

The Emergent Security Threats Reshaping China's Rise

A steady stream of research and analysis over the last two decades has flowed from the near consensus in the U.S. foreign policy community that, in the words of the U.S. National Intelligence Council, “few countries are poised to have more impact on the world over the next 15-20 years than China.”¹ Yet many of these efforts to foretell China’s future behavior have paid disproportionate attention to divining Beijing’s “strategic intentions.” This approach offers only limited insight into the factors that will ultimately determine how China pursues its interests and exerts global influence. It profoundly overestimates the importance of present intentions as a guide to future behavior, and severely underestimates the constraints that China’s security environment will place upon Beijing’s decisionmakers.

Gaining a handle on the likely trajectories of China’s rise will instead require a deeper understanding of the emergent threats to which Beijing will be forced to respond, regardless of its own designs. The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) policies of privileging economic growth and noninterference are engendering a new set of potential security threats that include: 1) international terrorism; 2) foreign instability and state failure overseas; and 3) overtly anti-Chinese regimes. The result will be a refashioning of China’s foreign policy agenda beyond its traditional security concerns. Beijing is undoubtedly amassing the means to exert influence in international politics, but regardless of its strategic intentions today, its rapidly evolving threat environment will play a decisive role in determining how China brings these resources to bear. Confronted with

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serious questions about China's impending effect on international security—where it will fight wars, who will be its future allies and adversaries, and whether it will jettison its current policy of non-intervention—it is necessary to look beyond intentions and toward China's future threat environment.

Emergent Threats to China

Beijing's foreign policy priorities are clearly articulated in official government documents and have been underscored by China's international behavior.² In order to ensure the survival of the CCP, the government in Beijing has sought to maintain a peaceful international and regional environment conducive to continued economic expansion. Ensuring economic growth has further necessitated the search for suppliers of raw materials and energy resources, as well as for new opportunities for trade and investment. At the same time, the ruling regime has placed enormous emphasis on defending China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, thereby seeking to preclude foreign interference in what Beijing's considers its internal affairs—including in Taiwan and Tibet—and those

of its diplomatic and economic partners. As a result, Beijing has eschewed governance issues in its foreign relations, and has sought to undermine liberal international norms that afford states the right and responsibility to protect individual political freedoms beyond their borders.³

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Terrorism

This approach to international politics is surely welcomed by a number of regimes in the developing world that wish to avoid foreign intervention, and by those that have benefited from the infusion of Chinese money, jobs, and infrastructure projects. Nevertheless, Beijing's permissive attitude toward non-democratic principles and singular focus on domestic economic development have become potential sources of blowback, including the specter of international terrorism as just one example. This threat, which is one of the most serious challenges facing Beijing, is aggravated by the fact that China's integration into the global economy has naturally meant a growing number of Chinese companies and expatriates in foreign lands—or in other words, an ever-expanding target set for those wishing to attack Chinese assets. From pipelines in Kazakhstan to refineries in Nigeria to ports in Sri Lanka, soft power begets soft targets.

The potential for terrorism directed at Chinese interests stems from several sources. The most immediate are separatist forces, within the Muslim Uighur

population in western China, which seek to establish an East Turkestan state. During the 1990s, successful independence movements in Central Asia, combined with the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, offered both moral and material support to similar elements in China. Since then, Islamist organizations in Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere along the Chinese border reportedly have provided weapons to pro-secessionist groups in Xinjiang.⁴ After the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Beijing has made repeated attempts to draw linkages between, on one hand, al Qaeda or the Taliban and, on the other, Central Asian terrorists and Uighur separatists.⁵ Although some analysts have suggested that Beijing's alarm greatly outstrips the actual threat from the Uighur minority,⁶ Chinese nationals have been victims of attacks, both on domestic soil and in neighboring Central Asian countries. In a January 2002 report, the Information Office of the State Council estimated that, in the preceding decade, China had suffered "over 200 terrorist incidents in Xinjiang, resulting in the deaths of 162 people."⁷ The United States itself captured enemy Uighur fighters during the early stages of the war in Afghanistan.

The separatist threat is hardly new, and Beijing would be fortunate if the terrorism story ended there. Instead, if left to fester, it could become a problem of international scope. Although the CCP has significant capacity to control, monitor, and ultimately suppress actors such as Uighur separatists within its borders, the same cannot be said of

China's policies and priorities are engendering a new set of potential security threats.

threats overseas. Beijing's repressive policies in Xinjiang have begun to draw the ire of better-organized and more dangerous extremist organizations. Terrorist groups in Central Asia have openly declared their goal of overthrowing existing governments and replacing them with an Islamic caliphate that would include parts of western China.⁸ Ayman al-Zawahiri, al Qaeda's second-in-command, has referred to the plight of the Uighurs in calling for global jihad.⁹ Farther afield, in the wake of July 2009 riots in Urumqi, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb released a statement pledging to exact revenge by attacking Chinese workers and businesses across northwest Africa.¹⁰ Condemning the lack of religious freedom in China, Abu Yahya al-Libi, a key al Qaeda figure, turned his attention toward China and predicted a defeat similar to that of the Soviet Union, noting, "The state of atheism is heading to its fall. It will face what befell the Russian bear."¹¹

Compounding foreign perceptions of anti-Muslim policies at home, Beijing's support for repressive governments in the Islamic world provides additional motivation for anti-Chinese terrorism. The abundance of energy resources in the

Middle East has made the region of enormous interest to China. Perhaps most significantly, Beijing's relations with Riyadh have blossomed during the last decade. What began as tentative investments in oil, natural gas, and mineral deposits has grown into a broader relationship encompassing trade, finance, and technical accords.¹² As these ties mature, it seems only a matter of time before China ranks among the "far enemies" of Osama bin Laden and other Saudi dissidents. Burgeoning Saudi-Sino relations are not unique; Beijing is nurturing similar economic and strategic linkages with Hosni Mubarak's regime in Egypt.

International terrorism could also arise from outside the Arab world, where Chinese extraction of natural resources is sometimes perceived as a national affront, regardless of the economic benefits accrued to the host country. Days after President Hu Jintao signed a series of oil deals with his Nigerian counterpart, Olusegun Obasanjo, local militants warned that "Chinese citizens found in oil installations will be treated as thieves. The Chinese government by investing in stolen crude places its citizens in our line of fire."¹³ Such attacks are already all too

common, with *Newsweek* reporting that "kidnappings, killings, and death threats have plagued Chinese workers from the Niger Delta to the eastern reaches of Ethiopia."¹⁴

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Weak or Isolated Partners

Beyond international terrorism, China's overseas interests are also threatened by the potential for political instability, state failure, or international interference in several of its most valued partners. Beijing's willingness to

work with illegitimate or unstable governments derives in part from the sizeable demands of its voracious economy. This is particularly true in energy resources and minerals, where the materials China needs are often buried in politically unstable countries.¹⁵ To name just a few, China imports oil from Angola, bauxite from Guinea, and natural gas from Turkmenistan. Operating in countries with weak political institutions, unreliable legal systems, and uncertain economic futures, Chinese companies are already accruing considerable overdue payments from local governments.¹⁶

Supply disruptions caused by civil war, revolution, or social unrest could do additional harm to China's economic interests and investments. This gives China an unfortunate stake in the preservation of these regimes. Beijing already supplies arms to four of the top five countries in *Foreign Policy* magazine's 2010 "Failed States Index"—Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹⁷ These countries rank among the most violent and unstable in the world, making Chinese interests highly vulnerable to local and regional

forces that could upend domestic stability in those countries. Although partnering with these regimes is relatively easy at the outset, the costs will only mount over time. As China's economic and political investments expand, Beijing will face increasing pressure to sink additional resources into propping up governments that might otherwise fall.

In part to defend its overseas interests, Beijing has also pursued a policy of non-interference in the domestic politics of foreign governments, carrying out an opportunistic strategy of cutting deals with regimes—such as those in Burma, Iran, North Korea, and Sri Lanka—precisely when they are otherwise shunned by the international community. These countries have welcomed China's support with open arms, and have benefited from Beijing's willingness to overlook domestic abuses in the name of economic development and regional stability. All too often, Beijing has then provided material assistance and used its seat on the UN Security Council to stymie international investigation and condemnation of human rights violations or weapons proliferation.

This was the case in Sri Lanka, where Beijing provided weapons and diplomatic cover to Colombo to launch full-scale military operations against the Tamil Tigers in 2008. China's support was crucial to the regime's ultimate victory, and came after much of the international community, including the United States, had withdrawn its support due to human rights concerns.¹⁸ Likewise, Chinese economic activities with isolated regimes have at times successfully undermined the influence of regional players or multilateral initiatives. Nigeria's minister of foreign affairs, for example, recently blamed Beijing for undercutting international efforts to pressure authoritarian regimes in Africa: "We can't start thinking of imposing sanctions on Guinea or Niger for bad governance and then they [China] go behind us and strike some other deals."¹⁹

This pattern of partnering with isolated or rogue regimes has negative consequences for Beijing. There are obvious reputational costs, such as when critics of China's relationship with Sudan protested the Olympic torch relay in 2008 and sought to recast the Summer Games as the "Genocide Olympics."²⁰ Ultimately, China's economic interests and political allies in these countries remain vulnerable to international sanction. Should China continue to interfere with multilateral initiatives, countries may reject Beijing's desire for the international community to keep its distance, as eventually occurred when additional UN sanctions were placed on Iran. If China continues choosing to work with gross violators of human rights, it is

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unlikely that it will be able to shield its economic and political investments indefinitely.

Anti-Chinese Governments

On top of the diplomatic and financial fallout that could result from destabilization in any of these countries, Beijing may also face the emergence of explicitly anti-Chinese governments. Beijing's willingness to offer security assistance and hefty investments to decidedly non-democratic regimes elevates the potential of confronting a future state adversary. New governments may turn on Beijing in response to its legacy of working with prior oppressors, particularly after revolution or democratization. The United States, for instance, has paid dearly for supporting autocratic governments in countries such as Cuba, Iran, and Nicaragua.²¹ By overtly avoiding human-rights issues and self-consciously parading its no-strings-attached assistance, China is positioning itself to confront similar forms of political blowback.

Henning Melber, a former activist in Africa who now heads the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Sweden, described the rise of anti-Chinese sentiments in simple terms: "It's because the Chinese are seen as backing the governments in oppressing their own people."²² Some leaders have advertised this support from China quite publicly. In 2006, Zimbabwean strongman Robert Mugabe warned his opposition that, "We want to remind those who might harbor any plans of turning against the government: be warned, we have armed men and women who can pull the trigger. . . The defense forces have benefited from the government's Look East policy through which they have not only acquired new equipment, but also learned new military strategies."²³

Beijing may believe it can escape this dilemma by investing in visible infrastructure projects which benefit common citizens. To its credit, China's economic growth and diplomatic emphasis on development have produced greater levels of aid, trade, and investment in certain parts of the developing world. The benefits of these activities, however, are not always distributed evenly. Where corruption and inequality prevail, China's rise has meant different things to different people. Journalist Yaroslav Trofimov explained that, "African leaders still hail China's burgeoning involvement as a solution to Africa's woes and a welcome alternative to the West. But among ordinary Africans, appreciation of this unprecedented influx of Chinese investments, products and settlers isn't nearly as uniform."²⁴

Despite the potential for economic gain, doing business with China has sometimes resulted in grievances such as low wages, local corruption, poor safety standards, and an influx of cheap Chinese goods that displace local products.²⁵ In Angola, for example, where other companies such as Chevron draw nearly

90 percent of their workforce from the local population, Chinese oil companies have been reported to employ less than 15 percent Angolan labor.²⁶ These phenomena have sparked accusations that China is engaging in a new form of economic colonialism. The Libyan foreign minister reflected on these trends in December 2009, remarking, "When we look at the reality on the ground we find that there is something akin to a Chinese invasion of the African continent."²⁷

These sentiments probably could be ameliorated if Chinese companies hired more local workers, raised wages, and pursued safety and environmental standards (in fact, some have already taken these steps). But Beijing has enough trouble enforcing responsible business practices at home, and has proven even less able to regulate the behavior of Chinese firms once they go abroad.²⁸ Add in prejudiced and racist attitudes by and against overseas Chinese nationals, and you have a noxious mix likely to exacerbate the ill effects of China's growing economic reach.

The most pronounced example of this dynamic to date is occurring in Zambia, where China has invested heavily in the copper industry. In November 2008, following a series of deadly accidents and incidents at Chinese-owned factories, opposition leader Michael Sata posed a major challenge in Zambia's presidential election by running on an overtly anti-Chinese platform.²⁹ Sata hit on emotive nationalist themes in his campaign, proclaiming that, "We've removed one foreign power and we don't want another foreign power here, especially one that is not a democracy."³⁰ Although Sata did not win nationally, he dominated in the capital of Lusaka and the Copperbelt, two regions where Chinese merchants and investors are more visible.³¹

As the 2011 general elections approach, Sata again is spouting anti-Chinese rhetoric as the leader of the opposition Patriotic Front party.³² Sata's task has been made easier by ongoing clashes at Chinese-owned facilities. In October 2010, Chinese managers of a mine in southern Sinazongwe province opened fire on Zambian workers who were protesting low wages and poor working conditions.³³ At least 11 were hospitalized. Less than a week later, Zambian Defense Minister Kalombo Mwansa was in Beijing vowing to advance military ties with China and reiterating Zambia's support on the issues of Taiwan, Tibet, and human rights.³⁴ In the wake of these events, Sata denounced the ruling government, proclaiming that, "We know we can't be protected by this government because it has been heavily corrupted by the Chinese."³⁵ To China's potential detriment, its economic penetration overseas is emerging as a domestic political issue in parts of the developing world, and populist or revolutionary political entrepreneurs are likely to capitalize in similar fashion on nationalist and xenophobic sentiments.

Finally, through traditional state-to-state politics, China may also engender adversaries as a result of ultimately being forced to take a stand on internationally contentious issues. Nonalignment is fine in theory, but is increasingly difficult to practice for a permanent member of the UN Security Council with rapidly expanding economic and security interests. Even apolitical economic cooperation—with countries such as Cuba, North Korea, or Venezuela—can be highly political (and controversial) actions in and of themselves. Similarly, in regions such as the Middle East that are wrought with rivalry and conflict, it will be tremendously challenging for Beijing to simultaneously maintain positive relations with Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. At some point, supporting one regime will mean opposing another. All this is not to predict a widespread phenomenon of anti-Chinese regimes around the world, but it will only take a few to cause major headaches in Beijing. Taken together, China is bound to face an extremely complex future threat environment, to be filled with some combination of terrorists, failed states, discontented publics, and outright adversaries.

With Eyes Wide Shut?

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Leaders in Beijing are not naïve about the security implications of amassing international power and influence. In fact, never has a country been so deliberate in its rise to great power status. Chinese bookstores and blogs are riddled with discussions about the lessons learned from historical hegemons and imperialists. In November 2006, Chinese Central Television, the official mouthpiece of the government, aired an extremely popular 12-part documentary on the rise of great powers. It was three years in the making and replete with interviews with the likes of Paul Kennedy and Joseph Stiglitz.³⁶ Chinese academics have organized seminars, study groups, and book series on the subject.³⁷ Drawing in part from these analyses, the CCP has sought to formulate a national security strategy which avoids the trappings of imperial overstretch and alliance politics, while preventing China from creating deleterious security dilemmas that could lead to military rivalry and economic competition. This has meant pursuing positive relations with governments abroad and aiming to co-opt, weaken, or divide forces which might otherwise contain its rise.

The consequences of such caution and prudence are manifest: continuing references to Deng Xiaoping's philosophy of "hiding capabilities and biding one's time" (*tao guang, yang hui*); the "New Security Concept" introduced in the 1990s which emphasized "dialogue and cooperation" over the use of force;³⁸ the resulting mantra of "peaceful rise" giving way to "peaceful development;" the near-obsession with checking any and all expositions of "China threat theory;" and the general reluctance to engage in military operations or punitive international sanctions which could breed antagonism from other states. Zheng Bijian, former vice-chair of the Central Party School, has assured the West that, "China will not follow the path of Germany leading up to World War I or those of Germany and Japan leading up to World War II, when these countries violently plundered resources and pursued hegemony. Neither will China follow the path of the great powers vying for global domination during the Cold War. Instead, China will transcend ideological differences to strive for peace, development, and cooperation with all countries of the world."³⁹ To its credit, Beijing has been relatively successful to date at preventing the emergence of major power adversaries and counterbalancing coalitions, but even international politics with Chinese characteristics has produced new obstacles. Despite its best efforts at pursuing peace, stability, and "win-win" relationships, China's approach to domestic and foreign policies has created an accompanying set of potential threats.

Beijing has taken steps to both alleviate and suppress these challenges, but the underlying dynamics continue to prevail. The CCP will increasingly find itself dealing with threats that result, at least in part, from its particular style of prioritizing political stability and economic growth in its international relations. Herein lies the prevailing contradiction in Chinese foreign policy from which Beijing—because of the domestic political and economic pressures it faces—has no easy exit. Foreign policies that emphasize "win-win" financial relationships at the expense of political liberalization may earn the amity of fellow regimes, but they will also induce the ire of certain populations. If there is irony in Beijing's assiduous study of the United States, it is that China is walking down the same plank, pursuing policies similar to those that led to some of America's most pressing contemporary security threats.

In assessing China's support for authoritarian regimes, it is often noted that the United States also sometimes pursues its interests at the expense of democratic principles.⁴⁰ This is a fair criticism, but the United States has balanced these policies by assisting in the spread and consolidation of political freedom. The same cannot be said of China. Of the countries that received major conventional weapons from the United States in the last five years, nearly 60 percent are designated as "Free" by the independent watchdog Freedom

House, with a mere 20 percent as “Not Free.” In contrast, “Free” countries account for only 15 percent of Chinese recipients, with “Not Free” regimes comprising a near majority.⁴¹ To say that both countries turn a similar blind eye to autocracy is simply inaccurate. Nevertheless, when anti-Chinese threats materialize, they are likely to emerge in reaction to China’s own policies.

Looking Beyond Intentions

The potential for emergent security threats to reshape Beijing’s foreign policy agenda has important implications for how to think about the rise of China. In March 2009, in his final appearance before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Pacific Command Commander Admiral Timothy Keating expressed his dismay over the seemingly contradictory behavior of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy. Reflecting on the dissonance of China’s newfound assertiveness in the South China Sea, with its good-faith contributions to international counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, Keating asked a familiar series of questions: “What are really their intentions, what is their strategic intent, where does China expect to be 10, 20, 50 years from now?”⁴² These remarks illustrate the widely shared sense that although the CCP’s principal priorities are well understood—regime survival, economic expansion, and territorial integrity—the specific means through which they plan to achieve those goals are not. A recent Pentagon report to Congress highlighted that China “has left unclear to the international community the purposes and objectives of the PLA’s evolving doctrine and capabilities.”⁴³

Embedded in these analyses of China’s “strategic intent” is the perception that leaders in Beijing have a well-developed national security strategy that will guide its future behavior. This notion further suggests that U.S. analysts should employ some combination of Chinese writings, leadership analyses, intelligence estimates, and diplomatic and military signals to reveal China’s intentions. Academic theories of international relations and power transitions have led scholars to adopt similar assumptions, positing China as a willful, proactive rising power that will choose either to assimilate into or to challenge the U.S.-led system.⁴⁴

This framework is misconceived, however, insofar as it overstates the causal linkages between China’s “strategic intentions” and future behavior. There is any number of reasons to believe that coherent, long-term strategies are not yet in place, and even if they were, would fail to persist over time. Analysts should therefore exercise caution in assuming that the CCP possesses a comprehensive and forward-looking national security strategy. China’s foreign policies, like those of other nations, have been and will continue to be reformulated as a result of leadership change, internal power struggles, and institutional competition (the role of the PLA

and civil-military relations are particularly important in this regard). This calls for additional research on the domestic politics, bureaucratic mechanisms, and military institutions through which China's foreign policies must churn.⁴⁵

More profoundly, the emergence of new international threats often disrupts long-term national security strategies, thereby further eroding the utility of focusing too narrowly on strategic intentions. When such threats arise, the process of making foreign policy often resembles caretaking in an emergency room, where power and resources are reflexively extended to immediate concerns and challenges. To drive this point home, recall George W. Bush's caustic criticisms of the Clinton administration's overseas adventurism. During his second debate with Al Gore, less than a month before the November 2000 election, the future president remarked that, "I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building."⁴⁶ Bush was by no means alone. In a widely read January 2000 *Foreign Affairs* article, future national security adviser and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wrote that, "The president must remember that the military is a special instrument. It is lethal, and it is meant to be. It is not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build a civilian society."⁴⁷ The contrast with their ensuing policies would be comical, were the issues at stake not so serious.

This is not meant as a criticism of the Bush administration, but rather as a comment on the behavior of great powers and the considerable limits of emphasizing the role of strategic intent. U.S. analysts can and should seek to deduce foreign-policy thinking in China through intelligence mechanisms, public statements, doctrine, academic debates, and other means. This is particularly true on near-term issues, such as UN sanctions on Iran, where Beijing was confronted with immediate and discrete choices. But even full and complete information about how Chinese strategists intend to exert their nation's power would offer only partial insight into when and where Beijing will ultimately decide to expend its economic and military capital. Ideas no doubt matter in world politics, but they are necessarily filtered through the international threat environment in which states operate.

The manner in which China exerts influence on the global stage is unlikely to be the direct product of a carefully designed and executed plan. Instead, it will emerge at least partially in response to future international threats, many of which will be of its own making. Despite Beijing's aspirations to be a different kind of great power, such threats are nascent, mounting, and nearly inevitable. Today it is piracy that has drawn China onto the international stage. Soon it will be a wider collection of security threats, potentially to include transnational terrorism and extremism, foreign political instability, and new state adversaries. As much as any long-term strategy, it is these threats that will shape China's international behavior in the decades to come.

Asking Hard Questions

The implications for the United States are manifold. Starting with the challenges, China's response to emergent international threats may run directly counter to U.S. interests. President Hu has outlined "New Historic Missions" for China's military to participate more actively in maintaining international peace and security,⁴⁸ and the PLA is becoming increasingly trained and equipped for military operations beyond the Taiwan Strait.⁴⁹ Washington may welcome greater PLA contributions in certain instances, but the expansion of the military's role in Chinese foreign policy necessarily increases the possibility of encountering U.S. troops abroad. Furthermore, without the impetus or ability to resolve security threats through the mechanisms of democratic liberalism, Beijing may double down on supporting autocracies when potential threats arise. These dynamics could pose serious challenges to U.S. leadership and interests.

Meanwhile, Washington's understandable desire to have Beijing explain why it is developing certain military capabilities may matter less than many people think. Greater transparency on the Chinese side is a worthwhile goal, but regardless of current plans, those capabilities will likely be employed in contingencies and ways that Chinese strategists are neither aspiring to, nor necessarily even considering, today.

These threats will shape China's international behavior in the decades to come.

On the upside, the need to manage emergent transnational issues will present additional avenues for U.S.-Sino cooperation, a fact recognized by the Chinese themselves. In October 2009, in a party-line speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission General Xu Caihou acknowledged that, "The Chinese military's execution of multiple military tasks provides a broader space for Chinese-U.S. military

exchanges and cooperation."⁵⁰ As opposed to abstract arguments about "responsible stakeholding" in the U.S.-led system, addressing threats that directly challenge Chinese interests may be far more likely to motivate Beijing to action. An increasingly palpable international threat environment could lead China to be more forward-leaning on cooperating in disaster relief, counterterrorism, and stability operations, particularly if sanctioned by the United Nations.

Finally, scholars have argued that China's domestic problems—environmental, social, demographic, economic, and political—will likely retard its meteoric rise.⁵¹ The same could be said of emergent international threats. Those who wish to see

the containment of Beijing's expanding influence should consider how international security threats will likely divert and drain its resources and attention. China has managed to free ride on the U.S.-led system without having to pay its dues as a great power, but that window appears to be closing fast. The ruling regime would like to push this date back as far as possible, but at the end of the day, the decision will not be theirs. In this sense, China's rise is most likely a self-limiting process which may not require U.S. sand in its gears to slow it down. The thorny question is whether the United States can and should play a role in affecting these threats themselves, something that may prove far easier than changing China's behavior directly. Although such questions are undoubtedly sensitive, they warrant serious debate behind closed doors. Rather than paying disproportionate attention to uncovering Beijing's strategic intentions, the time is ripe for better and more discussions about China's future threat environment.

Notes

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