impact of China's depictions of the strategic cultures of Japan and the United States.

Beijing has been depicted as increasingly belligerent over the past decade, a perception in direct conflict with earlier images of China. Ancient China is usually portrayed as possessing a weak martial tradition, a cultural predisposition to seek nonviolent solutions to problems of statecraft, and a defensive-mindedness, favoring sturdy fortifications over expansionism and invasion.

The author contends that existing depictions of China's strategic culture are flawed. China's strategic disposition cannot accurately be characterized as either pacifist or bellicose. Rather, the country has a dualistic strategic culture. The two main strands are a Confucian-Mencian one that is conflict averse and defensive minded; and a Realpolitik one which favors military solutions and is offensive oriented. Both strands are operative and both influence and combine in dialectic fashion to form a "Chinese Cult of Defense." This cult paradoxically tends to dispose Chinese leaders to pursue offensive military operations as a primary alternative in pursuit of national goals, while rationalizing these actions as being purely defensive and last resort. This dualistic strategic culture has been a constant, and China has not become more bellicose or aggressive in recent years except to the extent that the warfighting capabilities of the People's Liberation Army have improved or that military doctrine has changed.

The author also examines China's images of Japanese and American strategic cultures. Significantly, Chinese strategists tend to depict China's own strategic culture in very positive terms and contrast it with what are seen as the very negative images of Japan and the United States. As viewed from Chinese eyes, Japan possesses an extremely warped, violent, and militaristic strategic culture; while the United States possesses an expansionist, offensive-minded, conflict-prone strategic culture that is obsessed with technology. The author concludes by outlining a number of important recommendations for U.S. defense policy.

CHINA AND STRATEGIC CULTURE

Strategic culture should be considered a significant dimension in analyses of China's use of force for two reasons. First, the subject of national cultures has become widely recognized as a key dimension in strategy, including in the impact of culture on a country's tendency to use force.[1] Indeed, the impact of culture is vital to understanding China's military and security affairs. The contention that contemporary Chinese international relations have been heavily influenced by an ancient and enduring civilization is particularly prevalent.[2]

Second, scholars, analysts, and policymakers in the People's Republic of China (PRC) frequently assert that past and present policy and behavior are conditioned by a distinctive traditional Chinese philosophy of international relations. One influential military thinker, Lieutenant General Li Jijun, former vice president of the Academy of Military Sciences, reasons that:

> Culture is the root and foundation of strategy. Strategic thinking, in the process of its evolutionary history, flows into the mainstream of a country or a nation's culture. Each country or nation's strategic culture cannot but bear the imprint of cultural traditions, which in a subconscious and complex way, prescribes and defines strategy making.[3]

Indeed, the author of the above words and many others in the same Chinese elite community also perceive culture to exert a substantial impact on the strategic behavior of other countries.[4]

Furthermore, contemporary Chinese perceptions of other states are strongly colored by China's interpretations of their assumed cultural proclivities. These cultural images of other countries, particularly the images of the strategic cultures of other countries, are influential as China assesses threats and potential threats in the

international environment. This is especially so where Japan and the United States are concerned. Chinese images of both countries are heavily colored by the cultural baggage accumulated over more than 100 years of historical memory of Chinese-Japanese and Chinese-U.S. interactions.[5] While there is a considerable amount of literature on contemporary Chinese images of the United States, there is significantly less in the way of such studies on Chinese images of contemporary Japan. In each case, however, there is no focused study of China's culturally-based images of that country's strategic tradition.[6]

This monoraph is divided into four sections. The first explains the two main interpretations of Chinese strategic culture, and the nature and impact of strategic culture on China's use of force. The second examines the Chinese images of Japanese and U.S. strategic cultures. The third analyzes the implications of Chinese strategic culture, and the fourth offers recommendations for U.S. defense policy.

Definitions and Parameters.

I define strategic culture as the fundamental and enduring assumptions about the role of war (both interstate and intrastate) in human affairs and the efficacy of applying force held by political and military elites in a country.[7] These assumptions will vary from country to country.

Also important are the perceptions prevalent among the elite within one country regarding the nature of another country's strategic culture. The sum total of these assumptions tends to result, for example, in a composite image held by China of the United States. Borrowing from Allen Whiting, I define the strategic cultural image to be "the preconceived stereotype of the strategic disposition of another nation, state, or people that is derived from a selective interpretation of history, traditions, and self-image."[8]

Chinese elites are not of one mind on either the nature of their own strategic culture or on the images of those of other countries. China's self-image of its strategic culture is essentially a Confucian one, comprising a widely-held and hegemonic set of assumptions—although certainly not universal.

However, China's actual strategic culture is the result of interplay between Confucian and Realpolitik strands. The outcome is what I call a "Cult of Defense," whereby Chinese elites believe strongly that their country's strategic tradition is pacifist, nonexpansionist, and purely defensive but at the same time able to justify virtually any use of force—including offensive and preemptive strikes—as defensive in nature.[9]

Chinese perceptions of the strategic cultures of other states tend to be formed by military strategists and thus are skewed towards negative images of Japan and the United States.

Contrasting Depictions of China's Use of Force.

Culture has long been considered a critical dimension in China's approach to strategy and warfare. While the term "strategic culture" was not used until 1988,[10] conventional thinking was that China's Confucian tradition was a key determining factor in Chinese strategic thinking. Because of Confucianism, in this interpretation China tends to favor harmony over conflict and defense over offense.[11] Other analysts, usually focusing on Sun Zi's *Art of War*, have stressed a Chinese predisposition for stratagem over combat and psychological and symbolic warfare over head-to-head combat on the battlefield.[12] At the very least, these interpretations of Confucius and Sun Zi created the image of a China whose use of force is cautious and restrained.[13] More recently, analysts have argued that China's leaders are actually influenced by a realpolitik (or parabellum) strand of strategic culture.[14] According this

interpretation, the elite has been and continues to be quite willing to use force.

Both major interpretations of China's strategic tradition (Confucius/Sun Zi and Realpolitik) tend to assume its strategic culture as monistic and make no attempt to link it to domestic policy. It is a mistake to assume that a country's strategic culture can be subsumed within a single tradition and focussed exclusively on interstate violence. Indeed, it is likely that multiple strands of strategic culture exist. Ignoring trends in intrastate and societal violence risks overlooking diverse and important values and beliefs about the use of force and violence.[15]

A CHINESE CULT OF DEFENSE

Two dominant strands of Chinese strategic culture—a Confucius/Sun Zi one and a Reapolitik one exist side-by-side. Both of these are operative, and the interaction between the two strands produces a distinctive strategic culture: what I have dubbed the "Chinese Cult of Defense."[16] Most Chinese strategic thinkers believe that Chinese strategic culture is pacifistic, defensive-minded, and nonexpansionist. However, at least in the contemporary era, these sincerely held beliefs are essentially negated, or rather twisted by its assumptions that any war China fights is just and any military action is defensive, even when it is offensive in nature. Two further assumptions reinforce this: that threats to China's national security are very real and domestic threats are as dangerous as foreign threats, and that national unification is a traditional Chinese core strategic cultural value. The combined effect of these beliefs and assumptions is paradoxical: while most of China's leaders, analysts, and researchers believe profoundly that the legacy of Chinese civilization is fundamentally pacifist, they are nevertheless predisposed to deploy force when confronting crises.

The Chinese are particularly smitten with what they view as China's special gifts to the theory and practice of

statecraft and international relations.[17] While the leaders of most countries tend to believe they use military power in a strictly defensive manner,[18] this cluster of beliefs seems to be particularly inviolable among the Chinese.[19] Such beliefs are so prevalent among Chinese elites that it is rare to find civilian and military leaders who do not hold some or all of them.[20] Each of the three "Confucian" elements of Chinese strategic culture can be highlighted with reference to a phrase or saying.

"Peace is Precious."

A deeply-held belief in elite circles is that China possesses a pacifist strategic culture. Certainly majorities of people in most countries, including the United States, say they love peace—indeed it seems a near universal human desire. What is striking in the case of China, however, is the extreme degree to which this is stressed—to the extent that Chinese civilization is viewed as being uniquely pacifist, totally distinct from other strategic traditions in the world. One of the most recent official articulations of this appears in China's 1998 Defense White Paper:

> The defensive nature of China's national defense policy . . . springs from the country's historical and cultural traditions. China is a country with 5,000 years of civilization, and a peace-loving tradition. Ancient Chinese thinkers advocated "associating with benevolent gentlemen and befriending good neighbors," which shows that throughout history the Chinese people have longed for peace in the world and for relations of friendship with the people of other countries.[21]

Numerous Chinese leaders and researchers in the PRC contend that the Chinese people value peace. In 1995, Admiral Liu Huaqing, then a Vice Chair of the Central Military Commission, told a pro-Communist Hong Kong newspaper:

> China has consistently pursued a foreign policy of peace and insists that various countries should, in line with the charter of the United Nations and the Five Principles of Peaceful

> Coexistence . . . maintain a peaceful international environment and that disputes between countries should be settled through negotiations.[22]

Military researchers trace this preference for peace and harmony back in history. According to the General Xing Shizhong, Commandant of the National Defense University:

> The Chinese people have always dearly loved peace. . . . This historical tradition and national psychology have a profound influence on national defense objectives and strategic policies of the new socialist China.[23]

According to Li Jijun, former Deputy Director of the Academy of Military Sciences:

> China's ancient strategic culture is rooted in the philosophical idea of "unity between man and nature" [*tian ren he yi*], which pursues overall harmony between man and nature and harmony among men.[24]

Researchers also frequently mention the Confucian saying: "peace is precious" (*he wei gui*).[25]

In more recent times, leaders and researchers stress that China pursues peaceful solutions rather than violent ones. Chinese civilian and military leaders repeatedly stress China's adherence to the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" as Liu Huaqing does in the above quote.[26] According to one civilian scholar, the ancient principle of "trying peaceful means before resorting to force" (x*ianli houbing*) has been a major influence on post-1949 China. Thus, while the "leaders of Mao's generation were willing to use force to serve China's security, and more broadly, foreign policy goals whenever necessary . . . in most cases, China sent strong warnings or protests or engaged in negotiations" prior to employing armed force.[27] In a discussion of the military thought of Deng Xiaoping, two scholars observed:

> For many years we employed the thinking that, in whatever method we adopt to solve a problem, we should not use the means of war [but rather] peaceful means.[28]

And Deng felt it important to stress that one of China's three main missions for the 1980s was supporting world peace.[29] Beijing's policy on reunification with Taiwan regularly is cited to bolster this assertion. China's preferred means of unifying since 1979 is by nonmilitary means.[30] It is true that under Deng, China's policy altered dramatically from liberation by force to peaceful unification. But it is also important to note that the change is more tactical than strategic. Indeed, Beijing has refused to renounce the use of force.[31]

"Never Seek Hegemony."

A second deeply-held belief is that China has never been an aggressive or expansionist state. According to many leaders and researchers, China has never fought an aggressive war throughout its long history. And China has not threatened other countries. In post-1949 China, this has taken the form of constant pronouncements of the fact that "China will never seek hegemony."[32] Senior soldier Liu Huaqing told a Hong Kong interviewer in 1995:

> China is opposed to the use of force and to threatening with force. . . . China is against hegemonism and power politics in any form . . . China does not seek hegemony now, nor will it ever do so in the future.[33]

And Deng Xiaoping asserted in 1980 that one of the main tasks for the decade of supporting peace was intimately linked to "opposing hegemony" [*fandui baquanzhuyi*] .[34] Of course, at the time, hegemony was code word for the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Cold War, it has come to mean U.S. domination. But the term hegemony (*ba*) has a deeper meaning in Chinese political thought. *Badao* or "rule by force" has extremely negative connotations in contrast to *wangdao* or "kingly way" or "benevolent rule."[35]

According to many Chinese analysts, when China goes to war, it does so only in "self-defense." These analysts assert that virtually all of the wars China has fought have been waged to protect itself from external threats or to unify the country. One prominent Chinese military scholar insists that virtually all of the approximately 3,700 to 4,000 wars China has fought in more than 4,000 years of dynasties (ending with the collapse of the Qing in 1911) have been civil wars or wars to unify the country. And all of the eight "military actions" since 1949, the scholar asserts, have been waged in "self-defense."[36] When Chinese forces have ventured abroad, they have done so for a limited time and for nonexpansionist purposes. According to one analyst:

> The facts are: There are no records showing China's invasion of other countries or that China stations any soldiers abroad.[37]

Researchers regularly cite Mao's statement: "We [China] do not desire one inch of foreign soil."[38]

Examples often cited to support this interpretation include the famous voyages of Ming dynasty admiral Zheng He. Chinese researchers emphasize these expeditions were nonmilitary, and no attempt was made by the Chinese armada to conquer or colonize the lands it visited. The imperial eunuch's travels to East Africa and South Asia seem to have been purely voyages of exploration. According to several scholars, unlike Western adventurers such as Christopher Columbus and Vasco Da Gama, Zheng did not attempt to establish colonies or use force against peoples with whom he came in contact.[39]

"If Someone Doesn't Attack Us, We Won't Attack Them."

The third central tenet of this cult is that China possesses a purely defensive strategic culture. According to Li Jijun: "The Chinese are a defensive-minded people."[40] The classic illustration of this tendency regularly cited by Chinese scholars is, not surprisingly, the Great Wall.

According to Li: "China's Great Wall has always been a symbol of a defense, not the symbol of a national boundary."[41] In the 1990s, some Chinese researchers sought to validate this point by citing Western scholarship, notably the work of John Fairbank and Mark Mancall.[42] They also seek to make their case by drawing a direct comparison between Western and Chinese strategic traditions. According to Major General Yao Youzhi, Director of the Department of Strategic Studies at the Academy of Military Sciences, China's military tradition places "complete stress on a defensive stance" whereas, in contrast, Western military tradition "emphasizes offense."[43]

Another example of the defensive nature of China's strategic posture is the "No First Use" pledge regarding nuclear weapons.[44] Chinese officials also point to the military reforms China has undertaken over the past 2 decades as proof of China' purely defensive stance. Liu Huaqing said in 1995:

> As is known to all, China possesses a strategy of active defense, and cut its troops by 1 million several years ago, something no other country has thus far achieved. Our present military strength is of a defensive nature and the Chinese Government strictly limits defensive expenditure to the minimum level necessary to ensure national security.[45]

Perhaps the most commonly touted evidence is Mao's admonition: "If someone doesn't attack us, we won't attack them; however if someone does attack us, we will definitely [counter] attack" [*Ren bu fan wo, wo bu fan ren; ren fan wo, wo bi fan ren*].[46] This quote appears in China's 1998 Defense White Paper. The late Marshal Xu Xiangqian also mentioned it in practically the same breath as he discussed Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia during a 1980 interview.[47] Significantly, China's largest military conflict in the post-Mao era—an attack against Vietnam in February 1979—was triggered by Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. Although it was China that invaded Vietnam, Beijing officially labeled this war a "self-defensive

counterattack" [*ziwei huanji*]. According to two military thinkers: "[A] strategic counterattack implies a strategic offensive." The strategists continued:

> the February 1979 self-defense counterattack against Vietnam, from the military operational standpoint, offensive actions were employed. Nevertheless, the essence of this kind of offense was a self-defense counterattack.[48]

The same logic applied to China's brief but bloody border wars with India in 1962 and with the Soviet Union in 1969. Both conflicts are labeled "self-defense counter-attacks" [*ziwei fanji*].[49]

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EXTERNAL SECURITY

Counteracting these three core elements are four key strategic constants that justify the external use of military force. The concepts of just war, the value placed on national unification, the principle of active defense, and high threat sensitivity in practice negate the pacifying effects of the above core elements.

Contemporary Chinese Just War Theory.

Considerable attention by Chinese strategic analysts is given to the concept of just war. Authors tend to stress that Chinese thinking about just or righteous war [*yizhan*] dates back thousands of years.[50] The principle of just war seems to be a crucial element of China's traditional approach to war, in the view of many contemporary military researchers.[51] Indeed it is ancient: Confucius adopted the concept, and Mao later absorbed it.[52]

The distinction is simple: just wars are good wars, and unjust wars are bad ones. Just wars are those fought by oppressed groups against oppressors; unjust wars are ones waged by oppressors against the oppressed. In contemporary Chinese thinking, China long has been a

weak, oppressed country fighting against powerful imperialist oppressors. Thus for many Chinese, any war fought by their country is by definition a just conflict—even a war in which China strikes first.[53] This might include any war fought to "restore or protect national territory or to maintain national prestige."[54] The 1979 border war China fought with Vietnam is viewed as a just conflict.[55] Needless to say, virtually any war fought by a hegemonic power such as United States is an unjust war.

National Unification.

National unification is a core value in China's national security calculus on which no compromise is possible. It is an immutable principle in part because of China's history of division and inability to stop exploitation and oppression by foreign powers. But it is also an emotional and unwavering public stand precisely because the leadership of the PRC seems to lack any other inviolable principles.[56] According to Li Jijun:

> The most important strategic legacy of the Chinese nation is the awareness of identification with the concept of unification, and this is where lies the secret for the immortality of . . . Chinese civilization . . . [s]eeking unification . . . [is] the soul of . . . Chinese military strategy endowed by . . . Chinese civilization.[57]

According to another analyst, the "principle of unification": "hoping for unification, defending unification is a dimension of the Chinese people's . . . thought culture and is a special feature of its strategic thought."[58]

Threat Perceptions.

China's political and military leaders see threats everywhere. The full extent of the siege mentality of China's leaders is not always appreciated. This siege mentality results in elites viewing the foreign as well as domestic environments as treacherous landscapes filled with threats

and conspiracies.[59] The current campaign against corruption in China and the crackdown on the Falungong Sect suggest the depth of the regime's fear of domestic threats.[60]

This mindset may explain the need of the Chinese authorities during the Maoist era to come up with the seemingly innocuous phrase, "China has friends all over the world."[61] By the same token, one would expect that China had also at least some enemies in the world. Indeed, one is tempted to conclude that the slogan itself was prompted by Chinese insecurities. If a country has friendly states around the world, why is it necessary to recite this ad nauseum? And the reality was in the late Maoist era that China actually had few staunch friends: the handful that come to mind are Albania, North Korea, and Pakistan. The fact of the matter is that Maoist China believed itself surrounded by enemies. This was true of Deng's China, and also holds true for Jiang Zemin's China.

Active Defense .

The strategic principle of active defense is key to Chinese strategic thinkers. Most thinkers believe this is of central importance to Chinese strategy. According to the PLA's officer handbook, "All military experts, ancient and contemporary, Chinese and foreign, recognize the importance of active defense."[62] The tendency is for researchers and policymakers to broadly define defense as virtually anything, including a preemptive strike! Successive conflicts, including the 1962 border war with India, are labeled "self-defense wars" or "self-defense counterattacks" [*ziwei zhanzheng, ziwei fanjizhan* or *ziwei huanjizhan]*.[63]

The idea of "active defense" (*jiji fangyu*) is a relatively recent concept in Chinese strategic thought. It is an idea that crops up frequently in spoken and written material by Chinese strategic thinkers—it is mentioned in the 1995 interview with Liu quoted above, for example. While at least

one scholar dismisses active defense as mere propaganda,[64] the strategy appears to have real significance. Indeed it has been a key guiding principle in Mao's day, in Deng's time, and remains important at the dawn of the 21st century. Indeed, it figures prominently in China's 1998 Defense White Paper.

According to Deng Xiaoping:

> active defense is not merely defense per se, but includes defensive offensives. Active defense includes our going out, so that if we are attacked we will certainly counter attack.[65]

Senior Colonel Wang Naiming explains:

> [active defense] . . . emphasizes that the nature of our military strategy is defensive, but also active in requirements. It requires the organic integration of offense and defense, and achieving the strategic goal of defense by active offense; when the conditions are ripe, the strategic defense should be led [sic] to counterattack and offense.[66]

The "organic integration" between offense and defense is very much a part of the concept of "absolute flexibility" [*quanbian*] highlighted by Iain Johnston.[67] In a real sense then, the line between offense and defense is blurred. In the final analysis: "Active defense strategy does not acknowledge the difference . . . between defense and offense."[68] In fact, according to a researcher at the Academy of Military Sciences, active defense does not rule out a first strike:

> Our strategic principle of "striking only after the enemy has struck" certainly does not exclude sudden "first strikes" in campaign battles or counterattacks in self-defense into enemy territory.[69]

In sum, the impact of the Cult of Defense is a predisposition by Chinese elites to opt for force because they perceive its use by China as always defensive in nature.

But the impact of strategic culture does not end here. The impact on China's elites is two-fold. First, the strategic culture of their own country (articulated above) affects how they think and act. What is also influential is the way in which these same elites perceive the strategic culture of major powers viewed as rivals.

STRATEGIC CULTURE IMAGES OF JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

Chinese threat perceptions of the United States and Japan are heavily influenced by the intimate involvement of both with the prime objective of China's unification policy: the island of Taiwan. The United States strongly supported the Kuomintang (KMT) regime led by Chiang Kai-shek during World War II when it was based on the Chinese mainland. Following the KMT collapse on the mainland and its relocation to Taiwan, the Truman administration was ready to cut its ties with Chiang. However, the outbreak of the Korean War prompted Washington to come to the defense of the KMT regime in Taipei. In a series of crises in the Taiwan Strait, it has stood by the KMT government. It has also, in China's view, actively encouraged Taiwanese leaders to pursue independence (see below). Japan's 50-year occupation of the island (1895-1945) and the continued contacts between Japanese politicians and their Taiwanese counterparts underline Tokyo's link to Taipei. The strong ties that former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui had with Japan reinforced the connection. Lee speaks good Japanese, and it was in an interview with a Japanese newspaper that, by Beijing's reckoning, Lee first revealed his scheme to turn Taiwan down the road of independence.[70]

Japan: A Mutant Ninja Strategic Culture.

There is a "duality" to Chinese views of Japan. On the one hand, there is much admiration and appreciation for the economic benefits Japan offers to China. Particularly in the late 1970s and 1980s, Chinese leaders were very interested

in learning from Japan.[71] This even included the PLA, as it appears that the PLA was looking at militaries around the world in search of an appropriate model to emulate.[72] In more recent years, however, the PLA appears to view military-to-military ties with the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) through more of a negative strategic culture lens. The PLA has resisted efforts to build regular ties with the SDF out of suspicions of Japan and the "implied acceptance of Japan's forces as a legitimate national army" that such relations would carry with it.[73]

For many Chinese strategists, central to understanding the warped strategic culture of Japan is "Bushido" (*wushidao* in Chinese) or "way of the warrior."[74] According to Li Jijun, the "rather primitive" [*bijiao yuanshi*] religion of Shintoism and Bushido combine to produce a "bloody thirsty" [*shisha*] and "barbaric" [*yeman*] strategic culture. "In essence, bushido is the inhumane ethical outlook of conquering warriors and exaltation of slaughter . . . ."[75] Li then asks: "how can one explain Japan's wartime atrocities in China?" "The fundamental answer," he writes, "can only be found in its [Japan's] national policies [*guojia zhengce*] and strategic culture [*zhanlue wenhua*]."[76]

On the one hand, Japan is seen as a modernized and wealthy, high tech, advanced capitalist state. On the other, however, Japan is considered a country without a deep and/or vibrant philosophical tradition.[77] It is the example used to provide the stark contrast to the pacifistic, nonmilitarist culture of China. Japan is, in the words of Li Jijun, an "inbred [Japanese] freak" [*ziwo peiyu guitai*]. He also believes there is "no capacity [within Japan] for national introspection" [*buihui fanxing de minzu*], confession, and redemptive healing.[78]

China refuses to accept at face value the pacifist leaf that Japan has turned since the U.S. occupation after World War II. This is nurtured not just by the existence of a substantial and well-equipped SDF, but also by paranoia of Chinese leaders combined with memories of Japanese invasion,

occupation, and associated atrocities and violence, most infamously the Nanjing massacre of 1937. Many Chinese are convinced that Japan will continue to upgrade militarily despite its "Peace Constitution." They are also fearful of a revival of militarism and ultra-nationalism.[79] One Chinese analyst speaking in the mid-1980s attributed his concern to the "aggressive Japanese 'national character'."[80] Other researchers commented on the "arrogance" and "cunning" of the Japanese.[81] The modicum of support in the 1980s among Chinese elites for a robust Japanese defense and close Japanese-American alliance appears to have vanished with the end of the Cold War.[82]

The United States: A Star Wars Strategic Culture.

Just as with Chinese images of Japan, there is a duality of Chinese views of the United States. On the one hand, the United States is seen as a model; on the other, the United States is derided as threat. As David Shambaugh notes, a dominant theme in China's America watchers across the 20th century was "ambivalence."[83]

Today, on the threshold of the 21st century, many Chinese strategic thinkers view the United States as the primary threat to China.[84] The United States is not so much a direct military threat as a broader security threat, because of the perception that the United States is trying to contain China and undermine China through "peaceful evolution" and prevent unification with Taiwan. The view is particularly prevalent in the PLA.[85] According to one group of military researchers, "Since the end of the Cold War, Taiwan has increasingly been used by the United States as an extremely important chess piece to contain China."[86] General Zhang Wannian, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission in an emotionally charged address to senior PLA leaders in mid-May 1999—in the aftermath of the Belgrade bombing—reportedly claimed that "U.S. hegemonism is public enemy number one of the PLA."[87]

This perception is based on the fact that Washington is the sole global superpower, the troubled history of bilateral relations, U.S. national security objectives, and an interpretation of U.S. strategic culture. Certainly U.S. hegemony and the contentious history of U.S.-China relations are important factors in and of themselves. And official U.S. foreign policy pronouncements reinforce the belief in an American threat. But this is all compounded by Chinese interpretations of U.S. strategic culture.

American strategic culture tends to be subsumed within the broader category of a widely assumed "Western" [*Xifang*] way of war. This Occidental strategic culture is depicted as expansionist and realist in direct contrast to China's own pacific and principled tradition. According to one researcher, the West emphasizes "military means to achieve political objectives of geographic and political expansion." In comparison, "China [has] a defensive military tradition."[88] Indeed the "vast majority of Western national [strategic] cultural traditions emphasize obtaining "material benefits" [*shiji liyi*] instead of "ethical thinking."[89] In fact, it is not uncommon for Chinese strategists to insist that Westerners have "no ethical principles."[90] According to one military scholar, China possesses a "continental culture" that stresses "moral self-cultivation," while most Western countries have "maritime cultures" that stress "courage, strength, and technology." Western countries tend to view war with an adventurous and "romantic attitude."[91]

Core features of U.S. strategic culture in Chinese eyes are expansionism and hegemonism. The United States, according to Li Jijun, has "greatly expanded its territory through several wars . . . and expanded its interests and influence throughout the world through two world wars and the Cold War." The U.S. strategic culture is "highly offensive oriented" [*fuyu jingongxing]*.[92] In the view of many Chinese analysts, the United States "tries to force other countries to accept its will through political and economic

measures." In short, the United States is acting like a hegemon in the Chinese view.[93]

Another element of American strategic culture is what might be dubbed cultural or ideological hegemonism that "makes promotion of its own values a major part of its global strategy."[94] The flip side of this element is a fervent anti-communism in the United States that most Chinese analysts believe persists in the post-Cold War era. Many Chinese analysts puzzled over the logic behind U.S. intervention in Kosovo: what possible strategic interests could Washington have in this area? Beijing analysts concluded the intervention was based on U.S. opposition to a communist regime in Belgrade.[95]

According to many Chinese strategic thinkers, the U.S. defense elite worships technology. The U.S. military seeks to overcome all challenges through advances in technology.[96] This is typified by President Ronald Reagan's belief that American ingenuity would develop space age or "Star Wars" technology to enable the United States to protect itself from Soviet missile attack. More recently, researchers in China see the worship of technology evident in the appeal of missile defense proposals and the use of "stand off" technology which gives U.S. forces the capacity to wage war at a distance. The latter enables the military to avoid face-to-face combat and greatly reduces the potential for casualties. According to one Chinese analyst writing in the official *People's Daily* in June 1999, the United States seized the opportunity presented by Kosovo for experimental usage of "high-tech weapons to attack . . . civilian facilities . . . [and] treat innocent and peaceful civilians as live targets."[97]

Another key feature of this cultural approach is the American predilection for "strategic misdirection [*zhanlue wudao*]."[98] This is used to refer to the feints and thrusts aimed at sending the opponent the wrong way. According to Li Jijun, during the Reagan and George Bush administrations, the United States used this to great effect

against the Soviet Union and against Iraq. Star Wars (or the Strategic Defense Initiative) is viewed primarily as a ruse—Washington never intended to deliver, but alarm over it prompted the Soviets to increase spending on defense that, in turn, contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet regime. Li Jijun argues that the United States deliberately led Sadam Hussein to believe that there would be no American intervention in the event Iraq invaded another state.

The outcome of this characterization of U.S. strategic culture is the suspicion and indeed assumption of many analysts in China that the United States is intent on pursuing a similar tack with China. For example, most Chinese analysts were very skeptical of the United States "intelligence failures" in the Indian nuclear tests of May 1998 and the Belgrade embassy bombing a year later. Many were convinced that both were devious plots to throw China off balance and refused to believe the official explanations offered by the U.S. Government.[99] After all, Washington's goal is assumed to be the destruction or dismemberment of China.

Chinese analysts, however, identify some prime weaknesses in American strategic culture. One flaw is inconsistency. This is the result of several factors. A number of Chinese analysts conclude that U.S. administrations flip-flop between realism and liberalism.[100] This contributes to a lack of long-term strategic vision. An important factor in the view of one thinker is the fact that "public opinion and national aspirations" are "important factors" in the formulation of U.S. "foreign and domestic policies, and military strategy." In short, "national attitudes toward war are directly linked to the outcome of strategy." Because public opinion, and to a lesser extent national aspirations, fluctuate, it is very difficult for the United States to maintain consistent policies and take a long-term view. A prime example in the analyst's view was the U.S. decision first to intervene in Somalia and then, in a sudden reversal of policy, to pull out of Somalia. Clinton's "new

interventionism" collapsed under adverse public reaction to U.S. fatalities on the ground.[101]

While the technological edge that the United States enjoys appears daunting, several analysts consider this reliance on technology to resolve all problems as an Achilles' heel. The U.S. military, for example, will find it difficult to keep up with rapidly changing technology for a number of reasons. First, there are significant political constraints: the cost in an era of declining defense budgets and interservice rivalry in the vicious competition for control over limited resources. Second, some analysts argue, the technological systems are so complex that they are difficult to operate and integrate within a larger system of systems. Third, Chinese analysts assert, high tech systems are vulnerable to disabling from external attack.[102] Fourth, U.S. arrogance inhibits the development of necessary innovations and the spread of technology will enable other states to acquire and utilize similar technology relatively quickly.[103]

A final weakness is a lack of understanding about the history and cultures of the rest of the world. Li Jijun quotes approvingly the judgement of another Chinese strategic thinker: "almost all U.S. politicians (strategists) have no sense of history at all."[104] While there is a deep admiration for realists (and friends of China) with this outlook such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Henry Kissinger, and the late Richard Nixon, who are seen as the exception to the rule, most U.S. leaders are viewed more disdainfully.[105]

Analysis.

China's dominant self-image (Confucian strategic culture) and its images of other states will be influential in how China fights and whom it prepares to confront. China's civil and military elites perceive China's strategic culture as pacific, anti-hegemonic, and purely defensive in nature. This self-image belies the nature of China's actual strategic culture—the outcome of a dialectic produced by two strands

of strategic culture: Confucian and Realpolitik. The value of strategic culture in discerning patterns in China's use of force lies not only in identifying the nature of, and explaining the impact of, China's actual strategic culture. Strategic culture can also be used to understand how China perceives the strategic traditions of other states and uses these assumptions/beliefs to formulate threat assessments.

China's Use of Force. China will use force quite readily, always insisting it is defensive in nature. The Cult of Defense articulated above reveals a cultural tendency in China to, on the one hand, see itself as a pacific, defensive-minded civilization, while on the other, defining just war and active defense in ways that actually predispose China to use force. Chinese elites also consider national unification as a core principle and, within that, the PLA sees itself shouldering a sacred trust—primary responsibility for returning Taiwan to the motherland.[106] The Chinese leadership also assumes that threats surround China and anti-China conspiracies abound.

The PRC leadership will continue to deploy armed forces to confront domestic challenges and counter perceived international threats. Domestically, the People's Armed Police will continue to serve as frontline troops to confront independent-minded ethnic minorities, disgruntled workers, and peasants. But the PLA is the ultimate guarantor of internal security, as the events of June 1989 revealed. At China's borders and beyond, the air, sea, and land services of the PLA will engage the militaries of other states perceived as hostile to the Chinese state.

Current Chinese Threat Perceptions. As the United States reassesses the security environment in Northeast Asia in the early 21st century, it is important to gain an appreciation for and understanding of Chinese threat perceptions. The Chinese leadership views the key enduring external threats to China as emanating from Washington and Tokyo, and they see both capitals as supporting Taiwan's ambitions of independence. Thus

Taiwan is the key flash point. The PLA is preparing to use force against the United States in a Taiwan scenario. After the deployment of two aircraft carrier battle groups in the 1996 Strait crisis, most senior officers in the PLA assume the United States will become involved in any Chinese military operation against Taiwan.[107]

Chinese leaders, grounded in culturally-based assumptions about U.S. and Japanese strategic thinking and intentions, perceive the United States as the key threat to China for the foreseeable future and Japan as the presumptive challenge to China.

U.S. Threat. Whatever the United States does will be viewed with suspicion by China, and Washington should anticipate hot blasts of harsh rhetoric. But these should not simply be dismissed as propaganda—these words are also the manifestation of real Chinese fears. These concerns are a combination of China's own strategic culture and its image of U.S. strategic culture. Given this, the logic of U.S. moves should be clearly articulated with the recognition that the rhetoric may not be accepted at face value. Any changes in the U.S. forward presence in the Asia-Pacific (Northeast Asia in particular) and in U.S. alliance structures should be undertaken with this in mind.

Future Threat: Fear of a Resurgent Japan. The United States should also be sensitive to Chinese concerns about Japanese rearmament, given Chinese images of Japan's strategic culture. Any draw down of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia would likely mean a corresponding rise in Japanese defense spending and buildup of strategic capabilities. This could easily raise tensions in the region and trigger an arms race.

China uses force to achieve specific political goals—usually not to achieve a resounding military victory but to send a warning or a message of deterrence or compellance. Certainly an important part of the reason why China does not seek a stunning battlefield victory is because its military resources are limited relative to its potential foes. But there

is an important cultural dimension that accounts for this way of thinking, and China's predilection for the limited use of force should not be confused with a reluctance to use force at all. In fact, since 1949 China deployed force in ways that reveal a tendency to take significant, albeit calculated, risks. In the Taiwan Strait crises of the 1950s, in the 1969 border clashes with the Soviet Union, and in the 1979 border war with Vietnam, China could not be 100 percent certain that any of these actions would not provoke an escalating response from a superpower.

China's emphasis on unification and perceptions of threats within the Chinese state suggest force will be used domestically. There remains a genuine possibility that force will be used to achieve unification with Taiwan. Certainly military means are not the most desirable option for Beijing, but the use of force may be viewed as necessary.[108] Moreover, Chinese perceptions of Japanese and American strategic cultures reveal a predisposition to make Tokyo and Washington the headquarters of states with menacing designs on China's sovereignty and security. In sum, strategic culture has important influence not only on *why* China uses force, but *where* and against *whom*.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. DEFENSE POLICY

As the September 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) notes, "Asia is gradually emerging as a region susceptible to large-scale military competition." The continent is increasingly important to U.S. security interests. Asia "contains a volatile mix of rising and declining powers" as the QDR also notes, and China is certainly the most significant rising power in the region.[109]

If the findings of this study are accurate, China's leaders and strategists are convinced that their country harbors no aggressive intentions towards other countries. Because China is a peace-loving country that only uses force in self-defense, its defense modernization and territorial claims regarding Taiwan in the East and South China Sea

should not alarm anyone. Beijing's leaders, in other words, tend to remain oblivious to the possibility that other countries might feel threatened or uneasy about China's growing military power, saber rattling in the Taiwan Strait, or increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

This study also reveals that the feelings of ambivalence and suspicion with which many in the United States view China are mirrored in China. That is, many in China's national security community hold similar views of ambivalence and suspicion about the U.S. strategic disposition vis-à-vis China.

Such mutual suspicion and distrust make it difficult—albeit not impossible—for the two sides to hold a meaningful dialogue and cooperate on security issues.

Recommendations.

1. **Any change in the size of the U.S. force presence in Northeast Asia should be carefully considered and the logic or rationale should be articulated clearly**. China could very easily misread a change in the size of the U.S. military presence in Northeast Asia. A reduction, for example, could be interpreted as a decline in U.S. commitment. Land power adjustments in particular should be considered very carefully, since the size of U.S. ground forces in Northeast Asia tends to be considered a very significant indicator of the depth of U.S. defense commitment to the area. There is nothing wrong with the concept of "places, not bases" but in terms of "dissuading adversaries" and "deterring aggression"—two of the "key goals" outlined by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in the QDR report—one should not underestimate the value of forward deployed ground forces. China, for example, interprets American "boots on the ground" as a key symbol of U.S. steadfastness. This is true not only in the case for the continued U.S. presence on the Korean Peninsula, but also in the dispatch of American ground forces to Central Asia in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

2. **Robust and agile forward deployed land power with in-theater experience is a key determinant of success in future conflicts.** As Rumsfeld stated in his January 30, 2002, speech at the National Defense University (NDU), one of the lessons he drew from phase one of the War on Terrorism in Afghanistan was "don't rule out ground forces." While technology and airpower were invaluable in Afghanistan, without the presence of ground forces in the country, these elements would have been far less effective. Defense transformation does not render "boots on the ground (or in the stirrup!)" obsolete. He stressed that defense transformation is about using "new and existing capabilities" and putting them "together in unprecedented ways." Moreover, the fact that Special Operations Forces had trained with colleagues in Uzbekistan was instrumental in facilitating the access of U.S. forces to the region and provided firsthand experience of operating in Central Asia.

3. **When making changes in the U.S.-Japan defense relationship, give due consideration to how this will be interpreted by China.** Any changes in U.S.-Japanese defense ties will be minutely scrutinized by Beijing. Almost certainly, Beijing will interpret virtually any change as resulting in a closer military alliance. Moreover, given the dominant Chinese perception of the strategic cultures of these two countries, Beijing will tend to conclude the change results in a greater threat to China.

4. **Any change in the policy of "strategic ambiguity" vis-à-vis Taiwan should be weighed very carefully.** If the policy of "strategic ambiguity" shifted toward "clarity," Beijing would almost certainly perceive this to be a serious strengthening of U.S. commitment to Taiwan.[110] In such a situation, Beijing could easily determine that there had been a qualitative change of policy toward Washington, one that called for a significant Chinese response. This might easily trigger some kind of military action by China. Even if China limited itself to a display of force short of an actual military attack on Taiwan,

the likely increase in tensions would have a negative impact throughout East Asia. It is important to recognize that the majority of security analysts in Beijing and Shanghai are convinced that, despite the current U.S. policy of "strategic ambiguity" in the event of an unprovoked Chinese attack on Taiwan, the United States would come to the island's defense.[111] Indeed, ambiguity does not refer to doubts about whether the United States is committed to Taiwan's security; rather, the ambiguity refers to what precisely would trigger U.S. intervention and what the nature of that intervention would be.

5. **Make protection of U.S. military C^4ISR assets and defense against information attacks a high priority**. China has identified technology, and information technology in particular, as an Achilles' heel of the United States. Exploiting this weakness is clearly a priority for the PLA identified by Chinese military researchers. While it is unclear just how far along China is in developing actual information warfare capabilities, the potential challenge from China must be taken seriously.[112] Significantly, Rumsfeld stressed the importance of "protecting information networks from attack" in his January speech at NDU. Upgrading the protection of U.S. defense information networks must be made a high priority.

6. **Carefully and continuously monitor Chinese strategic thinking and perceptions of the United States, Japan, and Taiwan.** Staying abreast of trends in Chinese strategic thought and perceptions of the United States, Japan, and Taiwan is a critical and continual challenge. Monitoring Chinese thinking on these subjects provides significant insights and indications of possible future courses of action. Military-to-military ties are a core component of this (see recommendation 7). It is also essential to keep up on the ever-growing number of books and periodicals published by the Chinese defense intellectual community. Since this presents an immense challenge to Pentagon analysts, tapping the expertise of outside experts becomes increasingly essential. The size

and publication output of the PLA watching community has also grown. A manageable way to keep current with their research is to consult the series of papers from two annual PLA conferences. One, founded by the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies (or CAPS—a Taiwan-based think tank) has in recent years been co-sponsored by the RAND Corporation, and the papers are published as edited volumes by RAND. The other was founded by the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute (AEI). In recent years this conference has been co-sponsored by the Heritage Foundation and the U.S. Army War College. Since 1999 the annual conference volume has been published by the War College's Strategic Studies Institute.

7. **Getting security cooperation with China back on a more routine footing should be a priority.** Resuming security cooperation or military-to-military relations between the Pentagon and the PLA is important because it opens up multiple channels of communications where members of the two armed forces can learn more about each other firsthand, and the myths and stereotypes each hold of the other can be dispelled. Routine does not mean that the program is not well-conceived and prudently tailored to serve the interests of U.S. national security. Rather, it means that security cooperation should not be subject to turbulence of day-to-day Washington politics and ad hoc tinkering. One way to help ensure this is to avoid those aspects that are likely to be controversial and prone to be cancelled whenever there is a downturn in the relationship.[113] For the United States, the Army is the service best suited to take the lead role in security cooperation.[114]

ENDNOTES

1. For discussion of strategic culture in general, see Alastair I. Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security*, Vol 19, No. 4, Spring 1995, pp. 32-64; Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996; and Ken Booth and Russell Trood, eds., *Strategic Cultures in the*

Asia-Pacific Region, Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999. For a recent critique of the approach, see Michael C. Desch, "Cultural Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security*, Vol. 23, Summer 1999, pp. 141-170. For discussion of the utility of strategic culture in security studies of China, see Robert S. Ross and Paul H. B. Godwin, "New Directions in Chinese Security Studies," in David Shambaugh, ed., *American Studies of Contemporary China*, Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1993, p. 144; and Samuel S. Kim, "China and the World in Theory and Practice," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *China and the World*, 3rd ed., Boulder: Westview Press, 1998, pp. 14-15.

2. On China's international relations, see the writings of John K. Fairbank and Mark Mancall; on China's military and security affairs, see John K. Fairbank, "Introduction," in Frank A. Kierman, Jr., and John K. Fairbank, eds., *Chinese Ways in Warfare,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.

3. Li Jijun, "*Lun zhanlue wenhua*," [on strategic culture] *Zhongguo junshi kexue* [China military science—hereafter ZGJSKX] No. 1, 1997, p. 8. See also Li Jijun, *Traditional Military Thinking and the Defense Strategy of China*, An address to the U.S. War College [sic] Letort Paper No. 1, Introduction by Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, August 29, 1997. For the Chinese language version, see Li Jijun, "Zhongguo junshi sixiang chuantong yu fangyu zhanlue," *Zhongguo junshi kexue* [China Military Science] No. 4, Winter 1997, pp. 62-64.

4. See also, for example, Ni Lexiong, *zhanzheng yu wenhua chuantong: dui lishi de ling yi zhong guancha* [war and cultural tradition: another perspective on history] Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian Chubanshe, March 2000.

5. Of course, this dynamic works both ways. See, for example, Susan M. Puska, *New Century, Old Thinking: The Dangers of the Perceptual Gap in U.S.-China Relations*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, April 10, 1998.

6. On images of the United States in the late 20th century, see for example, David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. For a more recent effort, see Phillip Saunders, "China's America Watchers," *The China Quarterly*, No. 161, March 2000, pp. 41-65. On images of Japan in the late 20th century, see Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989; and Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, Washington, DC: National

Defense University Press, 2000, pp. 107-138, 153. The role of culture in Chinese perceptions of the United States and Japan is downplayed, if not ignored. In his study of China's Americanists, David Shambaugh notes, "culture [is] . . . a factor that conditions the broader intellectual milieu shaping the America Watchers' perceptions." *Beautiful Imperialist,* p. 297. Shambaugh has several pages of discussion on this aspect, but culture is not the focus of his study. By contrast, in his study of Japan watchers in China, Allen Whiting completely downplays the influence of culturally influenced images. See *China Eyes Japan*. Michael Pillsbury discusses in passing the cultural dimension of Chinese perceptions of the United States and Japan. See Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future* . . . , pp. xlv-xlvi, for the United States, and 108-109, 153, for Japan.

7. Jack Snyder formulated the term "strategic culture" in an effort to understand the nuclear strategy of the Soviet Union. Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, September 1977. The term often goes undefined. The following examples are taken from the China literature, although these uses of strategic culture are not unique to China studies. See two studies by Shu Guang Zhang: *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992; and "China: Traditional and Revolutionary Heritage" in Ken Booth and Russell Trood, eds., *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1999, pp. 29-50. For broad definitions, see Ross and Godwin, "New Directions in Chinese Security Studies," p. 144. Rosita Dellios states: "Strategic culture pertains to a people's distinctive style of dealing with and thinking about the problems of national security." Rosita Dellios, "'How May the World Be at Peace?': Idealism as Realism in China's Strategic Culture," in Valerie M. Hudson, ed., *Culture and Foreign Policy*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997, p. 203. For a focused and rigorous definition, see Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in China History,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

8. Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

9. Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March*, New York: Cambridge University Press, chap. 2, forthcoming 2003; Andrew Scobell, "The Chinese Cult of Defense," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 5, September/October 2001, pp. 100-127.

10. Chong-Pin Lin, *China's Nuclear Strategy: Evolution Within Tradition*, Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1988.

11. Fairbank, "Introduction," in Fairbank and Kierman, eds., *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, pp. 1-26. For a similar type of argument which stresses the influence of Daoism, see Rosita Dellios, "How May the World Be at Peace?"

12. Jonathan R. Adelman and Chih-yu Shih, *Symbolic War: The Chinese Use of Force, 1840-1980,* Taipei: Institute for International Relations, 1993; Howard L. Boorman and Scott A. Boorman, "Strategy and National Psychology in China," *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 1967, pp. 143-155; Edward S. Boylan, "The Chinese Cultural Style of Warfare," *Comparative Strategy,* Vol. 3, No. 4, 1982, pp. 341-366.

13. See, for example, Davis B. Bobrow, "Peking's Military Calculus," *World Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1964, pp. 287-301; Steve Chan, "Chinese Conflict Calculus and Behavior: Assessment from the Perspective of Conflict Management," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 1978, pp. 391-410; Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975; Melvin Gurtov and Byung-Moo Hwang, *China Under Threat*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

14. Johnston, *Cultural Realism*; Alastair I. Johnson, "Cultural Realism and Grand Strategy in Maoist China," in Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security*. While the fullest articulation of the realpolitik approach by Iain Johnston discerns the presence of two strands of strategic culture (Confucian-Mencian and Parabellum), he asserts that only one—the parabellum—is operative. See also Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 4, September/October 1997, pp. 37-53; Mark Burles and Abraham N. Shulsky, *Patterns in China's Use of Force: Evidence from History and Doctrinal Writings*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2000. See in particular the appendix in this RAND monograph.

15. Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chap. 2.

16. This depiction of China's strategic culture draws heavily on a larger study of China's use of force funded by the Smith Richardson Foundation. See Scobell, "The Chinese Cult of Defense"; and Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chap. 2. The cult of defense is a refinement of the "Cult of the Offensive" concept. See Jack Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Summer 1984, pp. 108-146; and Stephen Van

Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Summer 1984, pp. 58-107. Unlike the conception of Snyder and Van Evera which has bureaucratic/organizational origins, the Chinese Cult of Defense is grounded in psycho-cultural mindset. The concept of a "Cult of Defense" owes intellectual debts to the work of Stephen Van Evera, Jack Snyder, and Shu Guang Zhang. See Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953,* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

17. Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chap. 2.

18. Lawrence Freedman, cited in Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, p. 6.

19. The extent to which these ideas are prevalent throughout Chinese society, while important to ascertain, is not central to my analysis. Here I concentrate on China's civilian and military elites. Nevertheless, such beliefs seem widespread within China. "The self-perception of China as a pacific, nonthreatening country that wishes nothing more than to live in peace with its neighbors is extremely common in China, both among the elite and ordinary people." John Garver, quoted in Nayan Chanda, "Fear of the Dragon," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 13, 1995, p. 24.

20. The cluster of beliefs outlined below appears to be held by a significant number of leaders in China. The cult of defense articulated here is derived from writings published primarily in the 1980s and 1990s, and from interviews conducted in 1998 and 2000.

21. "White Paper on China's National Defense," Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service, July 27, 1998, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Reports-China Daily Report* (hereafter *FBIS-CHI*)-July 29, 1998.

22. "Liu Huaqing On the Stand of the Military Towards Taiwan," *Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong), September 4, 1995, in *FBIS-CHI*, September, 7, 1995.

23. Xing Shizhong, "China Threat Theory May Be Forgotten," *Quishi* [Seeking truth], No. 3, February 1996, in *FBIS-CHI*, February 1, 1996. See also Gao Jiquan, "China Holds High Banner of Peace," *Jiefangjun Bao* (Liberation Army Daily) June 27, 1996, in *FBIS-CHI*-96-133.

24. Li Jijun, "*Lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 9.

25. *Ibid*. See also Chen Zhou, "*Zhongguo xiandai jubu zhanzheng lilun yu Meiguo youxian zhanzheng lilun zhi butong,*" [Differences between China's theory of modern local war and America's theory of limited war], ZGJSKX, No. 4, 1995, p. 6; Interviews with civilian and military researchers in Beijing and Shanghai, May-June 1998 [hereafter "Interviews, 1998"].

26. The five principles, first outlined by Zhou Enlai in the 1950s, are mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, nonaggression, noninterference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

27. Wu Xinbo, "China: Security Practice of a Modernizing and Ascending Power," in Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice*, pp. 121-122.

28. Wang Zhongyan and Cui Haiming, "*Deng Xiaoping de junshi sixiang chutan*' [Preliminary exploration of Deng Xiaoping's military thought] in Pan Shiying, chief editor, *Dangdai Zhongguo Junshi Sixiang Jingyao* [The Essence of Contemporary Chinese Military Thinking], Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1992, p. 121. See also Peng Dehuai, "*Junshi jianshe gaikuang*" [General situation of military construction], July 16, 1957, in *Peng Dehuai Junshi Wenxuan* [Collected Military Works of Peng Dehuai], Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1988, p. 588.

29. Deng Xiaoping, "*Muqian de xingshi he renwu*" [Present situation and tasks], January 16, 1980, in *Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan (1975-1982)* [Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping 1975-1982], Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1984, pp. 203-204.

30. Wang and Cui, "Deng Xiaoping de junshi," p. 121; interviews, 1998.

31. Another example offered is the way ethnic Chinese cooperated with the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty. The Chinese, for instance, according to one military scholar, did not object to shaving their heads and wearing queues! Interviews.

32. See the succinct discussion in Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1997, p. 5.

33. "Liu Huaqing Refutes Argument," p. 31. See also Xing Shizhong, "China Threat Theory May be Forgotten."

34. Deng Xiaoping, "*Muqian de xingshi he renwu*," pp. 203-204.

35. The importance of these concepts was stressed by Chinese researchers during interviews I conducted in May and June 1998.

36. Li Jijun, "*Lun junshi zhanlue siwei*" [On military strategic thinking], ZGJSKX, No. 2, 1996, p. 78.

37. Gao Jiquan, "China Holds High Banner of Peace."

38. Li Jijun, "*Lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 10; interviews, 1998.

39. Li Jijun, "*Lun junshi zhanlue siwei*," p. 78; Li Jijun, "*Zhongguo junshi sixiang chuantong*," p. 62; interviews.

40. Li Jijun, "*Zhongguo junshi sixiang chuantong*," p. 63.

41. Li Jijun, "*Lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 9. See also Li Jijun, "*Zhongguo junshi sixiang chuantong*," p. 63.

42. Li Jijun, "*Lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 9; interviews, 1998.

43. Yao Youzhi, "*Gudai Zhong-Xi junshi chuantong zhi bijiao*" [A comparison of Chinese and Western ancient military traditions], ZGJSKX, No. 3, 1995, pp. 93-94.

44. Author's interviews with civilian and military researchers in Beijing and Shanghai, September 2000 [hereafter "Interviews 2000."].

45. "Liu Huaqing on Stand of Military Towards Taiwan."

46. Li Jijun, "*Lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 10; Chen Zhou, "*Zhongguo xiandai jubu zhanzheng*," p. 45; Xing Shizhong, "China Threat Theory May Be Forgotten"; Gao Jiquan, "China Holds High Banner of Peace"; Xiong Guangkai, "*Zhongguo de guofang zhengce*," [China's national defense policy], *Guoji Zhanlue Yanjiu* [International Strategic Studies], No. 55, January 2000, p. 4; interviews 1998.

47. "*Huijian Yidali jizhe Naxi.Polasishi de tanhua jiyao*' (17 August 1980) [Summary of a talk in an interview with Italian journalist . . . .] in *Xu Xiangqian Junshi Wenxuan* [Selected Military Works of Xu Xiangqian], Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1993, p. 305.

48. Zhang Jing and Yao Yanjin, *Jiji Fangyu Zhanlue Qianshuo* [Introduction to Active Defense Strategy], Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1985, p. 137.

49. See, for example, Junshi Kexueyuan Junshi Lishi Yanjiubu, ed., *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun de qishinian* [Seventy years of the Chinese People's Liberation Army], Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, 1997, pp. 541-547, 580-582. Moreover, China's intervention in Korea in October 1950 was also a counterattack, since in Beijing's view the United States had made the first aggressive moves against China on the Korean Peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait. Song Shilun, *Mao Zedong Junshi Sixiang de Xingcheng Jiqi Fazhan* [Formation and Development of Mao Zedong's Military Thought], Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, 1984, p. 222.

50. For a discussion of just war in the Confucian tradition, see Huang Pumin, "*Rujia junshi sixiang yu Zhongguo gudai junshi wenhua chuantong*" [Confucian military thinking and the military cultural tradition of ancient China], ZGJSKX, No. 4, Winter 1997, pp. 73-74.

51. Wang Zhiping and Li Dezhou, "*Zhong-Xi gudai junshi lilun de zhexue jichu*" (Philosophical foundation of Chinese and Western military theories in ancient times), ZGJSKX, No. 4, 1995, pp. 30-31, 34-35; Yao Youzhi, "*Gudai Zhong-Xi junshi chuantong*," pp. 95-96.

52. Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy," pp. 231-232. The theme of just or righteous war was a significant one in many popular histories and novels that Mao—and other leaders—read. See *ibid*., p. 247.

53. A first strike is only just if China can claim that the attack was launched to preempt an attack being prepared by an opponent.

54. Ted K. Gong, *China: Tradition, Nationalism and Just War*, Strategic Research Project, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, January 17, 1999, p. 23.

55. *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun junguan shouce (lujun fence)* [Chinese People's Liberation Army officer handbook (landpower edition)], Qingdao: Qingdao Chubanshe, 1991, p. 221.

56. See Bruce Cummings, *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1999, p. 166.

57. Li Jijun, "International Military Strategy and China's Security at the Turn of the Century," *Zhongguo Pinglun* (Hong Kong), August 5, 1998, in *FBIS*, August 13, 1998.

58. Fan Yihua, "*Shi lun Zhongguo xiandai sixiang wenhua de xing chao ji zhanlue qu*" [on the form and strategic trend of modern thought culture in China], ZGJSKX, No. 1, 1997, p. 26.

59. See, for example, Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, New York: Random House, 1994; Liz Sly, "A State of Paranoia*," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September/October 1999, pp. 38-43; Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2000.

60. On the corruption campaign, see John Schauble, "China's Communists Fear the Enemy from Within," *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 27, 2000, p. 8. See also more generally, Sly, "A State of Paranoia."

61. For recent use of this slogan, see, for example, Gao Jiquan, "China Holds High Banner of Peace," *Jiefangjun Bao*, June 27, 1996 in *FBIS*, July 12, 1996.

62. *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun junguan shouce (lujun fence),* p. 199.

63. The 1969 clash with the Soviet Union and the 1979 Vietnam conflict are similarly labeled. *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun junguan shouce (lujun fence),* pp. 514-515.

64. Iain Johnston contends that the term "defense" is employed for propaganda purposes so that every military action can be labeled as defense and hence more justified than anything called "offensive." See Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy," pp. 249-250, especially footnote 63.

65. Chen Zhou, "*Zhongguo xiandai jubu zhanzheng*," p. 46. See also Mi Zhenyu, "*Zhongguo jiji fangyu zhanlue fangzhen*" (China's strategic plan of active defense), in Shi Boke, ed.*, Zhongguo Daqushi* (Megatrends China), Beijing: Hualing Chubanshe, 1996, p. 53.

66. Senior Colonel Wang Naiming, "Adhere to Active Defense and Modern People's War," in Michael Pillsbury, ed., *Chinese Views of Future Warfare,* Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1997, p. 37.

67. Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. 102 ff.

68. Jianxiang Bi, "The PRC's Active Defense Strategy: New Wars, Old Concepts," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 11, November 1995, p. 94.

69. Chen Zhou, "*Zhongguo xiandai jubu zhanzheng*," p. 46. See also Nan Li, "The PLA's Evolving Warfighting Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics, 1985-95: A Chinese Perspective," *The China Quarterly*, No. 146, June 1996, pp. 443-463.

70. Li Jiaquan, "Where are the Chinese People's Feelings?" *Renmin ribao* [People's Daily] (Beijing), June 17, 1994.

71. On the duality of Chinese views of Japan, see Whiting, *China Eyes Japan,* pp. 27-28. On Japan as a model, see *ibid*., chapter 5.

72. See Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, p. 133.

73. See, for example, Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations*, Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1999, p. 65.

74. Li, "*lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 11-12; "*Riben junshi sixiang" (Japanese Military Thought), entry in Zhongguo Junshi Baikequan Shubian Shen Weiyuanhui, compiler, Zhongguo Junshi Baike Quanshu*, Vol. 1, *Junshi sixiang*, Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, 1997, p. 246 [hereafter *Zhongguo Junshi Baike Quanshu*].

75. Li Jijun, "*lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 12. This image was reinforced by the author's interviews with civilian and military analysts in Beijing and Shanghai, September 2000.

76. *Ibid*.

77. Interviews, 2000.

78. Li Jijun, "*lun zhanlue wenhua*," pp. 11, 13.

79. See, for example, *Zhongguo Junshi Baike Quanshu*, 1:246-247; interviews, 2000.

80. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, p. 148. The belief in a "Japanese cultural tendency toward aggression" seems widespread among Chinese strategic thinkers. This quote is from a recent book by a PRC-born international relations scholar who is now based in the United States: Suisheng Zhao, *Power Competition in East Asia: From the Old Chinese World Order to Post-Cold War Regional Multipolarity*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 219.

81. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan*, pp. 127, 196; interviews, 2000.

82. *Ibid*., p. 7; Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future*, pp. 113-114.

83. Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist*, pp. 297-298.

84. See, for example, Allen S. Whiting, "The PLA and China's Threat Perceptions," *The China Quarterly*, No. 146, June 1996, pp. 607-609; Mel Gurtov and Byung Moo Hwang, *China's Security: the New Roles of the Military*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998, pp. 70-73.

85. Andrew Scobell, "Show of Force: Chinese Soldiers, Statesmen, and the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-1996," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 2, Summer 2000, p. 241. But this belief is not limited to soldiers. According to a leading civilian America watcher:

> The enduring, unchanging fundamental goal of the U.S. strategy on China is to change China. The U.S. Government and U.S. strategists and politicians firmly believe that the phenomenon of the "fall of the Berlin Wall" will happen again in China sooner or later. The U.S. strategy on China is based on the idea that China will change, and the fundamental purpose is to promote China's evolution in the direction wanted by the United States, that is, to Westernize China.

Chu Shulong, "China's National Interest, National Power, and National Strategy," *zhanlue yu guanli*, August 1, 1999, in *FBIS*, October 26, 1999.

86. Zhu Chenghu, chief editor, *Zhongmei guanxi de fazhan bianhua ji qi qushi* [Changing developments and trends in China-U.S. relations], Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe, 1998, p. 194.

87. Cited in Li Tzu-ching, "The Chinese Military Clamors for War: Vowing to Have a Fight with the United States," *Cheng Ming*, Hong Kong, June 1, 1999, in *FBIS*, June 28, 1999. More than likely, these news reports are somewhat sensationalized and embellished. Nevertheless, given the outrage and anger in China over the May 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, the account in *Cheng Ming* is quite plausible. See also, Li Tzu-ching, "CPC Thinks China and U.S. Will Eventually Go to War," *Cheng Ming*, May 1, 1997, in *FBIS*-011-97-126. This article is also quoted by Pillsbury, *China Views the Future*, p. xxii.

88. Fan Yihua, "*Shi lun Zhongguo xiandai sixiang wenhua de xingchao ji zhanlue qu*," pp. 23, 22.

89. Wang Xuhe, "*Jianyi minzu wenhua dui junshi zhanlue de yingxiang*" [comment on the influence of national culture on military strategic thinking], ZGJSKX, No. 1, 1997, p. 44.

90. Peng Huaidong, "*Lun zhan Xi Zhan-Zhong guan zhi yancha yi*," [on the basic differences between Chinese and Western viewpoints of war], ZGJSKX, No. 1, 1997, p. 127.

91. Peng Huaidong, "*Lun zhan Xi Zhan-Zhong guan zhi yancha yi*," p. 127; interviews, September 2000.

92. Li Jijun, "*lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 14.

93. Interviews, 2000.

94. Li Jijun, "*lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 12.

95. Interviews, 2000.

96. Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Chaoxian zhan* [unrestricted warfare], Beijing: Jiefangjun Wenyi Chubanshe, February 1999, pp. 96-101.

97. Observer, "We Urge Hegemonism Today To Take a Look At the Mirror of History," *People's Daily,* June 22, 1999, cited in Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future*, p. 101.

98. This paragraph is drawn from Li Jijun, "*lun zhanlue wenhua*," pp. 14-15. See also, Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future*, pp. xlv-xlvi.

99. The information on Chinese perceptions of Indian nuclear tests of May 1998 come from author's interviews with civilian and military researchers in Beijing and Shanghai, May-June 1998. On Chinese perceptions of the May 1999 bombing of its Belgrade Embassy, see Li Tzu-ching, "The Chinese Military Clamors for War"; and Scobell, "Show of Force," p. 241.

100. Interviews, 2000.

101. Wang Xuhe, "*Jianyi minzu wenhua dui junshi zhanlue de yingxiang,"* p. 45.

102. Han Shengmin, ed*., Zouxiang 21 shiji waiguo junshi jianshe* [foreign military construction as the 21st century draws near], Beijing: Junshi Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 1996, pp. 47-48, cited in Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future*, pp. 66-67.

103. Zhu Xiaoli and Zhao Xiaozhuo, *Mei-E xin junshi geming* [the new revolution in military affairs in the United States and Russia], Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, 1996, pp. 41-45, cited in Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future*, p. 67.

104. Li Jijun, "*lun zhanlue wenhua*," p. 14.

105. Interviews, September 2000.

106. Scobell, "Show of Force," p. 240.

107. Author's interviews in Beijing and Shanghai with civilian and military researchers, February-March 2000; Scobell, "Show of Force." However, a minority of researchers appear to believe that the United States would blink.

108. Andrew Scobell, *Chinese Army Building in the Era of Jiang Zemin*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, September 2000, p. 26.

109. *Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, September 2001, p. 4.

110. Indeed, China reacted strongly to Bush's remarks in late April 2001 that the United States would do "whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself." See, for example, Philip P. Pan, "China 'Concerned' By Bush Remark: Beijing Says U.S. Drifting Down a Dangerous Road," *Washington Post*, April 27, 2001. The author witnessed this reaction first hand at a conference in early May 2001. Chinese participants insisted that Bush's statement was the end of "strategic ambiguity."

111. Andrew Scobell, *The U.S. Army and the Asia-Pacific*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, April 2001, p. 11. This does not mean that China would be completely deterred from launching an operation against Taiwan, but it does make Chinese military planning much more complicated and significantly lessens the probability of success.

112. Toshi Yoshihara, *Chinese Information Warfare: Phantom Menace or Emerging Threat?* Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, November 20001; Mark Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization: Implications for the United States,* Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, September 1999.

113. For more detailed discussion of security cooperation with China, see Scobell, *The U.S. Army and the Asia-Pacific*, pp. 31-32.

114. On why the Army is suited for this lead role, see Scobell, *The U.S. Army and the Asia-Pacific*, pp. 31-32.

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