

**The Grand Strategies of Rising Powers:  
Reassurance, Coercion, and Balancing Responses**

by

Michael A. Glosny

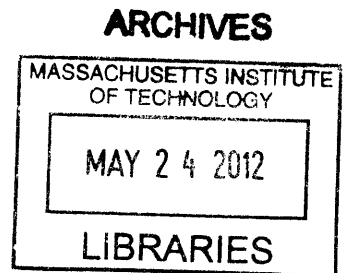
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation asks: what explains variation in how other great powers respond to rising powers? It tries to explain why the emergence of a rising power sometimes leads to tension, rivalry, and war, and other times leads to less competitive responses.

This project analyzes the effect of the rising power's grand strategy—whether it is reassurance or coercion—on the severity of the balancing response by the other major powers. I develop a theory of successful reassurance that shows how a rising power can prevent or minimize the severity of the balancing response by other great powers. Reassurance can limit the balancing response through two causal mechanisms: 1) *reduced estimates that rising power is a threat*, and 2) *reaping the benefits from a rising power*. I also develop a theory of coercion backfire that shows how a rising power that implements a grand strategy of coercion is more likely to make others feel especially threatened, and therefore more likely to provoke an early and especially firm response, exacerbating the severity of the balancing response.

I apply this theory to explain the balancing responses to the rise of Germany from 1871 to 1907 and the rise of China in the post-Cold War world. The empirical tests and process tracing evidence demonstrate that rising powers, contrary to the expectations of most realist balance of power and rationalist accounts, have considerable agency to affect the balancing response. In the cases of the rising powers of contemporary China and Bismarckian Germany, grand strategies of reassurance convinced states to minimize the severity of their balancing responses, even as the rising power's material power continued to grow. In contrast, Wilhelmine Germany's grand strategy of coercion antagonized the other powers and pushed them to respond by balancing very severely.

For the contemporary case of the rise of China, I use a variety of sources such as Chinese-language materials and extensive interviews from over two years of field work in China and Asia to examine China's grand strategy of reassurance and its effect on the responses by the United States, Japan, Russia, and India.

Thesis Supervisor: Stephen Van Evera  
Title: Ford International Professor of Political Science



## Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation is often described as a solitary and lonely endeavor, and at times it certainly was, but I never would have completed it without the support and assistance of many, many people.

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No one has had a greater influence on my academic life than Tom Christensen. It was as a college sophomore at Cornell in his "International Relations of East Asia" course that I first became interested in going to graduate school and studying international relations. From this class and my interactions with him in his office, I became hooked on China and Asia. He also encouraged me to start studying Chinese because "no matter what you do with your life China is going to be important." Tom was incredibly generous with his time, providing detailed comments with quick turnarounds even after he left MIT for Princeton and the U.S. government. He provided valuable comments and guidance on all aspects of the thesis and his influence can be seen on virtually every page.

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## Chapter 1: Theory Chapter

This dissertation asks: what explains variation in how other great powers respond to rising powers? It tries to explain why the emergence of a rising power sometimes leads to tension, rivalry, and war, and other times leads to less competitive responses. In international relations, these competitive responses are referred to as balancing, with alliances as the classic example of external balancing and increased military spending as the classic example of internal balancing. In international relations terminology, this project explains variation in the severity of the balancing response to the emergence of rising powers.

Many examples from modern history and several theories of international relations suggest that the emergence of a rising power is one of the most dangerous and destabilizing developments in international politics. Several historical examples of rising powers, such as France under Louis XIV and Napoleon, Germany under Wilhelm II and Hitler, and Japan under Tojo, have provoked war and balancing.<sup>1</sup> Scholars have described the last five hundred years as a series of historical cycles in which the rise of a new power has repeatedly triggered systemic wars.<sup>2</sup> According to many realist theories, as well as other theories such as power transition theory, the emergence of a rising power brings new challenges, difficulties, and tensions, and greatly increases the possibility of major

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<sup>1</sup> See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979); Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Spring 1993), pp. 5–51; and Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 7-41.

<sup>2</sup> See George Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987); Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *The Great Powers and Global Struggle, 1490-1990* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994); Charles F. Doran and Wes Parsons, "War and the Cycle of Relative Power," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 74 (December 1980), pp. 947-65; and Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a useful analytical review of this literature, see Jack S. Levy, "Theories of General War," *World Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (April 1985), pp. 344-374.

power war.<sup>3</sup> A rising power's expanding interests and influence often directly challenges existing powers and its increased capabilities often tempt it to launch wars of expansion. Under anarchy, the emergence of a rising power leads other great powers to fear that it will use its increased material capabilities to challenge the status quo, alter the distribution of benefits in its favor, and even potentially threaten their security and survival. These worries have often compelled other great powers to respond by taking countervailing action to defend their interests, and sometimes launch preventive wars against the rising power. Due to the rising power's expansion, or fears that the rising power will expand, the usual result of the emergence of a rising power is competition, rivalry, and war.

Most analysis of rising powers emphasizes rivalry and war, but there has been considerable variation in the outcomes of power transitions and the responses of great powers to the emergence of a rising power. Although some power transitions have led to war (the rise of Germany and World War I), others have occurred peacefully (the rise of the United States). As this dissertation will show, there has also been variation in the severity of the balancing response at different times

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<sup>3</sup> For some of these realist arguments, see Joseph M Grieco, "Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics," in Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry, *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 169-70; John A. Vasquez and Colin Elman, eds., *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003); T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortman, *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004); Jack S. Levy, "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War," *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (October 1987), pp. 82-107; Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), ch. 4; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); and Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984). On power transition theory, see A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1968); and A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Jacek Kugler and Douglas Lemke, eds., *Parity and War: Evaluations and Extensions of the War Ledger* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Ronald Tammen et al., *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Chatham House, 2000); Jacek Kugler and A.F.K. Organski, "The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston, MA: Unwin, Hyman, and Co., 1989), pp. 171-194; and Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For applications of these arguments to the rise of China, see Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), ch. 4; Robert S. Ross, "Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia," *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (July 2006); Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng, eds., *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Steve Chan, *China, the U.S. and the Power Transition: A Critique* (London: Routledge, 2007); and Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7-45.



during the rise of the same power. For both the rise of Bismarckian Germany in the 1870s and 1880s and post-Cold War China, the balancing response was more severe early in its rise when these countries were still weak, but much less severe later in its rise even as they became more powerful. Historical research argues that balancing against rising powers has not been as widespread as others have claimed,<sup>4</sup> and other scholars have formally shown that balancing is not the only potential equilibrium.<sup>5</sup> Preventive war theorists argue that because shifting power makes it impossible for rising powers to make credible commitments, declining powers launch preventive wars as a result of commitment problems. But while shifting power and commitment problems are common, preventive wars are not.

This variation in great power responses when facing rising powers is an important puzzle. In this dissertation, I develop a theory that shows how a rising power's grand strategy, which can be coded as reassurance or coercion, affects the severity of the balancing response by other powers. Grand strategies of reassurance can mitigate competitive dynamics and minimize the severity of the balancing response. Grand strategies of coercion, on the other hand, can exacerbate the severity of the balancing response and lead to hyper-balancing. As the discussions of how reassurance can be successful are especially original and surprising, the bulk of the dissertation will focus on reassurance.

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<sup>4</sup> See Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 72-107; Paul W. Schroeder, "Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 108-48; Paul W. Schroeder, "Why Realism Does not Work Well for International History (Whether or Not It Represents a Degenerate IR Research Strategy)," in Vasquez and Elman, *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, pp. 114-27; Richard Rosecrance, "Is There a Balance of Power?" in Vasquez and Elman, *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, pp. 154-65; and John A. Vasquez, "The New Debate on Balancing Power: A Reply to My Critics," in Vasquez and Elman, *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, pp. 87-113; Stuart Kaufman, Richard Little, and William C. Wohlforth, eds., *The Balance of Power in World History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and William C. Wohlforth et al., "Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2007), pp. 155-185.

<sup>5</sup> See Robert Powell, *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), ch. 3-4.

The core of this chapter is a detailed presentation of the theory and the plans for testing it empirically. The chapter proceeds as follows: First, I lay out the theoretical argument in brief. Next, I describe other theoretical explanations for balancing variation, briefly analyze some of the literature on rising powers, and suggest that my arguments about reassurance represent a strong challenge to the pessimistic expectations in the existing literature. Third, I introduce my definition of a rising power. Fourth, I describe the dependent variable (severity of balancing response) and the independent variable (grand strategy of rising power). Then I explain my theory of reassurance in great detail, describing the causal mechanisms, tools of reassurance, and testable predictions. Fifth, I lay out my theory of coercion backfire. Lastly, I discuss the research design for the preliminary empirical test of these competing theories.

### **The Theoretical Argument in Brief**

This dissertation presents a theory of how a rising power's grand strategy affects the severity of the balancing response by other powers. My theory builds on Jervis's insights on the spiral and deterrence models and Walt's balance of threat theory. Jervis argues that assessments of intentions determine whether a country should cooperate or compete with a potential adversary.<sup>6</sup> Walt argues that states balance against threats rather than just material power, and assessments of intentions are a key factor in driving external balancing decisions.<sup>7</sup> For both of these arguments, if the potential

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<sup>6</sup> See Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), ch. 3; Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167-213; Charles L. Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models," *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 4. (July 1992), pp. 497-538; Charles L. Glaser, *Rational Theory of International Politics: The Logic of Competition and Cooperation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Andrew H. Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Andrew H. Kydd, "Game Theory and the Spiral Model," *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (April 1997), pp. 371-400; and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Winter 2000/1), pp. 128-161.

<sup>7</sup> See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Spring 1985), pp. 3-43; Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia," *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Spring 1988); and David M. Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty: Beliefs about Intentions and the Rise of Great Powers," *Security Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2002), pp. 1-40.

adversary is perceived to have aggressive or malign intentions, states should respond in a more competitive manner; whereas if they are perceived as benign, states should have no need to balance and should respond in a more cooperative manner.

I further develop these arguments by proposing a theory that shows how the rising power's choice of grand strategy can influence these assessments, and thereby affect how other powers respond to the emergence of the rising power. A rising power that implements reassurance can induce others to orient their response around the spiral model, making them more likely to cooperate and resulting in less severe balancing than expected. A rising power that implements coercion on the other hand, will force the other powers to orient their response around the deterrence model, making them likely to balance earlier and more severely than expected. My theory extends these theoretical insights to rising powers, a particular difficult test for reassurance arguments. Moreover, as these original arguments did not explain the sources of these assessments, my theory shows that a rising power's grand strategy is an important factor in how states make assessments about threats and intentions.

A rising power's grand strategy of reassurance can minimize the severity of the balancing response through two causal mechanisms. Reassurance efforts not only shape the threat perception of other powers, but also manipulate the cost-benefit calculus of potential balancers. First, given that balancing is both costly and risky, the more the rising power can keep the other powers from concluding that the rising power is a threat, the less likely these states are to balance. Second, the rising power can affect the cost-benefit calculations of other states by using its power to provide them benefits and protect their interests. Although most discussions of rising powers focus on the worries in other countries about what the rising power can do *to* them, according to this mechanism, a rising power's reassurance can make the other countries understand what it can do *for* them. By

providing benefits to other powers, a rising power's reassurance strategy dampens hostility and circumvents potential balancing responses.

Arguments that reassurance can minimize competition may seem obvious, but in his review of Glaser's new book, Jervis argued that his fundamental claim that the "international system does *not* consistently favor competitive policies" is "both contested and important."<sup>8</sup> International relations scholars have shown formally, theoretically, and empirically that one party's concessions can elicit reciprocity and a cooperative equilibrium.<sup>9</sup> The difficulties of achieving cooperation under anarchy have led many scholars to argue that it is only possible under certain conditions, and has led others to be even more critical of the possibility.<sup>10</sup>

In most of these arguments, however, power is assumed to be constant.<sup>11</sup> As shifting power greatly complicates the prospects of cooperation, cases of rising powers are a particularly difficult and challenging set of cases for reassurance to be successful. Under shifting power, commitments become less credible, the costs, risks, and likelihood of the rising power's defection increase, and the bargaining power of both sides change.<sup>12</sup> In short, cases of rising powers are particularly difficult for reassurance to be successful and provide a series of least-likely cases for the theory.

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<sup>8</sup> See Robert Jervis, "Dilemmas About Security Dilemmas," *Security Studies* Vol. 20 (2011), p. 417. Fearon adds that this argument "go[es] against important articles of faith espoused by many self-described realists." See James D. Fearon, "Two States, Two Types, Two Actions," *Security Studies* Vol. 20 (2011), p. 434.

<sup>9</sup> See Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Kenneth A. Oye, ed., *Cooperation under Anarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations*.

<sup>10</sup> See Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 485-507; David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); and Robert Jervis, "Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 42-63.

<sup>11</sup> Copeland argues that the "static nature of power" limits Glaser's analysis, and more dynamic conceptions of power show that competition is more widespread than he suggests. See Dale C. Copeland, "Rationalist Theories of International Politics and the Problem of the Future," *Security Studies* Vol. 20 (2011), pp. 441-450.

<sup>12</sup> See Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Politics*; Andrew H. Kydd, "Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation," *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 325-357; James Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49 (Summer 1995), pp. 379-414; and James Fearon, "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation," *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Spring 1998), pp. 269-306.

In addition to developing a theory of how reassurance can circumvent a balancing response, I also argue that a grand strategy of coercion can lead to hyper-balancing. Coercion is more likely to make other states feel threatened and less likely to see the possible costs of balancing and benefits of not balancing, provoking a balancing response that is especially severe and likely to occur earlier than the power dynamics would suggest. To distinguish my theory of coercion provoking hyperbalancing from the traditional explanations that rising powers elicit balancing responses, the key evidence is the timing of the balancing response and the justifications offered by leaders.

I test this theory with both historical and contemporary cases using comparative case studies and process tracing. For each case I conduct convergence tests to see if the rising power's grand strategy predicted the severity of the balancing response and process tracing to determine whether the tools of reassurance influenced the decision calculus of the leaders of other countries. In the cases of the rising powers of Bismarckian Germany and contemporary China, I argue that grand strategies of reassurance convinced states to minimize the severity of their balancing responses, even as the rising power's material power continued to grow. In contrast, I argue that Wilhelmine Germany's grand strategy of coercion antagonized the other powers and pushed them to balance severely.

### **Overlooking the Role of the Rising Power: Literatures on Balancing and Rising Powers**

The existing literature on balancing responses and rising powers ignore the potential role for the rising power. Alternative explanations for variation in balancing responses focus on structural factors and the domestic politics of potential balancers. The literature on rising powers and power transitions focuses on how the dominant power can influence the rising power or sees little variation in the rising power. This neglect of the rising power is puzzling because its increasing material power would give a rising power greater ability to affect its external environment, and given the

potential for its increased power to provoke a balancing response from worried great powers, it would certainly be in the rising power's interest to try to shape these responses. In this project, I am trying to restore agency to the rising power and arguing that the rising power's grand strategy is an overlooked potential explanation for the variation in balancing response by other great powers. In the empirical chapters, I assess the explanatory power of these alternative theoretical explanations, as well as other more case specific alternative explanations. In some cases I argue that my theory can be combined with other explanations to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

### *Alternative Explanations of Variation in Balancing Responses*

First, some scholars argue that international structure, more specifically polarity or the distribution of power within the system, explains variation in balancing.<sup>13</sup> In multipolar systems, the larger number of actors and possibilities complicates important judgments about changes in relative power, identification of allies and adversaries, and the potential response of allies to threats. Uncertainty and miscalculation, which are endemic and widespread in multipolar systems, prevent effective balancing and often produce collective action problems, buckpassing, and underbalancing. In bipolar systems on the other hand, greater certainty about the threat and no need to rely on allies simplifies the response to potential adversaries, and produces vigilant and effective balancing. Christensen and Snyder show that there is more variation in balancing under multipolarity. They argue that adding the perception of the offense-defense balance provides a better explanation of

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<sup>13</sup> See Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus*, Vol. 93, No. 3 (Summer 1964), pp. 881-909; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, ch. 8; Kenneth N. Waltz, "War in Neorealist Theory," in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb, eds., *The Origins and Prevention of Major Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Autumn, 1993), pp. 44-79; John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Summer 1990), pp. 5-56; and Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Waltz and Mearsheimer were trying to explain system stability and war, but the effect of polarity on balancing effectiveness is clear and one of the main causal pathways to war or peace.

alignment patterns in multipolarity.<sup>14</sup> In systems perceived as offense-dominant, such as pre-World War I Europe, the result is hyper-vigilant balancing (or chainganging), whereas in systems perceived as defense-dominant, such as pre-World War II Europe, the result is underbalancing (or chainganging).

Second, another group of scholars focus on the domestic politics of potential balancers, and argue that it can impede or prevent efficient balancing dynamics in the face of potential threats.<sup>15</sup> According to this line of argument, states do not respond to changes in the distribution of power or emergence of a threat as unitary actors, but such responses are filtered through a process of domestic political contestation. Domestic politics and domestic pathologies can serve as obstacles and lead to collective action problems and underbalancing either by preventing a state from reaching consensus on the perception of the threat or from reaching consensus that balancing is the proper response to the threat. This is more a criticism of realist balance of power theories or a theory of underbalancing than it is an explanation for variation in balancing responses, but the implication is that if domestic politics do not interfere, and states are more like unitary actors, these states are more likely to behave as realists suggest, and balance in the face of threats as realists suggest.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 137-168.

<sup>15</sup> Recently, this argument has become more closely associated with neo-classical realists. See Randall Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 159-201; Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); and Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, eds., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). However, earlier research included arguments about how domestic politics inhibits balancing dynamics, see Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991), pp. 233-256; Deborah Larson, "Bandwagoning Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality?" in Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, eds., *Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimlands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), ch. 4; Robert Kaufman, "To Balance or to Bandwagon? Alignment Decisions in 1930s Europe," *Security Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Spring 1992), pp. 417-447; and Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, eds., *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> In their focus on criticizing realist balancing arguments, these scholars have overlooked the possibility that domestic politics can also lead to overbalancing and hyper-vigilant balancing, as well as underbalancing.

Third, others argue that offense-defense variables affect the intensity of security dilemmas, the severity of balancing responses, and the possibility of achieving cooperation under anarchy.<sup>17</sup> Unlike more pessimistic offensive realists, some defensive realists argue that even under anarchy, certain structural conditions make it possible to overcome or mitigate security dilemmas, distinguish revisionist actors from status-quo actors, and achieve cooperation between security seekers. The key factors explaining this variation in cooperation and competition are the offense-defense balance and the ability to distinguish offense from defense.

The main elements of the offense-defense balance are geography and technology, so most scholars characterize the offense-defense balance as a structural variable.<sup>18</sup> When defense is dominant and offense and defense are distinguishable, states that acquire defensive weapons or adopt defensive postures are able to send signals about their intentions and others are more likely to see them as credible, making security dilemmas less severe, balancing responses less severe, and cooperation possible between status-quo powers. When offense is dominant and/or offense and defense are indistinguishable, security dilemmas are more severe, balancing is more severe, and competition is more widespread. The structural conditions are the main determinants of the severity of security dilemmas and whether cooperation can be achieved.<sup>19</sup> How often these structural

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<sup>17</sup> See Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma;" Charles Glaser, *Rational Theory of International Politics*; Charles Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994-1995), pp. 50-90; Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufman, "What is the Offense-Defense Balance and How Can We Measure It," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Spring 1998), pp. 44-82; Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Offense-Defense Theory and Its Critics," *Security Studies*, Vol. 4 (Summer 1995), pp. 660-691; Jack S. Levy, "The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology and the Incidence of War," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (June 1984), pp. 219-238; and George Quester, *Offense and Defense in the International System* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> Van Evera adopts a broader understanding of the offense-defense balance to include not only the perception of the balance, but many other factors. See Van Evera, *Causes of War*; and Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Spring 1998), pp. 5-43. For a critique of this approach, see Richard K. Betts, "Must War Find a Way? A Review Essay," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Glaser refers to his more optimistic version of realism as "contingent realism," but the contingency that makes cooperation possible is dependent on structural offense-defense variables. See Glaser, "Realists as Optimists." Similarly, a review of defensive realist scholarship suggests that "structural modifiers" are the key factors that make cooperation possible. See Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited."



conditions occur is an empirical question, but this explanation also gives little role for the rising power or potential adversary in making cooperation possible.<sup>20</sup>

### *Literature on Rising Powers*

Although it is difficult to summarize the voluminous literature on rising powers, most strands of this literature overlook the potential role for the rising power.<sup>21</sup> First, the Anglo-American historical experience of facing rising powers has pushed many scholars to focus on how the dominant power or other powers can “manage a rising power,” and has led them to give no consideration to the ability of the rising power to shape its environment.<sup>22</sup> From the position of the dominant power, Britain had to deal with the challenges of the potential re-rise of post-1815 France, and the rise of Germany, Japan, and the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The United States had to deal with the challenge of the the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Based on this experience, deep consideration of how to influence the rising power by shaping its perceptions, interests, and behavior makes sense, but it has also led to a neglect of the agency of the rising power itself.

Other related theories privilege the effect of the dominant power’s behavior on the rising power. In power transition theory, even though the rising power’s satisfaction with the status quo is one of the major variables that determines whether power transition will result in war, the action in

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<sup>20</sup> States buying defensive weapons and adopting defensive postures are a necessary aspect of achieving cooperation, but defensive realists place more emphasis on these structural variables, which is a precondition for defense postures having any possibility of leading to cooperation.

<sup>21</sup> One of the major strands of the literature involving rising powers is focused on discovering the broad systemic factors that create long cycles of the rise and fall of a major power and how these cycles produce systemic outcomes such as war and peace. Analysis of the rising power’s grand strategy would not make sense for such macro-level systemic analysis. For examples, see footnote 2.

<sup>22</sup> See E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919-1939* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1946); Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1957); and Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991). For an assessment of the available strategies and historical examples, see Randall Schweller, “Managing the Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory,” in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *Engaging China: Managing a Rising Power* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 1-31.

the theory is in the dominant power's effect on the rising power's evaluation.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, in formal work, the structure of the game allows the dominant power to make offers that the rising power can accept or not, and relegates the rising power to a reactive role.<sup>24</sup>

A second reason for overlooking the role of the rising power is the pervasive belief that all rising powers are the same and all are shaped by their increased material power in very similar ways. Many realist scholars suggest that there is no variation in the grand strategy of rising powers, so there is no reason to devote attention to it. According to this line of argument, as the material capabilities of the rising power increase, its interests will expand and it will change its grand strategy and behavior to secure these expanding interests, which usually results in expansion.<sup>25</sup> As its power increases, a rising power will want more political influence and more control over its environment. The rising power's grand strategy is not an interesting or complicated story, and as there is no variation, studying it is of little analytical interest. I argue that even though all rising powers may want more influence and control as they become more powerful, there is considerably more variation in the grand strategies that rising powers implement to achieve this goal.

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<sup>23</sup> On power transition theory, see See A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1968); and A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Jacek Kugler and Douglas Lemke, eds., *Parity and War: Evaluations and Extensions of the War Ledger* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Ronald Tammen et al., *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Chatham House, 2000); Jacek Kugler and A.F.K. Organski, "The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston, MA: Unwin, Hyman, and Co., 1989), pp. 171-194; and Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> See Powell, *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*, ch. 3-4; and Robert Powell, "Uncertainty, Shifting Power, and Appeasement," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (December 1996), pp. 749-64.

<sup>25</sup> See Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*; Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Knopf, 1967); Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962); Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; Michael Mandelbaum, *The Fate of Nations: The Search for National Security in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Randall Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). For discussions of a rising China behaving like all other rising powers, see Robert J. Art, "The United States and the Rise of China: Implications for the Long Haul," in Ross and Zhu, eds., *China's Ascent*, pp. 260-292; and Jonathan Kirshner "The Tragedy of Offensive Realism: Classical Realism and the Rise of China," *European Journal of International Relations*, (Published online, August 17, 2010). Non-realist scholars also argue that as power increases, interests tend to expand and place new demands on foreign policy. See Nazli Choucri and Robert C. North, *Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1975); and Charles Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

### *A Role for a Rising Power's Reassurance: Challenge to Existing Literature*

My theory of how a rising power's reassurance can reduce the severity of balancing responses is a strong challenge to the existing literature, which expects the emergence of rising powers to produce competitive responses. Worst-case realists and preventive war theorists argue that when facing a rising power under anarchic conditions, worries about unfavorable shifts in the balance of power will compel other great powers to take countervailing actions to improve their relative power position and protect national interests; and if these efforts are unsuccessful, they should launch preventive war. Contrary to my argument that a rising power's reassurance can mitigate these competitive dynamics, these scholars argue that the rising power's strategy or behavior should not affect how great powers respond, and any concessions or commitments should be disregarded. The general expectation from this literature is that in the face of a rising power, the balancing response should move from less severe to more severe balancing.

Although Mearsheimer's arguments about how great powers behave as they become more powerful have received more attention and criticism, this discussion will focus on his arguments about great power responses to threats and potential aggressors. According to offensive realism, or what I think should be more appropriately called worst-case realism, prudence compels all countries to assume the worst about the intentions of others, and treat each other as revisionists.<sup>26</sup> Behavioral signals or other potential indicators are never reliable enough to lead to certain conclusions that a country has benign intentions, and as incorrect judgments can lead to elimination, states must assume the worst about intentions. Moreover, because intentions can change, past and current

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<sup>26</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter, 1994-1995), pp. 5-49; Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War;" Dale Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 187-212; Copeland, *Origins of Major War*; and Evan Braden Montgomery, "Breaking out of the Security Dilemma: Realism, Reassurance, and the Problem of Uncertainty," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 151-185. Many of Copeland's arguments are consistent with the preventive war theorists, but his arguments that anarchy undermines the credibility of all behavior, concessions, or commitments, as well as his emphasis on future uncertainty, makes it appropriate to call him a worst-case realist.

behavior provides no credible information about future behavior or future intentions. As a result, a country's grand strategy or diplomatic behavior should be completely ignored and have no effect on how countries behave towards each other.<sup>27</sup> Reassurance has no place in the world as described by worst-case realists. No country would be willing to adopt reassurance and make itself vulnerable, and even if it did, prudence would compel the other states to assume it was revisionist and would not reciprocate any concessions with cooperation.<sup>28</sup>

As intentions are unknowable, worst-case realists argue that states focus on material power. According to Mearsheimer, "Capabilities, however, not only can be measured but also determine whether or not a rival state is a serious threat. In short, great powers balance against capabilities, not intentions."<sup>29</sup> A rising power's increased material capability allows it to threaten the interests and survival of other great powers, so they are compelled to respond by balancing.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, worst-case realists argue that in response to power shifts of large magnitude, states should balance more severely and be more likely to consider preventive war.<sup>31</sup> Consistent with this argument, Mearsheimer suggests that in response to China's rise, "most of China's neighbors, to include India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Russia, Vietnam—and Australia—will join the United States to contain China's power."<sup>32</sup> Although many have criticized the offensive realist depiction of the world as hyper-competitive and conflictual, a world with rising powers is the most likely case for

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<sup>27</sup> See Copeland, *Origins of Major Wars*, p. 22, 246

<sup>28</sup> See Montgomery, "Breaking out of the Security Dilemma."

<sup>29</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 45. Mearsheimer argues that states balance only when the system contains a potential hegemon, and otherwise they have incentives to buckpass. However, how his definition and measurement of a potential hegemon is unclear and inconsistent, making this a less useful concept than it initially appears.

<sup>30</sup> One scholar writes: "According to the logic of offensive realism, states should fear the growing capabilities of rising powers, assume the worst about their intentions, act to forestall their growth before they reach their full potential, and sometimes launch preventive wars." See Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty," p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 268; and Dale Copeland, "Theory and History in the Study of Major War," *Security Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (2001), p. 215.

<sup>32</sup> See John J. Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to U.S. Power in Asia," *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3 (2010), p. 382.

Mearsheimer's pessimistic explanations to hold, and a particularly challenging environment for my theory of reassurance.

Preventive war arguments suggest that making credible commitments is impossible under conditions of shifting power, because a rising power can't credibly commit to not exploit its greater bargaining leverage at a future date when its power position has improved.<sup>33</sup> A rising power can make concessions, promises, or commitments, but it will have incentives to renege on them when its increased power improves its bargaining position, thereby making any promise or commitment not credible and making any mutually acceptable bargain between the rising power and declining power impossible.<sup>34</sup> According to Van Evera, "declining powers cannot trust rising powers' offers, because rising powers know the declining power cannot enforce the agreement later."<sup>35</sup> Similar to the arguments of worst-case realists, and in opposition to my theory of reassurance, preventive war theorists suggest that other powers should pay little attention to the rising power's grand strategy, behavior, or promises when deciding how to respond.

When facing a rising power that will be able to alter the status-quo in its favor in the future, the structure of the situation compels the other power to take countervailing action to protect its security position. According to Levy: "Faced with a rising and potentially hostile adversary, it is

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<sup>33</sup> See Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War;" Levy, "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War;" Jack S. Levy, "Preventive War and Democratic Politics," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 1-24; Van Evera, *Causes of War*, ch. 4; Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; Copeland, *Origins of Major Wars*; Robert Powell, "War as a Commitment Problem," *International Organization*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (2006), pp. 169-203; Powell, *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*, ch. 3-4; and Eric Gartzke, "War is in the Error Term" *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 567-587. For a quantitative critique of preventive war, arguing that statistical tests show no significant relationship between power shift and war onset, see Douglas Lemke, "Investigating the Preventive Motive for War," *International Interactions*, Vol. 29 (2003), pp. 273-92. For a formal critique arguing that preventive war is but one of many possible equilibria of how states respond to power shifts, see Emerson M.S. Niu and Peter C. Ordeshook, "Preventive War and the Balance of Power," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1987), pp. 387-419.

<sup>34</sup> According to Fearon, commitment problems are "situations in which mutually preferable bargains are unattainable because one or more states would have an incentive to renege on the terms." See Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," p. 381. Because a rising power has "incentives to misrepresent," a revisionist rising power will likely make the same types of peaceful promises and commitments that a status-quo rising power would, making these commitments not credible, and forcing other powers to dismiss them.

<sup>35</sup> He argues further: "Rising powers that want to trade their privileges for peace often cannot because they cannot bind themselves to their promises." See Van Evera, *Causes of War*, p. 80, 81.

better to fight now rather than risk the likely consequences of inaction—a decline in relative power, diminishing bargaining leverage, and the risk of war under less favorable circumstances later.”<sup>36</sup> The same logic of fear of decline and the rising power’s inability to credibly commit will compel the other powers to first try to secure their interests and security by balancing, and if such efforts are ineffective, to consider launching preventive wars.<sup>37</sup> Given that preventive war theorists agree that larger power shifts produce a greater preventive motive, a situation in which there is a perceived rising power is likely to produce a very large preventive motive, making severe balancing or preventive war particularly likely.<sup>38</sup>

Worst-case realists and preventive war theorists suggest a very clear decision calculus that should lead other great powers to severely balance or launch preventive wars. When confronted by a rising power, worries about the future should be especially prominent, and other great powers should focus on how the rising power’s greater material capabilities will threaten their security and survival. The focus on unfavorable shifts in power, along with the rising power’s inability to credibly commit not to take advantage of its improved future position, should lead other great powers to ignore the rising power’s behavior and promises, and they should be cynical and dismissive of any current concessions or cooperation. As a result, “farsighted prudence” should compel the other great powers to severely balance and contemplate preventive war to protect security.<sup>39</sup>

These arguments posit a clear decision calculus that should occur when states severely balance or launch preventive wars, but they are poorly specified in terms of predicting in advance

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<sup>36</sup> See Levy, “Preventive War and Democratic Politics.”

<sup>37</sup> See Randall L. Schweller, “Domestic Structure and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?” *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Jan., 1992), pp. 235-69.

<sup>38</sup> See Levy, “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” p. 97; and Van Evera, *Causes of War*, ch. 3.

<sup>39</sup> See Copeland, *Origins of Major War*, p. 4. There is some question as to whether these arguments describe how states actually behave, or if they only describe how states *should* behave, but these scholars argue that their theories have both prescriptive and explanatory power. For example, Copeland writes, “The rising state’s current preferences and diplomatic actions are assumed to be largely irrelevant to its decision... This assumption not only makes the analysis more tractable; it also reasonably approximates reality.” See Copeland, *Origins of Major Wars*, p. 37.

how powerful the rising power needs to be to provoke these competitive dynamics. Mearsheimer argues that in multipolar systems, only when a potential hegemon is present will states be more likely to balance, otherwise they will have incentives to buckpass. However, the criteria for what counts as a potential hegemon is unclear<sup>40</sup>, and his policy prescriptions to contain China before it becomes a potential hegemon are inconsistent with his own theory.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, though preventive war arguments are often persuasive at working backwards to explain why a particular war broke out, the theory does not identify the required thresholds for power shifts to compel balancing or considerations of preventive war, and does not specify the conditions under which shifting power is most likely to result in preventive war. These scholars certainly do not predict that all power shifts, even minor ones, will compel states to launch preventive war, but which power shifts will lead to preventive war is unclear. The poorly-specified expectations of how much power a rising power must possess to provoke these competitive responses makes it difficult to infer clear predictions from these theories about how a state should respond to a rising power. However, this literature is far more pessimistic than my theory of reassurance, and it suggests that reassurance should not matter in how states respond to rising powers.

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<sup>40</sup> According to Mearsheimer, “To qualify as a potential hegemon, a state must have-by some reasonably large margin—the most formidable army as well as the most latent power among all the states located in its region.” In the historical analysis, the relative importance of military power and latent power is inconsistently applied, and the criteria for “reasonably large margin” is also unclear. This is especially troubling because the theory predicts completely different responses based on whether or not a potential hegemon is present, so proper specification is particularly important. See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>41</sup> His theory would suggest that other countries would not have incentives to balance against China until after it becomes a potential hegemon, a position Mearsheimer argues that it had not reached in 1999 or in 2010. He is consistent with the theory in arguing that only after two more decades of China’s sustained economic and military modernization, when it will have become a potential hegemon, will China’s power provoke a balancing response. However, in other places his policy analysis and prescriptions are inconsistent with his theory, making it unclear how powerful a country needs to be to force others to shift from buckpassing to balancing. In a 2010 speech, he argued that several East Asian countries had already taken actions to contain China’s growth. This would seem to violate his theory as China has not yet become a potential hegemon. More troubling for his theoretical expectation of when balancing should occur, he is extremely critical of America’s engagement policy towards China over the last twenty years and argues that the United States should have been containing China. Either expecting or advocating containment or balancing before China became a potential hegemon contradicts his theory. Moreover, in Mearsheimer’s analysis it is not clear at what point China would become a potential hegemon and whether or not the East Asian system includes the United States. See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 396-402; and Mearsheimer, “The Gathering Storm.”

### **Rising Power: A Perceptual Definition**

According to my definition, a rising power is a state that is moving from non-great power status into great power status, or from the lower levels of great power status into the upper echelon. Despite all of the work done in political science on rising powers, there is no consensus on an appropriate definition, and very few definitions have even been offered. The two key attributes of this definition are that the rise needs to be perceived by the other major powers and that a rising power is not defined in dyadic terms. In the rest of this section I discuss these two attributes and distinguish my understanding of a rising power from other related concepts.

Given that I am trying to explain foreign policy responses (in this case, severity of balancing), a perceptual definition is most appropriate. To explain how other major powers respond to a rising power, they must first perceive the emergence of a rising power.<sup>42</sup> Other scholars have argued that in analyzing foreign policy choices, the perception of power is much more important than the objective balance of power.<sup>43</sup> Using objective measures of power, such as GNP or the Correlates of War data, is more appropriate for analysis of broad systemic patterns of relationships between shifting power and some other outcome.<sup>44</sup>

Using a perceptual definition is particularly useful for dating the beginning of a country's rise, as psychological theories and empirical evidence show that statesmen are poor estimators of relative power and are particularly bad at detecting changes in relative power. Rather than gradually updating beliefs and assessments based on new information, statesmen often need a big event or

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<sup>42</sup> The rising power perceiving itself to be rising, or being aware that others perceive it to be rising, is less important. However, some self-awareness is likely to affect the rising power's grand strategy, once it is aware that others are worried about its power and it may need to do something to shape their behavior and reactions.

<sup>43</sup> See William C. Wohlforth, "The Perception of Power: Russia in the pre-1914 Balance," *World Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Apr., 1987), p. 353; and Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power*, p. 42. Using objective measures of relative power to explain foreign policy choices often requires the use of an index of power that did not exist at the time the decision maker was estimating power or responding to changes in power, or requires a proxy measure that may or may not have been used at the time.

<sup>44</sup> For examples, see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "Systemic Polarization and the Occurrence and Duration of War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1978), pp. 241-267; and Edward D. Mansfield, "The Concentration of Capabilities and the Onset of War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Mar., 1992), pp. 3-24.



shock that forces them to notice that the distribution of power has changed. Research in cognitive and social psychology shows that individuals retain an assessment or a belief in the face of discrepant information until that belief is overwhelmed by information that is highly inconsistent with the previously-held view.<sup>45</sup> More recent research on the perception of power has demonstrated empirically that statesmen are poor at estimating their own and others' relative power, and often hold onto assessments about relative power long ago they are no longer accurate.<sup>46</sup> This research suggests that perceptions of shifts in power are driven more by events, especially shocks, than statistical measures, and that a perceptual definition of a rising power is much more appropriate for explaining how states respond in the face of a rising power.

Unlike much of the existing literature, I do not define a rising power in dyadic terms. For example, many researchers have focused on the example of the rise of Germany before World War I in the context of the German-British dyad, and measured Germany's rise in terms of this dyad.<sup>47</sup> Although dyads are certainly important, and the rising power's relation with the dominant power in the system is usually the most important dyad, a rising power is likely to have an effect on all of the major powers in the system, not just the dominant power. Moreover, the rising power will also worry about its relations with the other major powers, not just its relations with the dominant power. Therefore, I conceptualize a rising power as one that is perceived by several of the other great powers in the region or the system as a rising power.<sup>48</sup> For example, rather than saying that there was a dyadic power shift between Germany and France in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this study

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<sup>45</sup> See Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1958); and Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, and Co., 1957). For applications of these findings for international relations, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, especially ch. 4.

<sup>46</sup> For examples, see Aaron Friedberg, *The Weary Titan, Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Wohlforth, "The Perception of Power;" William C. Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Thomas J. Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliance in Europe, 1865-1940," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 65-97.

<sup>47</sup> For examples, see Copeland, *Origins of Major War*; Van Evera, *Causes of War*; and Art, "The United States and the Rise of China," in Ross and Zhu, *China's Ascent*.

<sup>48</sup> This also allows for the possibility of multiple rising powers during the same period.

identifies Germany as the rising power, and examines its attempts to limit the balancing behavior by all of the major powers in the system.

In terms of identifying rising powers, I will rely on evidence such as official government reports and statements, diplomatic correspondence, contemporary assessments by the foreign policy elite and expert observers, contemporary newspaper reports, and diplomatic histories. As I am trying to explain the balancing response by the leaders in other powers, the strongest evidence would be official reports or official diplomatic expressions that identify the growing material capability of the rising power and the potential such power might have for reshaping the region or system. However, if non-official reports display a strong consensus that another country's power is increasing substantially, this would also be good evidence that the rise was perceived.

For each of the empirical cases of rising powers, I will detail when the perceived rise began, which was usually preceded by a shock. For example, I date the beginning of the rise of Bismarckian Germany to be 1871, with the shock of its defeat of France and establishment of the Second Reich. Although it had experienced economic growth for many years prior to that, it was only with that shock of 1871 that others truly noticed how powerful it had become and that it was likely to have staying power as a force in Europe.

Given the lack of conceptual clarity in much of the relevant literature, I will differentiate my definition of a rising power from some other related terms, and thereby make my definition clearer. First, my concept of a rising power differs from what other scholars call power shifts. Power shifts are usually of a much shorter duration, allowing limited opportunity for the rising power's grand strategy to affect the response by other powers. In Van Evera's discussion of window theory, he distinguishes short-term windows, such as pre-war military mobilizations, and long-term windows, such as the Russian military buildup (known as the Great Program) that was launched in 1914 and

was to be completed in 1917.<sup>49</sup> If even a long-term power shift is of such a short duration, it is difficult to imagine how a rising power would have much of an opportunity to use its grand strategy to shape perceptions or responses. Unlike this conception of a power shift, in which even the long-term is still quite short, my definition of a rising power is based on a much longer process of increasing material power, usually fueled by uneven economic growth, but also suggesting that the rising power will remain a major force in international politics. My conception of a rising power as a longer-term phenomenon is more consistent with the common view that rising powers are relatively rare in history, and this definition allows time and space for the rising power's grand strategy to shape the balancing responses by the other powers.

The second important distinction is between the period of rise, which I focus on, and the period of transition. Heavily influenced by power transition theory, most of the literature on rising powers has focused on the period during which the rising power surpasses the dominant period in overall material power. According to the standard power transition theory definition: "The transition is always taken to refer to the overtaking process where a challenger catches up with and passes the dominant nation."<sup>50</sup> My definition of a rising power and the period of rise include the earlier part of the rise, long before it reaches the point of parity with the dominant power.

There are several benefits to the earlier focus of my research and understanding of rising powers. First, given that I am interested in rising powers, how a country manages its international environment during its rise is likely to affect whether or not it reaches the period of transition and surpasses the dominant power. Secondly, although the period of transition focuses on comparisons of overall material power, it is likely that the real shifting dynamics that matter might have already happened before the point of overtaking the dominant power in aggregate terms. For example, long

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<sup>49</sup> See Van Evera, *Causes of War*, p. 75; and Levy "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War."

<sup>50</sup> See Kugler and Organski, "The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation," in Midlarsky, p. 177-8.

before the future global power transition occurs between the U.S. and China at the aggregate level, the two powers will have confronted the regional power transition and the issue of leadership in East Asia. Only examining the aggregate global power transition forces researchers to overlook potentially consequential phenomenon.

Analyzing these earlier interactions not only help explain the perceptions and policies of major powers during the earlier period of rise, but developments in this period can affect the later power transition. Power transition theorists highlight the importance of the rising power's level of satisfaction with the status quo as a key variable in explaining whether or not the power transition will lead to war. However, these theorists not only have problems measuring the degree of satisfaction, but also have little to say about the sources of these evaluations. The rising power's interactions with other powers during the earlier period of rise, especially how other powers respond as it becomes more powerful, are likely to influence the rising power's degree of satisfaction with the status quo. These early interactions may not only be important for the rising power, but the early perceptions of the rising power may be sticky and have a tendency to "lock in."<sup>51</sup> These early interactions during the period of rise, and the assessments made during this period, will likely shape future interactions and responses.

### ***The Dependent Variable: Severity of Balancing Response***

This project does not try to explain whether or not a rising power rises successfully. This ultimate result, though certainly important, is likely to depend on many factors that are internal to the rising power. The focus of this dissertation is on the rising power's external environment and

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<sup>51</sup> On the importance of early interactions, lock-in effects, and path dependence, see Scott Plous, *The Psychology of Judgment and Decision-making* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), ch. 13; Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 94, No. 2 (Jun., 2000), pp. 251-267; and James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

the balancing response by other great powers, which is the most important external challenge for a rising power. The dependent variable for this study, the severity of the balancing response, is composed of a series of countervailing responses that could undermine the rising power's security and obstruct its rise. In the remainder of this section, I discuss the conceptualization of the dependent variable, examine the benefits of using a spectrum to measure the severity of the balancing response, and lay out the indicators for the dependent variable.

### *Conceptualizing the Severity of the Balancing Response*

I define balancing as a state increasing or exercising material power in response to an increased threat, in this case from a rising power. As opposed to theories that focus on balance as a systemic outcome, this definition focuses on balancing as a state's response to increases in power or threat.<sup>52</sup> Consistent with other definitions of balancing, I focus on countervailing actions that are directly targeted at the rising power. Many studies of balancing, both quantitative and qualitative, conceptualize balancing as a dichotomous variable, according to which a state either did or did not balance. Some scholars are only concerned with issues of war and peace, and dismiss as normal politics any behavior that falls short of the traditional balancing definition of the formation of alliances and increased defense spending. Although such a conceptualization may be easier to measure, it forces scholars to overlook a lot of consequential behavior. Levy suggests that a more complete understanding of the concept of balancing should include assessments of its scale or magnitude, and he suggests that a potential spectrum could include absent, weak, moderate, and

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<sup>52</sup> For discussions of balance of power, balances, and balancing, see Inis L. Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962); Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*; Edward V. Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power: A Case Study of the Theory and Practice of one of the Great Concepts of European Statecraft* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955); Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Ernst B. Haas, "The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda," *World Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4. (July 1953), pp. 442-477; Vasquez and Elman, *Realism and the Balancing of Power*; Michael Sheehan, *The Balance of Power: History and Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, "Hegemonic Threats and Great-Power Balancing in Europe, 1495-1999," *Security Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January-March 2005), pp. 1-33; and Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths, and Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

strong balancing.<sup>53</sup> Other scholars have also embraced the idea of balancing severity, though they have not developed it.<sup>54</sup>

In operationalizing the concept of severity of balancing, I adopt a broad spectrum of behavior to capture behavior that is significant for world politics and consequential for the rising power itself. This spectrum ranges from very severe balancing behavior such as preventive war and alliances to less severe balancing behavior such as denial of access to advanced technology or adoption of a more confrontational attitude in public settings. Many of the less severe balancing behaviors in this spectrum are consistent with soft balancing, which highlights recent attempts to constrain American foreign policy that fall short of traditional balancing behavior.<sup>55</sup> Some critics have argued that soft balancing is impossible to distinguish from “conventional policy disputes,” “diplomatic bargaining,” and “politics as usual.”<sup>56</sup> The spectrum approach allows those who have a high standard for balancing to focus on the more severe end of the spectrum. Other critics argue that so-called soft balancing actions can be better explained by alternative explanations such as the potential balancer’s economic interests, other security interests, and domestic politics; responding to and constraining U.S. power is not the motivation for this behavior, so it is incorrect to call it

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<sup>53</sup> See Jack S. Levy, “Balances and Balancing: Concepts, Propositions, and Research Design,” in Vasquez and Elman, *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, p. 136.

<sup>54</sup> In multiple places, Posen refers to the “intensity of balancing behavior,” and uses intensity in much the same way as I use severity. See Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, p. 63, 65. Walt also uses “mild” as a descriptor for balancing behavior, suggesting that balancing is not purely a dichotomous concept. See “Keeping the World ‘Off Balance:’ Self-Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy.” In G. John Ikenberry, ed. *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 126-7. Art also argues that scholars should employ a “somewhat broader understanding of balancing behavior.” See Robert J. Art, “Striking the Balance,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Winter 2005/06), pp. 177-185.

<sup>55</sup> Examples include forcing the U.S. to attack Kosovo and Iraq without the support of the United Nations. See Robert A. Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 7-45; T.V. Paul, “Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 46-71; Art, “Striking the Balance;” and Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

<sup>56</sup> See Brooks and Wohlforth, “Hard Times for Soft Balancing,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 72-108; and Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander, “Waiting for Balancing: Why the World Is Not Pushing Back,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 109-139. More specifically on the argument that soft balancing is the proper way to understand how states are responding to U.S. unipolarity, they argue that these actions do not follow a balancing logic and that they can be better explained by other factors.

balancing.<sup>57</sup> In line with this stronger critique, all behavior on the balancing spectrum must be aimed at the rising power or take the rising power as a target to be included, even at the less severe end of the spectrum. Moreover, using specific behaviors allows different scholars to use different thresholds for what they think “counts” as balancing, yet allows the analysis to capture movements in a more or less severe direction.<sup>58</sup> Other responses to rising powers, such as hiding, bandwagoning, distancing, or balancing against a third power are all considered to be non-balancing.<sup>59</sup>

Focusing on specific behavioral responses also helps overcome problematic uses of concepts such as balancing and hedging. Although some scholars have advocated a broader range of behavioral responses, the vast majority of theoretical and empirical studies focus on the choice of balancing or bandwagoning. As Schweller argues, most studies employ an overly narrow conception of bandwagoning that equates it to surrendering to the more powerful or more threatening state, forcing analysts to include a huge range of behavior under the rubric of balancing.<sup>60</sup> Chan is also correct in arguing that such an excessively broad notion of balancing involves concept-stretching and it would “be asking ‘balancing’ to do too much of the analytical heavy lifting if one were to include in this concept policies that seek cooperation, accommodation *and* resistance.”<sup>61</sup> Scholars have recently tried to move beyond this choice of “balancing or bandwagoning” by using the concept of hedging as a middle choice. The tendency in the literature, however, has been to define

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<sup>57</sup> See Wohlforth and Brooks, “Hard Times for Soft Balancing;” and William C. Wohlforth and Stephen G. Brooks, *World out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), esp. pp. 79-83.

<sup>58</sup> Two scholars argue that we should not think of hard balancing as only involving military actions and soft balancing as only involving non-military actions. Instead, both hard balancing and soft balancing can include both military and non-military behavior. See Kai He and Feng Huiyun, “If Not Soft Balancing, then What? Reconsidering Soft Balancing and U.S. Policy towards China,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2008), pp. 363-395.

<sup>59</sup> For a discussion of some of these other types of responses, see Schroeder, “Historical Reality versus Neo-Realist Theory;” and Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit.”

<sup>60</sup> See Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit.”

<sup>61</sup> See Steve Chan, “An Odd Thing Happened on the Way to Balancing: East Asian States’ Reactions to China’s Rise,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 12 (2010), pp. 408.

bandwagoning and balancing as a narrow set of extreme behavior, such as alliance with or against the most threatening power, and refer to everything in the middle as “hedging.”<sup>62</sup> The concept of severity of balancing response helps identify harder or softer forms of balancing, rather than using concepts that do not differentiate the magnitude of these responses.

This spectrum approach allows one to not only assess the magnitude (or severity) of the balancing response, but also to track changes in directionality. In coding the magnitude or severity of the balancing response, I will rely on the indicators laid out in the next section to determine where the behavior falls on the spectrum. The assessment of severity is based on the objective behaviors of the other great powers, not on the rising power’s perception or characterization of the response. The approach also allows judgments on whether the balancing response has become more or less severe over time, as the rising power’s material power has increased.

The general expectation from the international relations literature is that a rising power should provoke a response that becomes more severe as the material capabilities of the rising power increases, and should provoke a hard balancing response that is very high on the severity spectrum. From the rising power’s perspective, at a minimum the rising power should aim to prevent states from adopting the most severe type of balancing behavior, such as launching preventive wars or forming alliances against it. Overall, a rising power should also aim to minimize the severity of the balancing response. For a rising power, minimizing the severity of the balancing response is an especially challenging and difficult task.

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<sup>62</sup> See Edelstein, “Managing Uncertainty;” Evelyn Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies*, (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2006); Evelyn Goh, “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies,” *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2007/08), pp. 113-157; Kuik Cheng-Chwee, “The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore’s Response to a Rising China,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (2008): 159-185. Another problem with the concept of hedging is that in policy discussions on China, hedging is often defined as the harder military response, defined in opposition to or as a supplement to engagement. In this case, rather than occupying the middle-ground, hedging is much closer to balancing. For this usage, see Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 2005-6), pp. 145-167.



Lastly, for the sake of conceptual clarity, I distinguish the related concepts of war, containment, and balancing. Although war is substantially different from either containment or balancing, preventive war that is precipitated by a shift in power and justified as part of an attempt to return the system to equilibrium or prevent the rising power from becoming too powerful is the most extreme form of balancing.<sup>63</sup> Scholars and commentators have included such a wide range of behavior under the category of containment that it can mean anything from preventing territorial expansion or the spread of ideology into another country to active efforts to prevent any economic growth in a country and active efforts to overthrow a regime. For this project, containment refers to attempts to limit the ability of the rising power to rise, usually by active efforts to prevent the rising power from growing economically through pressure and isolation. Balancing is sometimes distinguished from containment and other times the two concepts are used interchangeably.<sup>64</sup> In this project, balancing will refer to the broad range of competitive countervailing responses to the rising power. Containment and preventive war are behaviors that are balancing, but they are balancing behavior at the most severe end of the balancing spectrum.

#### *Benefits of a Spectrum Approach to Balancing*

I briefly summarize the benefits of a broader conceptualization of balancing and a spectrum approach. First, a spectrum approach captures balancing behavior that is less severe than traditional measures, but that is still consequential for international politics. By adopting a traditional dichotomous approach that only includes hard balancing, such behavior is overlooked and missed. Some scholars may dismiss behavior that falls below the threshold of traditional hard balancing, but

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<sup>63</sup> According to Morgenthau, “Preventive war...is in fact a natural outgrowth of the balance of power.” See Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 211

<sup>64</sup> For examples, see Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; and Kai and Feng, “If Not Soft Balancing, then What?”

such responses can be very important in international politics and rising powers clearly do not view alliances and defense spending as the only behavior that can threaten their rise or their security.

Balancing responses that do not rise to the level of hard balancing can provide important feedback that can affect the rising power's grand strategy and its evaluation of the status quo, important developments that the traditional dichotomous approach would fail to notice. For example, if other powers respond to the rising power's reassurance with hostility, balancing responses that fall far below the level of hard balancing can lead a rising power to abandon reassurance or become dissatisfied with the status quo.<sup>65</sup>

Balancing behavior that does not rise to the level of traditional balancing may be especially important for rising powers. As a rising power is often experiencing tremendous domestic political, economic, and social transformation and dislocation, international challenges and complications may be perceived as especially threatening for a regime that is also dealing with immense domestic challenges.<sup>66</sup> For a domestic leadership that feels under great pressure in the face of domestic challenges, it might be particularly sensitive about minor challenges in its international environment. Soft balancing responses by other powers could also potentially have a particularly strong effect within the rising power as it interacts with domestic challenges and domestic instability; such hypersensitivity could drive the rising power to feel encircled and push them to respond. For a rising power, what scholars might call "politics as usual," could produce massive challenges for its rise, or force the rising power to conclude from another state's "diplomatic bargaining" that it is hostile to the rising power and will try to prevent its rise.

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<sup>65</sup> For example, Malenkov and Khrushchev's took actions in the mid-1950s that they believed were conciliatory, such as expressing goodwill to the American people, showing an openness to arms control, and withdrawing troops from Austria. After these moves were met with a hostile reaction by Eisenhower and Dulles, however, the Soviet leaders concluded that it had no choice but to abandon such efforts. See Deborah Welch Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust: U.S.-Soviet Relations during the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), ch. 2; and Ole Holsti, "Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy: Dulles and Russia," in David J. Finlay, Ole R. Holsti, and Richard R. Fagen, eds., *Enemies in Politics* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967).

<sup>66</sup> See Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); and Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

Second, the spectrum approach also captures levels of balancing that are even more severe than traditional dichotomous standards. The formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance in the early 1890s would count as balancing according to usual definitions. But these dichotomous definitions overlook balancing that is even more severe than the formation of an alliance—such as increased formalization of an alliance through military-to-military relations, joint planning, or joint exercises, even though such formalization could be consistent with balance of power arguments. For example, the Franco-Russian alliance became more clearly focused on Germany and moved from a broad political agreement to specific war planning against Germany; a spectrum approach allows us to capture these developments. According to traditional dichotomous standards, a preexisting alliance would make balancing against a new threat impossible by definition. For example, the U.S.-Japan alliance was formed during the Cold War in the face of Soviet and Chinese threats. Because the alliance continues to exist in the post-Cold War world, this dichotomous conceptualization of balancing makes it impossible for the U.S. and Japan to balance against the North Korean or Chinese threat.

Third, for scholars only interested in war and peace, one can also understand the spectrum of severity of balancing as similar to the “steps to war” model, in that it captures increases or decreases in inter-state competition.<sup>67</sup> For example, Copeland conceives of his dependent variable as a spectrum of hard-line or soft line positions that the dominant power can adopt towards the rising power, and uses this “variance in the severity (or “toughness”) of state policy” as a measure of the likelihood of war.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> See John A. Vasquez, “The Steps to War: Toward a Scientific Explanation for Correlates of War Findings,” *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (October 1987), pp. 108-145; John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Vasquez, “Re-examining the Steps to War: New Evidence and Theoretical Insights,” in Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies, II* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

<sup>68</sup> See Copeland, *Origins of Major Wars*, p. 36-7.

Lastly, adopting a spectrum for balancing behavior allows for an increase in the number of observations. With a relatively small universe of rising powers and a focus on war as the dependent variable, much of the research on rising powers has been plagued by a tiny number of observations. Consistent with the suggestions of recent work on social science methodology, this spectrum approach allows the scholar to maximize the number of observations of responses by the other powers.<sup>69</sup>

### *Indicators for Severity of Balancing*

Below I list the indicators for the spectrum of potential balancing responses:

#### Spectrum of Balancing Severity

*(Note: From Most Severe to Least Severe Balancing)*

- Preventive war against rising power (RP)
- Comprehensive efforts to prevent any economic growth in RP
- Active support for internal subversion to promote regime collapse in RP
- Strengthened alliance with defense planning explicitly targeted at RP
- Massive arms build-up, with increased defense burden, explicitly justified by threat from and aimed at RP
- Formation of alliance explicitly targeted at RP
- Threats to use force against RP, especially in a crisis
- Arms transfers or sales to third party explicitly aimed at RP
- Redeployment of forces to counter the RP

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<sup>69</sup> See Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

- Re-orientation of pre-existing alliance to focus more on the RP
- More gradual increase in defense expenditures and defense burden with RP as one of many potential drivers
- Formation of alliance with RP as one of many potential targets
- Denial of dual-use advanced technology with potential military applications
- Government actions to limit commercial relations with RP due to fear of vulnerability and security externalities
- Keeping RP out of regional or international organizations or groupings
- Adopting a more confrontational attitude toward RP in meetings or public settings
- Improved relations with other country with RP as one of many potential driving factors

### ***The Independent Variable: Grand Strategy of the Rising Power***

In the previous section, I described the dependent variable for the dissertation, the severity of balancing response. My argument is that the severity of the balancing response is affected by the grand strategic choice of the rising power. Analytically, I am focused on the effect of the rising power's grand strategy, not on the sources of the rising power's choice of grand strategy. In this section I explain the independent variable, the grand strategy of the rising power. First, I lay out my typology of grand strategies, which divides them into two ideal types: reassurance and coercion. Then, I briefly discuss coding procedures and the types of behavior that would be evidence for either grand strategy.

#### *Grand Strategy Typology: Reassurance and Coercion*

Although political scientists and historians fiercely debate which factors are most important in explaining why states adopt certain grand strategies, there is a general consensus on the concept

and definition of grand strategy. According to Posen: “A grand strategy is a political-military, means-end chain, a state’s theory about how it can best ‘cause’ security for itself.”<sup>70</sup> A grand strategy has a central logic and broad vision for how to combine military, political, diplomatic, and economic tools to secure a country’s interests and deal with the threats it faces. Although I recognize that grand strategies in practice are rarely as well-defined and coherent as theoretical discussions about them would suggest, I use the term grand strategy as a heuristic tool to better understand how rising powers try to manage their international environments. All countries try to design their grand strategy to address their international environment and threats to their security and interests. At a minimum, a rising power would prefer to prevent such balancing or minimize the severity of this balancing response, and would likely design a grand strategy that tried to achieve this goal.

For many realist scholars, all rising powers are essentially the same and their choice of grand strategy is shaped, if not determined, by its increased power. As material capabilities increase, the rising power’s interests expand, and it tries to maximize its influence.<sup>71</sup> This belief that all rising powers are the same and adopt the same broad strategy is one of the reasons that scholars have overlooked the importance of the rising power’s grand strategy as an independent variable. For example, Art suggests that as China rises, it “will do what all great powers do: not simply react to its international environment, but instead act to shape that environment in ways that are conducive to

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<sup>70</sup> See Barry R. Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, p. 13. For other discussions of grand strategy, see Edward Mead Earle, “Introduction,” in Earle, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1943); B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Praeger, 1954); Paul M. Kennedy, ed., *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); and Rosecrance and Stein, *Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*; Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); and Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> This characterization is most consistent with classical realism and neo-classical realism, but most other realists seem to share this view. See Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919-1939*; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*; Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*; Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit;” Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances*; and Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power*. For one of the boldest claims of how changes in material power determine a state’s strategy and behavior, see Mandelbaum, *The Fate of Nations*. Other non-realist scholars also agree that rising powers tend to behave the same and adopt the same strategies. See Choucri and North, *Nations in Conflict*; and Charles Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

its national interests.”<sup>72</sup> According to this view, all rising powers behave the same, trying to control their environment, expand their influence, and protect their expanding interests.

Although I agree that rising powers try to shape their environment, how they go about doing so is largely indeterminate and left undeveloped by these theoretical arguments. For example, Mearsheimer argues that countries aim to maximize their share of world power. When one considers his argument that states do not just constantly expand, but make strategic calculations about what types of strategies and behavior will maximize their power, this leaves much more room for variation in a rising power’s grand strategy than the traditional view suggests.

Grand strategy is a central concept in international relations and diplomatic history, but most of the research has been focused on the grand strategy of a particular country during a particular period in history, with less work on developing a typology of choices of grand strategy.<sup>73</sup> There is broad consensus on the concept, but no typology of grand strategies has become widely accepted in international relations or diplomatic history.<sup>74</sup> For a rising power that is trying to expand its influence, control its environment, and preventing balancing by other powers, it could adopt very different grand strategies that each has a central logic of how it would accomplish these aims.

I suggest that a rising power can choose between two different types of grand strategies: reassurance and coercion.<sup>75</sup> Although these grand strategies are clearly ideal types, each has its own

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<sup>72</sup> See Art, “The United States and the Rise of China,” in Ross and Zhu, eds., *China’s Ascent*. Gilpin writes: “The realist law of uneven growth implies that as the power of a group or state increases, that group or state will be tempted to try to increase its control over its environment.” See Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, p. 94.

<sup>73</sup> For examples, see Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Phillip II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999); and Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein, eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>74</sup> Scholars debating America’s post-Cold War grand strategy have generally agreed on the menu of strategic choices, but these options are unique to a country with America’s immense power and favorable geographic situation and were not meant as a general typology of choices of grand strategy. See Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter, 1996-1997), pp. 5-53.

<sup>75</sup> This formulation is similar to the way several other scholars discuss strategies and policy, though no one has really used this exact typology for grand strategy. On spiral and deterrence models, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, ch. 3. On benevolent and coercive strands of hegemonic stability theory, see Duncan Snidal, “The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory,” *International Organization*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 579-614. For a characterization of

logic and compelling story about how it could minimize or prevent balancing.<sup>76</sup> A rising power could increase its control over its environment, expand its influence, and prevent balancing by adopting either grand strategy. Moreover, this typology separates the political motives of the rising power from the choice of grand strategy. Unlike other typologies, this one allows either a revisionist rising power or a status-quo rising power to adopt either reassurance or coercion.<sup>77</sup> Factors such as extreme revisionist ambitions, urgency, or impatience could drive a rising power to adopt coercion, but this typology allows the rising power to adopt either grand strategy.

Reassurance and coercion both have a logic through which each choice of grand strategy could minimize the severity of the balancing response and protect the rising power's interests. A grand strategy of reassurance is based on the belief that balancing can be minimized or prevented through cooperative and conciliatory behavior. Through demonstrating benign intentions and showing that the rising power will not use its increased power to challenge the interests of others, the rising power will not be perceived as a threat, and other powers will not need to balance against it. A reassurance strategy is also motivated by a general belief that states balance against threats,

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political strategies as conciliation or deterrence, see Evan Luard, "Conciliation and Deterrence: A Comparison of Political Strategies in the Interwar and Postwar Periods," *World Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Jan., 1967), pp. 167-189. For a description of policies as cooperative or competitive, see Charles Glaser, "Realists as Optimists." Snyder and Diesing argue that persuasion, coercion, and accommodation are the tools available to induce cooperation from an adversary; see Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

<sup>76</sup> Drawing on Schelling's seminal work, some might argue that coercion and reassurance can not be distinguished. Although Schelling conceptualized deterrence as simultaneously requiring a threat and an assurance, his understanding of assurance and my grand strategy of reassurance are very different. Schelling's assurance is meant to communicate that you are not trying to deceive or "screw over" the party you are trying to deter or compel, so to prevent the person from taking another step he needs to believe he is not going to be shot anyway. My grand strategy of reassurance, as I will lay out in greater detail, is focused on reducing fear on the part of the other side, so that it does not feel threatened. See Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 74-5.

<sup>77</sup> Luttwak's typology of grand strategies includes two choices: expansionist and status quo. The choice of grand strategy, however, is completely endogenous to the motives of the state, so that expansionist powers can only adopt expansionist grand strategies and status quo powers can only adopt status quo grand strategies. See Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2001). For an excellent discussion of the need to keep motives and strategies independent in devising a typology of grand strategy, see Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). Although there are certain factors that could make one type of rising power choose one grand strategy over the other, such a revisionist rising power that needs to expand its influence over an area in a very short period of time and would be more likely to adopt a coercive strategy, this typology at least allows for the possibility of either type of state adopting either grand strategy.



rather than bandwagoning with them, so the rising power should take actions to minimize how threatening it is to others. Lastly, a reassurance strategy is also informed by a view that expansion and aggression are not only unlikely to succeed because they will provoke balancing responses, but that such behavior is likely to make the rising power less secure.

The basic logic behind a grand strategy of coercion, on the other hand, is that forceful policies will prevent or minimize balancing responses.<sup>78</sup> Rather than viewing increased power as something that others might worry about, according to this logic, the best way to break up existing alliances or prevent other alliances from forming is to show others that you are powerful and that you are willing to use force. Demonstrations of power not only deter others from challenging you, but also make others want to improve their relations with you. A coercive grand strategy is motivated by a general belief that states bandwagon with powerful and threatening states. Advocates of coercion are also likely to believe that credibility is very important and reputations, either for being strong and resolved or for being weak and lacking resolve, form very easily and transfer across situations. Lastly, supporters of coercion are likely to stress the risks of adopting a cooperative strategy, and argue that cooperation would not only force the rising power to forego opportunities for amassing more power, but also make others conclude that you are weak.

The rising power's choice of grand strategy is not endogenous to any single factor. Although I have highlighted the potential for the severity of the balancing response to influence the rising power's choice of grand strategy and to potentially produce a change in grand strategy, the rising power's choice of grand strategy is not endogenous to the balancing responses. A rising power could adopt reassurance in the face of severe balancing or it could adopt coercion in the face of non-balancing. For example, after the unified opposition from European powers that Bismarck

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<sup>78</sup> For more discussion of this logic, see Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, *Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Snyder, *Myths of Empire*.

faced during the 1875 War in Sight crisis, Bismarck responded by continuing to implement reassurance to prevent more severe balancing. On the other hand, Wilhelm II responded to signs of the formation of an anti-German coalition after 1900 by adopting a more coercive strategy aimed at smashing this coalition. How rising powers interpret, react to, and learn from the feedback provided by the balancing responses of other powers play an important role in understanding the evolution of the rising power's grand strategy over time. Although not a part of my theory of how grand strategy affects the balancing response, learning theory is important for understanding how rising powers adjust their grand strategies to manage their international environment more effectively.<sup>79</sup>

*Evidence for Coding the Grand Strategies:*

Given that a country's grand strategy in practice is often less coherent and consistent than it might be in theory, coding a state's grand strategy can sometimes prove difficult. One of the tools I use is to focus on how the rising power exercises, wields, and understands its increased power, which serves as something of a litmus test. The key question that helps distinguish its grand strategic choice is: how does the rising power think about its increased power? Does this increase in power create opportunities to expand its territory and challenge the interests of others? Or is this increase in power something that others are likely to be concerned about? The more the rising power sees the increased power as providing opportunities to seize territory, initiate crises, and challenge the international order, the more it looks like the ideal-type coercion strategy. The more the rising power, even though its power is increasing, does not take advantage of opportunities, limits military build-ups, and adopts a conciliatory posture towards others, the more it looks like the ideal-type reassurance strategy. The coding of the grand strategy as reassurance or coercion is from

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<sup>79</sup> On learning theory, see George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991); Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 279-312; and Jeffrey W. Knopf, "The Importance of International Learning," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (April 2003), pp. 187-209.

the perspective of the rising power and how it is trying to shape its environment. This approach has the analytical virtue of making it possible for the rising power to implement what it considers to be a grand strategy of reassurance, but have that reassurance lead to a severe balancing response.

In terms of evidence, I rely on foreign policy behavior and available public or diplomatic correspondence involving government officials or the key foreign policy elite. The strongest evidence for the type of grand strategy would not only include foreign policy behavior consistent with reassurance or coercion, but also include evidence of underlying reasoning in the elite about how reassurance or coercion would have the desired effect of preventing a balancing response. My argument about the causal impact of grand strategy on the balancing response by others should also hold even if the rising power has not consciously recognized the logic of how the grand strategy should affect the balancing response.

Although I have mostly talked about these grand strategies as ideal-types and pure strategies, rising powers could mix elements of both in their grand strategies.<sup>80</sup> Given that a rising power is usually not only concerned about one power, but also the responses of several powers, there is certainly the possibility of coercing one state while reassuring another. In this case, the overall logic in the rising power's strategy and approach to most great powers is the deciding factor. Another mixed strategy possibility is to simultaneously combine coercion and reassurance against the same actor. However, as the logics behind how these grand strategies are completely contradicting, this type of mixed strategy is unlikely.

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<sup>80</sup> See Schweller, "Managing the Rise of Great Powers," pp. 17-8. For the broader work on mixed strategies in game theory, see Drew Fudenberg and Jean Tirole, *Game Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); and Prajit K. Dutta, *Strategies and Games: Theories and Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

### *My Theory of Reassurance: Circumventing the Balancing Response*

According to my theory, a rising power's grand strategy of reassurance can be successful if it prevents, delays, or minimizes the severity of the balancing response against the rising power.<sup>81</sup>

Others characterize reassurance as a process or relationship of building trust that only exists if cooperation is reciprocated and results in a positive feedback cycle of trust and cooperation.<sup>82</sup> In my theory, the rising power can take actions and send signals of reassurance, and if these signals minimize the severity of the balancing response, then reassurance is effective.

A rising power, due to its increasing material capabilities, makes other powers anxious and fearful that as its power continues to increase, the rising power will try to use that power to its own advantage and to the disadvantage of the other powers. The challenge for the rising power is that it must credibly reassure the other powers that it will not exploit them as its material power increases, that it will abide by its commitments to not do so in the future, and that its increased material power will benefit others rather than threaten them. A grand strategy of reassurance is a sophisticated long-term power game in which the rising power tries to demonstrate its willingness to restrain itself and not maximize its power in the hopes that it can grow more powerful without being balanced

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<sup>81</sup> In the existing literature, there are at least two other ways that scholars use the phrase reassurance that differs from my use of the term. The first refers to reassuring allies, such as how the forward deployment of American troops in Europe and Asia reassures allies by defending their interests, deterring or defeating potential regional aggressors, and making others less fearful of shifts in power. See Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, pp. 140-1; and Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), pp. 31-41, 180-2; Michael Howard, "Reassurance and Deterrence: Western Defense in the 1980s," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Winter 1982-3), pp. 309-324; and Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). The second usage of reassurance refers to how other countries might respond to a would-be aggressor. According to scholars who adopt this conception, reassurance, defined in opposition to deterrence, is a way to influence a potential aggressor and dissuade it from attacking. See Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. p. 317; James W. Davis, *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 30-2; Stephen R. Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics* (Lexington, Ken.: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), pp. 14-5; and Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, eds., *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

<sup>82</sup> For example, see Tang Shiping, *A Theory of Security Strategy for Our Time: Defensive Realism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 130-131.

against.<sup>83</sup> In the rest of this section, I explain the causal mechanisms through which reassurance can circumvent the balancing response, discuss the tools of reassurance, lay out the key predictions for testing the theory empirically, and show where my theory fits in the existing research on reassurance.

### *Causal Mechanisms: Minimizing the Severity of the Balancing Response*

This section explains the causal logic of my theory of reassurance and traces the causal mechanisms through which a rising power's grand strategy of reassurance can convince other powers to minimize the severity of their balancing response. According to the first mechanism, *reduced estimates that rising power is a threat*, the reassurance strategy mostly affects the threat perception of the other powers. The logic is that because balancing is costly and risky, if reassurance keeps states at least uncertain as to whether the rising power is a threat, they are less likely to pay the costs and run the risks of severe balancing. According to the second mechanism, *reaping the benefits from a rising power*, the concessions and cooperation from the rising power's reassurance affects the cost-benefit calculus of the other powers. The logic is that if reassurance demonstrates that others will benefit from the rising power, severe balancing would be seen as more costly and cooperation seen as more beneficial, so the other powers would be less likely to sacrifice these benefits by balancing severely. Lastly, I also suggest that these mechanisms can operate independently or can reinforce each other.

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<sup>83</sup> In many ways the situation a rising power faces in trying to reassure others that it will not be a threat is similar to the sophisticated long-term power game that Ikenberry suggests hegemons often try to play in constructing stable post-war orders. G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

### Causal Mechanism 1: Reduced Estimates that Rising Power is a Threat

Although most defensive realists believe that potential aggressors or hegemony will ultimately provoke balancing, they also recognize that balancing against a rising power can be risky, and therefore should only be done when absolutely necessary. Defensive realists believe that cooperation under anarchy can be dangerous, but they argue that offensive realists completely overlook that competitive responses can also be risky.<sup>84</sup> If a great power incorrectly balances against a status-quo power, believing it to be a prudent response against a potential threat, this could prove counterproductive and ultimately decrease the state's security. A severe balancing response against a potential threat could produce a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the competitive response helps create a dissatisfied rising power that is more likely to challenge the system and threaten the security of other great powers. The risk of balancing is that if it is premature and unnecessary, it can turn a potential partner into a rival, and unleash spiral dynamics that could result in a competitive relationship, arms races, inadvertent escalation, and potentially lead to great power war.<sup>85</sup>

Other scholars, especially offensive realists, observe that balancing is costly and argue that states are likely to balance only when their survival is threatened and they have no other choice.<sup>86</sup> If countries balance internally, they must bear a much greater defense burden, which often requires diverting scarce resources. If countries balance externally, they pay significant costs to their autonomy, and also run the risk of being pulled into a war by their ally. Moreover, if deterrence fails, the country may have to expend resources in war, which could also allow buckpassing

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<sup>84</sup> Glaser criticizes this "competition bias," and argues that states that behave according to worst case assumptions ignore the risks involved. See Glaser, *Rational Theory of International Politics*, pp. 18, 52, 59-60, 142; and Taliaferro, "Seeking Security under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited," esp. p. 138.

<sup>85</sup> For a discussion of these spiral dynamics, Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, ch. 3; Charles L. Glaser, "Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics*, Vol. 50 (October 1997), pp. 171-201; and Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>86</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," p. 93; Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances*, p. 77; and Paul Fritz and Kevin Sweeney, "The (De)limitations of Balance of Power Theory." *International Interactions*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2004), p. 285.

countries to increase their relative power at the expense of the balancer.<sup>87</sup> Although usually not mentioned, another potential cost is that premature or unnecessary balancing would likely mean sacrificing any potential burden sharing that may have come from cooperation and any benefits the rising power might have shared with the other power.

Theoretical and empirical research suggests that states usually only balance when they perceive a country to be a threat or conclude that it is very likely to become a threat. States are often wary of rising powers, but such wariness is often not enough to trigger a balancing response. These scholars argue that states need to be perceived as hostile, aggressive, or threatening before they trigger a balancing response.<sup>88</sup> Research on threat perception similarly suggests that in order to be perceived as a threat, another state usually has to clearly demonstrate its intent to threaten others by flagrantly violating or challenging one of the accepted norms of international behavior or interests of another state.<sup>89</sup> For example, historians argue that the U.S. decision to balance against the Soviet Union early in the Cold War was not triggered by uncertainty about Soviet intentions, but was a response to repeated Soviet aggressive behavior that made most of the American foreign policy elite certain that the Soviets were revisionist, aggressive, and aimed to overthrow the American-led order.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, esp. p. 267.

<sup>88</sup> See Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 25; Sheehan, *Balance of Power*, p. 55; Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States," p. 19; Stephen G. Brooks, "Dueling Realisms," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Summer 1997) 445-477, p. 464; and Mark L. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 28.

<sup>89</sup> See Raymond Cohen, *Threat Perception in International Crisis* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979); Robert Jervis, "Perceiving and Coping with Threat," in Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, eds., *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 13-33; Klaus Knorr, "Threat Perception," in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1976), pp. 78-119; and Dean Pruitt, "Definition of the Situation as a Determinant of International Action," in Herbert C. Kelman, ed., *International Behavior: A Social-Psychological Analysis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965).

<sup>90</sup> See John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); and Robert Jervis, "Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?" *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 36-60.

This suggests that other powers need to be certain that the rising power is a threat before they decide to balance, especially given the potential risks and costs of premature and unnecessary balancing. This provides an opportunity for the rising power to shape the balancing response by manipulating the threat perception of the other powers through reassurance efforts. Through a grand strategy of reassurance, a rising power can minimize the likelihood that other powers perceive it to be a threat, and thereby minimize the severity of the balancing response. Ideally, a rising power would hope to make the other countries absolutely certain that it was benign and would not become a threat, but that is unlikely in any circumstance and would be particularly challenging in a situation of increasing power.

If the rising power's reassurance efforts can at least prevent the other powers from perceiving it is a threat, keep them uncertain about whether or not the rising power is a threat, and make them more likely to conclude that it is benign, this can minimize the severity of the balancing response. Many scholars argue that uncertainty leads to competition and war.<sup>91</sup> On the contrary, I not only argue that uncertainty does not doom states to competition, but also that given the potential risks and costs involved in balancing, uncertainty can lead to more cooperative outcomes.<sup>92</sup> Waltz and Mearsheimer's arguments about polarity also end up supporting this argument; clear and certain threats in bipolarity promote efficient and vigilant balancing responses, whereas uncertainty in multipolarity often lead to slow and inefficient balancing.<sup>93</sup> The more the reassurance strategy prevents the other powers from perceiving the rising power as a threat, and convinces them to

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<sup>91</sup> For an excellent discussion of the multiple meanings of uncertainty in international relations, see Brian Rathbun, "Uncertain about Uncertainty: Clarifying a Crucial Concept for International Relations Theory," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (September 2007), pp. 533-557.

<sup>92</sup> Other scholars support this more benign view of uncertainty. According to Glaser, "Certainty is not required to moderate the [security] dilemma—under uncertainty, higher estimates that the adversary is a security-seeker make cooperation less risky." See Glaser, *Rational Theory of International Politics*, p. 9. Mastanduno similarly suggests that states that are "on the fence" about whether a challenger is a threat are more likely to accommodate and cooperate, instead of confronting the power. See Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Spring 1997), p. 62. For the argument that cooperation can occur "despite uncertainty," see Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty," pp. 9-12.

<sup>93</sup> See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Ch. 8; and Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Ch. 9.



reduce probability estimates that the rising power is a threat, the less severe the balancing response will be. A rising power's concessions and cooperation can be seen as indicators of relatively benign intentions, and make balancing less likely because they help ensure that the rising power is not perceived as a threat. Keeping other powers at least uncertain also creates additional incentives for cooperation, so that the other powers can acquire more information about the rising power's intentions, and hopefully shape its interests, motivations, and behavior.<sup>94</sup>

### Causal Mechanism 2: Reaping the Benefits from a Rising Power

Many theories of balancing and preventive war use an informal cost-benefit calculus to explain how states respond to rising powers. For example, several theories of preventive war posit a choice between launching a war today and launching a war later under less favorable conditions, which would be more costly. These analyses overemphasize the potential costs of delay, while underestimating the potential costs of balancing and ignoring the potential benefits of not balancing or launching a preventive war. The traditional approach does not fully take into account the ways in which the tools of reassurance can alter the cost-benefit analysis in ways that make war or balancing less likely. These explanations only pay attention to what rising powers can potentially do *to* them and overlook what the rising powers can potentially do *for* them. Walt alludes to this possibility of benefit when he writes: "Although power can pose a threat, it can also be prized. States with great power have the capacity to either punish enemies or reward friends."<sup>95</sup> More recently, in his analysis

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<sup>94</sup> For more on how uncertainty can provide incentives to cooperate, see Glaser, *Rationalist Theory of International Politics*, p. 62; Tang Shiping, "Correspondence: Uncertainty and Reassurance in International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Summer 2007), pp. 193-197; and Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

<sup>95</sup> See Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 23. He also writes: "The power of other states can be either a liability or an asset, depending on where it is located, what it can do, and how it is used." See Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. x.

of East Asia's response to the rise of China, David Kang has also observed that "rising powers present opportunities as well as threats."<sup>96</sup>

Some literatures have pointed out that states with increased power can have a positive effect on others. In traditional balance of power theory, this idea of compensating others if one state makes gains or improves its power position is one of the key means to maintain stability and keep cooperative relations among the great powers.<sup>97</sup> Schweller also notes that when facing a rising power, revisionist countries will be interested in seeking benefits. However, as the choice between seeking security and profit is often a false one, all states can be interested in benefits and profits.<sup>98</sup> Lastly, one of the fundamental arguments in hegemonic realism and hegemonic stability theory is that dominant powers can maintain stability and make their immense power more acceptable by using it for the good of other powers, such as by providing public goods and solving global problems.<sup>99</sup>

The traditional emphasis on how it can be costly to delay balancing or launching a war against the rising power makes sense, but it ignores the potential ways in which delay can prove more beneficial and the potential ways that balancing or launching war today could also prove costly. Delaying may have risks and ultimately be costly, but maintaining friendly relations with the rising power, instead of taking countervailing action, allows for the possibility that the rising power's increase in material power will prove beneficial for the security and interests of other great powers. If fear of a disadvantageous future drives other great powers to launch a preventive war or balance severely against the rising power today, it will have to pay the costs of fighting the war and

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<sup>96</sup> See David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> See Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power*, p. 70-2; Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 6-7; and Geoffrey Bruun, *Europe and the French Imperium, 1799-1814* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1938), pp. 36-8.

<sup>98</sup> See Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances*, p. 160; and Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit."

<sup>99</sup> For application to U.S. hegemony, see G. John Ikenberry, "Introduction," in G. John Ikenberry, ed., *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 5; and Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2003), pp. 5-46.

maintaining a conflictual relationship. In addition, an overlooked potential cost is that by balancing, it would also sacrifice all of the potential benefits and gains from cooperation that it might have attained from the rising power if it did not balance.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, the rising power's increased material power greatly improves its ability to provide benefits, so the potential gains from not balancing could be especially large, as could the opportunity cost of sacrificed cooperation if the other powers unnecessarily balance severely against the rising power.

Pessimistic scholars might argue that it is very unlikely for other great powers to benefit from the emergence of a rising power, so it is not necessary to include this possibility in the notional cost-benefit analysis. However, this approach overlooks the possibility that a rising power's reassurance strategy can make the potential costs of severe balancing and war, and the potential benefits from cooperation, particularly prominent in the other power's decision calculus.<sup>101</sup> The rising power can influence the cost-benefit calculus by clearly showing the other powers that they will benefit from its continued rise, either through concessions or using its increased power to protect their security and further their interests. This manipulation of the cost-benefit calculus can minimize the severity of the balancing response by making other powers less likely to sacrifice these benefits and potential future benefits by moving to a hard-line policy. Fearon's bargaining model places artificial restrictions on the rising power's ability to show how its power can also provide benefits to others, and therefore prevents the rising power from being able to manipulate the cost-benefit calculus. In the model, the best the rising power can do is to make no new demands on the

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<sup>100</sup> Schelling recognizes the importance of this opportunity cost as a factor pushing for cooperation. He writes: "What makes agreements enforceable is only the recognition of future opportunities for agreement that will be eliminated if mutual trust is not created and maintained, and whose value outweighs the momentary gain from cheating in the present instance." See Thomas C. Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 45.

<sup>101</sup> Edelstein also notes that short-term benefits can drive states to cooperate with a rising power, but he seems to mostly refer to domestic costs and benefits within the potential balancer. See Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty."

declining power, but if the model allowed for concessions and reassurance, it might make preventive war a less appealing option.<sup>102</sup>

Lastly, because severe balancing and preventive war often require support and cooperation from multiple parties, successful reassurance efforts towards one potential balancer can reduce the likelihood that others will balance against the rising power. Reassurance efforts can prevent balancing by depriving potential balancers of allies or partners. For example, France wanted to balance severely against Bismarckian Germany, but as Bismarck's reassurance deprived it of potential partners, balancing alone became too costly for France. Successful reassurance efforts can not only make balancing less likely by forcing one country to bear the entire burden of balancing, but it can also impose new costs on the potential balancer as well. For example, if the United States wanted to severely balance against China or launch a preventive war, though it would prefer to share the costs and burdens with others, it is probably powerful enough to undertake such efforts on its own. However, China's successful reassurance towards the great powers of Asia may not only deprive the United States of potential allies, but if the United States took such actions, it could also damage its relations with the rest of Asia, which imposes new costs that would make the United States less likely to take such an action.

### Combining the Mechanisms

A rising power's reassurance can minimize the severity of the balancing response through either of these mechanisms, but they can also reinforce each other. Given the high costs and risk of premature balancing, a reassurance strategy can not only make balancing unlikely by making the other powers less likely to perceive the rising power as a threat (mechanism 1), but if the other

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<sup>102</sup> For a discussion of the bargaining model and preventive war, see Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," especially, p. 405-6. Fearon briefly mentions the idea of compensation, but does not fully explore the implications for commitment problems.

power risks sacrificing large potential benefits of cooperation (mechanism 2), this might also require even more unambiguous evidence that the rising power is a threat before it decides to balance.

Jervis summarizes this potential dynamic: “The greater these costs [of mutual defection] the greater the incentives to try cooperation and wait for fairly ambiguous evidence before assuming that the other must be checked with force.”<sup>103</sup>

### *Tools of Reassurance*

My theory includes a broad range of tools that a rising power can use to reassure the other powers.<sup>104</sup> I describe the potential tools of reassurance available to a rising power and suggest through which causal mechanism these tools would likely minimize the severity of the balancing response. In the empirical cases, I will discuss how these are used in a more detailed manner. These potential tools include:

--Self-Restraint: A rising power’s increasing material capability will provide it with opportunities to seize new territory, expand its influence and control, and challenge the interests of others.

Demonstrating self-restraint and passing up such opportunities sends the message to others that it is not greedy and not anxious to take advantage of every opportunity to maximize its relative power.<sup>105</sup>

Self-restraint can be costly because it forces the rising power to pass up opportunities to maximize relative power. Self-restraint can help minimize balancing by affecting the threat perceptions of others and reducing estimates that the rising power is a threat. Especially given that aggressive behavior and challenging established rules often leads rising powers to be perceived as a threat, self-

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<sup>103</sup> See Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma.”

<sup>104</sup> For a similar view, see Andrew H. Kydd, “Sheep in Sheep’s Clothing: Why Security Seekers do Not Fight Each Other.” *Security Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Autumn 1997), pp. 140, 153. Another scholar organizes tools of reassurance into the categories of words, non-military deeds, and military deeds. See Tang, *A Theory of Security Strategy for Our Time*, pp. 148-155.

<sup>105</sup> For more on self-restraint, see Janice Gross Stein, “Reassurance in International Conflict Management,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 3 (Autumn 1991), pp. 435-37; and Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 357.

restraint can be particularly important if it involves respecting existing spheres of influence and not crossing well-established red lines.<sup>106</sup>

--Self-Binding: If a rising power is willing to bind itself to the existing international institutions and international order as it rises, its increased power may be seen as less threatening and more acceptable.<sup>107</sup> Communicating a willingness to bind itself and make commitments, especially those that constrain the rising power's behavior, can serve as a costly signal. Entering into binding institutions communicates to others that the rising power accepts the international system, recognizes the legitimacy of the order, and is willing to play by the rules. This can most directly reduce the severity of the balancing response by demonstrating its benign intent and shaping the threat perception of other powers. However, if through its involvement in institutions, the rising power uses its power to solve problems and provide benefits for other countries, self-binding can also operate by manipulating the cost-benefit calculus.

--Sharing the Wealth: A rising power can make extra efforts to make concessions to other powers and use its increased power to help benefit other powers. For example, if a rising power acquired new territory or expanded its sphere of influence, it could allow others to expand on their own or use its increased power to help others gain control over territory or spheres of influence. Sharing the wealth can minimize the severity of balancing by allowing the other powers to reap the benefits from the rising power.

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<sup>106</sup> See Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing," p. 143.

<sup>107</sup> On self-binding, see Ikenberry, *After Victory*, ch. 1-2; Jervis, "Realism, Neoliberalism and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate;" and Lisa L. Martin, "Self-Binding," *Harvard Magazine*, Sept-Oct 2004, pp. 33-6.

--Binding: In addition to a rising power's self-binding in international institutions, it can prevent balancing by binding other powers to it. Through arrangements or alliances, the rising power can control or shape another power and help persuade it not to balance.<sup>108</sup> Although such binding may not seem consistent with reassurance, in order to successfully shape the behavior of the potential balancer, the rising power often has to make concessions or costly commitments such as defense commitments. Binding works to limit the severity of the balancing response by manipulating the cost-benefit calculus of the potential balancer and demonstrating that it can continue to benefit if it maintains cooperative relations with the rising power. Binding makes other powers feel less isolated and therefore less likely to need to seek an alliance against the rising power, and cooperation can also make the rising power seem less threatening. In extreme forms of shaping, binding may actually provide the rising power a "veto" over the foreign policy and alignment choices of its partner.

--Limited Military Build-up: As a rising power experiences economic growth, it is only natural that its military budget will increase as well. But if the rising power limits its military build-up and does not build weapons that would seem useful only for offensive purposes, other powers will be less likely to view the rising power as a threat. This will limit the severity of the balancing response by affecting the threat perception, and leading to reduced estimates that the rising power is a threat. This could also include pulling back or redeploying existing forces to signal a less aggressive or threatening posture towards a country.

--Words: Although international relations scholars seem to have largely accepted the distinction between costly signals and cheap words, words can be an important tool of reassurance both as a

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<sup>108</sup> For a discussion of binding, see Paul W. Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management," in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Historical Problems of National Security*, pp. 227-63; and Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

way to call attention to and frame other reassurance signals, and can be costly in their own right. To help ensure that other powers interpret the reassurance signal as intended, words can call attention to reassurance efforts, help shape the context in which they are perceived, and explain the meaning of such actions.<sup>109</sup> Words can also contribute to reassurance if expressing them proves costly to a domestic audience or if they constrain the rising power's behavior.<sup>110</sup> For example, abandoning public criticism, especially if had been repeated for a long period of time, or adopting more positive rhetoric to describe the other country, are examples of words as reassurance. A rising power can also use words to make promises to commitments to other powers of how it will be peaceful or how others might benefit.

#### *Predictions of My Theory of Reassurance*

If my theory of reassurance is correct, there are general predictions, as well as several other more specific testable predictions that one can infer from the theory. These include predictions about the rising power's behavior, the response of the other powers, and the justifications offered for these responses. The main general prediction is that rising powers that implement grand strategies of reassurance should be more likely to prevent or minimize the balancing response by others. The second general prediction is that when considering how to respond to the rising power, the justifications that other powers offer for not balancing more severely should support the theory's causal mechanisms.

Some predictions about the rising power's behavior that follow from the theory include:

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<sup>109</sup> See Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 19; Charles Osgood, *An Alternative to War or Surrender* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1962). p. 99-100; and Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust*, p. 31.

<sup>110</sup> See Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick T. Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (March 2007), pp. 35-66; and Stacie Goddard, "Talking Deception: Explaining Failures to Balance," unpublished manuscript.



--One should expect to see several examples of the rising power sending reassurance signals, such as self-restraint, concessions, self-binding, etc.

--The rising power should try to make other powers benefit from its rise and try to make sure that these other powers understand the constructive role the rising power is playing

--If the reassurance strategy is a conscious attempt to minimize balancing, before implementing reassurance, there should be evidence that officials understand the logic of reassurance and are explicitly aiming to minimize balancing through reassurance

Predictions and testable implications about how the other powers should behave and the justifications they should offer include:

--If other states balance, they should balance against powers other than the rising power

--Other states should perceive the reassurance signals that the rising power sends and benefits that the rising power tries to spread to the other powers

--When other states make threat assessments, they should conclude that a state other than the rising power is the greatest threat to their security

--When other states discuss whether or not the rising power is a threat, they should not conclude that the rising power is a threat, and it would be even better if leaders refer to the reassurance signals as evidence for why others should remain at least uncertain as to whether the rising power is a threat

--Officials should recognize and explicitly refer to the benefits that the rising power helped them obtain, express gratitude and appreciation for its role, and perhaps recognize that if relations deteriorated they would lose these benefits

--Officials in other countries should justify their decision not to balance more severely in part because they do not want to sacrifice cooperation with the rising power or gains from the rising power that it could get if it did not balance

--Other states should argue that the rising power's cooperative behavior and the benefits that they receive today suggest that the rising power might not become a threat even after it becomes more powerful

--In considering whether or not to balance more severely against the rising power, leaders in the other powers should express worries about triggering inadvertent spirals because they are not sure if the rising power is really a threat

### *Situating My Theory in the Existing Literature on Reassurance*

The seminal research on reassurance dates from the early 1960s and grew out of dissatisfaction with the unnecessary hostility, arms races, and risks of war during the Cold War. According to this view, not only was the Cold War based on an unnecessary misunderstanding, but U.S. policy was also making things worse through arms build-ups that deepened this misunderstanding and led to hostility. Instead, Osgood proposed a program of gradual reduction in tension (GRIT), through which the U.S. would show unilateral restraint and make unilateral concessions towards the Soviet Union, which would build trust and help both sides escape from this dangerous hostility.<sup>111</sup> At the same time, Amitai Etzioni proposed a similar program of concessions and confidence building measures to reduce tensions and prevent war.<sup>112</sup> As the Cold War hostility deepened, scholars argued that America's focus on competitive responses and arms build-ups forced the United States to miss several chances for tension reduction and cooperation with the Soviet Union that it could have capitalized on if it had implemented a program of reassurance.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> See Osgood, *An Alternative to War or Surrender*. Like most concepts in international relations, one could argue that Schelling put forth the core ideas of reassurance even earlier. In his discussion of how decomposition works for promises as well as for threats, Schelling suggests that smaller preparatory agreements and bargains can "create a tradition of trust" and can establish "good faith" that may ultimately overcome any worries of defection or abandonment. See Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict*, p. 45.

<sup>112</sup> See Amitai Etzioni, *The Hard Way to Peace: A New Strategy* (New York: Collier Books, 1962).

<sup>113</sup> See Lebow and Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War*; Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust*; and Scott Plous, "Perceptual Illusions and Military Realities: The Nuclear Arms Race," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (September 1985), pp. 363-89.

Outside of the politicized context of the Cold War confrontation, other scholars have shown formally that a cooperative equilibrium can be found and how reassurance strategies can be successful in helping two parties obtain such a cooperative outcome. In the late 1960s, economist Amartya Sen developed the “Assurance Game,” which showed that contrary to the pessimistic conclusions of the single shot prisoner’s dilemma game, players would be willing to cooperate with some indication that the other would cooperate, and some assurance or promise by one player could help convince the other player to cooperate as well.<sup>114</sup> Other subsequent research has shown that even under conditions of two-sided incomplete information, concessions can produce cooperative equilibrium in dynamic formal models.<sup>115</sup> Experimental research in social psychology has also shown that several of Osgood’s proposals did produce cooperation, at least at an inter-personal level.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to formal and experimental support, there are also important historical examples of reassurance helping to reduce tensions and facilitate cooperation. After Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, his program of reassurance gradually helped to reduce mistrust and helped end the Cold War.<sup>117</sup> Germany’s post-unification reassurance strategy towards

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<sup>114</sup> For the seminal work, see Amartya Sen, “Isolation, Assurance and the Social Rate of Discount,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (February 1967), pp. 112-24. In Sen’s original application, “cooperation” meant that an individual would increase his or her savings for the future and for the good of the community, whereas defection meant excessive spending which would benefit the individual but do harm to the community. For some of the earliest work in political science showing how the cooperative equilibrium could be achieved, see Russell Hardin, *Collective Action* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); and Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*.

<sup>115</sup> See Hugh Ward, “Testing the Waters: Taking Risks to Gain Reassurance in Public Goods Games,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (June 1989), pp. 274-308; and Joel Watson, “Starting Small and Renegotiation,” *Journal of Economic Theory*, Vol. 85 (1999), pp. 52-90. Andrew Kydd has shown formally that under anarchy, two security seekers can correctly identify each other and cooperate. See Kydd, “Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation;” and Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Politics*.

<sup>116</sup> See S. Lindskold, “Trust Development, the GRIT Proposal, and the Effects of Conciliatory Acts on Conflict and Cooperation,” *Psychological Bulletin*, No. 85 (1978), pp. 772-93.

<sup>117</sup> Some of Gorbachev’s most well-known signals of reassurance included reducing the number of SS-20s deployed against Europe, repeated proposals for moves towards disarmament, willingness to destroy more missiles as part of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, significant unilateral troop reduction, withdrawal from Afghanistan, and non-interference in the revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989. See Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust*, Ch. 6; Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust*, ch. 8; Alan R. Collins, “GRIT, Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24 (1998) pp. 201-219; and Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1994). For an argument that is critical of the role of reassurance, see

Europe after the end of the Cold War German provides an example of successful implementation of reassurance, even as the country's power is growing. Through its continued involvement in NATO, support of NATO's presence in Europe and Germany, and decision to further bind itself to European institutions through its support of the Maastricht Treaty, Germany was able to credibly reassure the rest of Europe that it would not use its increased power to establish an enlarged sphere of influence or launch aggressive wars.<sup>118</sup>

This theory of how reassurance can minimize the severity of the balancing response builds on this existing literature on reassurance, but there are important differences. First, the starting point in relations between the rising power and the other great powers are usually far less hostile than the adversarial and conflictual relations that characterize most relationships in the existing literature. Lebow and Stein characterize reassurance as a strategy of "conflict management among adversaries" and most of the cases they discuss involve relations of "ongoing hostility" or "deep mistrust."<sup>119</sup> In other analyses of reassurance, scholars focus on situations of enduring rivalry, countries with poor reputations, or how to escape an ongoing arms race.<sup>120</sup> The starting points for the relations between a rising power and other great powers is likely to be less adversarial and less hostile, making reassurance more likely to succeed.

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Richard A. Bitzinger, "Gorbachev and GRIT, 1985-1989: Did Arms Control Succeed Because of Unilateral Actions of in Spite of Them?" *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (April 1994) pp. 68-79.

<sup>118</sup> See Elizabeth Pond, *Beyond the Wall: Germany's Road to Unification* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1993); Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); and Angela E. Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>119</sup> See Stein, "Reassurance in International Conflict Management;" Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Beyond Deterrence," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 43 (Winter 1987), pp. 5-72; and Janice Stein, "Deterrence and Reassurance," in Philip Tetlock et al. eds., *Behavior, Society and Nuclear War*, vol. 2. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). They judged the test of whether reassurance was successful to be whether or not "adversarial leaders who are hostile and suspicious of one another" could avoid falling into war. See Lebow and Stein, "Beyond Deterrence," p. 41.

<sup>120</sup> See Stein, "Reassurance in International Conflict Management;" Lebow and Stein, "Beyond Deterrence;" Stephen R. Rock, *Why Peace Breaks Out: Great Power Rapprochement in Historical Perspective* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Paul Ian Midford "The Logic of Reassurance and Japan's Grand Strategy," *Security Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Spring 2002), pp. 1-43; George W. Downs and David M. Rocke, *Tacit Bargaining, Arms Races, and Arms Control* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); and Montgomery, "Breaking out of the Security Dilemma."

Second, the standards for successful reassurance in the context of this project, minimizing severity of balancing response, are much less demanding than most other discussions of reassurance. Even though the starting point usually involves adversarial relationships, the existing literature usually has a high standard for successful reassurance, such as building trust, achieving cooperation, or agreeing to and implementing lasting arms control arrangements.<sup>121</sup> According to one scholar, relations need to be transformed “from a state of war to a state of peace.”<sup>122</sup> The standard for successful reassurance in this project theory is far less stringent and easier to achieve.

Third, the set of tools for reassurance envisioned in this project are much broader than the narrow conception of reassurance through military signaling offered by many political scientists. According to some research, the only important form of signaling between countries involves military signaling through defense postures, arms control agreements, unilateral defense, and unilateral restraint.<sup>123</sup> Although defense policy is certainly important, my conceptualization allows states to adopt a broader set of tools in trying to reassure other powers.<sup>124</sup> Exploring this broader range of non-military signaling allows the scholar to capture more of the ways in which states try to communicate with each other.

### **Coercion Backfire: Provoking a Hyper-balancing Response**

Although most of the project is focused on the effects of reassurance on balancing, I also examine how a grand strategy of coercion affects the balancing response. If others behaved

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<sup>121</sup> See Aaron M. Hoffman, *Building Trust: Overcoming Suspicion in International Conflict* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006); Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust*; and Montgomery, “Breaking out of the Security Dilemma.”

<sup>122</sup> See Rock, *Why Peace Breaks Out*, p. 2; and Charles A. Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>123</sup> See Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma;” Glaser, “Realists as Optimists;” and Montgomery, “Breaking out of the Security Dilemma.”

<sup>124</sup> My formulation is consistent with Andrew Kydd’s work. He writes: “we should not limit our attention to the military realm when considering how states can deliberately convey signals about their motivations. Indeed to do so would lead one seriously to underestimate the ability of states to signal their motivations.” See Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust*, p. 139-40; and Kydd, “Sheep in Sheep’s Clothing.” Earlier work by Osgood, Etzioni, Lebow, and Stein also discuss a broader set of tools for reassurance.

according to Machiavelli's dictum that "it is much safer to be feared than loved," then rising powers adopting a grand strategy of coercion could mitigate the severity of the balancing response by demonstrating that it is powerful and willing to wield its power forcefully by using force, as well as by repeatedly threatening to use force and provoking crises.<sup>125</sup> As the flip side of the argument of how reassurance could be successful, however, I argue that coercion would make others feel especially threatened, and would be more likely to provoke an early and especially firm response, exacerbating the severity of the balancing response.

A rising power behaving in a coercive manner provoking a severe balancing response may not seem surprising, and may seem completely consistent with realist explanations of how states respond to rising powers. The timing of the severe balancing response and the justifications offered by officials in the country before balancing will help determine the relative explanatory power of my theory of coercion backfire and the expectation that shifting power caused the balancing response.<sup>126</sup> In terms of timing, my theory suggests that severe balancing responses would be preceded by coercive behavior from the rising power that is noticed by the other powers. Given that the rising power's grand strategy should trigger the severe balancing response, it is very likely that the shift to more severe balancing should happen very quickly, much more quickly than if such responses were driven by changing power dynamics. Moreover, it is likely that the severe balancing response will occur earlier than power factors might suggest such a response is necessary. In terms of the decision calculus, officials should point specifically to examples of coercive behavior by the rising power in

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<sup>125</sup> According to Machiavelli, coercion would be successful because "men have less scruple in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails." See Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, William J. Connell, trans. (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2005), pp. 75-8.

<sup>126</sup> Assessing the explanatory power of my theory of grand strategy is similar to comparing Walt's balance of threat theory and Waltz's balance of power theory. When Walt and Waltz make different predictions about which alliances should form, it is easier to test the relative explanatory power of both theories. However, when both theories point in the same direction, Walt's theory can still be valuable if his variables are supported by evidence and provide a more complete explanation for why an alliance formed. Similarly, my theory is likely to produce a more surprising finding when reassurance is shown to be successful, but my theory of coercion backfire may still offer a more complete explanation for why others balance severely against a rising power.

their changed assessments of how threatening the rising power was and should offer justifications for why a severe balancing response was necessary. Evidence of these justifications should be found in policy discussions among officials and elite within the country, private correspondence or reflections, or in newspaper articles.

### **Research Design**

This dissertation tries to assess the impact of a rising power's grand strategy on the severity of the balancing response by other powers. In this preliminary empirical test, I assess the explanatory power of the theory laid out in this chapter. Given the small number of cases of rising powers, the focus on the causal connections between the grand strategy and the balancing response, and the importance of the justifications offered by officials for their balancing response, the comparative case method, in conjunction with process tracing is the most appropriate methodological choice.<sup>127</sup> In addition, I assess the explanatory power of alternative potential explanations for these cases.

Based on my definition of a rising power, a plausible universe of rising powers would include: post-unification Bismarckian Germany (1871-1890), Wilhelmine Germany, pre-World War II Japan, pre-World War I America, and the contemporary rise of China. Out of this universe, the rising powers I examine in the dissertation are: Bismarckian Germany (1871-1890), Wilhelmine Germany, and the ongoing rise of China. In terms of selection criteria, my aim is to have variation on both the independent variable (grand strategy) and the dependent variable (severity of balancing response). Bismarckian Germany and contemporary China both implemented a grand strategy of

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<sup>127</sup> For discussions of the characteristics, advantages, and limitations of the case study method, see King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Brady and Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry*; and Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

reassurance, whereas Wilhelmine Germany implemented a grand strategy of coercion. For the cases of Bismarckian Germany and contemporary China, there is also within-case variation in outcomes. Early in the rise, even though both implemented reassurance, other powers responded with severe balancing; whereas a more comprehensive grand strategy of reassurance later in their rise produced less severe balancing, even though they were more powerful. The within-case variation for Bismarckian Germany and contemporary China allow for better assessments of the empirical support for my theory and other alternative explanations. For Wilhelmine Germany, the result was very severe balancing. Moreover, the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine cases serve as a paired comparison which allows me to control for many factors and try to focus on the variation in grand strategies.

Some experts have cited troubling historical analogies for the contemporary rise of China, such as Hitler's Germany and Tojo's Japan, but Avery Goldstein deserves credit for raising the potential utility of a broad comparison between contemporary China and Bismarckian Germany.<sup>128</sup> Goldstein observed the broad parallels that both were geopolitically central rising powers who aimed to prevent the formation balancing coalitions as their increasing power drew greater attention. He characterized China's grand strategy as "neo-Bismarckian," and briefly outlined the similarities in grand strategies.<sup>129</sup> This dissertation draws on Goldstein's seminal work to not only examine the grand strategies of Germany and China in greater detail, but analyze the effect of these grand strategies on the responses by major powers in these two different eras. In the past twenty years, Chinese scholars and government officials have also studied examples of historical rising powers in

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<sup>128</sup> For examples, see Paul Wolfowitz, "Bridging Centuries: Fin de Siecle All Over Again," *National Interest*, Vol. 47 (Spring 1997), pp. 3-8; and Robert Kagan, "What China Knows that We Don't: The Case for a New Strategy of Containment," *Weekly Standard*, January 20, 1997.

<sup>129</sup> See Avery Goldstein, "An Emerging China's Emerging Grand Strategy: A Neo-Bismarckian Turn?" in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 57-106; and Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, pp. 204-209.



an effort to help China rise successfully.<sup>130</sup> As part of the “peaceful rise” (heping jueqi) or “peaceful development” (heping fazhan) approach, China has emphasized that its rise will represent a “new path” (xin daolu) that does not repeat the aggressive expansion of Wilhelm, Hitler, and Tojo.<sup>131</sup> In the last few years, Chinese scholars have begun to focus more attention of the case of Bismarckian Germany and his relative success in managing Germany’s rise.<sup>132</sup>

Although I use the phrase “case” to refer to each of the rising powers in this dissertation, for each of these cases I have many observations. Not only does each case of a rising power extend over many years, allowing for many points of observation, but for each case I am tracking the balancing response of several countries, which allows for far more observations.<sup>133</sup> For Germany, I will be analyzing the balancing responses of Russia, Britain, France, and Austria and for China, I will be analyzing the balancing responses of the United States, Russia, India, and Japan.

Given the high evidence requirements for this project, availability of information is also an important consideration for case selection. The project requires information about the rising power

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<sup>130</sup> See Shi Yinhong, “Guoji Zhengzhi de Shijixing Guilu jiqi dui Zhongguo de Qishi” [The Pattern of Century Cycles in International Politics and Lessons for China], *Zhanlüe yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 5 (1995); Yang Zheng, “Shijie Zhengzhi Jincheng de Zhouqixing Guilu yu Zhongguo de Jiyu” [The Cyclical Pattern of World Politics and China’s Opportunity], *Zhanlüe yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 6 (1995); Wang Zaibang, “Lishishang Dagu Jueqi de Guoji Huanjing” [International Environment for Historical Rising Powers], in Yan Xuotong, chief ed., *Zhongguo Jueqi: Guoji Huanjing Pinggu* [The Rise of China: Assessment of International Environment], (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1998), pp.88-137; Huang Renwei, “Dagu Jueqi Daolu de Lishi Bijiao” [Historical Comparisons of the Paths of Rise of Great Powers], Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, *Bianhuazhong de Shijie yu Zhongguo Yinsu* [Changes in the World and the China Factor], (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2006), pp. 3-16; Qi Shirong, Qian Chengdan, and Zhang Hongyi, chief eds., *15shiji yilai Shijie Jinqiang Xingshuaishi* [History of Rise and Fall of Nine World Great Powers since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century], vol. 1-2, (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2009). China Central Television (CCTV) also aired a very popular 12-part series on the historical experience of world powers to educate the general public. For the full script of the series, see *Dagu Jueqi* [Rise of the Great Powers], vol. 1-3 (Beijing: Zhongguo Minzhu Fazhi Chubanshe, 2007).

to scholars and government think tank researchers analyzing the historical experiences of other rising powers

<sup>131</sup> See “China’s Peaceful Development Road,” (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council: December 2005); and Zheng Bijian, chief ed., *Lun Zhongguo Heping Jueqi Xin Daolu* [On China’s New Path of Peaceful Rise], (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 2005).

<sup>132</sup> See Sun Xuefeng, “Zhanlüe Xuanze yu Dagu Jueqi Chengbai” [Strategic Choices and Success or Failure of Rise of Great Powers], in Yan Xuotong and Sun Xuefeng, chief eds., *Zhongguo Jueqi jiqi Zhanlüe* [The Rise of China and Its Strategy], (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2005); Sun Xuefeng, *Zhongguo Jueqi Kunking: Lilun Sikao yu Zhanlüe Xuanze* [Dilemma of China’s Rise: Theoretical Reflections and Strategic Choices], (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2011), especially Ch. 2; and Lt. Col. Xu Qiyu, *Cuiruo de Jueqi: Daxhanlüe yu Deyizhi Digu de Mingyun* [Fragile Rise: Grand Strategy and the Fate of the German Empire], (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 2011).

<sup>133</sup> A constant theme in the methodological assessments of qualitative methods is the need for researchers to try to maximize the number of observations. See King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*.

and its strategy, the responses of the other powers, and the justification offered by the leaders and officials. For Bismarckian and Wilhelmine Germany, many of the most important primary documents from Germany and other European powers are available in English and there is a vast secondary literature. For contemporary China, in addition to the English-language primary and secondary sources, the information and evidence will be based on a thorough reading of Chinese-language books and articles on the rise of China and its grand strategy, and over three hundred hours of interviews with officials and experts in China, the U.S., and other parts of Asia. Lastly, these cases are of immense historical importance.

In assessing the explanatory power of my theory, I will conduct both convergence tests and process tracing. In the convergence tests I will look for covariation between the independent variable and dependent variable. Given that my theory specifies a clear causal logic and decision calculus according to which the other powers should respond, process tracing should help examine whether the independent variable affected the dependent variable through the hypothesized causal mechanisms. Moreover, given the broader definition of severity of balancing, the need to focus not only on the sending of reassurance signals but on how they were received, and the desire to trace the evolution of the rising power's grand strategy, detailed process tracing will be particularly important.<sup>134</sup>

Given the greater focus on reassurance in the theory and empirics of the dissertation, I also try to uncover the conditions under which reassurance should be more or less effective at minimizing the balancing response. In the conclusion, I discuss efficiency conditions for successful reassurance and examine future avenues for theory development and further empirical testing.

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<sup>134</sup> For an example of a work that similarly employs process-tracing to uncover the reasoning and justifications behind the decision of leaders, see Daryl G. Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

In terms of my theory of reassurance, these cases of perceived rising powers are all hard tests for my theory and least-likely cases for reassurance to be successful. According to most of the existing literature, rising powers are likely to provoke balancing responses and cooperation is most difficult to achieve under conditions of shifting power. Moreover, my definition of perceived rising powers makes it an even more difficult test for the theory of reassurance because this removes the possibility that the other powers did not balance because they did not notice that the rising power was rising.

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

The first chapter has presented my theory of how the grand strategy of a rising power can affect the severity of the balancing response by other great powers. The rest of the dissertation is composed of case studies that apply the theoretical framework to explain the balancing responses of other great powers when faced with historical and contemporary rising powers. Chapters 2-4 examine the rise of Germany from 1871 to 1907 and explain how Germany's grand strategy affected the balancing response by others. Chapter 2 argues that the shock of German unification in 1871 marked the beginning of Europe perceiving Germany as a rising power. It also explores the threats to Germany's rise and introduces Bismarck's grand strategy of reassurance. Chapter 3 analyzes the effect of Bismarck's reassurance on Europe in the 1870s. Chapter 4 investigates Bismarck's reassurance toward Europe in the 1880s and then examines how the shift to a coercive strategy under Wilhelm II provoked a severe balancing response before the outbreak of World War I.

Chapter 5-7 examine the contemporary rise and China and explain how its grand strategy has affected the balancing responses. Chapter 5 argues that the early-to-mid 1990s (approximately 1993) mark the beginning of the United States and Asian powers perceiving China as a rising power. The rest of the chapter discusses the threats to China's rise and how its grand strategy of reassurance is

aimed at managing these threats. Chapter 6 investigates China's reassurance towards the United States, the most important power in the post-Cold War world and greatest potential threat to China's rise. Chapter 7 analyzes China's reassurance towards the great powers of East Asia, and explains the balancing responses by Russia, India, and Japan. In Chapter 8, the conclusion, I summarize the argument of the thesis, highlight its contributions for the field, point out some policy recommendations, and lay out a research agenda for extending these arguments.

## **Chapter 2: The Rise of Bismarck's Germany and Its Grand Strategy**

The next three chapters consist of detailed analysis of the Austrian, Russian, British, and French balancing responses to the rise of Germany from 1871 to 1907, and several tests of my argument that the rising power's grand strategy should affect the severity of that balancing response. Chapter 2 identifies the starting point of Germany's perceived rise, explores the potential threats to Germany's rise, and explains Bismarck's grand strategy of reassurance. Chapter 3 examines the balancing responses by European powers during the 1870s, and explores the affect of Bismarck's grand strategy of reassurance on these responses. Chapter 4 examines European balancing responses as Bismarck continued reassurance during the 1880s, and then explains how the shift to coercion under Wilhelmine Germany provoked a severe balancing response.

This chapter defines Germany's perceived rise, discusses the international threats to that rise, and analyzes the overall grand strategy of reassurance that Bismarck implemented. First, using a perceptual definition for the start of a rise, I identify the shock of 1870-1 as the beginning of Germany's rise and explains why Germany's increase in power in the 1860s do not fit my criteria for the starting point of a rise. Secondly, the chapter analyzes the responses of European powers to the shock of 1870-1 and discusses the specific fears and worries each power had about how a rising Germany might challenge its interests. Next, it argues that after Germany's rise was perceived, an expectation of an increasingly severe balancing response to the continued rise of Germany is reasonable. Fourth, I discuss the domestic and international threats to Germany's rise, as viewed from the perspective of Bismarck and German leaders. Lastly, after laying out these threats, I discuss Germany's grand strategy, which is the theory through which German diplomacy would hopefully cause German security and prevent balancing against a rising Germany. Bismarck's grand strategy was reassurance, and his aim was to convince the rest of Europe that there was no need to

balance against Germany as it grew stronger because it was peaceful, did not wish to change the status quo, and would use Germany's increased power to the benefit of the rest of Europe.

### **1870-1: Defining the Start of Germany's Rise**

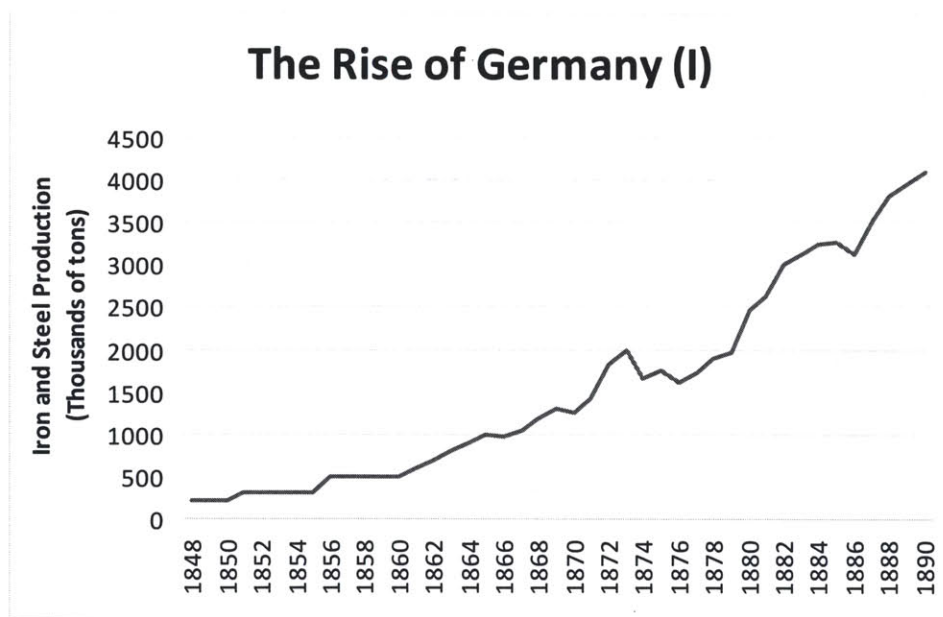
This project defines a rising power as a state trying to enter the group of great powers or a great power at the lower end of the hierarchy of great powers that is trying to move up. According to my perceptual definition, for a rise to begin, the other great powers in the system must perceive the rise. The rising power itself should also perceive this, so that the leaders in the rising power are aware that they must try to manage and shape the responses by others. According to this definition, I use 1870-1 as the beginning of the rise of Bismarckian Germany. Prussia's crushing defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Germany provided the shock that made the reality of Germany's increased power clear to the rest of Europe.

This section will first detail how even though Prussia's industrialization took off in the 1860s, European powers and Prussia itself underestimated and undervalued Prussia's material power throughout the decade. Next, I illustrate how the Prussian defeat of France and unification of Germany in 1870-1 served as the shock that forced European powers to notice the increase in German material power, and marked the beginning of its rise. Lastly, I will describe how European leaders responded to this shock and the new potential threats that a unified, rising Germany could pose to their interests.

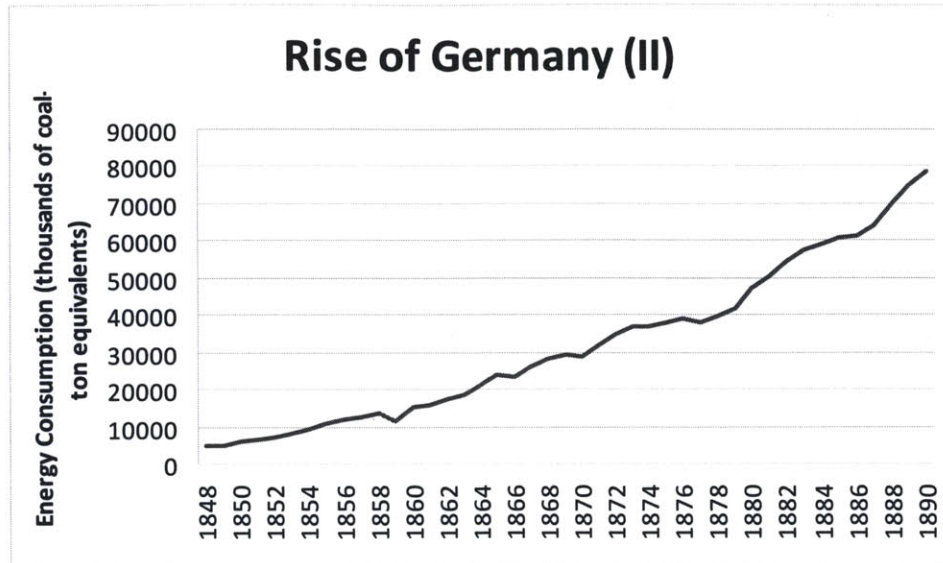
#### *Prussia's Rise in the 1860s: a Tree Falling with no one around to Hear*

Using hindsight to examine changes in the distribution of power in the nineteenth century, one could certainly argue that the rise of Germany began earlier than 1871. As the charts below show, Prussia's economic take-off started in the 1850s and 1860s, as it experienced rapid

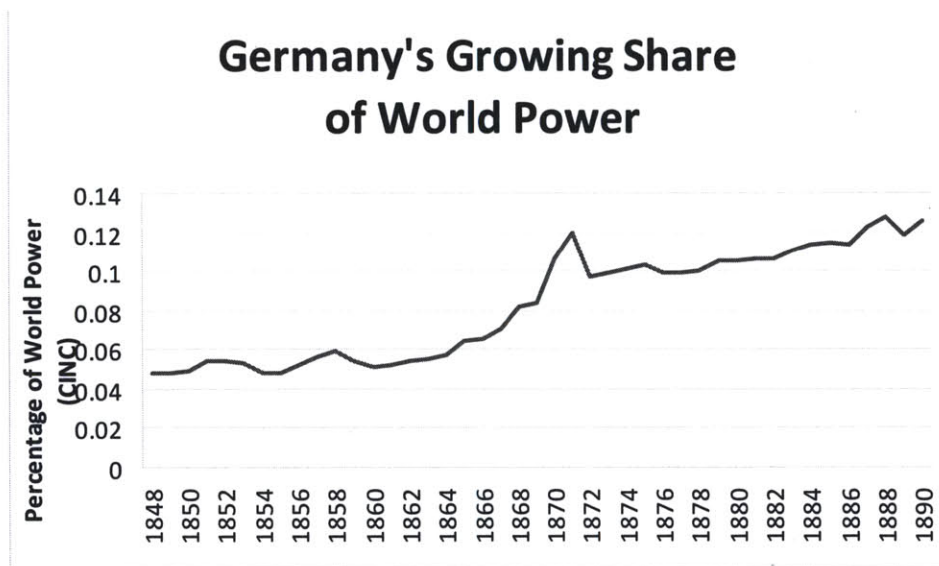
industrialization. However, the European great powers did not perceive this increase in Prussian power. Neither the assessments of Prussia's power, nor behavior towards Prussia revealed any real recognition of Prussia's increased power. During the 1860s, the European great powers focused on other potential international threats, especially France, and their own internal problems. Moreover, Prussian leaders also judged their own national power to be rather weak. The remainder of this section will examine how most other European powers, and the Germans themselves, largely overlooked Prussia's growing economic and military might until the Franco-Prussian War, thus making 1871 a more appropriate place to date the beginning of the rise of Germany for the purpose of this project.



*Source: Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities*



Source: *Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities*



Note: Relative Share of World Power is based on the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score, which combines iron/steel production, energy consumption, military expenditures, military personnel, total population, and urban population. The tremendous increase in military expenditure and share of world power in 1870 and 1871 are due to the Franco-Prussian War.

Source: *Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities*



Between 1848 and 1866, Austria was perceived as unquestionably the strongest power in Central Europe. Henry Kissinger writes that the other powers viewed Prussia as by far the weakest of the Great powers and hardly worth the name.<sup>135</sup> The November 1850 agreement at Olmutz marked Prussia's defeat in the power struggle over the control of Germany, and Austria's continued command of the leadership position. Prussia not only took a backseat to Austria in German affairs, but also hardly made any impact on the rest of Europe.<sup>136</sup> Prussia was not involved in the French, British, and Austrian coalition that defeated Russia's challenge to the Ottoman Empire in the Crimean War of 1853-6. Prussia attended the post-war conference in Paris that led to the signing of the treaty, but did not contribute very much to the proceedings, and was invited only as a formality and an afterthought.<sup>137</sup>

After the Crimean War, several powers focused on their own domestic political issues, and when they did consider foreign affairs, preventing Russian aggression, keeping a watchful eye on Napoleon III, and dealing with Italian unification demanded focus and attention. Prussia played virtually no role in these issues and barely acted like a great power, resulting in Prussia's economic growth going largely unnoticed. It began to play a more active role in European affairs with the annexation, together with Austria, of the Danish provinces of Schleswig and Holstein in 1864, but this was mostly viewed as a central European issue, and Austria remained dominant.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> See Henry A. Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), p. 111

<sup>136</sup> For more on the power struggle and the Olmutz agreement, see W.E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question, 1848-71* (New York: Octagon Books, 1981); and Frank Eyck, *The Frankfurt Parliament, 1848-9* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968).

<sup>137</sup> For more on the Crimean role and Prussia's small role, see Paul Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain and the Crimean War: The Destruction of the European Concert* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972); and Gavin Henderson, *Crimean War Diplomacy* (Glasgow: Jackson, 1947).

<sup>138</sup> On Schleswig-Holstein and Prussia's role in European affairs, see L.D. Steefel, *The Schleswig-Holstein Question* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932); and Keith A.P. Sandiford, *Great Britain and the Schleswig-Holstein Question, 1848-64: A Study in Diplomacy, Politics, and Public Opinion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); and Stacie Goddard, "When Right Makes Might: How Prussia Overturned the European Balance of Power," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Winter 2008/9), pp. 110-42.

On the eve of the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, Prussia was perceived as very weak. Austria believed they would easily defeat Prussia, and other countries shared in this assessment.<sup>139</sup>

According to Count Armand, the French foreign minister's top assistant: "The only worry that we had at the Foreign Office was that Prussia would be crushed and humiliated to too great an extent."<sup>140</sup> Moltke and other German officials agreed with this low estimate of Prussian power, and believed that Italian support in opening a two-front war was the only chance at a possible victory over the Austrians.<sup>141</sup> And even with the assistance of Italy, "the general expectation in Europe, which officials in Berlin were careful *not* to refute, was that Austria was militarily superior even to a Prussia aided by Italy's modest forces."<sup>142</sup>

The behavior of the European powers provides further evidence for perception of Prussia as a weak power that was likely to be defeated. Recognizing their weakness, the Prussians reached out for military assistance from Italy. Napoleon hoped that in the face of a two-front war, Austria might look to France for assistance, and France could claim Venetia as compensation. Therefore, Napoleon actively supported the alliance, believing that Prussia had no chance of even forcing a stalemate without it.<sup>143</sup> However, even facing Prussia and Italy, Austria refused to make any concessions to gain French support, confident in its ability to defeat both countries. After the

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<sup>139</sup> On Austrian views on the eve of the war, see F.R. Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy Among the Great Powers, 1815-1918* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); and Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War: Austria's War with Prussia and Italy in 1866* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For discussions of similar views in the other great powers, see Dennis Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles: Soldiers, Technology, and the Unification of Germany* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1975), pp. 121-4; and John Lowe, *The Great Powers, Imperialism, and the German Problem, 1865-1925* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 28. For a similar argument that Europe miscalculated the intra-German balance of power, see Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940," pp. 71-2

<sup>140</sup> See Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 115. The Russians were also concerned that Austria might defeat Prussia too quickly and gain enough power to challenge Russia. See William C. Fuller, Jr., *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 288-9; and Norman Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy, 1814-1914* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), p. 199.

<sup>141</sup> See Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy*, p. 201. For more on the German wars of unification, see Dennis Showalter, *The Wars of German Unification* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004); William Carr, *The Origins of the Wars of German Unification* (London: Longman, 1991); and Heinrich Friedjung, *The Struggle for Supremacy in Germany, 1859-66* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966).

<sup>142</sup> See Richard Smoke, *War: Controlling Escalation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977).

<sup>143</sup> See A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 161. For an excellent analysis of the French thinking and policy during this crisis and war, see E. Anne Pottinger, *Napoleon III and the German Crisis, 1865-1866* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).

alliance was solidified but before the outbreak of the war, Napoleon was so worried about a quick and decisive Austrian victory that he proposed an international conference to settle the outstanding issues.<sup>144</sup>

Among those few Europeans who did not predict an easy Austrian victory, the most common view was that the war would be a stalemate and a “campaign of mutual exhaustion” which would weaken all powers involved.<sup>145</sup> According to perceptions on the eve of the war, Prussia was about to be quickly destroyed by the Austrian army, or was about to become engaged in a long struggle that would force it to expend lots of resources. In neither of these scenarios does it seem that European powers perceived Prussia as a rising power or one that would grow more powerful in the near-future.

Although Europe was shocked by the Prussian rapid victory in 1866, most countries explained away its victory in a way that allowed others to continue to overlook the increases in Prussian power and underestimate the potential for continued future increases.<sup>146</sup> Shortly after the 1866 war ended, “Almost with one voice, they [correspondents and observers] proclaimed the needle gun as the key to German victory.”<sup>147</sup> Later evaluations placed less emphasis on the technology and weapons, but argued that if some of Prussia’s military reforms were adopted by Austria and France, they would be much stronger than Prussia itself.<sup>148</sup> After the Prussian victory, rather than being concerned about the potential for dealing with a rising Prussia, the French were focused on being frustrated at not gaining any territory after the war, best exemplified in French

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<sup>144</sup> See Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy*, p. 201-2.

<sup>145</sup> See Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles*, p. 213.

<sup>146</sup> See Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles*, p. 213.

<sup>147</sup> According to French sources, the French ambassador and the French military attaché in Vienna declared that the “Austrian defeat could be explained *solely* by the needle gun.” See Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles*, p. 213. According to another source: “The French military, studying Prussian performance in the 1866 war, had concluded that the victory stemmed largely from the Prussian army’s monopoly on one superior technology, the breech-loading infantry rifle.” See Smoke, *War*, p. 128.

<sup>148</sup> See Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles*, p. 214; and Christensen, “Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940,” p. 79-80.

calls of “revenge for Sadowa.”<sup>149</sup> Other European powers remained much more focused on the threat from Napoleon III. Moreover, there was little discussion of Prussia’s economic growth and growing industrial base as a factor in the victory or one that could serve as the basis for a more powerful and influential Prussia.<sup>150</sup>

On the eve of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, most assessments once again overlooked Prussia’s growing economic and military might and predicted French victory. Many observers believed that the French military had negated Prussia’s advantages in 1866 by adopting many of the same reforms and practices, and with superior French weapons such as the chassepot and the mitrailleuse, Prussia would be no match for the powerful French military.<sup>151</sup> One well-known illustration of French optimism before the war was the run on Prussian maps in French shops, based on the belief that the war would be fought on Prussian territory.<sup>152</sup>

As for the other powers, Great Britain and Russia believed that France would easily defeat Prussia and they were seriously concerned that this complete dominance of the continent could threaten their interests.<sup>153</sup> Austrian leaders believed that France would easily defeat Prussia and had planned to join in at the end of the war in the hopes of gaining spoils and getting revenge for its defeat in 1866. The Prussians themselves did not have a high estimate of their own power or

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<sup>149</sup> See Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy*, p. 206.

<sup>150</sup> See Barbara Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Moscow: Tsarist and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1814-1974* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1974), p. 154. Even among those experts who predicted that the Austro-Prussian War could become a lengthy war of attrition, there is little evidence that they noticed or commented on Prussia’s economic growth as an important factor.

<sup>151</sup> For a summary view of some of these assessments, see Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy*, p. 206. On French military reforms, see Richard Holmes, *The Road to Sedan: The French Army, 1866-1870* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1984).

<sup>152</sup> See Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France, 1799-1871*, vol. 2 (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 202.

<sup>153</sup> See Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Moscow*, p. 155. According to another source on the Russian military: “The general consensus in 1869 was that France would crush Prussia handily should war break out, while the general apprehension was that, having done so, France might then exploit its victory to annex the Rhineland, Belgium, and Luxembourg.” See Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia*, p. 272-3.

chances of success. Based on a thorough reading of German-language assessments, one historian argues: “Prussia’s swift victory in 1870-71 came as something of a shock to Bismarck.”<sup>154</sup>

From the 1850s until 1871, the European great powers, and even Prussia itself, consistently underestimated Prussia’s economic and military power, and often predicted that after military defeat it would be declining, not rising. Moreover, as the other European powers believed Prussia was going to be soundly defeated in 1866 and 1870, Prussia’s weak power position appeared likely to decline even further in the future. As argued earlier, leaders often do not accurately revise their estimates of the balance of power. During periods of multipolarity, in which states must focus on the power and behavior of several states at the same time, the inherent uncertainty often makes it even more difficult to accurately evaluate the power of other states.<sup>155</sup> Although Prussia experienced rapid economic growth in the 1850s and 1860s, it was not until the shock of Prussia’s defeat of France in 1870-1 that Europe finally recognized that it was a rising power.

### *The Shock of 1871: Recognizing Germany’s Rise*

In 1870-1, Prussia’s swift military defeat of the continent’s most powerful army, and the resulting unification of Germany, was the shock that forced Europeans to take notice of Germany’s rise and recognize that Germany was no longer the weakest of the European great powers. Historian Otto Pflanze writes: “Three stunning victories within six years had elevated Prussia whose qualifications for great power status had been questioned before 1866, to a leading position among European nations.”<sup>156</sup> A.J.P Taylor characterizes European reaction to this shock: “Every nation in

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<sup>154</sup> See Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: the German Conquest of France, 1870-1* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 228.

<sup>155</sup> On multipolarity and uncertainty, see Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, ch. 8. Christensen builds on Waltz and argues that accurate evaluations of the balance of power are especially difficult during periods of shifting power. He also argues that the European powers underestimated German power throughout the 1860s. See Christensen, “Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940,” especially pp. 70-81.

<sup>156</sup> See Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, volume II (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. xi.

Europe, even the isolationist British to some degree, felt affected by this new colossus.”<sup>157</sup> After 1870-1, European great powers perceived a strong and rising Germany that needed to be carefully watched, and German leaders realized that these countries were warily watching how Germany would wield its rising power.

Statements and behavior from European statesmen demonstrated the recognition of Germany’s strength and rising status. In a very famous February 9, 1871 speech during a British Parliamentary debate, then-opposition leader Benjamin Disraeli captured the suddenness and the implications of this shock. “This war represents the German Revolution, a greater political event than the French Revolution of the last century....Not a single principle in the management of our foreign affairs, accepted by all statesmen for guidance up to six months ago, any longer exists. There is not a diplomatic tradition which has not been swept away. You have a new world, new influences at work, new and unknown objects and dangers with which to cope....The balance of power has been entirely destroyed.”<sup>158</sup> As I discuss later, every European power worried that Germany may continue its expansion and challenge their interests in other parts of the continent.

In a clear reflection of perceptions of Germany’s increased power and status, both Russia and Britain looked to Germany to play a key role in resolving an 1870-1 dispute over Russia’s access to the Black Sea. Russia announced that it was no longer going to abide by the restrictions placed on its use of the Black Sea as part of the 1856 Treaty of Paris. Recognizing Germany’s increased status and role on the continent, the British approached Germany in the hopes that it would serve as its ally on the continent and pressure Russia to follow the treaty. Similarly recognizing the new importance of Germany, the Russians demanded German support, reminding Bismarck that Russian threats prevented Austria from sending troops to support the French in 1870. As both powers

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<sup>157</sup> See Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), p. 187.

<sup>158</sup> See William L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890* (New York: Vintage Books, 1931), p. 13-4.

looked to Germany for support, Bismarck not only proposed an international conference to be held in London in 1871, but essentially ran the conference with both parties urging it to play the leading role.<sup>159</sup> Especially when comparison to Prussia's non-involvement in the Crimean War and the European powers ignoring it during the post-war conference, these powers asking Germany to play a more central role in resolving a dispute showed that its rising power and status was perceived by European leaders. In another indication that the events of 1870-1 changed European perceptions of Germany's power and status, German cultural achievements were viewed with heightened appreciation after victory over France at Sedan.<sup>160</sup>

Germany's leaders themselves recognized the huge shock that the events of 1870-1 caused in Europe, in part because they were quite surprised in their own right. As I will discuss later, Bismarck was made well aware by other statesmen that they had noticed Germany's rise and were watching it warily. Moreover, in most diplomatic histories of Germany, 1871 is always given great prominence and the first issue addressed is the new balance of power that was created by the defeat of France and the unification of Germany and the implications of this shock for German domestic and foreign policy.<sup>161</sup>

In their discussions of the European balance of power in the nineteenth century, diplomatic historians almost always focus on 1870-1 as a decisive turning point, after which Germany is recognized as playing a far greater role in European affairs.<sup>162</sup> James Joll uses 1870 as the starting

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<sup>159</sup> For more on the conference and Bismarck's role, see Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 215-6.

<sup>160</sup> See Raymond Sontag, *Germany and England: Background of Conflict, 1848-1894* (New York: D. Appleton Century, 1969), p. 95.

<sup>161</sup> For examples, see Erich Brandenburg, *From Bismarck to the World War: A History of German Foreign Policy, 1870-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927); Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy, 1871-1914* (London: Routledge, 1976); Klaus Hildebrand, *German Foreign Policy from Bismarck to Adenauer: The Limits of Statecraft* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); and David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

<sup>162</sup> Some historians suggest that in 1870-1, Germany achieved European hegemony or continental hegemony. This term is usually not very well defined. If it is meant to mean the strongest single military power on the continent, then by virtue of defeating France, who was considered to be the strongest single military power, it had definitely achieved that status. If hegemony is meant as achieving a position of strength such that it could defeat any combination of continental

point for his book and his first chapter is called “the new balance of power.”<sup>163</sup> Paul Kennedy writes: “Both at the time and even more in retrospect, the year 1870 was viewed as a decisive watershed in European history.”<sup>164</sup> According to Taylor, with the French defeat at Sedan, “the balance of power was startlingly altered.”<sup>165</sup> Moreover, consistent with the approach adopted here, many of these historians identify 1870 as the period in which the rise of Germany begins. Joll refers to the “rise of Germany” as the driver for changes in international balance of power in the post-1870 world.<sup>166</sup> Taylor also refers to the rise of Germany as occurring in the early 1870s.<sup>167</sup> According to Remak, in 1871 Germany “had risen to the rank of a major power.”<sup>168</sup> According to L.L. Farrar, “The shift of power among the states and the rapid rise of German power gradually became the system’s central issues after German unification in 1871.”<sup>169</sup> A unified Germany was no longer the weakest of the great powers that could easily be overlooked by other powers focused on domestic issues or other international issues, but after 1871, it was an industrializing country with a large population and strong military, whose rising power and influence would make it a key factor in post-1870 European and world affairs.

### *Responding to the Shock: the Great Powers View the Rise of Germany*

As most of Europe was focused on the threat from France and worried about complete French domination of Europe once it defeated Prussia, European leaders were initially relieved at Prussia’s surprising victory. France had already been seen as a threat to key European interests

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powers, this clearly did not occur in 1870, as Bismarck’s obsession with avoiding an anti-German coalition clearly demonstrate.

<sup>163</sup> See James Joll, *Europe since 1870: An International History*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Penguin Books, 1990).

<sup>164</sup> See Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, p. 188.

<sup>165</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 210.

<sup>166</sup> See Joll, *Europe since 1870*, p. 24.

<sup>167</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*.

<sup>168</sup> See Joachim Remak, *The Origins of World War I* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), p. 4.

<sup>169</sup> See L.L. Farrar, *Arrogance and Anxiety: the Ambivalence of German Power, 1848-1914* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1981), p. xxx.



across the continent, so a stronger Germany was favorably viewed as a potential check on French hegemony and domination. However, when European statesmen stopped rejoicing at the defeat of the aggressive French, and began to look at how a victorious, powerful, and unified changed the map of Europe, they began to voice serious concerns about Germany's future behavior and the strong possibility that a rising Germany may take aggressive action and threaten their interests.

Given their deep worries about the greater threat that a victorious France would have posed to their interests, many European diplomats welcomed France's defeat. In a letter dated January 5, 1871, British diplomat Sir Robert Morier observed: "the rooting up, once and for all, of the pretensions of France to a privileged and exceptional position in Europe, seems to me so desirable an event that I confess myself totally incapable from the political view to understand any one in his senses wishing the result to have been otherwise."<sup>170</sup> As French plans to seize Belgium came to light, British diplomats were initially even more relieved that a hegemonic France had been defeated.<sup>171</sup> Russian diplomats, never forgetting Napoleon I's drive into Russia, feared that a stronger France would repeat such an endeavor. Shortly after the war ended the Russian Chancellor Gorchakov wrote to the tsar: "[The] creation of a strong political and military power interposed between us and France under the direction of an anti-Polish Protestant state long allied to Russia offers us real advantages."<sup>172</sup>

Although initially relieved that a stronger Germany could prevent France from growing too powerful, when European diplomats stopped thinking about France and started thinking about what a strong Germany meant for European affairs and the European distribution of power, this led to

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<sup>170</sup> See W.N. Medlicott and Dorothy K. Coveney, eds., *Bismarck and Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), p. 74. For similar observations, see Rene Albrecht-Carric, *A Diplomatic History of Europe since the Congress of Vienna*, revised edition (New York: Harper Collins, 1973), p. 136; and Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, p. 374. Moreover, the Russian challenge in the Black Sea also reminded Britain that Russia was a revisionist challenger as well, thus initially making a more powerful Germany seem less threatening. See Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980), p. 24

<sup>171</sup> See Albrecht-Carric, *Diplomatic History of Europe*, pp. 136-8; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 213.

<sup>172</sup> See Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia*, p. 272. For similar observations, see Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Moscow*, p. 148.

widespread worry and concern about the potential German threat to their interests. On the shift in British thinking, one historian observes that suspicion of France and Napoleon III led them to support Germany, “but this mood quickly evaporated after the battle of Sedan. Now the realization dawned that the eclipse of France meant the supremacy of Germany.”<sup>173</sup> Bismarck’s memoirs capture this “be careful what you wish for” feeling as it related to Russia. He wrote: “I hardly think that during our war [Franco-Prussian War] the Russian cabinet clearly foresaw that when it was over, Russia would have as neighbor so strong and consolidated a Germany.”<sup>174</sup>

After 1871, Europe had to contend with what historian A.J.P. Taylor has called “the German problem.” By this he meant “the existence in central Europe of a modern bureaucratically organized state whose potential for economic growth could now, after unification, be fully realized to provide the resources, if and when needed, for the most efficiently organized military system in Europe.”<sup>175</sup> Worries that a united Germany would dominate Europe date back to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In 1609, a British observer remarked: “as for Germany, which if it were entirely subject to one Monarchy, would be terrible to all the rest.”<sup>176</sup> Given these concerns, European diplomats worked for centuries to keep central Europe divided and weak. With the defeat of the French at Sedan in 1870 and the subsequent unification of Germany, Europe now faced the potential threat of a strong, unified political entity in the center of Europe, who could threaten the security interests of all the European powers. Moreover, given that Bismarck had launched several wars in the 1860s and had acquired a reputation as the “blood and iron” chancellor, this new country in the center of the continent made Europeans even more worried about future changes in the balance of power and challenges to their interests.

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<sup>173</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. 247.

<sup>174</sup> See Otto von Bismarck (T.S. Hamerow, ed.), *Reflections and Reminiscences* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 237-8.

<sup>175</sup> For Taylor’s formulation of the German problem, see A.J.P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of German History Since 1815* (London: Methuen, 1961). For a newer analysis that uses Taylor’s framework to analyze European diplomatic history, see Lowe, *The Great Powers, Imperialism, and the German Problem*, p. 39.

<sup>176</sup> For a discussion of the historical worries about a unified Germany, see Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 80-1.

After German unification and a realization of its rising power, European statesmen were generally concerned about how Germany would use its new-found power and whether it would seek to gain even more power. They asked themselves: “Would Germany, intoxicated by success, develop Napoleonic ambitions?”<sup>177</sup> These general worries were even more pronounced because of Germany’s strong military and Bismarck’s demonstrated willingness to use it. Based on a thorough reading of the contemporary assessments of European diplomats, Sontag suggests: “The strongest continental state in the hands of a skillful despot who frankly admitted he respected power alone-it was not a comfortable situation, for other European powers.”<sup>178</sup> In addition to a general concern about the potential challenge of a rising Germany, states had specific worries about where they feared German might challenge them next.

After defeating France, Austrian diplomats worried that it would be Bismarck’s next victim, and feared that Bismarck would try to create a “large Germany” that included all German people. Count Friedrich von Beust, the Austrian chancellor, “was convinced that Prussia, if she gained control over the south, would not halt at the Austrian border, but would inevitably seek to found a great-German empire stretching all the way to the Adriatic.”<sup>179</sup> These worries were not without basis, as there were many Germans still in Austria, and many in Germany demanded a complete unification of all Germans. In 1870, Austrian officials voiced their concerns to Hans Lothar von Schweinitz, the north German envoy to Austria-Hungary, that Germany would try to destroy Austria to bring the remaining Germans into the new empire.<sup>180</sup> Moreover, these concerns about a

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<sup>177</sup> See Raymond Sontag, *European Diplomatic History, 1871-1932* (New York: The Century Co., 1933), p. 1. See also Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany, 1800-2000* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), p. 163; and Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 29. In fact the metaphor of Napoleon and worries about Germany becoming another Napoleon were often-invoked right after unification and even during the 1875 “War in Sight” crisis.

<sup>178</sup> See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 135. For evidence of similar assessments, see Kitchen, p. 120; and F.R. Bridge and Roger Bullen, *The Great Powers and the European States System, 1814-1914* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2005), p. 182.

<sup>179</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. 248. For more evidence of Austrian concerns, see Lothar Gall, *Bismarck: The White Revolutionary*, vol. II (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 41.

<sup>180</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. 249.

move against Austria did not only represent Austrian paranoia, but were shared by many other European statesmen as well.<sup>181</sup>

Despite recent cooperation between Prussia and Russia, and strong family connections between the tsar and the kaiser, Russia was concerned about a rising Germany's potential threat to its interests on the continent. With a significant number of Germans in Poland, any attempt to unite all Germans in one empire would include an invasion of Russian Poland. Russian diplomats also worried about the potential for a German drive to the east, as most continental powers with increased power tried to conquer all of Europe. Lastly, Russia worried that a rising Germany would make it more difficult for Russia to extend its influence on the continent.<sup>182</sup>

Although Britain's favorable geographic position made it least vulnerable to the potential for German aggression, there were many worries and concerns voiced in Britain after German unification.<sup>183</sup> In Disraeli's famous 1871 speech in front of parliament, he said: "The balance of power has been entirely destroyed, and the country which suffers most, and feels the effects of this great change most, is England."<sup>184</sup> In December 1870, Prime Minister Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville: "I have an apprehension that this violent laceration and transfer is to lead us from bad to worse, and to be the beginning of a new series of European complications."<sup>185</sup> Expressing an especially ominous view, Lord Odo Russell, British Ambassador to Germany, believed that Bismarck's objective was "the supremacy of Germany in Europe and of the German race in the

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<sup>181</sup> See Langer, p. 19.

<sup>182</sup> For further discussions of Russia's perceptions of a rising Germany, see Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Russia*; and Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967). According to Taylor: "Great Britain and Russia had always counted on a balance of power on the Rhine; and it was they—Russia more than Great Britain—who were beaten at Sedan." See Taylor, *Struggle*, p. 210

<sup>183</sup> The phrase "Europe has lost a mistress and won a master," which captures some of these worries, was heard all over Europe, and especially in Britain. See Langer, p. 15.

<sup>184</sup> See Langer, p. 13-4. Langer also cites a similar statement from Sir Robert Peel: "I must say that I look on the unification of Germany as a great peril to Europe...It cannot be for the good of Europe that there should be a great military despotism in Germany, built up on the ruin and destruction of France." See Langer, p. 14.

<sup>185</sup> See Langer, p. 13.

world” and that he would “go to any length” to achieve this end.<sup>186</sup> Although the chances of a German invasion of the home islands seemed slim, there was some concern over the possibility. In the early 1870s there were rumors of German landings at Dover, as well as the publication of several examples of what would later become known as the “German invasion” literature.<sup>187</sup> There were also fears that with France weakened, Germany might attack Belgium or Holland, both to prevent British involvement in European affairs and as a potential prelude to an attack across the channel.<sup>188</sup> Some British officials, recognizing that Germany feared a French recovery, worried that it might take advantage of France’s weakened state and the occupation of the strategic areas of Alsace and Lorraine to try to invade France again and completely destroy it. British diplomats were concerned that this would not only permanently upset the continental balance of power, but would position Germany for an invasion of Britain.<sup>189</sup> Lastly, there were some concerns that recent German cooperation with Russia could lead to an alliance that challenged British interests not only on the continent, but threatened its passage to India through aggressive actions in the Near East.<sup>190</sup>

The French were certainly worried that the Germans would attack again and bring an end to the new republic. French statesmen were in all European capitals spreading rumors and trying to play up virtually all of the worries mentioned above, in the hopes of winning support against

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<sup>186</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. 248. In March 1873, Odo Russell wrote “Germany is in reality a great camp ready to break up for any war at a week’s notice with a million men.” See M.S. Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Longman, 2001), p. 27.

<sup>187</sup> See Hildebrand, p. 20; and Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 142.

<sup>188</sup> See Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1840-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 234. Sir Robert Peel also expressed these worries. He wrote: “Now that Germany is united, she would require a large seaboard, and does not this threaten danger to Holland and the colony of Heligoland?” See Langer, p. 14. For diplomatic cables on this possibility, see Theodore S. Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck: Documents and Interpretations* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 142-3.

<sup>189</sup> For Gladstone’s discussions of these issues, see A.W. Ward and G.P. Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 326.

<sup>190</sup> The British sent Odo Russell, then Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office to discuss the Straits issue with Bismarck, and he was “considered by England as the instigator of Russia’s actions.” See Erich Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 189-90. For more on these concerns, see Langer, p. 14.

Germany. Moreover, they worried that Germany would never allow it to recover and regain its lost status as the predominant power on the continent.<sup>191</sup>

This section shows the qualitative change in how Germany was perceived in Europe after the shock of its defeat of France in 1870-1, and shows that based on my perceptual definition, the rise of Germany began in 1871. After the rapid and complete victory over France, and the unification of Germany, it was clear that German power had increased substantially. Moreover, unlike the late 1860s, when much of Europe believed that Prussia was soon going to be defeated and weakened, by 1871, Germany was perceived as a major power with staying power. As I will show in the next chapter, not only did European leaders perceive Germany as a legitimate great power, they continued to perceive German power as rapidly increasing throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Lastly, it is only after the shock of 1870-1 that European leaders and diplomats begin to worry about the potential threats that a more powerful Germany could pose to their interests throughout Europe. After 1871, Germany was perceived as a rising power and a new factor that needed to be taken into account as European states provided for their own security.

### **Likely Responses to the Rise of Germany: Expectations of Balancing**

Although most balance of power theory does not offer specific predictions about when balancing behavior should occur, the rise of Germany should have provoked a balancing response from the other great powers in the 1870s and 1880s. First, I argue that based on the rest of Europe perceiving Germany's rise after the shock of 1870-1, a balancing response would be a reasonable expectation. According to some realists who only focus on the objective material balance of power, Germany was still too weak in the 1870s and 1880s to provoke a balancing response, and only should have provoked a balancing response early in the first decade of the twentieth century.

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<sup>191</sup> For further discussions of Alsace-Lorraine and the peace treaty, see Rich, p. 215-6; and Albrecht-Carrie, p. 139-42.

Although I argue that a perceptual definition is more useful if one is trying to explain state responses, I argue that using the factors that these analysts focus on, one can make a strong argument that they should have expected balancing against Germany in the 1870s and 1880s. Moreover, I show that their interpretation of late nineteenth century European history either reinforces the idea that balancing should have been expected, or else seriously undermines their own theoretical expectation. Lastly, several other political scientists and historians have argued that balancing against Germany's rise in the late nineteenth century was a reasonable expectation. Overall, this analysis suggests that as Germany's rise continued and its power increased through the 1870s and 1880s, the balancing responses by the other European great powers should have become more severe.

In the theory chapter, I argued that in an anarchic world in which states must depend on themselves to guarantee survival, a rising power will lead to anxiety and concern and provoke a countervailing balancing response by the other great powers to safeguard their security. Given that leaders make decisions based on their understanding of the world in which they live, I argued that it is only the perception of a rising power that should initiate these moves towards a countervailing balancing response. In the previous section, I argued that it was only the shock of the defeat of France in 1870-1 and the unification of Germany that led the leaders of Europe to recognize that German power had rapidly increased, and it was only after this shock that European leaders began to worry about Germany as a potential threat to their interests. Therefore, as Germany's rise continued from 1871, a balancing response by the other great powers is a reasonable expectation. Unfortunately most realist theory does not provide a specific guide as to the severity of the balancing response that one might expect, or whether the rising power should provoke external balancing or internal balancing. At the very least, after Germany is perceived as a rising power, as its power continues to rise, the balancing response should increase in severity. Although predicting the

exact severity or magnitude of the balancing response is difficult, these theories make a strong argument for directionality; that is, as the rising power's material power increases, the severity of the balancing response from others should increase.<sup>192</sup>

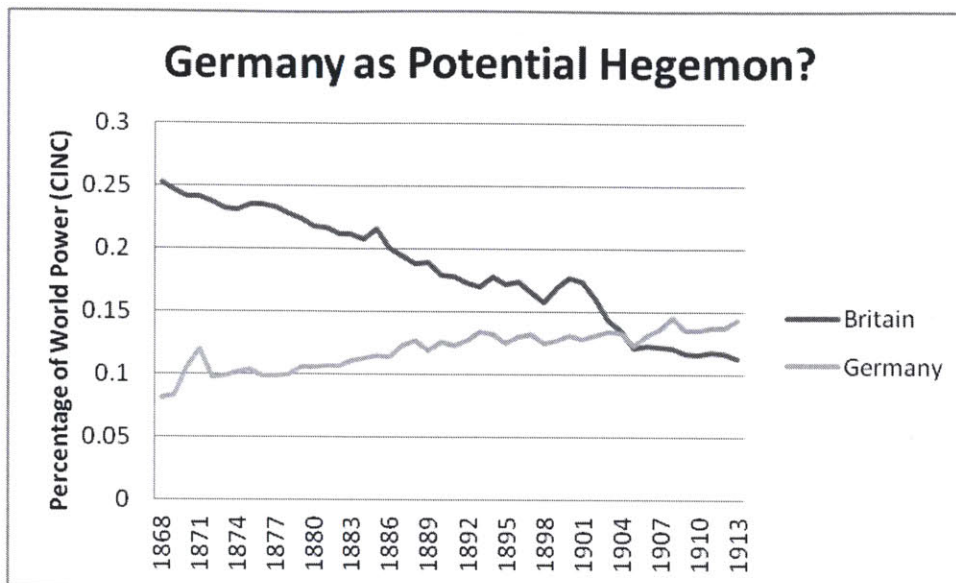
To some realists that focus on objective material power, Germany was not strong enough in the 1870s or 1880s to provoke a balancing response. According to Mearsheimer: "Although Germany was the most powerful state in Europe between 1870 and 1900, it was not a potential hegemon," and therefore one would not have expected to see the other great powers balance against it.<sup>193</sup> However, I argue that based on the factors that these analysts focus on and their reading of nineteenth century history, balancing against Germany was a reasonable expectation in the 1870s and 1880s, and therefore the lack of balancing against Germany during this period is a puzzle that needs to be explained. Those who argue that Germany was too weak to provoke a balancing coalition highlight Great Britain's tremendous latent power. As the charts below clearly show, Great Britain's economic power and overall power were greater than Germany's until the early twentieth century, so these analysts would not have expected a balancing reaction until then.

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<sup>192</sup> Other factors such as geography and relative power are also offered as explanations for who should balance, but I will return to these explanations in the alternative explanations section at the end of the next chapter.

<sup>193</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 186.





Note: The Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score combines iron/steel production, energy consumption, military expenditures, military personnel, total population, and urban population.

*Source: Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities*

However, I argue that using the same material factors that these scholars focus on, a convincing case can be made that Germany was the most powerful military power on the planet, and its increasing power should have provoked a balancing response during the 1870s and 1880s. Although how one defines and measures power has been quite controversial, Mearsheimer convincingly argues that land power is most important, with latent power representing additional power that could potentially be converted into additional land power.<sup>194</sup> Levy and Thompson also focus on land power in continental systems.<sup>195</sup> The problem with this argument is that if land power is paramount, then the naval power and latent power of an offshore balancer like Britain should not matter very much for the continental balance of power. Britain's army was very small throughout the late nineteenth century. Despite its massive latent power, it was severely limited in its ability to

<sup>194</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, ch. 2.

<sup>195</sup> See Levy and Thompson, "Hegemonic Threats and Great-Power Balancing in Europe, 1495-1999."

generate land power that would directly affect the continental balance of power. Levy and Thompson argue that maritime powers generally have smaller armies, and the need to project power across great distance and over bodies of water reduces the ability of a maritime state to project military power on to the continent. Although they argue that this makes maritime powers less threatening and less likely to provoke a balancing response, by the same logic, one should also greatly discount the impact of maritime powers in the overall continental balance of power.<sup>196</sup> When applied to Britain in the late nineteenth century, this suggests that even though it possessed massive latent power, its ability to easily generate land power that could affect the continental balance of power was severely limited.

It makes even more sense to discount British power during this period because it seemed very unlikely to use this power to intervene in continental affairs, especially on behalf of France and Russia. The argument that Germany was still too weak to provoke a balancing response suggests that because of Britain's immense latent power, the other continental powers would not have seen Germany as a potential threat on the continent because Germany's share of systemic power would still have been small. However, after Lord Palmerston left power in the 1860s, the British had retreated to a role of splendid isolation, showing little interest in continental affairs. In the three Prussian wars in the 1860s, the British did not intervene or show themselves to be particularly likely to use its massive latent power to directly affect the continental balance of power. In the early 1870s, even if British latent power was great, from the view of the continental great powers, this did not matter much as Britain had demonstrated its lack of willingness to use that power to influence affairs on the continent. Moreover, by the 1880s, Britain had a deep conflict of interest with France

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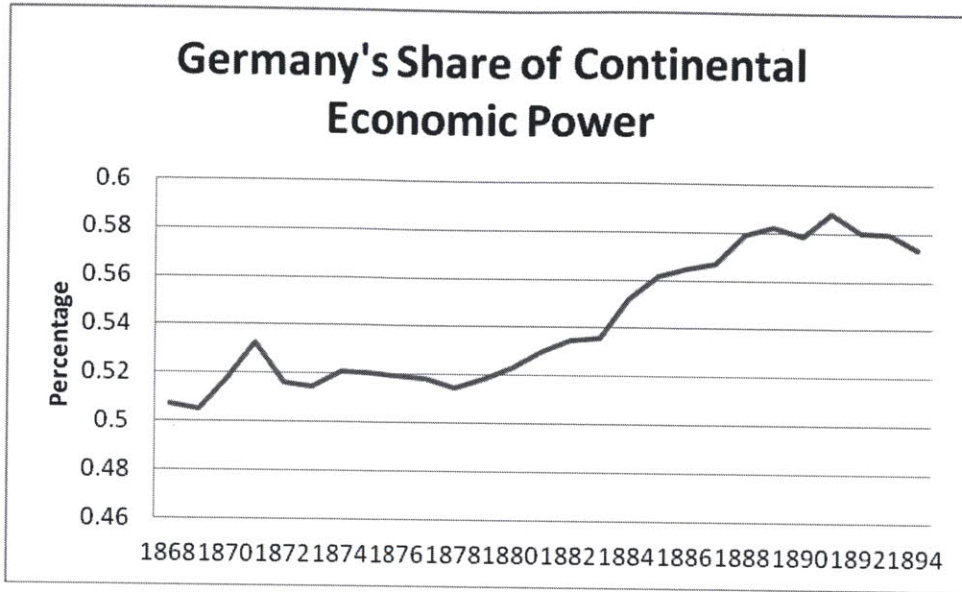
<sup>196</sup> The foundation for these insights is the loss of strength gradient. According to this concept, the amount of a country's military power that can be projected to a certain place depends on the distance. For the original work, see Kenneth Boulding, *Conflict and Defense* (New York: Harper, 1962). For later arguments that highlight geography and distance as a factor limiting the ability to project to power, see Levy and Thompson, "Hegemonic Threats and Great-Power Balancing in Europe, 1495-1999," p. 10; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; and Walt, *Origins of Alliances*.

of Egypt and with Russia over the Near East and Central Asia, which made reliance on British power to protect their interests a risky choice. Bismarck captured this sentiment when he said: “I wasted several years of my life by the supposition that England was a great nation.”<sup>197</sup> Although Britain’s latent power was tremendous, its ability and willingness to generate land power on the continent, which was the type of power that really mattered, was severely limited.

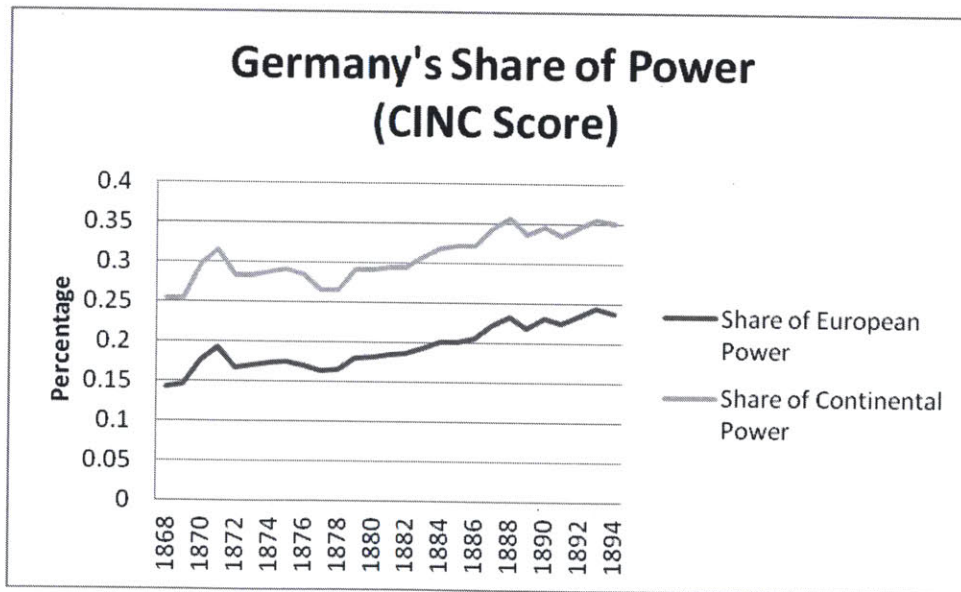
If Great Britain’s ability and willingness to project power onto the continent were limited during this period, it does not make sense to include Britain’s massive latent power in the total power in the continental system. To correct for this overestimation of British power, I present several charts below that show Germany’s share of power in the continental system—that is the system including Germany, France, Russia, and Austria. Not surprisingly, these charts show Germany to have a much higher share of systemic power and would make one more likely to expect a balancing response. Although completely excluding Britain is probably too extreme, counting all of British power as if it mattered on the continent is also incorrect. The precise discount rate for British power is controversial and difficult to assess, Germany’s share of European power was clearly greater than aggregate measures of power suggest.

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<sup>197</sup> See Charles Grant Robinson, *Bismarck* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1919), p. 179.



Note: Economic power combines iron/steel production and energy consumption. Continental power is the total power of Germany, Austria, Russia, and France.  
*Source: Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities*



Note: The Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score combines iron/steel production, energy consumption, military expenditures, military personnel, total population, and urban population. European power is the total power of Germany, Austria, Russia, France, and Great Britain. Continental power is the total power of Germany, Austria, Russia, and France.  
*Source: Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities*

Moreover, these figures substantially overestimate Russian power and underestimate German power. In terms of military power, although Russia's army was by far the largest during this period, most analysts discount Russian power in some way to provide a more accurate depiction of the balance of power. Russia's army was very slow to mobilize, spread across many fronts, and very poorly trained.<sup>198</sup> Moreover, Russia's huge total population gives it immense latent power, according to the aggregate data. In reality, however, Russia showed itself to be not particularly adept at generating combat power out of its massive population and projecting it into central Europe.<sup>199</sup> Therefore, including aggregate army size substantially overestimates Russian power and ends up underestimating Germany's true share of European or continental power. Relying on aggregate figures also underestimates Germany's military power, because it does not include Germany's clear qualitative advantage over the French and the other European armies.<sup>200</sup>

Based on Germany's strong military and its geographical position, which are factors that these scholars stress, Germany should have been perceived as threatening and therefore likely to provoke a balancing response. Not only did Germany have the most powerful army during this period, but its geographical location in the center of Europe made it especially threatening to every other great power, including Great Britain. According to Mearsheimer, "The most dangerous states in the international system are continental powers with large armies."<sup>201</sup> He also argued that "common borders promote balancing."<sup>202</sup> As Bismarckian Germany shared a border with Russia, France, and Austria, using the same factors that these scholars focus on would make Germany more threatening than its potential share of European power would suggest.

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<sup>198</sup> See Levy and Thompson, "Hegemonic Threats and Great-Power Balancing in Europe, 1495-1999." p. 18; and Fuller.

<sup>199</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 65. Mearsheimer argues that Russia had little latent power in reality, which is why it was defeated in the Crimean War and the Russo-Japanese War.

<sup>200</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 186; and Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

<sup>201</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, p. 135.

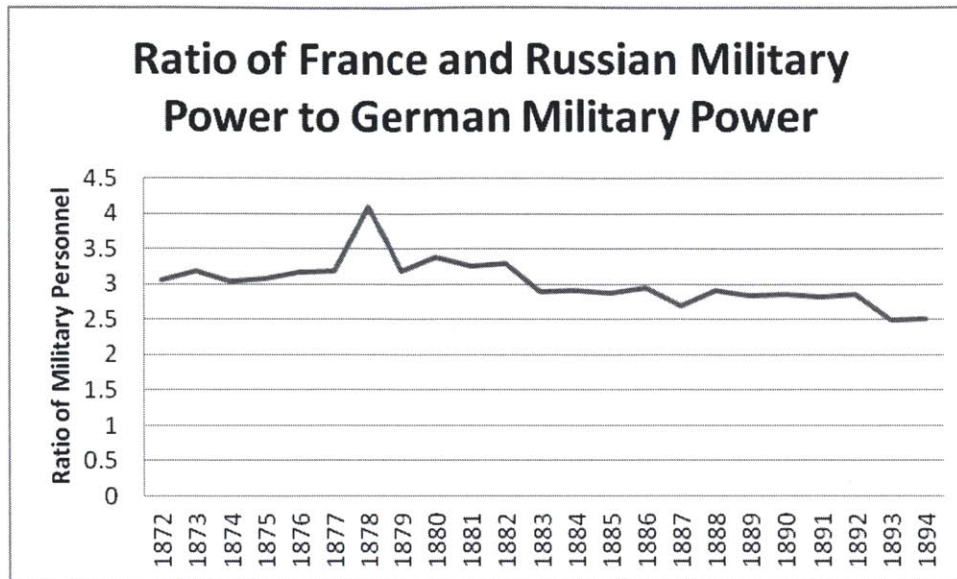
<sup>202</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, p. 271.

If Britain's immense latent power meant that Germany was too weak to provoke a balancing response in the 1870s and 1880s, then according to this analysis, Germany should have also been too weak to provoke a balancing response in the 1890s. However, these analysts try to argue that the Franco-Russian alliance was formed as an efficient balancing response against the threat of a rising Germany.<sup>203</sup> Mearsheimer argues that Germany was not a potential hegemon until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and therefore, by his own analysis, the other great powers should not have feared Germany, nor felt a need to balance against it. Although Germany's latent power had increased throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the overall structure of the distribution of power in Europe had not fundamentally changed by the early 1890s—Germany was the strongest power on the continent, but still trailed Great Britain in latent power. Moreover, as the chart below shows, there was not a significant change in the continental military balance that would have necessitated an alliance. If, according to Mearsheimer's own analysis, Germany was strong enough to provoke the formation of an alliance in the early 1890s, well before German power eclipsed British power, then a balancing response is a reasonable expectation in the 1870s and 1880s as well. If Germany was powerful enough, and therefore threatening enough to require an alliance in the 1890s, then its power should have required some balancing response in the 1870s and 1880s as well.

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<sup>203</sup> According to Mearsheimer: "It was apparent by 1890 that Germany, with its formidable army, large population, and dynamic industrial base, was rapidly becoming Europe's most powerful state. Indeed, France and Russia, formed an alliance in 1894 to contain the growing threat located between them." See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, p. 262-3.





*Source: Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities*

Lastly, several political scientists and historians have argued that balance of power theory would have predicted the formation of balancing alliances against Bismarckian Germany. In Schweller’s analysis of French underbalancing in the late nineteenth century and Arthur Stein and his collaborators’ analysis of dyadic interactions in the 1870s and 1880s, both argue that balance of power theory would predict a balancing response after Germany’s defeat of France and continued rising power.<sup>204</sup> Political scientist David Calleo also argues that the rise of Germany “could not help but profoundly challenge the European balance of power. A coalition of hostile powers was nearly inevitable.”<sup>205</sup> According one noted German historian: “The dominant position achieved by Germany [in 1871] ..... ought to have generated new alliances designed to redress the balance by holding Germany within its new frontiers.”<sup>206</sup> In analyzing the post-1871 European order, Henry

<sup>204</sup> See Schweller, *Unanswered Threats*; Brian Healy and Arthur Stein, “The Balance of Power in International History,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1973), pp. 33-61; and Richard Rosecrance et al., *Power, Balance of Power, and Status in Nineteenth Century international Relations* (Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage Publications, 1974).

<sup>205</sup> See Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered*, p. 9.

<sup>206</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. 253. According to another historian: “Since a German victory after 1871 would jeopardize the balance, Germany would probably be met by a coalition of the other great powers.” See Farrar, *Arrogance and Anxiety*, p. 15.

Kissinger argues: “According to all the traditions of Realpolitik, European coalitions were likely to arise to contain Germany’s growing, potentially, dominant, power.”<sup>207</sup>

### **Germany Views its Rise: Domestic and International Threats**

This section will examine how German leaders viewed Germany’s rise, and which potential threats most concerned them. In general, whereas the other great powers worried about the potential for Germany to use its growing power to expand its influence in Europe and feared future aggression, Bismarck worried about the internal challenges of creating, managing, and controlling a newly-created country. Bismarck’s concern about potential international threats existed in a context of even greater concern about domestic challenges and potential domestic threats to the survival of Germany as a unified state. The complexity of these domestic threats and challenges made it even more important to minimize the threats and pressure Germany confronted from international forces and made Bismarck hyper-sensitive to any international forces that supported domestic challenges to the authority and legitimacy of the regime.

Even though Bismarck is often thought of as focused on foreign policy, these immense domestic challenges were more pressing and more important.<sup>208</sup> Therefore, international threats and pressure on the Reich needed to be kept to a minimum so that Germany could concentrate its resources and efforts on the domestic challenges of building a new state and maintaining control over it. According to historian Otto Pflanze: “From 1871 to 1890 his foreign policy was the defensive shield behind which the German nation coped with the problems of internal unification. No word and no task was more often in Bismarck’s expressed thoughts during these decades than

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<sup>207</sup> See Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 137-8.

<sup>208</sup> In his diplomatic history of Europe, even Taylor writes: “in truth, Bismarck’s energies were consumed in building up the new German state.” See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 201-2. According to another historian: “Until the tasks of internal organization and appeasement were accomplished, domestic policy necessarily assumed a primacy that it had not in recent years.” See Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 101



that of “consolidation.”<sup>209</sup> Not only did Bismarck face the challenges of trying to create a new state, but Germany’s economic rise created severe dislocation and new social problems that Germany needed to address, even as it struggled to maintain control over the fragile new central state. If these threats could be minimized and not require substantial resources, then Germany could focus its efforts on building the state, maintaining control over it, addressing new social problems, and sustaining economic growth.

The first section will examine the domestic threats Germany faced as it tried to rise. Next, I will explore the potential international threats that Bismarck and German leaders were most concerned about. In the next section of the chapter I will explain Bismarck’s grand strategy and how he tried to prevent these potential threats from becoming reality to allow Germany to devote resources and attention on solving the domestic challenges that Germany faced

#### *The Pressures on a Rising Fragile State: Domestic Threats to Germany’s Rise*

When the Second Reich was established in 1871, German leaders needed to create new institutions of centralized national government, instill a sense of Germany as a nation, and solidify legitimacy of the regime. The new Germany united a large number of diverse states with little tradition of accepting centralized authority. To facilitate efficient exchange and integration, German had to remove trade barriers that existed between the German states and had to establish a uniform system of weights and measures.<sup>210</sup> Given the lack of existing centralized institutions, Germany had to undertake the enormous tasks of establishing executive, legislative, and judicial organs of power,

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<sup>209</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. xii. Pflanze repeats this theme of the relationship between foreign policy and domestic policy in several places.

<sup>210</sup> See Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany*, p. 116.

reforming imperial finances and establishing a national bank, writing a uniform commercial code and criminal code, and improving roads and railways to link towns and provinces.<sup>211</sup>

These efforts at building state institutions and maintaining control over a unified state were further complicated by the inclusion of several groups that could potentially challenge Berlin's central authority or even break away from the Reich. Several of the German states, such as Bavaria and Wurttemberg had strong traditions of independence and valued their separate identity. Many of these states were not only reluctant to submit to any central authority, but also deeply hated the other German states, which complicated the task of establishing any real German unity under the Reich.<sup>212</sup> Moreover, within Germany, there were many minority groups such as Catholics, Poles, and Alsatians.<sup>213</sup> As the interests of these minority groups were not likely to be protected in a German state, these groups had the potential to undermine German authority by aligning with powerful forces in other countries. With so many disaffected groups and such a weak tradition of centralization, there was a real worry that some of these groups or states might try to split off from the new German empire. There was a very strong feeling that this fragile new state would not survive its first domestic or international crisis.<sup>214</sup>

Some of the best evidence of Bismarck's perception of the fragility of the new Germany was his hyper-vigilant efforts to destroy the groups that he felt mounted a challenge to internal order, stability, and the new German government. According to a new volume based on newly-discovered primary sources from the 1870s, Bismarck "saw the newly established German empire permanently beset by a myriad of enemies—among these, most prominently Roman Catholics and socialists."<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> For more on these tasks, see Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 196-225; D.G. Williamson, *Bismarck and Germany* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 44; Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 4; and Taylor, *Course of German History*, p. 135.

<sup>212</sup> See Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 4.

<sup>213</sup> For a further discussion and numerical breakdown of these minorities, see Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. xii.

<sup>214</sup> See Rich, p. 217.

<sup>215</sup> See Siegfried Weichlein, "Bismarck as Trickster," H-Net Review (January 2007), available at <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=12801>, p. 2.

In the early 1870s, his efforts were focused on heavy-handed suppression of the Centre Party, which appealed to German Catholics, Poles, and other nationalist minorities. Recent pronouncements by the Catholic Church challenged the authority of the German government and encouraged Catholics within Germany to privilege the church over Germany.<sup>216</sup> Perceiving all Catholic activities as a potential threat to the regime, in the early 1870s, the government launched a flurry of restrictions on Catholics, minorities, and supporters of the Centre Party which came to be known as the Kulturkampf (cultural struggle).<sup>217</sup> This hyper-sensitivity to potential threats to the fragile regime also meant that Bismarck viewed any international support for domestic opposition groups as an especially severe challenge to Germany's interests and survival.

Domestic fragility continued throughout Bismarck's reign and Germany's economic rise only exacerbated it. In the late 1870s and 1880s, the Social Democrats became the new enemy of the Second Reich, and the next victim of Bismarck's attacks. Germany's rapid industrialization not only included urbanization and the creation of new dynamic industries, but also massive unemployment and social dislocation in some sectors and areas.<sup>218</sup> In addition to building a new state and preventing it from collapsing, Germany's rise unleashed new social and political forces that needed to be addressed. As this social discontent led to the increasing popularity of the Social Democrats, Bismarck responded both by cracking down on its followers and by launching a massive social welfare program to address the new problems caused by Germany's rise.<sup>219</sup> According to two

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<sup>216</sup> In 1864, the *Syllabus Errorum* condemned the principles of freedom and liberalism, which Bismarck and the German government supported and tried to incorporate into the new German state. The announcement of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility in 1870 directly challenged the sovereignty of Germany and the authority of German leaders.

<sup>217</sup> These measures, which are most closely associated with Adalbert Falk, included seizing control over many schools run by Catholics and minorities, outlawing Catholicism, and imprisoning or exiling hundreds of priests who violated these laws. For more on the Kulturkampf, see Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 202-210; Nicolas Der Bagdasarian, *The Austro-German Rapprochement, 1870-1879: From the Battle of Sedan to the Dual Alliance* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1976), pp. 132-7; Williamson, *Bismarck and Germany* p. 54; and A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman* (London: new English Library, 1974), p. 151.

<sup>218</sup> For a discussion of the acute problems that Germany's growth unleashed, see Hans Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871-1918*, Kim Traynor, trans. (Dover, N.H.: Berg Publishers, 1985); Hans Ulrich Wehler, "Bismarck's Imperialism 1862-1890," *Past and Present*, No. 48 (August 1970), pp. 119-155; and Geiss, *German Foreign Policy*, p. 7-9.

<sup>219</sup> See Taylor, *Bismarck*, p. 162; and Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 207.

historians: “The first thing that must strike the student [of Bismarck] is the permanent atmosphere of crisis of his nineteen-year Chancellorship.”<sup>220</sup>

### *International Threats: The Basis for Grand Strategy*

Based on Bismarck’s writings, German documents, and diplomatic histories, this section will discuss the potential international threats that could prevent or slow Germany’s rise. The rest of the chapter will analyze the grand strategy that Bismarck devised to prevent these threats from materializing and potentially slowing or preventing Germany’s rise. As German leaders viewed its international environment, the four potential threats that were emphasized were: a potential French invasion, the formation of anti-German coalitions, the outbreak of a general war, and international support for domestic forces that sought to challenge the regime or break away from Germany. If Bismarck’s grand strategy could prevent these international threats from complicating Germany’s external environment, Germany would be in a better position to focus on addressing Germany’s more pressing domestic challenges, to continue its economic growth, and to continue to improve its position in European international affairs.

After its military defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the harsh peace which followed, France longed for an opportunity to get revenge and return to its rightful place as the most powerful nation on the continent.<sup>221</sup> Therefore, deterring and preventing French military attack was an important task for German foreign and military policy. Even though Germany had proven itself militarily superior and had improved its position by seizing the strategically-important territory of Alsace-Lorraine, France was still a great power with a large military; moreover, given France’s open hostility to Germany in the early 1870s and clear desire to revise the status-quo, Germany needed to

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<sup>220</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, *Bismarck and Europe*, p. 7.

<sup>221</sup> The terms of the peace included seizing Alsace-Lorraine, imposing an indemnity of five million francs, and occupying parts of France until it was repaid. See Rich, p. 215-6; Albrecht-Carrie, p. 140-2; Taylor, *Bismarck*, p. 132-5; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 210-7.

make preparations for the possibility of such a war. Even though Germany would likely emerge victorious from another war with France, the undertaking would likely force Germany to divert resources from domestic needs to the war effort. Given France's relative weakness, a unilateral French invasion was not seen to be as likely or as worrisome as the danger that Germany would if France attracted an ally, but it was still a potential threat to Germany's rise.

The second international threat to Germany's rise was the potential formation of an anti-German balancing coalition. In the *Kissingen Diktat* of 1877, Bismarck wrote: "A French newspaper said of me recently that I had a "coalition nightmare;" this kind of nightmare will long (and perhaps always) be a legitimate one for a German minister."<sup>222</sup> Bismarck recognized, and often wrote about how Germany's central position in Europe made it particularly vulnerable to anti-German coalitions and two-front wars. He wrote: "We are situated in the heart of Europe, and have at least three fronts open to an attack....We are also more exposed to the dangers of a coalition than any other nation, as is proved by the whole development of history, by our geographical position, and the lesser degree of cohesiveness, which until now has characterized the German nation in comparison with others."<sup>223</sup>

Bismarck was only worried about the great powers and feared that a coalition of three, or even two other powers, could pose a significant threat to German stability and security. Given that France was the only country that was openly hostile to Germany, a coalition involving France seemed the most likely and the most dangerous. In the early 1870s, France was too weak to be appealing to an ally, but Germany feared that as it recovered from war and grew more powerful, the

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<sup>222</sup> See E.T.S. Dugdale, *German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914, vol. 1* (New York: Harper, 1928), p. 54-5 (hereafter GDD). This is the four volume English translation of the many volumes of German diplomatic correspondence published in German in 1923 under the name *Die Grosse Politik*. The English translation focuses on relations with England, but there is still a lot on overall German approaches to foreign policy. This memo was dictated on June 15th, 1877 with the 1875-78 eastern crisis in the background, during his stay at Kissingen, but reveals principles that seem to define Bismarck's grand strategy and diplomatic thinking for the duration of his time in power.

<sup>223</sup> See Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck*, p. 290. This particular quote is from his February 6, 1888 speech in front of the Reichstag, but Germany's unfavorable geographic position was a constant theme in Bismarck's observations about Germany's strategic position and foreign policy.

possibilities of France forming an alliance with another great power would increase. In December 1872, Bismarck wrote to Emperor Wilhelm I: "Our chief danger in the future begins at the moment when France once more appears to the royal courts of Europe as a possible and appropriate ally."<sup>224</sup>

In the *Kissingen Diktat*, Bismarck laid out which potential coalitions worried him the most. He wrote: "Coalitions can be formed against us, based on the western powers with the addition of Austria, even more dangerous perhaps on a Russo-Austrian-French basis; great intimacy between two of the last-named powers would always offer the third of them a means of exerting very effective pressure on us." It is often incorrectly suggested that being "a trois," or being on the side with three powers in a world of five great powers, was a fundamental principle of Bismarck's foreign policy. The above statement and much of Bismarck's diplomatic behavior show that he recognized that even a situation in which two great powers are firmly allied against Germany could provide immense challenges to Germany.<sup>225</sup> Although a three-country coalition would be far more dangerous for Germany, a bilateral alliance would also represent a threat to Germany's rise and force it to be prepared to fight a two-front war.<sup>226</sup>

As Bismarck noted at Kissingen, Britain and Russia's security competition in the Near East and Central Asia made a coalition involving both powers unlikely, but the other two possible combinations would represent a great threat to Germany. Moreover, as Bismarck would often to, there were historical precedents for these coalitions. The coalition between France, Austria, and

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<sup>224</sup> See Craig, *Germany*, p. 105. LaFore also writes: "The only real threat to Germany could come from France, and only then from France with a powerful ally." See Laurence LaFore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1971), p. 86.

<sup>225</sup> Bismarck referred to being "a trois" in January 1880 during discussions with Saburov in which he was trying to convince the Russians to return to an alliance with Germany and Austria. In the complete quotation, Bismarck tried to call Saburov's attention to "the importance of being one of three on the European chess-board. That is the invariable objective of all cabinets and of mine above others. Nobody wishes to be in a minority. All politics reduces themselves to this formula: to try to be one of three, as long as the world is governed by an unstable equilibrium of five Powers" See Craig, *Germany*, p. 115. The context for the "a trois" statement, with its clear motive of trying to convince the Russians that being "a trois" was in their interest, as well as his expressed worries about how a coalition of two could threaten Germany, casts doubt on how fundamental this concept was to Bismarck's thinking about potential alliances.

<sup>226</sup> Especially if Britain continued its policy of non-intervention, making it so that there were only four European great powers, an alliance of two powers against Germany would be a significant threat and complication.

Britain, often called the Crimean Coalition, had united to prevent potential Russian gains in the Near East in the 1850s. France's desire for revenge against Germany and interest in finding partners for such an endeavor was well-known. However, fears that a powerful Germany might try to invade Austria and incorporate Austrian Germans into the new Reich, or fears that Germany could threaten the Low Countries or even the British home islands could bring Austria and Britain into an anti-German coalition. The other potential coalition of France, Austria, and Russia, known in history as the Kaunitz Coalition, was organized in the eighteenth century by Austria to frustrate the expansion of Frederick the Great and Prussia. Russian fears that Germany could try to incorporate the Germans in Poland into the Reich, or challenge Russia's superiority in eastern Europe, could push it into such a coalition. As someone who was very familiar with Prussian history, Bismarck was probably very familiar with the Kaunitz coalition, and expressed concerns about it on many occasions.<sup>227</sup>

Of the potential bilateral coalitions that could form against Germany, a Franco-Russian alliance or Franco-Austrian alliance were the most likely possibilities and those which worried Bismarck the most. After the German occupation ended, French leaders would be actively seeking a partner to exact revenge against Germany. Given that Russia's huge population and army made it powerful than Austria, a Franco-Russian alliance was a greater potential threat. Germany's friendly relations with Russia and French weakness made such an alliance unlikely in the early 1870s, but it became more possible as German power grew and France's recovery made it a more suitable ally. The desire for revenge against Germany for its defeat at Koniggratz, and worries about a potential German invasion made Austria a potential ally for the French. From Bismarck's viewpoint, even though Austria was weaker than Russia, a Franco-Austrian alliance would still force Germany to fight a two-front war against two great powers and probably make it overly dependent

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<sup>227</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. 253; and Brandenburg, *From Bismarck to the World War*, p. 6.

on Russia. Moreover, as France and Austria had reached an informal pact before the Franco-Prussian War, there was evidence of some friendship. Although neither of these alliances was likely to take shape in the early 1870s, as France recovered from its defeat, both were possible and having to face either would be a major threat to rising Germany.<sup>228</sup>

The third potential international threat was the outbreak of a major European war. This would threaten Germany's rise because it would likely become involved, forcing it to divert scarce resources from ensuring domestic growth and stability, and could end up producing one of the coalitions of Bismarck's nightmares. There were three basic tensions in European politics that could lead to war: between Germany and France over Alsace-Lorraine, between Russia and Austria over the Balkans, and between Russia and Britain over conflicting interests around the world from the Balkans to the Near East to the Far East.<sup>229</sup> To ensure a peaceful international environment, Germany not only had to deal with managing the potential balancing responses of others to its own rise, it also had to prevent these tensions from escalating into general war. In the Balkans, Bismarck avoided choosing sides between Austria and Russia, but if a war broke out both sides would look to Germany for support; and the side that did not receive sufficient support would likely join with France to encircle Germany.<sup>230</sup> As for the potential outbreak of a Russo-British war, the biggest danger was that Britain would not only pressure Russia with naval power, but also ask Austria to use its land power. This would create another situation of having to choose between Austria and Russia.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Bismarck believed, and other historians have adopted this view, that the difference in domestic ideologies of the two countries would also make it impossible for such an alliance to form.

<sup>229</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. 254. Most historians pay more attention to the first two potential conflicts and overlook the third, but the British and Russians came as close to a war as either of the other two dyads.

<sup>230</sup> For an excellent discussion of some of Bismarck's worries regarding Austria and Russia, see Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Moscow*, pp. 193-7.

<sup>231</sup> No matter where on the globe Russia and Britain ended up clashing, there was always the strong likelihood that Britain would respond by pressuring from the sea and asking Austria to pressure from land.



The last international threat was the international support for domestic forces that sought to challenge the regime or break away from Germany. This is often overlooked in analysis of Bismarckian Germany's foreign policy, but the crisis mentality and fragile nature of the regime meant that Germany's leaders would likely be hyper-sensitive to such pressures. I have already laid out the religious, ethnic, and ideological minorities which were seen by Bismarck as potential challenges and potential secessionists. The international component was that these groups might ask for or be offered support from other countries to weaken or destabilize a new Germany. It is very telling that when Bismarck spoke of the Centre party and the Social Democrats, he said they were groups which "opposed national development *by international methods.*"<sup>232</sup> Potential international linkages included: Catholic clergy in France, Belgium, Austria, and Italy could support Catholics; Russia could support the Poles; and France or any other country whose relations with Germany had soured could support social revolutionaries. For a newly-formed country that worried about its regime legitimacy and already contained severe centrifugal forces due to the variety of groups within the state, international support for any of these groups was a grave threat to the survival and stability of a rising Germany.

### **Bismarck's Grand Strategy of Reassurance:**

After the previous section described the various potential threats to Germany's rise, this section will examine Germany's grand strategy--the overall approach Bismarck adopted to prevent these threats from materializing and challenging Germany's security and its rise. For a rising power, perhaps the most important aspect of its grand strategy is what it chooses to do with its increased power, how it chooses to wield it, and how it believes others are likely to respond to it. The rest of this section will examine the logic behind what Bismarck tried to do *with* Germany's growing power,

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<sup>232</sup> See Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 207.

and what he tried to do *about* Germany's growing power. This overall grand strategy was one of reassurance. Through specific actions to affect the threat perceptions and cost-benefit calculations of the other great powers, Bismarck's grand strategy aimed to convince these powers that there was no need to firmly balance against Germany, even as it grew stronger. First, I will explain the overall logic of this grand strategy of reassurance, based mostly on German primary sources. Second, I will explore some of the sources of this overall approach. Third, I will discuss some of the tools that Bismarck used to reassure the other great powers. Lastly, I will briefly discuss some of the key ways in which Bismarck's grand strategy of reassurance evolved throughout the 1870s and 1880s.

### *Bismarck's Reassurance: The Overall Approach*

Given the fragile state of the new Germany in 1871, and the challenges to domestic stability that Germany's rise unleashed, Bismarck's grand strategy should best be understood as an attempt to prevent international tensions and pressure from further complicating Germany's political and economic predicament. After a thorough reading of German sources, one historian concludes: "The task of German foreign policy was to shield the Reich from external danger during a period of internal consolidation."<sup>233</sup> The goals of Bismarck's grand strategy were to deter French attack, prevent the formation of an anti-German coalition, and prevent the outbreak of European great power war. In general, Bismarck tried to prevent these threats from materializing by limiting Germany's military forces and trying to shape the threat perceptions of the other great powers through impression management. Bismarck tried to demonstrate not only that it was not a threat to interests of the other European powers, but also that as it grew more powerful, Germany was willing and able to use this increased power to provide new opportunities and advantages for the other

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<sup>233</sup> See Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. II, p. xvi, p. 252.

European powers.<sup>234</sup> If this grand strategy of reassurance successfully prevented new challenges in Germany's international environment, then German leaders could hopefully solve or at least manage Germany's immense domestic challenges and continue its rise.

Although Bismarckian Germany, like most countries, did not publish one document that revealed its grand strategic thinking, the *Kissingen Diktat*, which Bismarck wrote in 1877, provides several clues as to what he hoped to accomplish. In his description of his ideal picture of the international environment that he hoped Germany would face, he wrote: "it is not of one portraying any acquisition of territory, but rather one showing a combined political situation, in which all of the Powers, except France, have need of us, and are removed from the possibility of coalescing against us by the nature of their relations towards each other."<sup>235</sup> Although the *Kissingen Diktat* was less clear about exactly how Bismarck hoped to achieve this outcome, Germany's behavior and other writings from Bismarck reveal a relatively consistent overall approach.<sup>236</sup> Moreover, other historians and

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<sup>234</sup> Germany could have tried to prevent these threats from emerging by implementing a grand strategy of coercion. Bismarck could have estimated that wielding its growing power in an aggressive manner, seizing new territory, initiating crises, and making threats was the optimal way to prevent others from challenging Germany or forming an alliance against it. There were domestic groups within Germany that pressured Bismarck to behave in exactly this way. See Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered*, p. 25.

<sup>235</sup> See GDD, p. 55. Although he wrote this in 1877, and there are clearly portions of the document that are related to contemporary events, this part of the assessment is general enough and consistent with some of his earlier views, that it is probably accurate to say this described what he hoped Germany would face in 1871 as well. According to a supporting view: "[the] roots of the Bad Kissingen memorandum can be found in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War." See Peter William Van Der Meer, "Bismarck's Dilemma: German Foreign Policy from 1870 to 1882," Master's Thesis, Simon Fraser University (1998), p. 4.

<sup>236</sup> The early historiography on Bismarck and the Bismarckian system sometimes verged on hero worship and often gave the impression that Bismarck was both omnipotent and omniscient in diplomacy. For example, see Langer, *passim*. Later historians tried to correct this view and referred to the Bismarckian system as a "system of stopgaps" and suggested that Bismarck's foreign policy involved more crisis management and improvisation than these early treatments suggested. See W.N. Medlicott, *Bismarck and Modern Germany* (London: English Universities Press, 1965), p. 180; and Klaus Hildebrand, *German Foreign Policy from Bismarck to Adenauer: The Limits of Statecraft*, Louise Wilmot, trans. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). However, these correctives of the mythic status of Bismarck as a diplomat should not be interpreted as arguing that Bismarck did not have a grand strategy. In fact, even these later treatments reveal a relatively consistent approach to foreign policy. Moreover, as I discussed in the theory chapter, I am using the term grand strategy in an abstract manner to highlight the two different logics about what a rising power can do with its increased power. Together, these works affirm that although Bismarck did not have total control of European international affairs, he recognized that Germany's power worried others and consistently took actions to reassure these states.

political scientists support the general claim that Bismarck's post-unification foreign policy was restrained and focused on preventing balancing.<sup>237</sup>

The most pressing problem that Bismarck faced was a revisionist France. After its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, France sought revenge not only to take back Alsace-Lorraine but to reclaim its position as the most dominant power in Europe. In the early 1870s, France would not accept Germany's increased power and looked for the earliest opportunity to attack Germany, and actively sought an ally that could ensure French victory. Shortly after the Battle of Sedan, Bismarck wrote: "Our task is to see that France leaves us in peace, and to make sure that in case France refuses to keep peace, she shall have no allies."<sup>238</sup> Given that a revisionist France could not be reassured as to Germany's peaceful disposition, especially as it was the fact of Germany's new power that was so objectionable, Bismarck decided that the only way to deter a French war of revenge was to remain strong militarily. This would not only hopefully deter war, but leave Germany in a position to defend itself in case France launched a war of revenge anyway.<sup>239</sup>

In addressing the second potential international challenge, the formation of anti-German coalitions, Bismarck's grand strategy of reassurance becomes clear. Although France wanted to move against Germany to revise the status-quo, Bismarck recognized that the other European powers were worried that a stronger Germany might take further action to challenge their interests and increase its power further. Bismarck wrote: "We ought to do all we can to weaken the bad feeling which has been called out through our growth to the position of a real Great Power."<sup>240</sup> His aim was to demonstrate to the other great powers that there was no need to ally with France or to

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<sup>237</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 324; Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 83; and Kupchan, *Vulnerability of Empire*, p. 367, 383.

<sup>238</sup> See Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 5.

<sup>239</sup> As I discuss later, although France's revisionism and hostility towards Germany prevented Bismarck from trying to reassure it in the early-to-mid 1870s and mid-to-late 1880s, Bismarck did adopt a strategy of reassurance towards France from the late 1870s to the mid 1880s. According to one historian: "Only against France, whose resentment Germany could not hope to appease, was the big stick occasionally shaken." See Munroe Smith, "Military Strategy Versus Diplomacy: In Bismarck's Time and Afterward," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (March 1915), p. 50.

<sup>240</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 178.

join together in an anti-German coalition. Bismarck engaged in two broad efforts to try to “weaken the bad feeling” that came with the increase in German power and prevent other European powers from forming an anti-Germany coalition.

First, throughout the 1870s and 1880s, Germany limited its military strength, even as its economic base improved dramatically. Although Germany did not want to slow its overall economic growth, it tried to limit how much of that increasing economic power was transferred into military power, which would be seen as much more threatening by the rest of Europe.. Germany needed to have a strong enough military to deter France, but wanted to limit its size so as to not provoke or threaten the rest of Europe. Moreover, when Germany increased its military in the late 1880s, it waited until the appearance of a legitimate threat from France, so as to try to limit how provocative the increase in spending appeared.

Secondly, Bismarck implemented a broad effort at impression management, trying to limit the degree to which Germany’s increased power was seen as threatening. Bismarck captured the essence of this effort when he wrote: “It has always been my ideal aim, after we had established our unity within the possible limits, to *win the confidence* not only of the smaller European states, but also of the Great Powers, and to convince them that German policy will be just and peaceful.”<sup>241</sup> Given that other European powers were worried that Germany would seize more territory, German leaders repeatedly declared its peaceful nature and satisfaction with its current territory. Shortly after unification, Bismarck private expressed to Prince von Bulow the message that he and other diplomats had been delivering all over Europe. He wrote: “Our policy is and remains a policy of peace. We have no reason to want a war, and I do not see what we should have to gain by one. The

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<sup>241</sup> See Otto von Bismarck, *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman*, vol. II, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1898), p. 288.

annexation of German-Austria, or the Baltic provinces, or even any Dutch or the Swiss territory, would only weaken us.”<sup>242</sup>

Bismarck not only tried to demonstrate that Germany would remain peaceful even as it grew more powerful, but he also tried to repeatedly show that Germany was willing to use this new power to help secure benefits and confer advantages on the other European powers. In addition to showing that Germany was peaceful, Bismarck sought to “weaken the bad feeling” through an effort to “convince the world that a German hegemony in Europe is *more useful* and less partisan and also less harmful for the freedom of others than that of France, Russia, or England.”<sup>243</sup> The aim was to reassure the others about Germany’s increasing power by repeatedly demonstrating that Germany would use this increased power and position to provide opportunities and benefits for everyone else rather than using it to further increase its own power. The goal of this impression management effort was to prevent the formation of an anti-German coalition by demonstrating that a stronger Germany did not threaten other European powers, but could actually help secure their interests.

In addition to deterring a French attack and preventing the formation of an anti-German alliance, Germany sought to prevent the outbreak of great power war. So although Germany could highlight the actions of others and capitalize on existing rivalries among others as part of its efforts to convince others that it was not the greatest threat, Germany wanted to make sure that these threats or rivalries did not lead to war. A European war would likely draw Germany in and probably lead to the formation of an anti-German alliance. Therefore, when the threat of European great

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<sup>242</sup> See Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck*, p. 267. Bismarck repeatedly argued that further expansion would lead to more problems domestically and internationally. To the French Ambassador in 1885, he said: “She [Germany] asks nothing more than to live at peace with all her neighbors. She has no interest in taking anything from any of them....Looking all round our frontiers every gain would be a loss, every increase a cause for weakness.” See G.P. Gooch, “Franco-German Relations,” in G.P. Gooch, ed., *Studies in Diplomacy and Statecraft* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942), pp. 19-20. In an 1888 interview, he said: “What territory could she think of annexing? She has enough of Poland already. By seeking fresh conquests, the German Empire would only be exposing itself to perpetual warfare with Russia and France, who is simply waiting for an opportunity for avenging Alsace and Lorraine.” See Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck*, p. 266-7. He also wrote: “we do not require an increase of our immediate territory, and...we could not attain it without strengthening the centrifugal elements in our own territory.” See Medlicott and Coveney, pp. 178-9.

<sup>243</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 178.

power war increased, Bismarck actively intervened to keep the peace, and often used its powerful position to offer concessions to both sides to assuage their concerns.

According to rationalist theories, Bismarckian Germany's task of reassurance was made even more difficult because a revisionist and aggressive Germany would have incentives to act peacefully in the hopes that it could take advantage of the other powers. Therefore, as a result of these incentives to misrepresent, and the fact that a truly peaceful rising power and a revisionist rising power may take the same actions, the other powers will be likely to discount these reassurance efforts as not credible, and would likely respond by hard balancing in response to Germany's increasing power. These types of theories would suggest that even if Bismarckian Germany was truly peaceful, its reassurance efforts should be discounted by other powers because they would fear that they were facing a "wolf in sheep's clothing" that was trying to take advantage of them.

*Sources of Bismarck's Reassurance:*

Although it is difficult to uncover the specific origins of Bismarck's understanding that other states react negatively to increased power and aggressive behavior, he seems to have learned this lesson from observing the experience of previous and contemporary European leaders. In a remarkable conversation with editor Anton Memminger at Kissingen on August 16, 1890, Bismarck reflected, "I have not adhered to the opinions and expedients of other statesmen, but have rather used their errors in calculation as a warning to myself. Napoleon I failed because, presuming on his military victories, he started quarrels with all the other countries instead of maintaining peace. Success in war made him arrogant and pugnacious. In his thirst for world domination he ran into endless dangers, which brought about his fall." His deepest failing is that he did not practice the

virtue “after great successes, wise moderation”<sup>244</sup> Drawing on deeper research in German-language materials, other historians argue that Bismarck learned important lessons from Napoleon I’s ultimate failure.<sup>245</sup> According to Taylor, Bismarck “had learnt from the failure of Napoleon III not to make projects which disturbed the balance between the Great Powers in Europe. This is the reason why Europe had a generation of peace once Bismarck established his ascendancy.”<sup>246</sup> From observing the behavior of French leaders, and Europe’s reactions, Bismarck seemed to have concluded that other powers are often fearful of increases in power and respond to excessive aggression by forming alliances which ultimately defeat the aggressor.<sup>247</sup>

Bismarck’s diplomatic and military decisions during the wars of German unification in the 1860s provide further evidence that Bismarck recognized that aggressive behavior or increases in power could provoke a balancing response from other countries.<sup>248</sup> Recognizing that other powers tend to join together to resist aggression, Bismarck focused his diplomatic efforts of isolating each of Prussia’s adversaries, trying to legitimate Prussian behavior, and limiting war aims to end the war quickly before others would join. Before each war, Bismarck launched campaigns to drive a wedge between potential balancers, preventing them from coming to the assistance of the target of Prussian limited aggression. It is unclear if this successful experience in limited war and preventing balancing in the 1860s reinforced a view that Bismarck had adopted from earlier observations of historical and contemporary leaders, or if this experience in the 1860s also served as a source for his

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<sup>244</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 177-8. A portion of this is also cited in Otto Pflanze, “Bismarck’s Realpolitik,” in James J. Sheehan, ed., *Imperial Germany* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), p. 162.

<sup>245</sup> One historian concludes that “He [Bismarck] would not repeat Napoleon I’s mistake.” See J.A.S. Grenville, *Europe Reshaped, 1848-1878* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 381.

<sup>246</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle*, p. 240.

<sup>247</sup> There is not enough evidence to know for sure whether Bismarck genuinely learned these lessons from history and then applied them in the formulation of his grand strategy, or decided on his grand strategy first and decided to invoke these unsuccessful experiences of aggressors as the counter-example. There is not enough evidence to know for sure whether Bismarck genuinely learned these lessons from history and then applied them to his grand strategy, or decided on his grand strategy first and decided to invoke aggressors as the counter-example.

<sup>248</sup> See Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*; Carr, *The Origins of the Wars of German Unification*; and Goddard, “When Right Makes Might.”



view that states tend to balance and moderate behavior was the best way to prevent such a reaction. Other political scientists have argued that Bismarck's diplomatic behavior and world view reveal a belief that states tend to balance against power or threat.<sup>249</sup> By the time of German unification however, Bismarck seemed to have clearly learned that increases in power and aggressive behavior led to balancing responses by others, and as a result, a powerful, unified Germany would need to behave in a moderate and restrained manner if it hoped to avoid provoking a European balancing response.

### *The Tools of Bismarck's Reassurance*

As part of the grand strategy of reassurance, Bismarck implemented all of the tools of reassurance that I discussed in the theory chapter. The following chapter will discuss German reassurance efforts in the 1870s and 1880s in much greater detail, highlighting not only how they were employed, but also demonstrating the causal pathways through which these tools of reassurance limited the balancing response. In this section, I will briefly illustrate each of these tools by referring to specific examples of how Bismarckian Germany implemented them to reassure the rest of Europe.

Self-Restraint: The other European powers feared that Bismarck intended to crush France at some point, which would not only eliminate one of Germany's main rivals, but also give Germany unquestioned predominance in Europe. A German conquest of France would not only directly threaten Britain, but might make Germany too powerful for the rest of Europe to contain.

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<sup>249</sup> According to one, Bismarck had a "keen appreciation of the workings of the balance of power and the Realist expectation that others would coalesce to resist encroachments on their interests." See Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 83. Another writes: "Bismarck was careful to avoid overly competitive policies that might cause other states to balance against German power." And he further writes: "Much of Bismarck's intellectual and diplomatic energy was in fact devoted to ensuring that German behavior not appear too threatening and that increases in German power not incite the formation of an opposing coalition of superior strength." See Kupchan, *Vulnerability of Empire*, p. 383, 367.

Therefore, Germany restrained itself in not using the opportunity of the Balkan crises that erupted in 1875 and then again in 1885 to attack France while the rest of Europe was focused on events in the east.

Self-Binding: Although there was much less of an established institutional structure that Germany could bind itself to, Germany bound itself to Russia and Austria in the Three Emperors' League that was formed in 1873. Russia and Austria were not only worried about each other, but also worried about Germany's new power, and this willingness to be engaged and bind itself to these powers helped address their concerns. In addition, Germany's acceptance of the great power congress system as a way to address problems and settle issues showed that it was accepting of the great power system and great power norms that had been established and that Germany was willing to work within that system.

Sharing the Wealth: There were numerous examples of Germany using its increased power to the benefit of the other powers in a way that actually increased the relative power of the other state. For one example, at the 1878 Congress of Berlin after the Russo-Turkish War, Bismarck used his new power as chairman of the congress to show support for every other European power seizing a piece of territory, while Germany took nothing. In the 1880s, Germany also repeatedly used its increase power to the benefit of the Russians by preventing the British from entering the Black Sea through the Straits and putting pressure on the Russians.

Binding: Bismarck repeatedly made agreements with other countries to bind them to Germany in the hopes of preventing them from allying with another power against Germany, as well as in the hopes of influencing their foreign policy. The 1881 Three Emperors' Alliance is an excellent

example of this tool. Fearing that Russia could form an alliance with France and force Germany to face pressure from two sides and run the risk of fighting a two-front war, Bismarck made significant concessions to Russia to bind Russia to Germany and prevent such an alliance from forming.

Limited Military Build-up: Given that Prussia had already demonstrated its ability to defeat the most powerful armies on the continent, other European powers worried that Germany would turn its increasing economic power into even greater military power. However, throughout the 1870s and most of the 1880s, Germany had a very limited increase in the size of its army, and even though most other European countries significantly increased the size of their navies in the 1880s, Germany did not.

#### *Evolution of Bismarck's Reassurance*

Although the next chapter will analyze the implementation of Bismarck's grand strategy in greater detail, here I will highlight two important areas in which the grand strategy of reassurance evolved and changed during the 1870s and 1880s. The first evolution was from a relatively passive reassurance of the early 1870s to a more active reassurance in the late 1870s and 1880s. The important driver for this evolution was Bismarck's learning experience as a result of the 1875 War-in-Sight crisis. In the early 1870s Bismarck was moderate and peaceful in words and behavior until the mid-1870s when worries about French support for the ultramontane challenge to Germany's regime stability forced German leaders to threaten France. In response to what was mostly perceived in Germany as a vigorous defense of its own domestic stability, Germany's threatening behavior in 1875 provoked a joint response from the British and Russians who put an end to their own competition to unite in preventing any German moves to changes the status quo in Europe. As a result of this balancing response, Bismarck learned that Germany's immense power and

position in the middle of Europe made the rest of Europe hyper-sensitive about any potential moves to change the status quo in Germany's favor. He also learned that any small moves that made others fearful that Germany was trying to do so, such as threatening France in 1875, would provoke a strong response from the rest of Europe. In short, Bismarck and Germany learned just how tight the constraints on its behavior were and just how difficult a predicament it was in as a rising power in the middle of Europe. Starting with the 1878 Congress of Berlin, Bismarck's reassurance evolved from a more passive strategy into a more active one where Bismarck tried not only to show others how Germany was not a threat to them, but took on a more active role in guiding European diplomacy and demonstrating how a strong Germany would benefit the rest of Europe. Although in retrospect some view Bismarck as in control of European affairs throughout the 1870s and 1880s, this is not correct. In the early 1870s, Bismarck and Germany were more passive and only became more active later in the decade.<sup>250</sup>

The second evolution occurred in Bismarck's strategy towards France. In the early-to-mid 1870s, Germany relied on the threat of military force to deter a French invasion and used peaceful diplomacy to reassure the rest of Europe and convince them that there was no need to ally with France against Germany. However, by the late 1870s, as a result of learning how that military deterrence could still provoke unease in the rest of Europe and a change in French government, Bismarck adopted a strategy of reassurance towards France as well. The goal was to convince France that Germany did not wish to attack, while at the same time trying to provide significant concessions to France in the colonial realm to make it less likely to launch a war of revenge against Germany. This strategy lasted until the mid-1880s when another change in French government made such reassurance impossible. The next chapter will examine Bismarck's grand strategy of

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<sup>250</sup> For a specific example, some mistakenly view the 1873 Three Emperors' League and 1881 Three Emperors' Alliance as both being a Bismarckian initiative. In reality, the 1873 Three Emperors' League formed as a result of Russian and Austrian initiatives, whereas only the later 1881 Three Emperors' Alliance formed as a result of Bismarck's initiative and efforts.

reassurance in greater detail, and show how it helped to minimize the severity of Europe's balancing response against a rising Germany.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Others have argued that the most important evolution in Bismarck's grand strategy in the 1870s and 1880s was from maintaining freedom of maneuver in the 1870s to adopting formal alliances starting with the Dual Alliance with Austria in 1879. For example, see Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*; and Timothy W. Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), ch. 3. However, I argue that while the alliance itself was an important development, it did not mark a huge change in Bismarck's diplomatic approach. The alliance itself only required Germany to come to the assistance of Austria if it was invaded, which was an action it would have been likely to take anyway in the event of a Russian invasion of Austria. In the 1875 Balkan crisis, there is ample evidence that because Germany could not allow Russia to eliminate Austria, that if Russia invaded Austria, Germany would have come to its assistance. Therefore, the alliance simply committed Germany to action it would have likely taken on its own accord. For support of this argument, see Bagdasarian. Moreover, the commitment as part of the Dual Alliance did not significantly change Bismarck's approach to the Balkan crisis of the 1880s even though the alliance had been formed. Lastly, I would argue that broader interpretations of the commitments of the alliance after Wilhelm II came to power and the importance of this commitment in the origins of World War I have led others to exaggerate the huge change that the Dual Alliance represented for German diplomacy.

### **Chapter 3: Bismarck Reassures the Great Powers of Europe**

On the floor of British Parliament in 1871, in reaction to Prussia's defeat of France and the unification of Germany, Benjamin Disraeli famously declared: "The balance of power has been entirely destroyed."<sup>252</sup> This chapter explains how the European great powers responded to the rise of Germany, the rising great power whose unification overturned the balance of power. Based on detailed analysis of European responses and behavior during the 1870s, I show that the grand strategy of a rising Bismarckian Germany affected the severity of the balancing response by European great powers.

Recognizing that its increased material power worried the rest of Europe, Bismarck's grand strategy of reassurance tried to demonstrate that its rise would not threaten others or undermine their interests, but instead to show that it would work for peace and would even use its new power to provide benefits to the other European countries. Although Germany's reassurance was mostly successful in the early 1870s, Germany provoked the War in Sight crisis in 1875 during which Russia, Britain, and France joined forces to balance against Germany. Although its overall approach was to try to reassure the rest of Europe, Germany responded to external and internal challenges to stability by threatening France, Belgium, and others. This hyper-sensitive and aggressive attempt to defend German interests was perceived as provocative by the great powers of Europe and led to a more severe balancing response.

The War in Sight crisis provided important lessons for Bismarck that helped lead to a more effective grand strategy later in the 1870s. This strong response by the rest of Europe showed Bismarck that Germany was very constrained and any moves that looked aggressive would trigger more severe balancing responses. After this experience in the mid-1870s, Bismarck recognized that

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<sup>252</sup> See Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890*, p. 13-4.

it needed to implement a much more consistent and comprehensive strategy of reassurance if a country as powerful as Germany would not be seen as a threat. In the rest of the chapter, I explore how Bismarck implemented a more thorough strategy of reassurance and through the Congress of Berlin and the formation of the Austro-German alliance, Bismarck's Germany delayed the formation of balancing coalitions and minimized the severity of the balancing response, which helped maintain a stable international environment for Germany's rise.

This chapter examines how Bismarckian Germany tried to implement its grand strategy of reassurance and follows the reactions and responses of the other great powers to Germany's rise. The historical analysis largely proceeds chronologically, but the narrative places particular emphasis on the evolution of reassurance, how it is received by the other powers, and balancing behavior by the other great powers. In the following chapter, I provide a more thorough assessment of the explanatory power of my theory of reassurance.

### ***Reassurance in the Early 1870s: a Rising Germany Faces an Uneasy Europe***

Germany's military defeat of France and the establishment of the German Reich did not fundamentally alter European perceptions of the balance of power to the extent that this power shift provoked intervention or a balancing response by the European great powers. For every power besides France, who wanted to reclaim Alsace-Lorraine and its status as the dominant power on the continent, the status-quo in 1871 was acceptable.<sup>253</sup> Germany had not yet gone "too far," but the rest of Europe worried that as German power continued to increase, it would be tempted to further

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<sup>253</sup> According to two historians, "the other powers [besides France] were more ready to accept the new Germany into the international community, but always with one proviso: that she did not seek to expand any further." They also write: "In the 1870s almost all of the other powers were prepared to accept the new order of things, or at least to reserve judgment on the new Empire." See Bridge and Bullen, *Great Powers and the European States System*, p. 183-4.

expand its power and territory.<sup>254</sup> Austria feared that Bismarck would next move to complete German unification by incorporating Austrian Germans into the Reich. Russia feared that Germany wanted to incorporate Polish Germans. Britain feared that Germany would take control of Belgium or the Netherlands, leaving it in a position to challenge the home islands. Although the rest of Europe accepted the new distribution of power in 1871, the challenge to Bismarckian Germany was to credibly demonstrate that Germany would not expand further, and therefore convince the rest of Europe that it was not necessary to balance against Germany.

#### *Reassurance in the Early 1870s: Peaceful Promises and Military Restraint*

Bismarck's grand strategy was focused on preventing the formation of balancing coalitions that could check Germany's rise, undermine its interests, and complicate efforts to build and consolidate the new German Reich. In the early 1870s, Bismarck's attempts to reassure the other European powers consisted mostly of peaceful rhetoric and promises in combination with military restraint. Although these measures helped prevent the formation of balancing coalitions, Russia and Austria remained wary of Germany's future behavior.

Germany's peaceful rhetoric and promises to be a satiated power included general promises to behave peacefully, as well as specific promises to not take actions that the other powers worried a more powerful Germany might take. As William I put it in 1871: "new Germany, as she has come out of the fiery ordeal of the present war, will be a sure guarantee of the peace of Europe."<sup>255</sup> German leaders not only declared their peaceful intentions and satisfaction publicly, but also did so directly to foreign ambassadors and foreign leaders, and instructed German ambassadors to repeat this message. Bismarck tried to convince the rest of Europe that not only was Germany satisfied

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<sup>254</sup> Bismarck's recent history of aggression further exacerbated European worries. Historian Raymond Sontag captures the worries shared by the rest of Europe: "The memory of Bismarckian aggression before 1871 refused to die; the robber in Berlin had turned policeman, but might not his old habits return?" See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 94.

<sup>255</sup> See Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck*, p. 140-1.



with the current status quo, but also that any increase in territory would actually weaken Germany's regime security by pulling new minorities into a Germany that was having a difficult enough time building a state structure that could accommodate the minorities it already had.<sup>256</sup> Moreover, Bismarck recognized that any expansion would damage its relations with its neighbors and lead to greater external pressure at exactly the point in time when Germany needed peace for consolidation.<sup>257</sup> Bismarck made these same arguments to his German colleagues.<sup>258</sup>

Although any two, or especially three, powers united against Germany could threaten its rise, Bismarck's was particularly focused on reassuring Austria. After the crushing defeat in 1866, the new Austrian Chancellor Beust often spoke of revenge for Sadowa, was very suspicious of Bismarck, and deeply feared that Bismarck would attack again to bring the Austrian German provinces into the Reich. The relatively moderate peace imposed by Bismarck in 1866 made reconciliation a possibility. Recognizing Austria's fears, Bismarck repeatedly assured Austria's leaders that Germany had no desire for further expansion, had no designs on the Austrian Germans, and had no desire to weaken the cohesion of the already fragile Reich.<sup>259</sup> In December 1870, Bismarck sent a letter to officially notify the Austrian government of the reorganization of Germany, declare its peaceful intentions towards Austria, and express a deep hope for benevolent relations. On the next day, Bismarck sent a letter directly to Beust which declared that Germany had no designs on Austrian territory and no desire to incorporate Austrian Germans. Bismarck also enlisted several friends to write newspaper articles refuting allegations that Bismarck sought to expand into Austria that had appeared in

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<sup>256</sup> For evidence of these arguments, see Rich, p. 219.

<sup>257</sup> See Gall, *Bismarck*, vol. 2, p. 249.

<sup>258</sup> In a conversation with Prince von Bulow shortly after unification, Bismarck said: "Our policy is and remains a policy of peace. We have no reason to want a war, and I do not see what we should have to gain by one. The annexation of German-Austria, or the Baltic provinces, or even any Dutch or the Swiss territory, would only weaken us." See Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck*, p. 267.

<sup>259</sup> German leaders also tried to emphasize Austrian and German monarchical solidarity, shared values, shared culture, and shared history as the basis for a new trusting relationship.

Austrian newspapers.<sup>260</sup> German leaders followed up promises of peaceful intentions by meeting with Austrian leaders to express these sentiments in person and try to establish friendly relations. In summer of 1871 Wilhelm and Bismarck met with Francis Joseph and Beust at Ischl, and the two chancellors met again at Salzburg in September 1871.<sup>261</sup>

Bismarck also specifically addressed Russian and British worries about the potential for a rising Germany's continued expansion. Russia worried that Germany would expand further into Poland or the Baltic states to bring the rest of the German people into its empire. He repeatedly said that the Russian Baltic provinces were of "no political consequence" to him.<sup>262</sup> Knowing that bringing Polish Germans back into Germany would also require bringing a lot more Poles into the empire as well, Bismarck repeatedly told Russian diplomats that Germany already had "too many Polish subjects" and he didn't want anymore. When Tsar Alexander II came to Berlin to visit Wilhelm, his uncle, German leaders expressed these sentiments directly to Russian leaders.<sup>263</sup> In more general terms, Bismarck also emphasized conservative monarchical solidarity and familial relations, as Tsar Alexander II was William I's nephew.

British leaders worried that Germany might expand at the expense of Belgium or the Netherlands, which would threaten Britain's continental interests, and worried that Germany would use its increased power to build a navy and try to become a colonial power. Bismarck had many conversations with Ambassador Odo Russell and constantly expressed Germany's peaceful intentions and tried to address these concerns, which other opponents of Bismarck constantly tried to play up. Bismarck explicitly told Russell that he had no desire to challenge Belgium or the Netherlands, "neither desired colonies nor fleets for Germany," recognized that such moves would

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<sup>260</sup> For excerpts from these letters and newspaper articles, see Bagdasarian, p. 72-3.

<sup>261</sup> See Bagdasarian, pp. 94-101; and Langer, p. 19-20.

<sup>262</sup> See Gall, vol. II, p. 43.

<sup>263</sup> See Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck*, p. 142-3.

threaten Britain and therefore argued that colonies would only be a “cause of weakness.”<sup>264</sup> Russell passed these messages on to Lord Derby and the British Foreign Office.<sup>265</sup> Bismarck also tried to draw attention to the similarities of Germany and Britain, such as a common experience with industrialization and both being liberal monarchies.

France, in the early 1870s, although full of desire for getting revenge against Germany, knew that it had to free itself from German occupation before any of this could be a possibility. Thiers knew that France was too weak to defeat the Germans by themselves, or at least would be for several years, so he knew that convincing others that it was strong militarily and economically, as well as politically stable, were requirements to being an appealing ally for another European country. Although France would have liked to balance against the new Germany as quickly and as severely as possible, it was forced to focus on getting itself into a position where after the German occupation ended, it might be seen as an attractive ally for another European country, and together they could balance against a rising Germany.

Germany reinforced these promises of peaceful intentions with military restraint. First, Germany did not continue its expansion or challenge any of the areas that the European powers feared it might. Secondly, it limited the size of its military, even as its economic power continued to grow. Despite concerns in Europe that Germany would devote a greater share of its resources to military modernization and maintain a large standing army that could menace Europe, Germany did not convert this economic power into much greater military power and German law set the size of the standing army at a modest size.<sup>266</sup> Although there were concerns about the potential for German

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<sup>264</sup> See Hamerow, *Age of Bismarck*, p. 142-3. Bismarck also constantly emphasized how German domestic public opinion would not support naval development, colonies, or expansion.

<sup>265</sup> See Winifred Taffs, *Ambassador to Bismarck: Lord Odo Russell, First Baron Amptill* (London: F. Muller, 1938), p. 70.

<sup>266</sup> After much domestic debate, in 1874, German law set the permanent strength of the army at 401, 659. For more on these debates and the ultimate decision, see Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, p. 220; and Holborn, *History of Modern Germany*, p. 253.

naval modernization, the building plans were meager and it did not devote significant resources to its navy until the late 1880s, with its first battleship not being approved until 1888.<sup>267</sup>

*The Three Emperors' League of 1873: Reassurance through Binding and Self-Binding*

The Three Emperor's League, dating from October 1873, was a loose political united front between the emperors of Russia, Austria, and Germany, aimed at preventing the spread of revolutionary ideas eastward and responding to disagreements or new threats to peace through consultation. Although there were some elements of German reassurance in the formation of the Three Emperors' League, some historians have exaggerated Bismarck's importance and incorrectly characterized the Three Emperors' League as the beginning of Bismarck's system of alliances through which he dominated and controlled European politics. Unlike the Three Emperors' Alliance of 1881, which was initiated and controlled by Bismarck, the Three Emperors' League was pushed by Russia and Austria more than Germany.<sup>268</sup>

Besides the desire to protect themselves from the spread of revolutionary ideology, the biggest factor that drove Germany, Austria, and Russia together was mutual concern about the other states and a desire to manage that concern. Germany was concerned that Austria or Russia would either align against Germany or combine with France against Germany. Therefore, the League was an attempt to reassure Russia and Austria by binding them to Germany and reducing the possibility of an anti-German coalition. Moreover, given the possibility of Austro-Russian competition leading to war in the Balkans, peaceful settlement of disputes through the league would also hopefully prevent a war that would force Germany to choose sides and likely lead to an anti-German coalition.

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<sup>267</sup> For more on the developments of the German Navy under Bismarck, see Holger H. Herwig, *Luxury Fleet: The Imperial German Navy, 1888-1918* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 1980); and Ivo Lambi, *The Navy and German Power Politics, 1862-1914* (New York: Harper Collins, 1984).

<sup>268</sup> For one of many examples, Sidney Fay claims that "the guiding spirit of the league was the German chancellor." See Sidney B. Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, vol. I (New York: Macmillan, 1930), p. 57.

Austria and Russia were both worried about the potential German threat to their interests, and worried about close relations between Germany and the other. From their standpoint, the league would both prevent too close bilateral relations at their expense and would also provide an opportunity to restrain Germany, reduce its unpredictability, and hopefully shape and control its external conduct. Lastly, from the standpoint of reassurance, Germany's self-binding sent reassuring signals to Austria and Russia by demonstrating its willingness to enter into cooperative relations and willingness to be influenced. Although German reassurance through binding and self-binding were important aspects of the Three Emperors' League, the league was not completely under the control and manipulation of Bismarck.

The League had its origins in a series of bilateral visits and meetings.<sup>269</sup> After Austrian and Russian summits with Germany, both countries feared that German relations may get too close, which would undermine that country's interests in the Balkans. In 1872, Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph had planned to visit Berlin in April 1872, but moved the visit to September so as to be able to observe military maneuvers. Fearing that this summit would lead to closer Austro-German relations, the Russian tsar invited himself to the summit and turned it into a trilateral meeting. At a naval review on July 15, the tsar turned to German Ambassador Prince Reuss and asked, "Hasn't anyone in Berlin written to you that they wish to have me there at the same time as the Emperor of Austria? Do you think this would be agreeable to the king?"<sup>270</sup> In September 1872, the first trilateral meeting took place in Berlin. The three emperors affirmed their opposition to revolution, but reached no more than a broad political agreement. The Three Emperors' League was not formally formed until 1873, when Austria and Russia agreed to the Schonbrunn Convention in June, and Germany agreed to its principles in October. The league did not have clear commitments other

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<sup>269</sup> For excellent discussion of these developments, see William A. Gauld, "The 'Dreikaiserbundnis' and the Eastern Question, 1871-76," *English Historical Review*, vol. 40, no. 158 (April 1925), p. 208-13, especially p. 212 which summarizes the main clauses of the League's commitments; see also Langer, p. 17-24.

<sup>270</sup> See Bagdasarian, p. 116-7.

than the promise of consultation before action or in the event of disagreements, but each side believed that the need for consultation would limit the ability of the others to challenge the status quo.<sup>271</sup>

The importance of mutual mistrust in the formation of the league was clear in 1872. Russia mistrusted Austria since the Crimean War, and these worries only increased after Andrassy became chancellor in November 1871 and focused Austrian efforts on improving its position in the Balkans. Russian worries about Austro-German relations were evident in the tsar's inviting himself to the summit, and were further heightened at the September 1872 meeting when Bismarck hinted to Gorchakov that Andrassy had offered Germany a bilateral alliance. Russia feared that such an alliance would undermine its position in the Balkans and likely encourage a rising Germany to challenge its interests in Russia. Fuller convincingly argues that it was mostly fright that pushed Russia into the league.<sup>272</sup> Although Austria was very concerned about its position in the Balkans and its competition with Russia, it was also deeply concerned about a potential threat from Germany. Andrassy revealed this at the September 1872 meeting when he asked Gorchakov, "Does it suit Russia that the German Empire should complete her task by gradually eliminating Austria from the map of Europe?"<sup>273</sup>

The Three Emperors League allowed Russia and Austria to protect themselves from each other, but also allowed them to protect themselves from the threat of a rising Germany. According to Pflanze: "Seen from the direction of St. Petersburg and Vienna, the Three Emperors League was a restraining net, with which Germany's partners hoped to keep Germany from abusing its

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<sup>271</sup> For a discussion of the commitments, see Gauld, pp. 208-13; and Langer, pp. 17-24. During a May visit to Russia, the General Staffs negotiated a military convention which promised 200,000 troops either side was attacked, but Bismarck said it would only come into effect if Austria signed it, which it did not. See Bagdasarian, p. 112-3.

<sup>272</sup> See Fuller, p. 293-4.

<sup>273</sup> See Bagdasarian, p. 119.

newfound power.”<sup>274</sup> Two other historians argue that “the Schonbrunn Convention itself had distinctly anti-German overtones.”<sup>275</sup>

Recognizing Russian and Austrian apprehension over the rise of Germany, Bismarck used the Three Emperors’ League as an opportunity to signal benign intent through self-binding.<sup>276</sup> To return to the earlier metaphor, if Russia and Austria saw the League as a “restraining net,” Germany’s decision to be caught within it was a positive development and revealed Germany’s willingness to be engaged and constrained. Moreover, from Germany’s standpoint, it not only helped prevent war in the Balkans, but by binding Austria and Russia together with Germany, the Three Emperors’ League also prevented the formation of an anti-German alliance. In addition, knowing that Britain remained worried about Germany’s rise, Bismarck was careful to keep London informed as the league was coming together to reassure it that the league was not directed at Britain and would not harm its interests.<sup>277</sup>

#### *European Balancing in the Early 1870s: A Systemic Adjustment to Prussian Victory*

To this point I have suggested that the unification of Germany did not provoke a balancing coalition, however, there was some behavior by the other great powers that might be coded as internal balancing that needs to be briefly addressed. After Germany’s military defeat of France, who had previously been considered the strongest army on the continent, the other European powers reorganized their militaries, often adopting many of the practices of the successful German army.<sup>278</sup> For the Austrians, this process began after Austria’s defeat in 1866.<sup>279</sup> For the Russians,

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<sup>274</sup> See Pflanze, II, p. 260-1. According to Medlicott, “neither could be free from apprehension as to what Bismarck would do next.” See Medlicott, *Bismarck and Modern Germany*, p. 102.

<sup>275</sup> See Bridge and Bullen, p. 195.

<sup>276</sup> See Edelstein, “Choosing Friends and Enemies,” p. 90-1.

<sup>277</sup> See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 260.

<sup>278</sup> See Geoffrey Wawro, *Warfare and Society in Europe, 1792-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Brian Bond, *War and Society in Europe, 1870-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998); and Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983).

military reforms were sorely needed since Russia's defeat in the Crimean War, and were finally pushed through in the early 1870s.<sup>280</sup> For the French, once the German occupation ended in 1873, France focused on military reform.<sup>281</sup> The timing, happening shortly after German victory, and form, adopting many German practices, of these military reforms might suggest that this was internal balancing against Germany.

According to Waltz, emulation and imitation are two of the main mechanisms through which systemic balances form, wherein other states imitate or emulate successful states, leading to what Waltz calls the sameness effect.<sup>282</sup> However, it is difficult to call these responses balancing in anything other than the broadest Waltzian form. In practice, most IR theorists have focused on external balancing rather than internal balancing, because although internal balancing makes sense conceptually, in practice it could include everything from trying to sustain economic growth (which may or may not have anything to do with balancing) to implementing a crash arms build-up focused on a particular adversary (which would obviously be more likely to count as balancing). In the case of France, these reforms were certainly an attempt to strengthen its military to be strong enough to prevent another German attack and hopefully be able to seek revenge on Germany, either alone or with an ally. For France, these reforms should probably count as balancing, and it is not surprising that France would respond in such a way. France was quite obviously trying to balance against Germany, and spent much effort during Bismarck's reign trying to form alliances with other countries, knowing that internal balancing would likely not be sufficient to counter a more powerful Germany. For Austria and Russia, it is far less clear. From an analytical standpoint, if this is considered internal balancing against Germany, virtually any military reform throughout history

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<sup>279</sup> See Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy Among the Great Powers*

<sup>280</sup> See Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia*.

<sup>281</sup> On French reforms, see Douglas Porch, *The March to the Marne: The French Army, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>282</sup> See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, ch. 4.



would also need to count, thus expanding tremendously what does and does not count as balancing. Moreover, for Russia, it is not at all clear that these reforms were focused on Germany as a potential threat. At this time, Russia was in conflict with Britain over the Straits and over influence in Central Asia, and there were also worries about competition with Austria in the Balkans. In fact in the early 1870s, Germany was perhaps Russia's closest friend, with Germany having supported Russia's decision to renounce the restrictions on its use of the Black Sea that were in place since the end of the Crimean War. Likewise, although Austria was certainly worried about the potential for German expansion at its expense, Austria also knew it needed to improve its military to be able to compete with Russia for influence in the Balkans. Although these military reforms in the aftermath of the German victory could count as balancing, with the exception of France, it is unclear whether or not these reforms were directed at Germany.

*Early 1870s: Not Balancing Against Germany, but Being Concerned About Others*

In a theme that would recur throughout Bismarck's reign, even if Britain wasn't fully reassured by such promises, by laying low and not threatening Britain's interests, Bismarck's reassurance strategy allowed others to present themselves as even more of a threat and make Germany look much better by comparison. As would often be the case in the 1870s and 1880s, Russian expansion showed itself to be far more of a threat to Britain's interests than German power, even though German power was greater than Russia's. After promising not to do so in June 1873, the Russians occupied the Khanate of Khiva, in modern-day Uzbekistan, and Britain focused more of its attention on Central Asia and the potential threat to India.<sup>283</sup> It is certainly likely that a different grand strategy that was not devoted to reassuring Britain could have forced Britain to return to an interventionist policy on the continent rather than being more worried about a threat in

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<sup>283</sup> See Langer, p. 40.

Central Asia than a potential threat in the heart of Europe.<sup>284</sup> Even in the face of the upsurge of international socialism, a common threat that all three could align against, Austria and Russia remained wary and concerned about a rising Germany.<sup>285</sup> The remaining wariness on the part of Russian and Austrian leaders suggested that they would continue to keep a close watch on Germany's behavior and future commitments and judge how credible its peaceful promises looked to be.

### **The "War in Sight" Crisis of 1875:**

The 1875 "War in Sight" crisis began with German threats against France in April 1875 that forced Russia and Britain to put aside their own rivalry in Asia, return their focus to central Europe, and join forces to respond by threatening Germany to prevent any aggressive challenges to the European balance of power. The crisis takes its name from an April 8, 1875 article in the Berlin *Post* entitled "Is War in Sight?" which suggested that French recovery and rearmament was on the verge of provoking war.<sup>286</sup> After this implicit threat, at an April 21<sup>st</sup> dinner at the British Embassy in Berlin, Radowitz much more explicitly threatened the French Ambassador Gontaut-Biron. He is reported to have said: "But if France's inmost thoughts are bent on revenge—and it cannot be

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<sup>284</sup> For a related argument that focuses on the importance of Germany's strategy and behavior on Britain's relatively calm response to the rise of German power in the early 1870s, see Hildebrand, *German Foreign Policy*, p. 23.

<sup>285</sup> In a discussion of how these two threats would be perceived by other powers, one historian describes what was close to Germany's hope. He writes: "Confronted with a common foe, the European powers would be more amenable to Berlin's new status in the European balance of power. The fear of German hegemony would yield to the comfort of German cooperation and even leadership." See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 258. One could try to tell a story about how Bismarck "used" the threat of international socialism and revolution to show Austria and Russia how this was a much greater threat to them than the rise of Germany, and to make them realize how useful Germany could be for them in overcoming this threat. However, this would involve crediting Bismarck's foreign policies with more activism than is warranted, as there is very little evidence of this behavior or line of argument coming from Bismarck.

<sup>286</sup> For further discussions of the "War in Sight" crisis, see Joseph V. Fuller, "The War-Scare of 1875," *American Historical Review*, vol. 24, no. 2 (January 1919), pp. 196-226; Winifred Taffs, "The War Scare of 1875 I" *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 9, No. 26 (December 1930), pp. 335-49; Winifred Taffs, "The War Scare of 1875 II" *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 9, No. 27 (March 1931), pp. 632-49; and George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order: Franco-Russian Relations, 1875-1890* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979). For an excellent recent analysis of these events see, James Stone, *The War Scare of 1875: Bismarck and Europe in the Mid-1870s* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010).

otherwise—why wait to attack her until she has gathered her forces and contracted alliances? Agree, in fact, that politically, philosophically, and *even from a Christian point of view*, these deductions are well-founded and such fears are bound to guide Germany.”<sup>287</sup>

Although worries about French recovery played some role in provoking this threat, the more important factor was the threat of a Catholic conspiracy in which France, the Vatican, and others supported oppressed Catholics in their opposition to German law. Although such a provocative threat may seem to represent a shift to a coercive grand strategy, from Bismarck’s point of view, he still hoped that reassurance would prevent others from balancing against Germany, but because French support for the ultramontane conspiracy was a threat to Germany’s very regime survival, it required a very strong response to defend German core national interests. However, the other European powers perceived Germany’s strong defense of challenges to its core interests as needlessly provocative and they worried and took active measures to prevent Germany from trying to alter the balance of power in Europe.

Bismarck’s grand strategy in the mid-1870s remained mostly focused on reassurance, as it was in the early 1870s. In an attempt to convince the rest of the Europe that it had no need to ally with France against it, Germany continued its peaceful rhetoric, military restraint, and cooperation through the Three Emperors League. However, Bismarck also had to deal with a revisionist France that was focused on taking back Alsace-Lorraine and its predominant position in Europe. As French economic recovery made it a more viable potential ally, Germany not only needed to remain

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<sup>287</sup> For the full text of the dispatch from Gontaut-Biron to Foreign minister Decazes, see Medicott and Coveney, p. 89. For a slightly different translation and discussion of the dinner, see Fuller, p. 203. There has been some speculation that Radowitz may have had a bit too much to drink, but subsequent threats of preventive war by other German officials suggest this was probably not an isolated incident.

strong enough to deter unilateral invasion, but also hoped to intimidate France in slowing these improvements.<sup>288</sup>

France's rapid recovery and perceived war preparations were one factor that helps explain the German threats that ignited the crisis. In an 1874 dispatch, Bismarck wrote, "I am convinced that the danger which threatens us from France starts from the moment when France appears to the courts of Europe to be capable of making an alliance again."<sup>289</sup> France took the first step towards becoming an attractive ally much earlier than Germany expected, paying Germany the full amount of the owed compensation, and forcing the end of the German occupation in August 1873, eighteen months ahead of schedule. Moreover, Marshal MacMahon, a life-long military officer, was exactly the type of leader that would make the French government respectable in Europe and a more desired ally.<sup>290</sup> In addition to this general recovery, France began taking steps that made Germany fear that it was preparing for a potential attack. In January and February 1875, the Germans learned that France had purchased several thousand horses from Germany and was attempting to purchase 10,000 more.<sup>291</sup> On March 13, the French government announced a major military reform, the "Law of Fourth Battalions," which the Germans somehow calculated that this law would lead to an

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<sup>288</sup> Although the crisis is often called the War Scare, there is near unanimity among historians that Bismarck did not want war, but rather wanted to intimidate France and used threats of war to increase the credibility of such threats. In an introduction to several documents relating to the crisis, two historians write: "Bismarck wanted to warn but not to fight." See Medicott and Coveney, p. 79. According to Fuller: "Considerably taken aback by France's rapid recovery from her disasters and convinced that the idea of revenge was always uppermost in her national consciousness, he was constantly bent upon making her realize the hopelessness of these dreams." See Fuller, p. 198. Sontag argues that the hope of the specific threats was to convince France to abandon the new army bill. See Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 6. Eyck echoes these views: "The goal of the campaign was to intimidate France so much that she would abstain from the proposed measures....My impression is that Bismarck wanted to make Europe, and particularly France, believe that he was willing to go to war if France failed to revoke her measures of military reorganization." See Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 219-21.

<sup>289</sup> The rest of the quote reads: "which it was not under Thiers, and is not yet under MacMahon." For the full February 28, 1874 dispatch, see Medicott and Coveney, p. 87.

<sup>290</sup> See Craig, *Germany*, p. 106.

<sup>291</sup> Worried that the purchase of such horses was a preface to a French invasion, the German government prohibited the future sale of horses on March 4, 1875. Worried that the purchase of such horses was a preface to a French invasion, the German government prohibited the future sale of horses on March 4, 1875.

increase of 144,000 soldiers.<sup>292</sup> The publication of the article and Radowitz's threat came shortly thereafter.

Although underemphasized in most discussions of the "War in Sight" crisis, it is only when one considers the threat of the ultramontane conspiracy and how international support for Catholics within Germany was viewed as a direct challenge to the unity and stability of the fragile state that Germany's vigilant response to France makes sense.<sup>293</sup> Moreover, in response to this perceived international support for the conspiracy, Bismarck not only threatened France, but Belgium too. After Germany placed heavy restrictions on German Catholics in the May Laws of 1873, foreign clergy across Europe, but especially in France, openly criticized these moves and responded by supporting Catholics within Germany. German leaders worried about an ultramontane conspiracy, led by France, in which Catholics from France, Belgium, Austria, Italy, and elsewhere would join forces with Catholics within Germany to challenge the unity and stability of the fragile German state.<sup>294</sup> Showing how seriously he took this threat, Bismarck sent a warning to French bishops, declaring that "it is a question of our security. Your bishops foment revolt in the empire, and that we cannot stand."<sup>295</sup> The same Bismarck who famously criticized preventive war as "suicide for fear of death," saw this subversion as such a great threat that in 1873 he said: "If France supports the Catholics in Germany, I shall not wait till she is ready, as she will be in two years, but I shall seize a favorable opportunity."<sup>296</sup> Based on all of the papers of Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador to Germany, Taffs concludes that "One of the first things to become obvious...was that behind the

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<sup>292</sup> In reality, it was more of a restructuring of units to increase efficiency than a huge increase in manpower. A French estimate put the increase at only 28,000, which most historians agree was much closer to reality. On the army reforms, see Craig, *Germany*, p. 107; Fuller, p. 199-200; and Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order*, p. 13-4.

<sup>293</sup> David Edelstein has provided a partial corrective in his dissertation, noting how Germany's threats against France on religious issues complicated the bilateral relationship. See Edelstein, "Choosing Friends and Enemies," p. 93.

<sup>294</sup> For discussions of the worries about this Catholic conspiracy, see GDD, p. 1; Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire* p. 214; and George O. Kent, *Bismarck and His Times* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University, 1978), p. 107.

<sup>295</sup> See G.P. Gooch, "Franco-German Relations," in G.P. Gooch, ed., *Studies in Diplomacy and Statecraft* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942), p. 6.

<sup>296</sup> See Gooch, "Franco-German Relations," p. 7.

outward impressiveness of Bismarck's supremacy he was haunted by fear of the Vatican and of Socialism."<sup>297</sup> Wilhelm also expressed these worries about the ultramontane conspiracy to the British.<sup>298</sup>

Worries of the ultramontane conspiracy were especially prominent just before Germany threatened France. In February 1875, in response to renewed Belgian interference, Germany sent a note to the Belgian government that demanded a change in Belgian law and that Belgian priests who were involved in this interference be harshly punished.<sup>299</sup> In March 1875, news that Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph was to meet with Italian King Victor Emmanuel in April made Bismarck worried that an international ultramontane alliance was forming, especially as the French press was jubilant over this development.<sup>300</sup> On April 5<sup>th</sup>, the day that Francis Joseph visited Italy and three days before the "Is War in Sight?" article appeared, another German newspaper article expressed deep concern at the emergence of a Franco-Austrian Catholic alliance that was supported by the pope.<sup>301</sup> Moreover, the famous April 8<sup>th</sup> article also included a lengthy discussion of the ultramontane threat.<sup>302</sup> In mid-April, as the crisis was heating up, Germany also sent a second threatening letter to Belgium about the interference of its clergy. In an attempt to control the crisis, Gontaut-Biron met with German leaders, explained that the horses were not ordered by the War

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<sup>297</sup> See Taffs, *Ambassador to Bismarck*, p. 8.

<sup>298</sup> In a February 1874 letter from Queen Victoria asking for German "magnanimity" in the face of numerous rumors of war. Rather than taking this opportunity to highlight Germany's overall peaceful intentions, as he had on many occasions, Wilhelm replied by "laying emphasis upon the Ultramontane danger and the Catholic tendency to create a state within a state." See R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question* (London: F. Cass, 1962), p. 9-10. In early 1874 Count Munster was also instructed to call Britain's attention to the ultramontane plot coming from Belgium and France. See Taffs, *Ambassador to Bismarck*, p. 69.

<sup>299</sup> See Bagdasarian, p. 162; and Langer, p. 43.

<sup>300</sup> See Pflanze, Vol. II, p. 266; and Bagdasarian, p. 160. The *Berlin Post*, along with other German newspapers, also noticed the jubilation in the French press. The conclusions that were seemingly drawn by German officials was that France was orchestrating the formation of this alliance. See GDD, p. 3.

<sup>301</sup> For a discussion of the article entitled "New Alliances," which appeared in *Kölnische Zeitung*, see Gooch, "Franco-German Relations," p. 8; Taffs, *Ambassador to Bismarck*, p. 83; and Bagdasarian, pp. 163-4.

<sup>302</sup> According to the article, "The possibility cannot be excluded that the imperial trip to Venice was used by at least the members of this party to sound out the Italian government to what extent there is a basis for a triple alliance, under the aegis of the pope, directed against Germany." For discussions of this part of the article, see Bagdasarian, p. 164; and Kennan, *Decline of Bismarck's Order*, p. 15.

Office and professed France's peaceful intentions.<sup>303</sup> Although France believed the matter was settled, Radowitz threatened Gontaut-Biron at a dinner the very next week. To Germany, these warnings were a necessary response to serious threats to the stability and survival of the German state. If a relatively weak France had already caused potential problems for Germany, a stronger France would cause even more problems, and therefore its growing strength needed to be slowed and it needed to be sent a message.

*Explaining Europe's Balancing Response to Germany's Threats in 1875: the Formation of an Incipient Balancing Coalition*

Making the most of this opportunity, French Foreign Minister Decazes used this incident to rally European support and portray Germany as a threat to international peace and stability. On April 29, he forwarded the dispatch from Gontaut-Biron, which summarized Radowitz's threats, to every European capital. Along with the forwarded dispatch, he also pointed out that Germany was ordering lots of cartridges and shells in preparation for war, and included a note which read: "it is difficult for us to avoid a certain emotion in the light of an accumulation of reports which agree in showing Prussia multiplying her military preparations and applying herself to the completion of her armaments by the end of June."<sup>304</sup> He also gave special instructions that the ambassadors should communicate that this should be seen as evidence of Germany's future intentions.<sup>305</sup>

German efforts to convince the rest of Europe that France was the threatening party continued, as did further attempts to make sure France understood Germany's threats were serious and credible. On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Moltke sought out British Ambassador to Germany Odo Russell to argue

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<sup>303</sup> For the details of this meeting, see Gooch, "Franco-German Relations," p. 9; and Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 217.

<sup>304</sup> For a discussion of this note, see Langer, p. 46. Decazes also persuaded influential newspaper editor Henry Blowitz to publish an account of Germany's threatening behavior in the May 6<sup>th</sup> issue of the *London Times*, but he also ran a story suggesting France might be exaggerating the threat from Germany. See Langer, p. 47.

<sup>305</sup> See Fuller, p. 204-5.

that if a preventive war broke out, the responsibility lay not with the side that attacked, but with the side that provoked the war. This was a not too subtle attempt to argue that if Germany was forced to invade France, it would be France's responsibility.<sup>306</sup> On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the German Foreign Office sent a note to the German Ambassador in France Hohenlohe, instructing him to try to counteract the peaceful impression Gontaut-Biron had after his April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting in Berlin, and to make sure that France understood that Germany was not happy with French behavior and military reforms and it should not rest secure in the belief that the crisis was closed.<sup>307</sup>

Britain and Russia responded to these German threats by forming a coalition, and attempting to bring others on as well, which warned Germany that it had pushed far enough and that any further attempts to change the distribution of power in its favor by threatening or attacking France would be unacceptable and they would be actively opposed. Both countries were satisfied with the distribution of power in 1871 and were content with a stronger Germany as long as it did not try to challenge the status quo or fundamentally alter the distribution of power, but the developments of April and May 1875 suggested that Germany was considering doing exactly that, and concerted action was required to prevent this and make sure Germany knew that this was unacceptable. Although most IR theorists would not code this as balancing behavior because a formal alliance was not signed, the actions and the discussions by both sides show that this should be thought of as less severe balancing or incipient balancing. Although most of the available data sets code broad cooperative agreements such as the Three Emperors League as an alliance, and therefore an example of external balancing, the joint response and warning to Germany during the "War in Sight" crisis is probably closer to the fundamental logic behind balancing behavior, albeit at a lower and a less severe level. In this case, Britain and Russia combined their power and united in

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<sup>306</sup> For more on this discussion, see Winifred Taffs, *Ambassador to Bismarck: Lord Odo Russell, the first Baron Amptill*, (F, Muller, 1938), p. 89-90.

<sup>307</sup> See *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 218; and Fuller, p. 207.



action to prevent Germany from taking actions to change the balance of power to the detriment of their interests and security.<sup>308</sup>

In the case of Britain, Germany's threats against Belgium and France forced it not only to return to involvement in continental affairs, which it had abandoned for several years, but also to try to recruit other states to join with it in checking Germany. In the years between the unification of Germany and the "War in Sight" crisis, France continually tried to convince Britain that Germany was a significant threat that required British involvement in response. In 1874, Gavard, the French Charge d'Affairs in London, continually called Foreign Minister Derby's attention to Germany's growing navy, whose growth consisted of building three small ironclads, but Britain was not worried by such developments, and remained isolationist.<sup>309</sup> However, Germany's attempts to prevent a potential Catholic coalition that would challenge German internal stability and its attempts to slow French economic and military recovery provoked a response from Britain. Having identified the security of Belgium as one of its main interests on the continent, Britain noticed Germany's threats. The second threatening letter sent to the Belgian government on April 16 warning against support for Catholics in Germany, which was sent just as the war scare was heating up, made the British particularly concerned about German aims in Belgium and they worried that Germany might try to invade. As Germany's threats to France continued, Britain became more enraged until finally British leaders decided a firm response was necessary, as was a need to recruit other countries to support them in these endeavors. In early May, Disraeli wrote: "Bismarck is really another old Bonaparte again, and he must be bridled."<sup>310</sup> Disraeli also instructed Derby to approach Gorchakov about

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<sup>308</sup> In theoretical terms, defining alliance formation as the only behavior that counts as external balancing has forced scholars to overlook this type of behavior that has all of the characteristics of balancing. For more on the narrowness of the definition of external balancing, see Timothy W. Crawford, "Wedge Strategy, Balancing, and the Deviant Case of Spain, 1940-41." *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January-March 2008), pp. 1-38.

<sup>309</sup> For discussions of these attempts, see Langer, p. 42.

<sup>310</sup> See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 120. Queen Victoria shared such sentiments. In a letter to her daughter, the German Crown princess, she wrote: "Bismarck is so over-bearing, violent, grasping and unprincipled that *no one* can stand it, and *all* agreed that he was becoming like the first Napoleon whom Europe had to join in putting down." See

united action against Germany. In a May 6<sup>th</sup> dispatch, he wrote: “My own impression is that we should construct some concerted movement to preserve the peace of Europe like Pam [Lord Palmerston] did. There might be an alliance between Russia and ourselves for this special purpose; and other powers, as Austria and perhaps Italy might be invited to accede.”<sup>311</sup> On May 7<sup>th</sup>, Russell was instructed to meet with the tsar when he came to Berlin and see about “the desirability of some common understanding to secure the peace of Europe.”<sup>312</sup> The result was that on May 10<sup>th</sup>, on the same day that the tsar and Gorchakov were to meet with German leaders to express their displeasure and warn Germany against the dangers of future similar behavior, Russell met with them right before the Russians and expressed the same warnings.<sup>313</sup>

The Russian reaction followed along similar lines. Before the “War in Sight” crisis, Russia remained wary about the rise of Germany, but especially with the cooperative relationship established by the Three Emperors League, Russia did not see German power as a threat to European peace. However, Germany’s threats of preventive war and threats to challenge the existing status quo forced Russia to respond, both through unilateral warnings and attempts to build coalitions with other countries to make such warnings even stronger. Although the tsar was uncomfortable standing up to his uncle the German Kaiser, the severity of German threats, along with Gorchakov’s arguments, eventually led to a policy designed to counterbalance Germany. On May 5, the Russian Ambassador to Britain Peter Shuvalov stopped in Berlin on his return trip to London, and warned Bismarck and William that German threats and preventive war would not be

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Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 121. Later in the same letter she also wrote: “No one will tolerate any Power wishing to dictate to all of Europe.” See Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 30. When Derby learned of German Ambassador to France Hohenlohe’s threats, he responded: “Such an aggression would arouse in Europe universal indignation; and this sentiment would be nowhere stronger than in England.” See Fuller, p.213.

<sup>311</sup> For this dispatch, see Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1966), p. 574. For more on this dispatch and how it relates to European diplomatic developments, see Langer, p. 48.

<sup>312</sup> See Langer, p. 48. At about this time, Britain also sent off notes to Austria and Italy trying to get their support for the firm response to German actions. For more on this and the Derby dispatch to Russell, see H.W.V. Temperley and Lillian M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy, 1792-1902* (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 351-3.

<sup>313</sup> See Fuller, p. 216.

welcome.<sup>314</sup> At the same time, Russia reached out to other European powers. In the words of Fuller: “not satisfied with throwing her own weight into the scale against Bismarck, she [Russia] also exerted herself in helping him to bring Austria and England to join in her protestations.”<sup>315</sup>

Although Austria tried to distance itself from the Russo-British criticism, and Andrassy was hopeful that this criticism would harm Russo-German relations, Austria was also worried about the German threat and lent some support to the joint action.<sup>316</sup>

As mentioned earlier, on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1875, Russell, followed by the tsar and Gorchakov, met with Bismarck and William. They repeated the same message: continued threats were unacceptable and would be met with a firm response if they continued or were acted upon. A May 14<sup>th</sup> dispatch from von Bulow to Prince Reuss in St. Petersburg summarizes the events of May 10<sup>th</sup> and shows that Germany received the message. According to the dispatch, the British and Russian officials “expressed its anxiety at the supposed danger to European peace arising from the relations between Germany and France.”<sup>317</sup> The Germans were also aware that the Russians and British had tried to recruit other countries to join their cause.<sup>318</sup> Although this coordinated response did not rise to the level of what most IR scholars would consider hard balancing, the characterizations of these joint actions by contemporary leaders and historians, as well as the logic that motivated such a response, suggests that this should be seen as proto-balancing or the early stages of a balancing coalition.

Disraeli referred to his desire to form an “alliance” and to “construct some concerted movement,”

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<sup>314</sup> See Langer, p. 49.

<sup>315</sup> See Fuller, p. 210.

<sup>316</sup> Andrassy instructed Ambassador Karolyi to “make some representations to Bismarck.” Moreover he authorized the tsar to say that he also spoke on Austria’s behalf. See Fuller, p. 214. However, knowing that Germany, and especially Bismarck, would pay more attention to Russian opposition, Andrassy “was so pleased that he jumped upon his and turned up on his hands three times like an exuberant and delightful child, crying: “Bismarck will never forgive that.” See Langer p. 52; and Bagdasarian, p. 180-3.

<sup>317</sup> See GDD, p. 7. For other discussions of the contents of these meetings, see Fuller, p. 216; and Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 220.

<sup>318</sup> According to a May 12<sup>th</sup> memo by von Bulow: “The British Government has announced in Rome that it intends to bring influence to bear in Berlin in favor of peace. The situation, however, is very serious, and the British Government calls upon Italy to second it in these efforts.” See GDD, p. 7.

and Derby called for “combined diplomatic action.” Several other scholars have characterized this response as the formation of a “coalition.”<sup>319</sup> Moreover, the manner in which this cooperation unfolded is completely consistent with the logic of how balancing coalitions are supposed to form. At this time, Britain and Russia were in the middle of a competition for power and influence in Asia, but the threat of Germany challenging the balance of power in central Europe forced them to put these worries aside and cooperate to maintain an acceptable balance of power on the continent.<sup>320</sup> Even Richard Rosecrance, who has criticized balance of power theory for many years and has used the 1870s and 1880s as a key example of where balancing should have happened but did not, suggests that British and Russian responses to German threats in the “War in Sight” crisis could perhaps count as balancing.<sup>321</sup>

***Growing Pains and Learning from the Balancing Response: Rising Germany Understands its Constraints and the Need for Greater Reassurance***

The firm response by the British and the Russians taught Bismarck the valuable lesson that European countries would not tolerate any moves that challenged the status quo of a stable distribution of power or threatened peace on the continent and they would counter any such attempts. In trying to counter threats to Germany’s internal stability and limit French military growth, Bismarck had learned the limits of acceptable behavior and learned what type of behavior

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<sup>319</sup> According to one historian: “The spectre [sic] of a *coalition* had appeared, and he was conscious that by playing with fire he had partially forfeited the confidence in him which Europe had begin to entertain. Everyone as asking apprehensively what he would do next.” See Gooch, “Franco-German Relations,” p. 11. According to another scholar: “A *coalition of hostile powers* was nearly inevitable and indeed appeared as early as 1875, when Britain and Russia both made clear they would not tolerate another German victory over France.” See Calleo, p. 9. Focusing on the cooperative element of the response, another historian discusses how the British and Russians “*jointly warned*” Bismarck. See LaFore, p. 87. Emphasis added.

<sup>320</sup> Taylor puts this very succinctly: “In May Russia and Great Britain had dropped their Asiatic rivalries in order to protect France.” See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 227. Kissinger notes that putting aside this competition for the sake of cooperation against Germany shows how serious they viewed the threat and is very consistent with how the flank powers operated, returning to the continent to uphold the balance of power when it was threatened. See Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 148.

<sup>321</sup> See Rosecrance, “Is there a Balance of Power?” in Vasquez and Elman, eds., *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, p. 158.

crossed the line. He had pushed too hard on the European system and the system had pushed back. In a May 14, 1875 dispatch to Munster, in what is probably the best evidence of this learning process, Bismarck showed that he had finally realized how strong the resistance was, and even though he was quite surprised, he drew the lesson that this crisis showed him exactly where the red lines were for the rest of Europe. He wrote: “We must draw the conclusion that England was prepared to raise Europe against us and in France’s favour [sic], if at any time we intended—which is now not the case—to make military or diplomatic preparations against the renewal of French attacks.”<sup>322</sup> Other historians also discuss the lessons Bismarck learned from this crisis. Jelavich suggests that Germany learned not only that it had very little freedom to push or maneuver, but also that “combined French, British, and Russian cooperation against Germany was possible.”<sup>323</sup> With an eye to implications of these lessons for future grand strategy, Sontag writes: “He learned his lesson. Thereafter he showed himself keenly alive to the fact that a new and delicate equilibrium existed in Europe, and equilibrium which might easily be altered to the disadvantage of Germany.”<sup>324</sup>

Bismarck’s view that these powers were acting defensively to maintain the status quo and distribution of power in Europe revealed a deep level of understanding of the security dilemma and spiral model and helped pave the way for a gradual change in grand strategy towards a greater focus on actively reassuring the other European powers of Germany’s peaceful intentions. Especially given that Bismarck knew that his policies towards Britain and Russia were meant to be peaceful and reassuring, and he was only responding defensively against French and Belgian challenges to Germany’s domestic and international interests, Bismarck could have interpreted the Russian and British response as evidence that they were aggressive, would not allow Germany to rise, and could

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<sup>322</sup> See GDD, p. 8-9.

<sup>323</sup> See Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Moscow*, p. 160.

<sup>324</sup> See Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 7. A Bismarck biographer notes simply: “It taught Bismarck his big lesson for the future.” See Gall, vol. II, p. 46. Another historian writes: “The ‘War-in-Sight’ crisis of 1875 taught Bismarck an important lesson—that other nations regarded the enormous growth in German power as a potential threat to European peace and stability.” See John Lowe, p. 41.

not be reassured. In fact Jervis applies insights from social psychology and attribution theory to argue that in the exact situation Bismarck faced in 1875, he would have been far more likely to conclude that because Bismarck knew his behavior was defensive, and that therefore Russia and Britain should have known this as well, the only way in which Russia and Britain would have responded so firmly would be if their intentions were malign and they were behaving aggressively. Instead, with the exception of the personal animosity that he felt toward Gorchakov, he did not conclude that this firm response signaled aggressive intentions towards Germany, but instead learned how behavior that was not meant to threaten them could still cause international problems and lead to a firm response. Rather than concluding that Russia and Britain had aggressive feelings towards Germany, he seems to have concluded that he needed to be more active and bend over backwards to demonstrate to others that Germany would remain peaceful even as it grew more powerful.<sup>325</sup> Historian Lothar Gall summarizes the conclusions Bismarck drew when he writes: “The policy of the Reich, Bismarck now realized, must henceforth proceed with the utmost caution. It must try to avoid anything that might even remotely suggest to the most hyper-critical observer intentions of an aggressive nature.”<sup>326</sup> Medlicott and Coveney highlight not only the lessons Bismarck learned from the crisis, but also how this influenced his future grand strategy. They write: “The lesson of the 1875 crisis was the need for less direct and explicit assertions of strength...Accordingly, there was a change of tactics after 1875. Increased emphasis was laid on

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<sup>325</sup> I refer to this as understanding the second level of the spiral model for a rising power. Bismarck’s understanding of the first level, understanding that the rising power’s growing power is likely to make other powers wary and anxious, was clearly laid out in the earlier discussion of Bismarck’s grand strategy. Understanding the second level means that if others respond in what might be considered an aggressive way, the rising power considers that its power and actions might have provoked the response, rather than the response being solely motivated by the aggressive designs of the other great powers. These two levels, as I call them, are present in Jervis’ discussion of the spiral model, although he does not characterize them in this way.

<sup>326</sup> See Gall, vol. II, p. 47. Kennedy writes: “It was a testimony to Bismarck’s percipience that he drew the correct lessons from these events [1875] and sought to forestall any realization of his *cauchemar* de coalitions by assuring the great powers that Germany was inherently peaceful.” See Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 31. Lowe also echoes this: “After warnings from Russia and Britain, however, Bismarck was quick to reassure the powers that Germany was committed to the cause of peace.” See John Lowe, p. 1.

Germany's desire for peace and absence of expansive aims."<sup>327</sup> Most of the rest of this chapter is devoted to analyzing how these changes in the tactics of Bismarck's reassurance grand strategy were implemented and the effect this had on balancing behavior of other great powers.

### **The Balkan Crisis and the Congress of Berlin: 1875-1878**

After many years of abuse and poor administration by the Ottoman Empire, a revolt broke out in Herzegovina in July 1875 and soon spread to Bosnia.<sup>328</sup> Coming so soon after the "War in Sight" crisis, Bismarck likely welcomed this development as it diverted Europe's attention away from Germany and Franco-German relations.<sup>329</sup> However, a crisis in the Balkans, if it was not controlled, could become a threat to German security interests. If the crisis led to a European war, Germany's two allies, Austria and Russia, would likely end up fighting each other. This would not only mean the collapse of the Three Emperors League, but would also put Germany in a position where it would likely have to choose which of the two to support. The country that was unsatisfied by Germany's support would likely ally with France, leading to an anti-German coalition and the prospect of a two-front war.<sup>330</sup> Therefore, Germany's main interest in the Eastern question was to avoid European war which could force Germany to choose which side to support, likely leading to

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<sup>327</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 9.

<sup>328</sup> As Russo-German relations worsened in the 1880s, Russian nationalists, pan-Slav sympathizers, and even Tsar Alexander III came to believe that Germany was involved in supporting and igniting this revolt in an attempt to increase its influence in the Balkans. For the best discussion of the gradual acceptance of this narrative, despite no basis in reality or supporting evidence, see Kennan, *passim*. In truth, Austria was at least partly responsible for encouraging these revolts. After the years of misrule, many in Bosnia and Herzegovina wanted to be annexed by Austria, and many in the Austrian military wanted to annex these territories to improve its defensive position and enlarge its influence. In the late spring 1875, military leaders convinced Emperor Francis Joseph to make a lengthy tour of Dalmatia. Although it was not likely the emperor's intention, many in these areas interpreted this as a sign that Austria wanted to be the protector of western Slavs. There were no doubt voices in Austria who helped encourage this view, which gave the rebels greater confidence in the success of their revolt, as they expected that Austrian assistance would be forthcoming. For discussions of this visit and its impact on the revolts, see Albertini, vol. I, p. 12-3; Langer, p. 71; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 233.

<sup>329</sup> See Pflanze, vol. II, p.418.

<sup>330</sup> There was also the possibility that if Germany's attention was focused eastward, France could decide that it was strong enough to try to attack. At this stage, France probably was not strong enough to consider such a bold move, even if Germany's attention was diverted to the east, but this was also a potential threat to Germany.

the formation of an anti-German coalition. As for direct interests in the Balkans or the Straits, Germany had none. France also had no direct interests in the Eastern question, and just hoped that the results of the crisis would leave it in a better position to launch its war of revenge against Germany.

The other European powers had much greater direct interests in the Eastern question. Britain had always had a traditional concern with Constantinople, but with the opening of the Suez Canal, the Near East became the key to access from the Mediterranean to India, its colonial jewel. The Suez Canal opened in 1869 and in November 1875 Disraeli acquired a controlling share due to the financial trouble of the khedive of Egypt. To Britain, keeping this waterway open was a vital interest, and to this point, keeping the area under Ottoman control had provided sufficient stability in the area. Moreover, Britain was in the middle of a competition for global influence with Russia, and didn't want Russia to expand anywhere, but especially not into areas which it considered vital.<sup>331</sup>

Since Prussia's defeat of Austria in 1866, and the subsequent formation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria had to look to its south and east if it wanted to expand influence, as it was too weak to expand its influence to the west. However, whether or not Austria should expand its influence and territory into the Balkans was a hotly debated domestic issue. The formation of Austria-Hungary in 1867, also known as the Dual Monarchy, was a delicate compromise where the many ethnic groups in the territory would be governed by Germans and Magyars. However, there was a large number of minorities, especially Slavs, who were unhappy with this compromise, and the Dual monarchy spent its entire existence trying to deal with these contradictions and complications. The Magyars opposed annexing any more Slav territories because they worried that with more Slavs in the Empire, there would be calls for trialism, which would weaken the Magyar's control and influence in the government. However, both Austrian Germans and Magyars also feared the

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<sup>331</sup> See Rich, p. 221.



formation of a strong Slav state in the Balkans, which could be too attractive to the Slavs within the Empire and could lead to the disintegration and collapse of Austria-Hungary. However, Bosnia proved to be a special case. Given the racial and religious mix, a weak independent or autonomous Bosnia would be “a recipe for perpetual chaos, or even civil war.” Austria could not allow this to happen. Even Andrassy, who was a Magyar and opposed further annexation of Slav lands, said: “Bosnia must either be Turkish or Austrian; a third possibility does not exist.”<sup>332</sup> Although there was some debate within Austria about whether or not it wanted to annex more territory or expand its influence in the Balkans, there was more of a consensus in terms of what outcomes of this crisis would be detrimental to Austria’s interest. It wanted to avoid the formation of a strong independent Slav state in the Balkans, especially if it was a Russian satellite, and it wanted to limit Russia’s influence in the Balkans.<sup>333</sup>

Russia had its own domestic battles that would affect its views on the Eastern question. In this case the issue was pan-Slavism and how influential the view would become within the Russian government. To pan-Slavs, Russia’s mission was to bring all of the Slavic people together under its rule. This not only meant that Russia would need to annex most of the Balkans, but also the Slavic lands that were a part of Austria-Hungary. When the crisis broke out in the summer of 1875 and even more so as it spread, the pan-Slav voices became louder within Russia. However, the Russian government, recognizing its own weakness and the likely opposition of the rest of Europe to

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<sup>332</sup> See Rich, p. 200. In addition, annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina was discussed, and later justified, as a defensive maneuver. Not only would it give Austria a more defensible border, but it would take away one avenue through which an enlarged Serbia could gain important access to the Adriatic.

<sup>333</sup> It is debatable whether or not Austria should be thought of a status quo or revisionist state. There were certainly some elements within Austria that wanted to expand influence and annex more territory. However, the dominant judgment of historians seems to be that it was satisfied with the status quo and as long as the Balkans remained firmly under control of the Ottomans, and the Russians stayed out, they were satisfied. For this view, see Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 8. Crawford challenges this view by characterizing the Austrians as revisionist impelled by “contingent necessity.” According to this view, because it was unlikely that the Ottomans would maintain firm control over the Balkans or be able to keep the Russians out, the Austrians would be forced to try to change the status quo, or at least make sure that the changes in the status quo were not too its disadvantage. See Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence*, ch. 3. This is an important issue for Bismarck’s ease of managing the crisis, as he consistently pushed the Austrians and Russians to come to a resolution themselves.

attempts to realize the pan-Slav dream, tried its best to resist these calls. However, for both power and pan-Slav reasons, the Russians wanted to extend its influence as far as it could into the Balkans, and wanted to make sure that Austria was not able to improve its position in the Balkans.

Moreover, the Russians wanted to make sure that its access to the Straits was not denied by the British, and if possible, hoped to use the crisis to improve its position on the Black Sea.<sup>334</sup>

*Germany's Approach to the Crisis: Lay Low, Support Austria and Russia, and Hope Britain Keeps the Peace*

Although Bismarck clearly wanted to avoid the outbreak of war, until finally agreeing to host the Berlin Congress in February 1878, Germany played a very passive role in resolving the crisis in the Balkans. In reference to how it would try to mediate between Austria and Russia, one historian writes: "German policy was to be so balanced as not to favor unduly one of her friends rather than the other."<sup>335</sup> In practice, this meant encouraging both to work through the Three Emperors League to come up with a mutually agreeable plan to resolve the crisis. Bismarck encouraged them to work together to come up with ideas, and said he would support anything that both parties had agreed to. Because Germany had no interests in the Balkans or the Near East, Bismarck was willing to partition the Ottoman Empire as long as it satisfied all parties, and often suggested vague schemes in which he used these territories as tokens to improve relations.<sup>336</sup> However, the British preferred to keep the Ottoman Empire in place and opposed any move in this direction. Given the difficulties of coming up with ideas that were acceptable to Russia, Austria, Britain, and the Porte, everyone looked to Bismarck to try to break the impasse and take the initiative. However, Bismarck continued to urge them to come up with a solution themselves. After a December 1875 meeting with Gorchakov in which Bismarck repeated his support for anything he and Andrassy agreed on,

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<sup>334</sup> See Kennan, p. 25-35.

<sup>335</sup> See Gauld, p. 220.

<sup>336</sup> Langer captures Bismarck's view perfectly when he writes: "The peace of Europe was more worth saving than the Ottoman Empire." See Langer, p. 165.

Bulow sent a dispatch that summarized Germany's frustrations and fears. According to Gauld's discussion of the dispatch, Bulow wrote: "It was impossible in the absence of agreement between Russia and Austria for Germany 'to take action on the side of one against the inclination of the other."<sup>337</sup> It was clear that Bismarck feared that in being more active in proposing more ideas, or in supporting one idea over another, he ran the risk of alienating one of his two partners, which might lead them to look for friendship in France. He did not want to stick his neck out because he feared he would be blamed for any disappointment.<sup>338</sup> Moreover, he constantly tried to encourage the British to be the one to take the initiative in coming up with solutions, and in trying to put pressure on Russia when the Russo-Turkish war looked more likely in the second half of 1876.<sup>339</sup> Overall, given his fear of offending either Austria or Russia and forcing them to befriend France, especially given that Germany had no direct interests in the Eastern question, Bismarck adopted a very low profile and tried to encourage others to come to an agreeable solution.

#### *The Crisis Spreads and Germany's Approach is Tested*

As several mediation attempts failed, and the crisis spread to other areas in the Balkans, the other European powers grew tired of Bismarck's "hands-off" policy and looked for more involvement and support. In the first attempt at mediation, the Andrassy note of December 1875, Austria proposed a series of modest reforms for the Sultan's governance of Bosnia. It was accepted by all of the powers, including Turkey, but it was rejected by the insurgents as insufficient

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<sup>337</sup> See Gauld, p. 213. His summary continues: "The purpose of this common policy was not to give the development of affairs in Turkey one direction rather than another, 'but to preserve the three emperors' alliance on the basis of liberty of action."

<sup>338</sup> For more discussion on this point, see Holborn, p. 239. However, he also did not want to be totally left out of such an important international crisis and did not want others to believe that Germany was unimportant or unconstructive, so he tried to actively support any ideas that had any consensus. See Lowe, p. 48.

<sup>339</sup> According to one historian's summary of Bismarck's approach: "First, he proposed partition of the Ottoman Empire. Second, he sought to restrain the Austrians while encouraging Britain 'to entirely take the lead in the Eastern Question.'" See John Lowe, p. 48.

protection.<sup>340</sup> Consistent with the policy described above, Bismarck supported the Andrassy Note. After it failed, he invited Austria and Russia to come to Berlin to come up with another attempt at compromise. The resulting Berlin Memorandum of May 1876, despite its name, was again a product of Andrassy's idea being accepted by the Russians, and only then was Bismarck willing to support it. The initiative proposed more extensive reforms, which satisfied the insurgents, but the Sultan opposed it, and was supported by the British.<sup>341</sup>

As mediation attempts by the great powers proved unsuccessful, the crisis escalated. In May 1876, the revolts spread to Bulgaria. Believing that the Ottoman Empire was growing weaker and was nearing collapse, and with support of many Russian pan-Slavs, the Serbs declared war on Turkey in June, followed by Montenegro attacking Turkey in early July. As the Slavs finally seemed to be uniting to challenge their oppressors, pan-Slav voices encouraged Russia to join in and support them, but Russian weakness, combined with Austrian and British opposition, prevented this.<sup>342</sup> As the Turco-Serb War was still going, Andrassy and Gorchakov met to discuss how to deal with the effects of the war. The result was the Reichstadt Agreement, which was signed on July 8, 1876. According to the agreement, if Turkey won the war, it would not be allowed to benefit and they would push for a restoration of the status quo ante bellum. If Serbia and Montenegro won, their territory would be enlarged, Austria would take Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Russia would recover Bessarabia on the Danube, which it had lost in 1856. Although this partition scheme was very

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<sup>340</sup> They felt it had no formal guarantee from the powers, and obviously doubted Turkey's compliance. For discussions, see Langer, p. 75; Taylor *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 234; and Pflanze, vol. II, p. 416.

<sup>341</sup> The British opposed it for a number of reasons, some of which expressed publicly and some of which were not. Long a protector of Ottoman sovereignty, the British complained that the extensive reforms infringed on the Sultan's sovereignty and authority. The British also argued that the insurrection needed to be successfully suppressed first, and then Turkey would be required to make reforms. However, other reasons that were not openly expressed seemed more important. Disraeli did not trust the Three Emperors League and feared that supporting anything that they had proposed would not only strengthen the grouping, but would likely not be in Britain's interest. In fact, until Constantinople looked to be under threat, Disraeli was more focused on trying to split the Three Emperors League than resolve the crisis, and he thought that keeping the crisis alive would be a great way to split Austria and Russia, given their divergent interests. See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 236; John Lowe, p. 46; Rich, p. 201; Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 450; and Ward and Gooch, vol. III, p. 98.

<sup>342</sup> Many Russian soldiers, including generals joined with Serbia in its fight. See Fuller.

similar to what Bismarck had suggested earlier in the crisis, he was not involved in this negotiation at all and did not even know about the meeting or agreement until September. In the end, the Serbs were easily defeated, but this agreement laid the foundation for future Austro-Russian agreements.<sup>343</sup>

As for Germany's response to the Balkan crisis in 1875-6, although it was unwilling to stick its neck out regarding the Eastern question, Bismarck tried to repair some of the damage done to British views of Germany during the "War in Sight" crisis by supporting Britain and reaching out to improve relations. In November 1875, when Disraeli took over a controlling share in the Suez Canal, Bismarck was both approving and congratulatory.<sup>344</sup> In an even greater showing that Bismarck had no hard feelings after the firm British response in 1875, and realized that Germany needed to reassure its skeptics even more, in a January 2, 1876 meeting with Russell, Bismarck proposed an alliance with Britain.<sup>345</sup> In a January 3, 1876 dispatch to Derby, Russell suggested that the reason for this alliance offer was that Germany felt isolated by recent improvements in Austro-Russian relations. According to Russell's assessment of Bismarck's logic, if Austro-Russian relations grew much closer, the alliance would at least give Germany an ally, and if Austro-Russian relations did not grow that close, his overtures to Britain would at least have laid the foundation for cordial relations. Britain was very thankful for the offer and show of goodwill, and hopeful that in the future on specific issues where their interests lined up, they could cooperate, but declined the offer citing the lack of interest in exclusive alliances.<sup>346</sup> Although this approach was only marginally

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<sup>343</sup> This agreement marked a fundamental change in Austria's position as it was now willing to partition the Ottoman Empire. For more on this agreement, see George Hoover Rupp, "The Reichstadt Agreement," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (April 1925), p. 503-510; Medlicott, *Bismarck and Modern Germany*, p. 124; and Pflanze, vol. II, p. 422.

<sup>344</sup> See Medlicott, *Bismarck and Modern Germany*, p. 122.

<sup>345</sup> On this overture, which includes an analytical article and collections of dispatches from the British Public Records Office, see David Harris, "Bismarck's Advance to England, January, 1876," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 3, no. 3 (September 1931), pp. 441-456.

<sup>346</sup> For these dispatches, see Harris, p. 447-8; and Temperley and Penson, p. 354-5. In support of this assessment that fears of isolation led Germany to this move, the introduction to the section of GDD on the Eastern Crisis reads: "It seemed to the Imperial Chancellor that the observation that 'Count Andrassy and Prince Gortchakoff were seeking to draw nearer to each other than either of them was seeking to draw near to us,' and even more, the certainty that Russia was working for a closer understanding with France over the Eastern Question, indicated for Germany a rapprochement

successful in signaling peaceful intentions, given that the British believed Bismarck was only offering this out of desperation and fear of isolation, this exchange revealed something about how both sides perceived each other. For the Germans, reaching out to Britain showed that they had certainly not concluded that the British firm response in 1875 was not motivated by aggression and desire to prevent Germany's rise, but rather that Germany still believed Britain could be and should be reassured. The British response, especially the dispatches between British officials, showed that although they were not ready for an alliance, and were skeptical of Bismarck's motives, they had not yet decided that a rising Germany was going to threaten European peace, and even envisaged situations in which their interests would align and in which they could cooperate.

However, Germany showed far less initiative in regard to the Eastern question and the other powers grew more frustrated. After the Berlin Memorandum failed, Russia suggested that Bismarck should call an international conference to bring all of the powers together, but he refused. Into the fall of 1876, as all of the proposals failed and rumors of Russian preparations for war against Turkey became heard all throughout Europe, all powers looked to Germany, but Bismarck still did not answer to their satisfaction.<sup>347</sup> In the words of two historians: "Each of the three [Austria, Russia, and Britain] hoped for Bismarck's support, and each was disappointed during the last months of 1876."<sup>348</sup> As Bismarck continued to respond with partition schemes and calls for Britain to do more, the other powers, especially Britain, grew more frustrated and suspicious of Bismarck's motives. After the Berlin Memorandum failed, the German Crown Princess reported to Queen Victoria that Bismarck's hope was "that England should entirely take the lead in the Oriental

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with England." See GDD, p. 20. There is of course an irony here given that any chance of Austro-Russian relations becoming too close would have been brought on by Bismarck's encouragements of them to come up with agreeable solutions, which he would only subsequently endorse.

<sup>347</sup> See Langer, p. 96-9.

<sup>348</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 93. They also write: "During the crisis he continually assured the three dominant powers, Britain, Austria, and Russia, of his sympathetic understanding of their problems. But he hardly lifted a finger to help any of them." See *Ibid.*, p. 92.

question, and that he was quite ready to follow and back up whatever England proposed.”<sup>349</sup> Trying to push the responsibility onto Britain was not a new strategy, in fact Bismarck had tried this all throughout the year, pointing out that Britain had great interests in the region, and therefore should be the one to act.<sup>350</sup> Especially in the fall of 1876, both Britain and Germany wanted the other to prevent Russia from going to war, and both launched public and private campaigns not only to convince the other to act, but also to make it look like the other had the power to prevent war, but was not willing to use it.<sup>351</sup>

As Germany continued to respond with partition plans, Britain grew more frustrated and more suspicious.<sup>352</sup> Britain had opposed these partition plans on many occasions, and continually expressed a desire to leave the Ottoman Empire in tact, yet Bismarck continued to make such suggestions. Moreover, Britain began to be suspicious about the details of his partition ideas. In response to Bismarck’s idea that Britain should take Egypt and the Russians should take the Black Sea, one historian writes: “Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, considered it characteristic of Bismarck’s Machiavellian schemes that the Chancellor should advise Britain to annex Egypt, obviously with the idea that this would bring Britain into conflict with France.”<sup>353</sup> Not only did British leaders think that he was trying to push them into a war with France, but they also worried

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<sup>349</sup> See Langer, p. 83.

<sup>350</sup> In a January 4, 1876 dispatch from Bulow to Munster, he recounts how Bismarck told Russell: “It was rather curious that in that country [England], in spite of the great interest that this question contained for it, no one was disposed to attend to expressions of opinion.” See GDD, p. 21. Germany as a disinterested power was a theme that Bismarck repeated to all diplomats in an attempt to explain why he was not going to intervene and at the same time encourage them to work it out themselves. See GDD, p. 23.

<sup>351</sup> For a British example, according to an October 16 London *Times* article, which was likely planted by Disraeli: “One plain word from Bismarck would stop Russia even on the brink of the abyss into which a very little more pressure would make her plunge.” See Langer, p. 100. For a German example, in a November 10, 1876 dispatch to Bulow, Bismarck writes: “I have, moreover, no doubt that England could ensure peace, as we could, if she threatened Russia with war in the event of Russia’s attacking Turkey, and England’s interests give her a possible pretext, and in any case the natural right to do so. We, however, have neither of these.” See GDD, p. 38.

<sup>352</sup> In one of the most widely-cited statements demonstrating British frustration, Bismarck said: “When I hear that the German chancellor is unavailable and that her Majesty’s ambassador is here because he can do no useful business in his proper position, then I listen to eccentricities that should not be permitted to affect the destinies of great nations.” See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 151.

<sup>353</sup> See Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 247. Describing such attempts to push an Anglo-Russian understanding as “sincere,” Langer writes: “But his policy was entirely misunderstood in England, and his offers of support were viewed with the deepest suspicion.” See Langer, p. 124.

that he was trying to push Britain into war with Russia so that Germany would be free to attack France, and even the Netherlands or Belgium.<sup>354</sup> British leaders even suspected that Germany was only pushing Britain to take the lead in resolving the crisis so that while Britain was distracted, Germany would have a free hand in western Europe. This produced a cycle where the longer Bismarck was unwilling to take the lead, the more suspicious Britain became of Germany's motives, and the more suspicious it became, the more fearful it was that Germany would use force in the west if Britain focused too much of its attention on the Eastern question.<sup>355</sup>

Although Bismarck and other German diplomats were aware of the mounting frustration with its inaction, they concluded that taking the initiative would still be more likely to disappoint the powers, and Germany worried that holding a conference might even lead to an end of the Three Emperors League and the formation of an anti-German alliance. In an August 14, 1876 memo to Bulow, Bismarck wrote: "The most probable result [of hosting a conference] for us would be that our three friends, Russia, Austria, and England, would leave the Congress in a state of annoyance against us, because neither had received the support that she expected from us."<sup>356</sup> Bismarck also worried that given the similarity of interests between Austria and Britain, Austro-British cooperation would likely destroy the Three Emperors League and split the conference participants, leaving Germany in its nightmare position of having to choose.<sup>357</sup> He also worried that there would be a showdown between Gorchakov and Disraeli, and the resulting friction would not be conducive to

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<sup>354</sup> See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 431.

<sup>355</sup> See Langer, p. 124.

<sup>356</sup> See GDD, p. 23-4.

<sup>357</sup> According to the memo: "The danger to the Kaiserbundniss rests on the fact that Austria's interests lie much nearer to those of England than of Russia, and that a Congress will sharply accentuate this difference, seeing that Austria will be obliged to choose between the two absolutely opposed interests of England and Russia...Germany would be called upon day after day to act as umpire between the two hostile groups at the Congress, the most thankless task that could fall to us." See *Ibid.* For a similar analysis, see Fay, vol. I, p. 62.



peace.<sup>358</sup> It was with these risks and trade-offs in mind that Bismarck boldly declared in a December 5, 1876 speech at the Reichstag: “I will not advise active participation of Germany in these things as long as I see no interest for Germany in it which—forgive the blunt expression—would be worth the healthy bones of a single Pomeranian musketeer.”<sup>359</sup> Although Bismarck would use the opportunity of hosting the Berlin Congress in early 1878 to be more assertive, overcome some of these suspicions, and show how a stronger Germany could provide benefits to the rest of Europe, Bismarck judged that a low-key policy was the least risky.<sup>360</sup>

### *Russia Prepares for War*

In late 1876, as it became clear that no negotiated solution was possible, Russia began to lay the diplomatic foundation for a war with Turkey. Russia hoped to gain the support, or at least neutrality, of Britain, Austria, and Germany. Britain had been the most protective of Turkey and Turkish sovereignty, but what was perceived in London as the brutal suppression of the rebellion in Bulgaria during the summer changed all of that. In September, Gladstone published his pamphlet, *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Questions of the East*, which condemned Turkey’s brutality and Disraeli’s indifference in the face of it. Almost overnight, the mood of Britain became anti-Turkey, and Russia would no longer have to worry about British interference if it went to war with Turkey.<sup>361</sup> The Russians were not overly concerned with Austrian opposition, as they thought Germany would hold Austria in line, as Russia had done for them in 1870. However, in late September, Russian Adjutant-

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<sup>358</sup> See GDD, p. 24. In a reflection of his personal animosity towards Gorchakov, Bismarck also suspected that Gorchakov did not really want to work for peace, but wanted a large stage in which to put on a show and upstage the other diplomats, especially him.

<sup>359</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 99. Although many people often use the “Pomeranian grenadier” formulation, Bismarck did not use this phrase until the late 1880s.

<sup>360</sup> In an excellent discussion of Bismarck’s role in the Eastern crisis from one of the best historians of the period, Medicott suggests that any suggestion that Bismarck was in charge of all events during the crisis should be dismissed. He writes: “The more the crisis is studied, however, the more evident it becomes that he carried caution to the point of abdicating any real attempt to influence events.” See Medicott, *Bismarck and Modern Germany*, p. 124-6.

<sup>361</sup> For the best treatment on this, see David Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

General Count Soumarokoff-Elston went to Vienna and London, carrying letters from the tsar and Gorchakov. The tsar's letter argued that if the Turks were unwilling to accept reforms, European powers would have no choice but to use force. He suggested that Austrian troops should enter Bosnia, Russian troops should occupy Bulgaria, and the British Navy should guard the Straits. The British obviously rejected this call for joint military action, as did Andrassy, who voiced surprise at the idea of Russia moving into Bulgaria, as it was never mentioned in the Reichstadt Agreement.<sup>362</sup>

As Russia was beginning to organize its diplomatic support for its war with Turkey, Germany tried to reaffirm its relations with Russia. After the resentment in Russia at Germany's refusal to call an international conference, despite Russia's requests to do so, and after the wave of anti-German news stories throughout the summer of 1876 that the government allowed to run, Bismarck wanted to bend over backwards to send reassuring signals to Russia.<sup>363</sup> In early September, Field Marshal Edwin von Manteuffel was sent to meet the tsar and attend military maneuvers in Warsaw. Manteuffel carried a letter from William, his uncle, which read: "The memory of your attitude toward me and my country from 1864 to 1870-1 will guide my policy toward Russia, whatever comes."<sup>364</sup> The tsar welcomed these expressions of good feelings and vague promises, but as he was preparing for war, he wanted a more specific commitment. He reportedly sent Manteuffel back with two questions, and when these were not answered by the middle of September, the tsar sent Ambassador Oubril to ask them to Bulow. The questions were: 1) what would Germany's attitude be if Russia had to act "independently?" and 2) what diplomatic actions did Germany propose instead of the conference?<sup>365</sup> In a communication through Schweinitz on September 22, he told the Russians that the answer to the first question was already in William's

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<sup>362</sup> For a discussion of this mission, see Gauld, p. 215. Especially as it was not yet clear to Russia that Germany would not be supporting it as it hoped, it seems like Russia was trying to get Austrian and British approval for a move into Bulgaria.

<sup>363</sup> According to Gauld: "The mission of Baron Manteuffel to Warsaw of 2 September was intended to efface the bad impression made by Bismarck's refusal to summon a conference of the powers." See Gauld, p. 214.

<sup>364</sup> See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 422-3.

<sup>365</sup> See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 423.

letter. The end of September was about the time Austria and Britain had opposed Russia's proposed joint military action. Given the Austrian threat to Russian vital overland supply routes in the Balkans, Russia needed to push Germany for a specific commitment before it felt comfortable going to war.

On October 1, 1876, the German military attaché in Russia telegraphed to Germany the question that Bismarck had hoped to avoid: "Would Germany act as Russia did in 1870, if Russia went to war with Austria?"<sup>366</sup> After taking a long time in trying to formulate an answer that would prevent Germany from having to make a choice, yet at the same time reassure and satisfy Russia, he finally cabled the answer to Schweinitz on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. His answer was that if a Russo-Turkish War broke out, Germany would try to keep the peace between Russia and Austria, and it had great confidence that it would be successful, but if it was not, "nevertheless Germany would have no reason to abandon her neutrality."<sup>367</sup> On October 30, Schweinitz went to the Crimea to share these views with Gorchakov and tsar. Gorchakov's response to this message was direct and to the point. He snapped back: "I want more."<sup>368</sup> Gorchakov also said to Schweinitz: "We expected great things from you [and] you have brought us nothing."<sup>369</sup> Moreover, not only did the response refuse to commit Germany to preventing Austria from intervening, but in referring to it not being in Germany's interest to see either country destroyed, he also suggested that if Russia was beating

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<sup>366</sup> See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 423. According to Sumner, there was added symbolism of using the Werder channel as that was how Russia declared its willingness to keep Austria in line in 1870. See Sumner, p. 207. However, the result was that Bismarck was doubly annoyed. Not only had he been asked to choose between Austria and Russia, his exact nightmare, but in using Werder to send the message, Russia was not following the correct diplomatic protocol. See Fay, vol. I, p. 64.

<sup>367</sup> See Gauld, p. 218.

<sup>368</sup> He continued: "and I shall tell Prince Bismarck so; he must speak; he must loudly declare that Russia has a right as the mandatory of Europe to make an end of intolerable conditions." See Gauld, p. 218.

<sup>369</sup> See Eber Malcolm Carroll, *Germany and the Great Powers, 1866-1914: A Study in Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), p. 138. Gorchakov's unreasonable expectations were not Bismarck's fault. In the spring of 1876, Oubril, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, told Gorchakov and the tsar that Bismarck had always said that if he had to choose between Austria and Russia, he would choose Russia.

Austria on the battlefield, Germany might come to the aid of Austria.<sup>370</sup> Trying to make the best of the situation, Bismarck and Bulow continued to talk about reciprocating the 1870 situation.<sup>371</sup> However to the Russians, the situation they inquired about was the same as the 1870 situation, and the Germans had made clear they were not willing to behave as Russia had on their behalf.<sup>372</sup> This lack of support damaged Russo-German relations, undermined mutual trust, and would be an issue that would continue to be an obstacle as both sides tried to improve relations in the 1880s.

As Austria knew that Russia was preparing for war, it also wanted to get Germany's support. After Austria refused the joint military action proposed by the Russian envoy in September 1876, Baron Munch visited Berlin to seek German support. Bismarck gave a similar response to Austria as he did to Russia. He tried not to do anything to encourage war and let them know that if Austria went to war, it should not expect German support. But Bismarck also repeated the message that it was in Germany's interest to prevent the destruction of either power, which proved reassuring to the weaker Austria.<sup>373</sup> Without Germany, the only potential ally for Austria was Britain, and in addition to having different interests in the Eastern question, neither viewed the other as a particularly reliable ally.<sup>374</sup> Bismarck tried to make sure that Russia understood that Germany was not choosing Austria over Russia, but rather was treating them in the exact same way, with the survival of both being in Germany's fundamental interests. In a December 1<sup>st</sup> speech that was published at Bismarck's urging, most likely to send a message to both Austria and Russia, Bismarck said that the

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<sup>370</sup> See Langer, p. 97. Bismarck expresses his view even more clearly in his memoirs: "We could indeed endure that our friends should lose or win battles against each other, but not that one of the two should be so severely wounded and injured that its position as an independent great power, taking its part in the councils of Europe, would be endangered." See Bismarck, vol. II, p. 234.

<sup>371</sup> According to a November 16<sup>th</sup> dispatch from Bulow to Schweinitz: "German policy in reference to Russia would be similar to that which the tsar had undertaken for us at that period [1870] as soon as Russia encountered a similar crisis." See Gauld, p. 219.

<sup>372</sup> Taylor argues that Bismarck thought that Germany's support for Russia's 1870 denunciation of the onerous restrictions on access to the Straits was the reciprocation for Russia's support, whereas Russia thought that was a small thing and the debt would only be repaid with similar action against Austria. Although there is documentary evidence for that assertion, it seems to fit well with the events. See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 220.

<sup>373</sup> See George Hoover Rupp, *A Wavering Friendship: Russia and Austria, 1876-1878* (Porcupine Press, 1976), p. 192-5.

<sup>374</sup> On Austria's alliance options, see Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence*, pp. 46-74. On the mutual evaluation as an unreliable ally, see Rupp, *A Wavering Friendship*, p. 233-40.

only way relations with Germany would be damaged would be “if one of our friends asked that we should treat the other friend as an enemy...and prove our stronger love to the one by hatred to the other.”<sup>375</sup>

Although Russia would have preferred to have German support keep Austria neutral during the war against Turkey, it had no other choice but to make an agreement with Austria, and gain its neutrality through concessions. To prevent the Russians from acting independently, the British organized the Constantinople Conference in December 1876. Although there were acrimonious disputes over how to divide the Balkans, the proposals that imposed some autonomy on Bosnia and Bulgaria were rejected by the Sultan and he announced the drafting of a new constitution which would make these proposals unnecessary. After this failure, the Russians and Austrians agreed to the Budapest Conventions in January 1877, and followed this with a March supplement. Austria promised to remain neutral during Russia’s attack on Turkey and agreed to the establishment of an autonomous Bulgarian state. In exchange, Russia allowed Austria to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina whenever it wanted, promised there would be no large Slav state, and guaranteed that it would not extend its influence into the western Balkans. With Turkey’s refusal to even consider the basic changes proposed at the London Protocol on March 31, 1877, the rest of Europe had tired of Turkey’s intransigence, freeing Russia to act. On April 24, 1877, Russia declared war on Turkey.

*The Russo-Turkish War: Pan-Slav Victory and Threat to Europe*

At the outset of the war, as Russia’s armies enjoyed early success on the battlefield, the British were far more concerned than either the Germans, who had no interests in the area other than keeping the war localized, or the Austrians, who had made a pre-war agreement with the Russians. In response to Russia’s success in the war, Britain warned Russia against trying to take

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<sup>375</sup> See R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question*, p. 120-1.

Constantinople, prepared militarily to check Russia if it tried to anyway, tried to form an alliance with Austria to check the Russians, and assisted the Turks in their fight with the Russians. After the Russians crossed the Danube in late June 1877, the successful early offensives forced Britain to take preventive actions. Britain sent its fleet to the Besika Bay both to signal its resolve and put itself in a position to attack the Russians, or at least put pressure on them, if they tried to take Constantinople. British leaders also warned that if they moved on Constantinople, Russia should not count on British neutrality.<sup>376</sup> However, Britain could not really threaten a land power without a continental ally. Therefore, in response to the Russian threat, the British Cabinet instructed Derby to propose an “active alliance” with Austria, and although this was refused, they did reach a “moral understanding” in late July to jointly oppose Russian control of the Dardanelles or Constantinople and its establishment of a large Bulgarian state.<sup>377</sup> Lastly, Britain floated loans to Turkey which allowed them to purchase breech loading artillery from Krupp and breech loading rifles from the US.<sup>378</sup>

In July, when the Russian advance was stalled during the heroic defense of Plevna, Austria and Britain relaxed and hoped that Russia would not be successful enough to challenge their interests. The defense of Plevna held much longer than anyone expected, but in December Russia emerged victorious and continued its offensive.<sup>379</sup> As the advance continued, Britain made military preparations and tried to strengthen its relations with Austria. During the stand at Plevna, Britain had pulled its fleet back, but with its fall it sent it back to Besika Bay. Britain was also full of popular support for war and became swept up in a spirit of patriotism, leading to the song that invented the

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<sup>376</sup> See Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Moscow*, p. 180; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 244.

<sup>377</sup> See William Flavelle Monypenny and George Earle Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. VI (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920) p. 144-9; William A. Gauld, “Anglo-Austrian Agreement of 1878,” *English Historical Review*, p. 109; and Ward and Gooch, vol. III, p. 119.

<sup>378</sup> See Rich, p. 224.

<sup>379</sup> For discussions of Plevna from an 1895 memoir, see Frederick William von Herbert, *The Defence of Plevna: 1877: Written by one who took part in it* (Boston: Adamant Media, 2004).

phrase jingoism.<sup>380</sup> By mid-January 1878, when it appeared as if the Russians were really threatening Constantinople, the British made a series of moves designed to threaten Russia and check its advance. On January 23, the government ordered Admiral Hornby to take the Mediterranean Fleet towards Constantinople, but the order was countermanded when negotiations looked likely. When these broke down and the Russian advance continued, Hornby was ordered into the Straits again, but without the Sultan's permission, he only got to the entrance of the Straits before being forced to return to Besika Bay. Finally, on February 12<sup>th</sup>, he was told to enter the Straits with or without permission and anchor off of Constantinople.<sup>381</sup>

In terms of its relations with Austria, Britain pushed Andrassy to do more and adopt a binding agreement or defensive alliance, but Austria refused. Both powers feared that Russia would challenge their interests, but their interests differed. Britain was concerned with Constantinople and Austria was concerned with the Balkans. Moreover, Austria did not want to move against Russia until it had violated the agreements of the Budapest Conventions, or else it was likely that Russia would consider those null and void. However, until it violated the agreement, it was difficult for Austria to respond too firmly.<sup>382</sup> It was not until the details of the Treaty of San Stefano were made available that Austria knew that Russia had violated the agreements, and then it was far more willing to cooperate. Four days after the treaty terms were communicated to Britain, in a March 27<sup>th</sup> Cabinet meeting, Lord Beaconsfield proposed calling out of the reserves and dispatching a large

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<sup>380</sup> According to the popular song sung throughout the British Empire in early 1878,

“We don't want to fight,  
But, by jingo if we do,  
We've got the ships,  
We've got the men,  
We've got the money too.”

See Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 10; and Ward and Gooch, vol. III, p. 123.

<sup>381</sup> For details on these moves, see Arthur Marder, “British Naval Policy in 1878,” *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 12, no. 3 (September 1940), pp. 367-73; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 246; and Temperley and Penson, p. 362. The January 23<sup>rd</sup> order led to the resignation of Derby.

<sup>382</sup> See Monypenny and Buckle, vol. VI, p. 227; Ward and Gooch, vol. III, p. 127; Temperley and Penson, p. 134; and Langer, p. 133.

force from India to occupy a port in the Levant. By the end of May, an Indian expeditionary force of 7000 native troops was landed at Malta ready in case the negotiation at the Congress of Berlin collapsed.<sup>383</sup>

*A Coherent Approach to Reassurance Comes Together: Bismarck Takes the Stage (Albeit Reluctantly) and Answers the Call to Preserve Peace*

As the British and Austrians spent the Russo-Turkish War worrying about the potential Russian threat to their interests, and preparing to respond to that possibility, Bismarck disappeared from Berlin and public life. He was absent from Berlin from April 15, 1877 until February 14, 1878 when he returned to chair the Congress of Berlin. While on this extended stay for rest and recuperation, Bismarck penned the famous Kissingen Diktat, written on June 15, 1877. In the earlier discussion of Bismarck's grand strategy I have already introduced the general guidance contained in the document. He both developed in more detail his fear of "coalition nightmare" and sketched out the overall picture of international relations he was hoping to create, which was "not one of gaining territory, but of a political situation as a whole, in which all the powers except France had need of us, and would thus be deterred as far as possible from coalitions against us by their relations with each other."<sup>384</sup> However, he also made some important observations about his desired hope for future Anglo-Russian relations and the results of the Eastern question, which both provide insights into his strategic thinking at the time, but also would later guide his policy. Recognizing the importance of the Anglo-Russian relationship, he concluded the document by saying that even if war could not be averted between the two, the goal would be the same, to negotiate a "peace which would satisfy both at the expense of Turkey." Returning to his partition schemes, he suggests that if England took positions in Turkey and Russia took the Black Sea, both

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<sup>383</sup> See Ward and Gooch, vol. III, p. 127; and John Lowe, p. 49.

<sup>384</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 102-3.



would be satisfied with the status quo, but given their larger interests, a competition would continue that would inhibit the formation of an anti-German alliance. He opened the document by saying: “I wish that, without making it too noticeable, we should encourage the English with any designs they may have on Egypt.” Bismarck’s plans, even in an internal document, seem to be to partition Turkey and cede territory to satisfy the demands of others, not to use these to provoke wars as the British and others suspected.<sup>385</sup> In terms of Bismarck’s desirable results of the Eastern crisis, he lists five: 1) Russian and Austrian interests and rivalries to move to the east; 2) Russia to take strong defensive positions in the east and “to need our alliance;” 3) for Britain and Russia to have a satisfactory status quo; 4) to separate Britain from France, who is still hostile to Germany; 5) relations between Austria and Russia that would not allow them to gang up on Germany. In addition to the more specific aim of trying to prevent the formation of anti-German coalitions, the document overall suggests that the best approach to realize that goal is to make most countries satisfied with the status quo and to see how Germany is a productive force in creating that acceptable status quo and important player in maintaining it.<sup>386</sup>

As the war clouds loomed in early 1878, with Russia advancing towards Constantinople and perhaps the Balkans, and Britain and Austria made preparations to check this advance, Bismarck couldn’t stand aside anymore and answered the call to preserve peace. Bismarck was not too worried about the Russo-Turkish War, and hoped it could be localized. But once it looked like it was going to escalate to an Anglo-Russian War in which Austria would likely join the British side,

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<sup>385</sup> Although there is not much historiographical discussion on this point, I would suggest that the “without making it too noticeable” is likely to be a recognition of British suspicion of German motives and if Germany suggested something, even if it would be in Britain’s own interests, the British, and especially Beaconsfield, might suspect that he was setting a trap for them. Other could interpret this as a secret plot to encourage the British to do something that would be harmful to their interests in the end, and allow Germany to profit from it, but this does not seem to be the tenor of the overall document. Moreover, as an internal document, it seems reasonable to suggest that if he had a sinister plan, it would be more likely to be expressed here.

<sup>386</sup> The goal with regard to Russia that they should “need our alliance” ties in to a theme introduced in the grand strategy discussion and developed in the rest of the chapter, that of other powers becoming more dependent on Germany and seeing that it is in their interests to maintain good relations with Germany because in so doing they will also benefit.

Bismarck was faced with the possibility of his nightmare scenario--an Austro-Russian War in which he had to choose sides and risk losing the other to France. He knew that mediating the dispute would displease the Russians, which was especially risky given the animosity already created by Germany's lack of support of Russia before the war. However, as Sontag writes: "Forced to choose between the certainty of antagonizing Russia and the incalculable risks of a European war, the chancellor decided for peace."<sup>387</sup>

The disputes among the powers over the location, chairman, and content of the congress showed how necessary and important Bismarck's role as a peacemaker was for all of the powers. Gorchakov expressed Russia's willingness to attend a conference, but opposed it being held in London or Vienna, expressing support for a conference held in Berlin.<sup>388</sup> Although Bismarck clearly hoped that a conference would be held and produce a peaceful outcome, before his "honest broker" speech in mid-February, he was very reluctant to hold the conference in Berlin or to chair it himself. He told Andrassy that the Austrians should insist on holding the conference in Vienna, and even suggested that it should meet in Paris. When Berlin appeared to be the only acceptable venue, he still tried to push responsibility onto Waddington, the French Foreign Minister, and pushed others to accept him as the chair.<sup>389</sup> However, with both the Russians and British insisting on Bismarck as the only chair who was acceptable to both, Bismarck finally gave in to try to ensure that peace was maintained.<sup>390</sup> After the news of the Russian-imposed Treaty of San Stefano spread throughout Europe in March 1878, the content of the congress became a dispute. The terms of the treaty

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<sup>387</sup> See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 154. Taylor echoes this when he writes: "He [Bismarck] was indifferent to the fate of the Balkans; he could not be indifferent to the Balance of Power." See Taylor, *Bismarck*, p. 170.

<sup>388</sup> According to a Feb. 1, 1878 dispatch from Schweinitz back to the Foreign Office, Gorchakov said: "If either Vienna or London is chosen, we shall not take part. I should have objection at all to Berlin." See GDD, p. 61.

<sup>389</sup> See W.A. Gauld, "The 'Dreikaiserbundnis' and the Eastern Question, 1877-8," *English Historical Review*, vol. 42, no. 168 (October 1927), p. 563; and Taylor, *Bismarck*, p. 170. According to one historian's review of the *Grosse Politik* volumes, Bismarck even told London that he was willing to have Gorchakov preside over the conference. See Sidney B. Fay, "Review of Die Gross Politik," *American Historical Review*, vol. 28, no. 3 (April 1923), p. 545.

<sup>390</sup> On British preferences, see GDD, p. 71. According to Pflanze: "He [Bismarck] was not eager to assume the task now thrust upon him, but accepted chiefly on the insistence of Tsar Alexander." See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 435.

represented a victory for pan-Slav forces, and as such proved to be a great threat to Britain, Austria, and even France. In addition to the annexation of Bessarabia in exchange Dobrudja, which was expected, the treaty made Bosnia-Herzegovina autonomous, which violated previous agreements with Austria. Most shockingly, the treaty created a big Bulgaria which stretched from the Black Sea to the mountains of Albania and from the Danube to the Aegean. As a Russian satellite, this gave Russia an outlet to the Mediterranean, which threatened French and British interests, and extended Russian influence far into the Balkans, threatening Austrian interests.<sup>391</sup> Given such a diplomatic victory in the treaty, Russia did not want to discuss all of the terms of the treaty, whereas Britain and Austria would not attend unless the entire treaty was up for discussion. Bismarck, however, said he would not chair the meeting, which was Russia's demand, unless the entire content of the treaty was up for discussion.

The conference being held in Berlin with Bismarck as its chairman, as well as all of the powers pushing for that as the preferred outcome, reflected recent changes in European perceptions of Germany's power position and perceptions of its trustworthiness. During the last crisis in the Near East, the Crimean War of 1854-6, Prussia was invited to the post-war conference almost as an afterthought and as a matter of courtesy. There is very little evidence of the Prussian delegates doing anything, and no power asked them to do more. Twenty years later, for the post-war conference to be held in Germany, was a tribute to its new strength and proof of recognition of its continued rise.<sup>392</sup> In the words of Taylor: "the Congress of Berlin demonstrated that a new Balance

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<sup>391</sup> For a discussion of the treaty terms, see Rich, p.204; John Lowe, p.50; and Albrecht-Carrie, p. 172. The pan-Slav Ambassador to Constantinople, Ignatiev, claimed to be ignorant of any promises made to Austria. See Albertini, vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>392</sup> This was a source of great pride for Germany and its people. According to Sontag: "the German people joyously contrasted their position in Europe now, with their position a quarter of a century before, when the powers had met in Paris to end the Crimean War by a congress to which Prussia had been invited only as a contemptuous afterthought." See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 155.

of Power, centered on Germany, had come into existence.”<sup>393</sup> Just as important as the implications for Germany’s growing power, other countries pushing for Germany to be the host suggested that the other countries had at least begun to put their wariness and misgivings stemming from the “War in Sight” crisis behind them. I do not want to suggest that all was forgiven and forgotten, and as showed earlier, German behavior during the crisis led to increased suspicion for some, especially the British, but for these countries not only to accept Germany as the chair, but also push for them to hold that position, suggests that there was at least some confidence that Germany would not use this position to harm their interests.<sup>394</sup>

*Bismarck at the Congress of Berlin: Sharing the Wealth and Doling out the Spoils*

The Congress of Berlin, which lasted from June 13<sup>th</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>, significantly revised the content of the Treaty of San Stefano, trying to meet Russia’s minimal demands while addressing the other powers’ concerns. In reality, due to Bismarck’s efforts, each country’s benefits far exceeded their expectations going into the conference, with the important exception of Russia.<sup>395</sup> There were many agreements made before the Congress officially began, which helped the proceedings along, but as these were usually vague, much work was required to figure out how they would be implemented and how to make sure agreements were consistent and were acceptable to all parties. Bismarck was very important in this role, threatening to break up the meeting on many occasions in

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<sup>393</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 254. According to one historian: “That Berlin was selected as the site for the international congress that concluded the Balkan crisis was symbolic of the position to which Bismarck’s diplomacy had elevated the Prussian capital in merely fifteen years.” See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 434. Moreover, the diplomatic roles of Germany and France seemed to switch places. For the past two hundred years, the post-war treaty conferences of most wars were held in Paris, as it was the diplomatic capital of the world, and Prussian delegates attended but played a minimal role. The Congress of Berlin represented a shift where Berlin became the diplomatic capital of the world and the French delegates played a minimal role.

<sup>394</sup> For more on this, see Pflanze, vol. II, p. 434.

<sup>395</sup> For a short summary of the results of the Congress, see Albrecht-Carrie, p. 174.

order to push through agreements on specific issues.<sup>396</sup> In terms of the results of the Congress, perhaps the most important issue was the big Bulgaria that Russia had created. According to the agreements at Berlin, it was divided into three parts: Bulgaria proper would remain under Ottoman suzerainty and Russian occupation had to end in nine months, Eastern Rumelia which would be an autonomous Ottoman province, and Macedonia which was returned to direct Ottoman rule. This solution addressed British and French concerns about Russian access to the Mediterranean and Austrian concerns about Russian projection of influence into the western Balkans. Moreover, Austria was permitted to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it could garrison the Sanjak of Novibazaar, which would not only prevent the union of Serbia and Montenegro, but also give it a path to Salonica and the Aegean to project economic and political influence.<sup>397</sup> Britain and France also made significant gains. Britain was allowed to occupy Cyprus. Bismarck and others gave strong support to French occupation of Tunis as well. Many incorrectly cite Bismarck's phrase "I believe the Tunisian pear is ripe" to have first been said at the Congress of Berlin. In fact, it was said in early 1879, but Bismarck's active support and approval of French occupation of Tunis does date from the Congress.<sup>398</sup> The Congress of Berlin addressed European worries after the Russo-Turkish War and its peace treaty, and even gave them spoils at the expense of others, so that when Bismarck closed the conference he declared: "within the limits of what was possible, done Europe the service of keeping and maintaining peace."<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> For a more favorable view of Bismarck's role at the Congress, see Langer, p. 153. Arguing that most of the work was done before the Congress and that Bismarck did not contribute much at all, see Medlicott, *Bismarck and Modern Germany*.

<sup>397</sup> The administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina was seen as a compromise between those who wanted annexation and those who did not. Administration of the region, in addition to splitting Serbia and Montenegro, were defensive moves that would hopefully stifle Serbia's goal of being the Piedmont of the Slavs and bringing all of the Slavic lands of the Balkans into one large country that would threaten Austria's cohesion and unity. This was particularly important because Serbia and Montenegro each were granted some land in the settlement and Austria feared this could inspire an attempt to unify the Slavs. On these concerns, see John Lowe, p. 51; and Rupp, p. 33-7.

<sup>398</sup> I will discuss Bismarck's active support for French colonial adventures and France's response to this in a later section. For the Bismarck quote dated correctly as early January 1879, see William L. Langer, "The European Powers and the French Occupation of Tunis, 1878-1881, I," *American Historical Review*, vol. 31, no. 1 (October 1925), p. 76.

<sup>399</sup> See Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p.250.

In an issue that would continue to affect German-Russian relations throughout the 1880s, despite much evidence that Bismarck bent over backwards and confronted the other powers to get Russia better terms, after the close of the Congress most Russians were greatly disappointed in the lack of German support and blamed Bismarck for the humiliating terms of the treaty. When Peter Shuvalov, the de facto lead Russian delegate returned home from the Congress of Berlin, he heard the tsar calling it “a European coalition against Russia under the leadership of Prince Bismarck.”<sup>400</sup> In reality, Russia did not make out so badly at the Congress, and this was mostly due to Bismarck’s support. According to one Russian historian, the terms of Berlin satisfied Russia’s own minimal territorial aims.<sup>401</sup> Russia was allowed to keep Bessarabia, giving them control of the mouth of the Danube.<sup>402</sup> More importantly, Russia was allowed to annex Kars and Batum, which were ports on the eastern end of the Black Sea that Russia had long sought after. Bismarck not only fought for this concession, but was able to get it on very favorable terms for the Russians. Fearing the possibility of the Russian Fleet in the Black Sea, in return for the Black Sea ports, Salisbury demanded that the Sultan be forced to open the Straits to the British Fleet. Bismarck objected and even threatened to resign, with the result being that Russia was able to take these ports without paying any cost.<sup>403</sup> In an August 1879 memo, Herbert von Bismarck, in the hope of reminding Russia how useful Germany had been in the past, instructed Radowitz to remind Russian diplomats of the specific concessions that Russia received at Berlin due to Bismarck’s support.<sup>404</sup> However, the dominant Russian opinion, heavily influenced by pan-Slav media, saw the Congress as imposing

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<sup>400</sup> See Langer, p. 172.

<sup>401</sup> See Hugh Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, p. 458.

<sup>402</sup> If anyone had reason to be dissatisfied with the results of the Russo-Turkish War and the Congress, it was the Rumanians, who despite fighting on the side of the Russians during the war, lost Bessarabia, and were only given Dobrudja in exchange.

<sup>403</sup> See Temperley and Penson, p. 381.

<sup>404</sup> These were annexation of Batum, the inclusion of Sofia within Bulgaria, and annexation of another strip of territory north of the Balkans belonging to Turkey. See GDD, p. 101-2. For a discussion of this support and how it was perceived in Russia, see Kennan, p. 69.

significantly worse terms than they had in the Treaty of San Stefano, and also saw the other European powers dividing spoils as a result of Russia's suffering and military victory.

*Bismarck and the Congress: Answering the Concerns of Europe*

Although he was less successful with the Russians than with the other powers, Bismarck used his opportunity as chair of the Congress of Berlin not only to restore peace to Europe, but also to address many of the fears and suspicions that other countries had about Germany's rise. He also used this occasion to show the European powers that as German power increased, Germany would use it not only to strengthen peace, but also for the benefit of others. Bismarck was well aware of the wariness that others felt towards Germany after the "War in Sight" crisis, and was also aware of the growing suspicions that his passive attitude in the Eastern crisis has engendered in other countries, especially Britain. Throughout the crisis, the French and British were very worried that Bismarck was going to use the distraction of the crisis in the east to attack the French in the west and finish the job as they believed he had intended to in 1875. Especially as Germany took a relaxed attitude to the crisis in the Balkans itself and tried to push the British to get involved, the British suspected that Germany was maneuvering to get a free hand to attack France, or even Belgium or Holland. They worried that Bismarck hoped that a war would break out and Britain would be forced to intervene, leaving France, Belgium, and the Netherlands alone and vulnerable. Moreover, Britain suggested that Bismarck's partition schemes, rather than a way to solve the crisis, were actually a master plan to force Britain into tension with others, and even war, which would give him the free hand to invade in the west.<sup>405</sup> However, Bismarck's behavior in early 1878 showed all of these worries to be unwarranted. Rather than sitting by as Anglo-Russian war looked more and more likely, the threat of such a war prompted Bismarck to intervene and behave as the peacemaker.

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<sup>405</sup> For discussions of these worries, see Langer, p. 124.

Rather than letting the war happen, leaving him with a great opportunity to attack France, he intervened to prevent war and try to return peace to Europe, and in the process sacrificed a great opportunity to inflict great harm on France.

Although most of Europe was happy that Bismarck had stepped up to chair the conference, many also worried at the time that he would use it to try to make gains for himself, or even to try to work on behalf of the Russians to get them a better deal.<sup>406</sup> Bismarck definitely tried and succeeded in getting Russia a better deal than it could have gotten without its support, but Bismarck worked hard to make sure that Austria, Britain, and even France came away from the conference with significant gains in terms of land, while taking nothing for Germany. In the words of one historian: “Amid this land grabbing, Bismarck sat tossing morsels to others, but asking nothing for Germany. It would have been impossible to devise a more effective method of disarming the general suspicion of German aggression.”<sup>407</sup> Bismarck’s decisions to forego the opportunity to invade France during the crisis and to make significant concessions to the other powers were quintessential costly signals. Not only did Germany pass up the opportunity to increase its relative power vis-à-vis France, but its decision to give land to other powers also put it in a worse position in terms of relative power.<sup>408</sup> Bismarck envisioned his role as divvying up the spoils and giving them to others, while taking none for Germany. From his “honest broker” speech in February 1878 to his behavior at the Congress of Berlin, Bismarck made great efforts and sacrifice to portray Germany as a country that was not a threat, but whose power could bring benefits to the rest of Europe.

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<sup>406</sup> For a discussion of these worries, which were held more by the British than anyone else, see GDD, p. 71.

<sup>407</sup> See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 156.

<sup>408</sup> Germany’s behavior in early 1878 should be added to the list of “silver bullet” evidence against Mearsheimer’s claim that states are always looking to maximize power and if opportunities present themselves, they jump on them. Britain’s decision not to support the South in the American Civil War is one of the best examples of great opportunities that states did not take advantage of. However, in this case, the Germans not only did not take advantage of the situation, but actively intervened to prevent the outbreak of a war which would have given them a great opportunity to increase relative power at the expense of France, and then gave more material resources to other European powers who could use this against Germany. For a discussion of the Civil War and missed opportunities, see Barry R. Posen, “The Best Defense,” *National Interest* (Spring 2002), pp. 119-26.



### *The Evolution of Bismarckian Reassurance: Moves to Greater Activism and Consistency*

Bismarck's more active reassurance strategy, most clearly evident in his intervention to prevent the outbreak of war in early 1878, his attempts to dispel the concerns of others, and his efforts to make sure that every power made significant gains at the Congress of Berlin, while not taking advantage of any opportunities to increase Germany's own power position, helped others feel less threatened by the rise of German power. During the 1875-78 period, although suspicions about Germany remained from the "War in Sight" crisis, the only behavior that came close to balancing was directed against Russia as it threatened Constantinople and imposed treaty terms that challenged the interests of other powers. The Russian threat some of the attention off of a rising Germany, and gave it opportunities to show that it would not use the crisis to its advantage, but instead would work to maintain peace and use its power to benefit the rest of Europe.

Gall summarizes this shifting view of Germany when he writes: "The troublemaker of Europe, whom both the British and the Russian governments had only recently believed must be put in his place, had in the space of a few years become a kind of guarantor of the European order."<sup>409</sup> According to another historian: "At critical moments, especially over Bulgaria, his energetic intervention saved the day, and in general he established a new reputation for himself as a peace maker."<sup>410</sup> Lastly, British historians argue: "Germany, true to Bismarck's promise, played the part of the 'honest broker,' and succeeded in it so well that, when the Congress was over, both Great Britain and Russia claimed its decisions as a triumph for their respective purposes."<sup>411</sup> Although this assessment certainly exaggerates Russia's optimistic reaction to the results of the Congress, which will be addressed in the next section, Germany's self-restraint and constructive contribution to peace and interests of European countries made these countries less pessimistic

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<sup>409</sup> See Gall, vol. II, p. 55.

<sup>410</sup> See Carr, *History of Germany*, p. 149.

<sup>411</sup> See Ward and Gooch, p. 139.

about the implications of the rise of Germany, even if some apprehension and wariness remained.<sup>412</sup> Although Bismarck's reassurance strategy did not eliminate all worries, implementing a strategy that not only kept other powers uncertain as to whether or not Germany would be a threat, but also showed some evidence as to how its rise could be beneficial for their interests, made it less likely that these powers would pay the costs of severely balancing against a rising Germany.

### *1879-84: Solidifying Relations to the East*

Despite the great work done by Bismarck at the Congress of Berlin, the deterioration in Russo-German relations and looming changes in Austria led to great concern over the prospects of German isolation and the formation of anti-Germany coalitions. Throughout 1878 and into 1879, Russo-German relations substantially worsened. Not only were there negative sentiments remaining from the experience with the Russo-Turkish War and Congress of Berlin, but anti-German sentiments in the Russian press also began to be supplemented by overtures to the French and troop movements against Germany. Moreover, smaller issues relating to economics and immigration did not help restore relations. By the end of the summer, the tsar was even sending threatening telegrams to Germany.

#### *The Deterioration of Russo-German Relations*

In the previous section I discussed Russia's negative reaction to the perceived insufficient German support shown to Russia during the war with Turkey and at the Congress of Berlin. Bismarck ended up taking most of the blame and received most of the criticism from the Russian

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<sup>412</sup> Echoing this point, Pflanze writes: "For a time Germany's "half-hegemony" over the European balance of power was regarded with less concern in London, Paris, and Vienna. The new question was whether Russian distrust and even hostility would become the critical weak spot in German foreign relations." See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 441. Moreover, Gall writes: "Probably no one but Bismarck...could quite openly have imposed upon it a policy of extreme restraint and called upon it deliberately to renounce any kind of demonstration of strength and influence. That very fact, of course, enormously enhanced his personal standing in the international sphere." See Gall, vol. II, p. 54.

press and Russian officials. It must be pointed out that initially, when the conference ended, most of the press actually blamed Austria and Britain. This was for good reason as they were the ones who benefited most from Russia's war effort. However, some anti-German, or more likely anti-Bismarck, officials and editors launched a campaign to shift the blame for Russia's setbacks onto Bismarck's shoulders. Given how quickly such a change in attitude occurred, and the tsar and high officials' acceptance of this view, many historians have speculated that Gorchakov, who intensely hated Bismarck, was the leader behind this campaign.<sup>413</sup> When Peter Shuvalov, who was in charge of Russian negotiations at the Congress of Berlin, returned to Russia, he tried to convince others that the treaty's terms were not that bad, with the only difference being the size of Bulgaria, and he argued that Bismarck's efforts on behalf of Russian interests were a great help in getting these concessions. However, by this time the Gorchakov view had already become dominant. Kennan summarizes what was a likely response to Shuvalov's argument: "The only one to gain from its decisions had been Austria. Bismarck had wanted it all to end this way; Shuvalov had been duped by Bismarck's cleverness."<sup>414</sup> As Russia began to repair its economy after the war and embark on the path to industrialization, the anti-German sentiment continued to dominate the press.

Actions by both sides in early 1879 added fuel to the fire and further damaged Russo-German relations. Firstly, moves taken by both sides in the economic realm did very little to help repair relations. In 1877, given its slow industrialization and large war bill, Russia moved towards protectionism, increasing tariffs by 50%. In January 1879, largely as a result of Bismarck's changing domestic political support, Germany also raised tariffs on many products including grain, corn, and cattle. Moreover, Germany imposed strict quarantine regulations to stop the spread of plague, but this also prevented movement across the borders, damaging the Russian economy. Given the close economic relationship between Russia and Germany, these measures ended up being quite damaging

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<sup>413</sup> See Langer, p. 172; Kennan, p. 68-70.

<sup>414</sup> See Kennan, p. 69.

to each other.<sup>415</sup> Germany soon provided even more reason for Russia to mistrust it. In February 1879 it was revealed that Austria released Germany from the clause in the 1865 Treaty of Prague that required the holding of a plebiscite in northern Schleswig. To the rest of Europe, and especially Russia, this looked like Austria repaying Germany for previous favors, which Russians took to mean repayment for Bismarck's support for Austria at the Congress of Berlin. The Russian media was full of attacks on Germany and Bismarck, including the oft-repeated: "the honest broker worked on a handsome commission."<sup>416</sup>

In addition to these minor disagreements, the Russian government began taking actions in 1879 that threatened Germany's interests and made them worry about their future relations. As Bismarck and German diplomats noted on many occasions, the Russian government could have easily cracked down on the anti-German sentiments in the Russian media, but its unwillingness to do so was interpreted by Germany as a show of support for these anti-German forces and agreement with their message. This view was reinforced by other Russian actions. At several points in 1879, the Russians moved forces into Poland, which seemed to be focused on Germany. Lastly, word reaches German diplomats of improved relations with France, including some friendly overtures towards France on the part of the Russian government. In March 1879, as the French Ambassador to St. Petersburg was leaving his post, the tsar reportedly said to him: "Our common interest ought to impose upon us the obligation to come together. I know of no question that could divide us, and there are many questions in which it would be desirable for us to move along together."<sup>417</sup> This was

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<sup>415</sup> For discussions of this, see Langer, p. 172-3; Pflanze, vol. II, p. 495; and Craig, *Germany*, p. 113. Although much analysis focused on diplomacy and power politics have tried to interpret these moves as tactical responses to an environment in which relations had deteriorated, and characterize these as moves to hurt a potential enemy. Most historiography suggests however, that these economic decisions were taking place on an entirely different plane than any of the geopolitics that most such analysis is concerned with. Although it is definitely correct to say that these moves did not help restore an atmosphere of trust and friendship, their importance should not be overstated.

<sup>416</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 260; and Pflanze, vol. II, p. 499.

<sup>417</sup> See Kennan, p. 41.

perceived by the Germans to be more than simply diplomatic custom, especially when they received word of several other overtures.<sup>418</sup>

By the end of the summer of 1879, the tsar was threatening German officials. On August 6, in a conversation with Ambassador Schweinitz, the tsar suggested that if Germany did not change its conduct, “this will end in a very serious way.” This was followed by Tsar Alexander sending the kaiser what has become known as the “box on the ears” letter, which he sent on August 15<sup>th</sup>. On the issue of worsening bilateral relations, for which the tsar blamed Germany, he wrote: “The consequences may be disastrous for our two countries.”<sup>419</sup> In an August 9<sup>th</sup> memo, perhaps in an attempt to improve relations and stabilize the relationship, Herbert von Bismarck told Radowitz to meet with the Russian Charge d’Affaires and explain how Germany supported Russia’s position during the conference, as well as to make specific mention of the concessions Bismarck forced others to make on Russia’s behalf.<sup>420</sup> Langer refers to these two incidents as two “threats of war.” Whether or not they rose to that level of seriousness in Germany is unknown, but according to two historians, at this point, Bismarck was “beginning to feel unsure of Russia, even threatened by her.”<sup>421</sup> Moreover, Bismarck probably did not take great comfort in learning, as he and the kaiser

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<sup>418</sup> Kennan has done some of the best research on the early stages of the Franco-Russian relationship. Although he is clear is arguing that these initial overtures did not amount to very much, he highlights relations between military officials and newspaper editors as being particularly important both at the early stages and in constantly working in advocacy of improved relations and an eventual alliance. For more details of these channels, see Kennan, pp. 52-56.

<sup>419</sup> For the text of the letter, see Medlicott and Coveney, p. 114. He also wrote: “But I think it my duty to call your attention to the sad consequences which these may cause in our good neighborly relations by embittering our two nations against each other, as the press of the two countries is already doing.”

<sup>420</sup> See GDD, p. 101-2.

<sup>421</sup> See Bridge and Bullen, p. 212. According to Ambassador Schweinitz, when he returned to Berlin for a meeting with Bismarck in April 1879, he concluded: “the constant flirting with France by Gorchakov, the endless preparations for war by Miliutin, the advanced position of Russian cavalry at our frontier, the raving language of the Petersburg and Moscow press, have convinced the Chancellor that he can no longer rely on Russia nor even on its rulers to the same extent as before.” See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 113-4. Although Bismarck seemed open to improving relations with Russia through the summer of 1879, some of his comments in his memoirs reveal that he was growing agitated with Gorchakov and Russian expectations. He wrote: “It was expected at St. Petersburg that in the diplomatic discussion for carrying out the decisions of the Berlin congress we should immediately in every case support and carry through the Russian interpretation as opposed to that of Austria and England, and especially without any preliminary understanding between Berlin and St. Petersburg...I had the impression that Prince Gortchakov expected from me, as a laud from her admirer, that I should guess at and represent the Russian wishes without Russia having herself to utter them, and thereby to undertake any responsibility.” See Bismarck, *Reminiscences*, p. 229. Taylor nicely expresses a sentiment that Bismarck

were formulating their response to the letter in September, that Russia had made overtures to Paris and Rome during the previous spring or that General Obruchev had made overtures to France, including attending military maneuvers that August.<sup>422</sup> Overall, the biggest change in the international environment Germany faced by the summer of 1879 was that deteriorations in Russo-German relations revived the possibility of a Franco-Russian alliance against Germany, and German isolation.

#### *Leadership Changes in Austria and the Threat of Coalitions Reemerges*

These fears of German isolation and the potential formation of anti-German coalitions were magnified by developments in Anglo-Austrian relations and the impending retirement of Andrassy. Since the end of the Congress of Berlin, Britain and Austria closely cooperated in trying to implement the provisions of the treaty, and maintained very close relations. Although this was never a problem for Bismarck, when he learned in the summer of 1879 of Andrassy's impending retirement, he began to fear that his successors would reorient Austrian foreign policy. Bismarck was very aware that although Andrassy was a good friend and they saw eye to eye on most international issues, there were forces in Austria that did not trust Bismarck and wanted to return Austria to its past prominence in central Europe and European affairs. Bismarck feared that a new Austrian foreign policy might favor relations with Russia, or even France, against the interests of Germany.<sup>423</sup>

The deterioration of Russo-German relations and the impending resignation of Andrassy threatened Germany with the formation of anti-German coalitions and German isolation, threats

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must have shared. He writes: "He [Bismarck] hoped to please the Russians by mitigating the effects of their defeat; they thought that he ought to have prevented the defeat itself." See Taylor, *Bismarck*, p. 176.

<sup>422</sup> See Langer, p. 182; and Kennan, p. 48.

<sup>423</sup> For a discussion of this, see Rich, p. 212; Bridge and Bullen, p. 212; Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 12; and Bagdasarian.

which Bismarck needed to deal with successfully to ensure Germany's continued rise. Bismarck worried about the formation of two potential coalitions—the Kaunitz coalition (France, Austria, and Russia) and the Crimean coalition (France, Austria, and Britain). He seems to have been more worried about a Kaunitz coalition, and feared that the new leadership in Austria would look to Russia, which was already full of anti-German sentiment, and might be especially open to an anti-German alliance. Norman Rich lays out the logic behind these fears: “the new Austrian government might complement its pro-Slav domestic policy by a pro-Russian, anti-German foreign policy; worse still, the clericals might bring in Catholic France as well, to create that combination most deadly to Prussia, a ‘Kaunitz’ coalition.”<sup>424</sup> Although Austro-Russian cooperation may have seemed a little unlikely just one year after they came close to war over the Balkans, Bismarck argued that if they could come to a secret agreement at Reichstadt, as they had in 1876, they could also form a coalition together.<sup>425</sup>

The other coalition that he worried about was the revival of the Crimean coalition, which would bring Austria, Britain, and France together against Germany. As mentioned earlier, the Russian threat drove Austria and Britain together, and this cooperation continued as they worked together to implement the terms of the Berlin Treaty. Meanwhile, Britain and France had maintained very close relations throughout the 1870s, in what many have called an *entente*. All that was required for such a coalition to form was for Austria to reorient its foreign policy away from

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<sup>424</sup> See Rich, p. 211. According to one historian, Bismarck may have feared that Russia felt secure enough to antagonize Germany through 1879 because they had already made a deal with Austria, which would likely result in the revival of the Kaunitz coalition. See Langer, p. 177.

<sup>425</sup> In his memoirs, Bismarck writes: “if a secret treaty of Reichstadt was possible without our consent, without our knowledge, so also was a renewal of the old coalition—Kaunitz’s handiwork—of France, Austria, and Russia, whenever the elements which it represented, and which beneath the surface were still present in Austria, should gain the ascendancy there.” See Bismarck, *Reminiscences*, p. 239. He also invoked the history of Joseph II and Catherine the Great to show that close Russo-Austrian relations had an historical precedent. See Bismarck, *Reminiscences*, p. 249. Given that these claims are made in his memoirs, it is difficult to judge whether these were justifications for his choice to ally with Austria or if these concerns actually motivated his decision to ally with Austria. Given his overall concern with the threat of the formation of coalitions against Germany, it is more reasonable that he was genuinely concerned with these coalitions, even if he was more concerned than he needed to be.

Germany and towards France, which given the history of recent cooperation and large Catholic population in both countries, was certainly a possibility.<sup>426</sup> In his later discussions with Saburov about the Three Emperors' Alliance, Bismarck said one of his motivations for the alliance with Austria was to "dig a ditch between her and the western powers."<sup>427</sup> If either of these coalitions came to fruition, Germany would be vulnerable to international intimidation, pressure, or war, and this would certainly slow or prevent Germany's rise. If the Kaunitz coalition formed, Germany would be left with Great Britain as the only potential ally, and it was unreliable. If the Crimean coalition formed, Germany would only be able to ally with Russia, and with the poor state of Russo-German relations, Germany might end up completely isolated.<sup>428</sup>

*The Evolution of German Grand Strategy: From Passive to Active Reassurance*

To prevent German isolation, Bismarck decided that he needed to take action to prevent the formation of these coalitions, and adopted the more activist reassurance strategy that would continue to guide his foreign policy for the rest of his time in power. As discussed earlier, despite Bismarck's reputation as the center of European diplomacy throughout his tenure, this was far from true for most of the 1870s. In the early 1870s, although he and the Kaiser often made promises that Germany was satiated and peaceful, he took few actions to support those words. His decision to join the Three Emperors' League and try to signal peaceful intentions was certainly welcome and appreciated, but it was more Bismarck making the most of an opportunity that others presented him

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<sup>426</sup> For a discussion of how Bismarck feared that Austria would ally with Britain and France, see Albrecht-Carrie, p. 178; and Bridge and Bullen, p. 212.

<sup>427</sup> Bismarck was no doubt trying to convince Saburov of the merits of the Three Emperors' Alliance and how the Dual Alliance was not directed at Russia, but there was undoubtedly some truth in the worry. See J.Y. Simpson, ed., *The Saburov Memoirs: or Bismarck and Russia, being Fresh Light on the League of the Three Emperors, 1881* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 74.

<sup>428</sup> Despite the prevalence of anti-German sentiment in Russia and even the troop movements in Poland, it is unlikely that Bismarck really feared an imminent attack from Russia, especially given that it was recovering from war, but he did seem to fear that such sentiments might lead to a reorientation of its foreign policy that might be bad for German interests and German security. See Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 13-4.



with than him shaping European affairs. Germany probably was too active and vocal in responding to threats to internal stability and trying to deter the French military buildup during the “War in Sight” crisis, and Europe responded by checking Germany. During the crisis in the Balkans, Bismarck remained passive and refused to get involved, even when others asked him to. Although Bismarck addressed many of the worries of European powers at the Congress of Berlin and ended up making sure that everyone benefitted, Bismarck was very reluctant to chair the conference until the very end. By 1879, however, Bismarck’s reassurance policy had evolved from a more passive and reactive one, to a grand strategy focused on shaping Germany’s international environment and seizing the initiative. According to one assessment, he concluded that the “loose alignments which had for a decade permitted him to stay passively in the background while international tensions were safely deflected to the periphery of the continent, could no longer give Germany security.”<sup>429</sup> As Gall summarizes this evolution from passive to active reassurance: “Contrary to the way in which he had seen things in 1877, however, he soon found that he could no longer confine himself to exploiting situations as they arose. He had to seize the initiative and attempt to exert a positive influence on events himself. In the last eleven years of his political career he thus increasingly practices what he had so passionately preached *against* before: he sought deliberately to create and to preserve situations of his own making rather than adapt to those he found and turn them to his advantage.”<sup>430</sup>

The October 1879 alliance with Austria is usually considered the “decisive change” in Bismarck’s foreign policy, but I would argue that the change to a more active reassurance policy was

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<sup>429</sup> See Bridge and Bullen, p. 212.

<sup>430</sup> See Gall, vol. II, p. 59. Grenville writes: “Gradually, almost reluctantly, Bismarck ceased to play the role of a spectator of European diplomacy, following Germany’s particular interests, taking advantage of situation or at least trying to, and in 1878 once more himself became one of the principal participants and manipulators.” See Grenville, p. 384. According to George and Craig: “It became rapidly apparent to Bismarck, however, as he became aware of the unreliability of old friends during the crisis of 1875 and of the possibility of an Austro-Russian conflict in the Balkans that would almost certainly involve Germany, that wishing for peace was not enough.” See Alexander George and Gordon Craig, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 33. For further discussion of this change in strategy in the late 1870s, see John Lowe, p. 56.

far more evolutionary.<sup>431</sup> In terms of the move from a free hand to alliances, it is true that the Dual Alliance marked a decisive change. However I would argue that the greater change in Bismarck's diplomacy was not from a free hand to alliances, but from passive to active reassurance. Bismarck's pushing through the Dual Alliance, and subsequently the Three Emperors' Alliance was the manifestation of this broader shift in Bismarck's foreign policy, where Germany became an active shaper of its environment and the center of European international affairs. As discussed earlier, the lessons that Bismarck drew from the firm response of European countries during the "War in Sight" crisis was not that they were out to contain Germany, but that he needed to bend over backwards to reassure them and reduce their worries about Germany's growth. Although the Balkan crisis was fortunate for Germany because it took the focus off of it, it was unfortunate because it was the worst possible situation for Germany to try to more actively reassure the other powers. Given that the dispute was largely between Russia and Austria, any attempt to actively reassure or support one would run the risk of alienating the other and making Germany's own nightmare come true, as the other state would likely form an alliance with France against Germany. It was only at the Congress of Berlin where Bismarck eventually felt comfortable with Germany actively exercising its new power and everyone but Russia was pleased with the result. By 1879, facing the potential threat of anti-German coalitions, Germany had to take some action to prevent this, and by now Bismarck felt more secure and comfortable exercising its power and playing a more central role in European diplomatic affairs.

*Active Reassurance in Practice: Binding, Sharing the Wealth, and the Dual Alliance*

The embodiment of Bismarck's new active reassurance strategy was his efforts to push through the Dual Alliance with Austria and then bring Austria and Russia together in the formation

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<sup>431</sup> See Langer, p. 176.

of the Three Emperors' Alliance. As early as April 1879, as relations with Russia deteriorated, Bismarck realized that Germany needed to make a special effort not to antagonize the other powers, especially Austria and Britain, and to befriend and reassure them.<sup>432</sup> By the end of the summer, as Germany faced the possibility of worsening relations with both Russia and Austria, Bismarck decided he needed to take action to prevent Germany's isolation. As Bismarck puts it in his memoirs: "The situation demanded an effort to limit the range of the possible anti-German coalition by means of treaty arrangements placing our relations with at least one of the Great powers upon a firm footing."<sup>433</sup> Given the state of anti-German sentiment in Russia, Bismarck had serious doubts as to whether or not they could be reassured, so firming up relations with Austria seemed to be the better choice.<sup>434</sup> As Kennan puts it, if Russia was not dependable, Bismarck needed to make sure Austria was.<sup>435</sup> After the Dual Alliance was signed in October 1879, and Germany's flank was secured, Bismarck was very happy to reach out to Russia and Germany was certainly the engine behind the establishment of the Three Emperors' Alliance. To Bismarck, after Austria allied with Germany, Russia would have no choice but to want to improve relations, and he could establish a formal trilateral alliance that he was able to control and keep friendly relations with both Russia and Austria through that instrument.<sup>436</sup> Through Bismarck's more active reassurance strategy, the aim would be to prevent the formation of any anti-balancing coalition and make the other powers see that a stronger Germany could benefit them.

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<sup>432</sup> He told this to Schweinitz in an April meeting. See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 501

<sup>433</sup> See Bismarck, *The Man and the Statesman*, vol. II, p. 256. Highlighting the importance of worsening Russo-German relations, Bismarck also wrote: "I was compelled by the threatening letter of the Czar Alexander to take decisive measures for the defence and preservation of our independence of Russia." See Bismarck, *Reflections and Reminiscences*, p. 255.

<sup>434</sup> I will discuss the reasons why Bismarck chose to improve relations with Austria instead of Russia in a later section on how Bismarck convinced the Kaiser to support the signing of the treaty.

<sup>435</sup> See Kennan, p. 72. Following similar logic, Geiss argues that with Russia's hostile response to the Congress of Berlin, German concern shifted from maintaining a free hand in Europe to not being isolated, and this drove the alliance with Austria. See Geiss, p. 36.

<sup>436</sup> For a discussion of the overall logic connecting the two agreements, see Kennan, p. 74

Although Bismarck wanted to respond to the German threats of August 1879 by reaching out to Austria, the kaiser preferred to reach out to Russia, in the hopes of salvaging the bilateral relationship. Given that the kaiser was the tsar's uncle, he placed a special value on relations with Russia. The result was that as Bismarck reached out to Austria, the kaiser simultaneously reached out to Russia. Bismarck met with Andrassy at Bad Gastein on August 28<sup>th</sup>, and was very pleased that Austria was open to an alliance.<sup>437</sup> Working along the opposite diplomatic track, William sent Field Marshall Manteuffel to Russia to express the kaiser's wish to improve relations and put any troubles behind them.<sup>438</sup> This successful meeting led to another meeting, this time between the two monarchs, at Alexandrovo on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, where Alexander apologized for the letter and both expressed a desire to put the past troubles behind them. The next day Miliutin met with William and explained that the Russian troop concentrations were a defensive move to counteract the French-Austrian-British coalition. Convinced that this was plausible, William returned to Germany very pleased that he had repaired the relationship.<sup>439</sup> Despite the kaiser's report of a successful visit with the tsar, and wish to improve relations with Russia instead of Austria, Bismarck went to Vienna to meet Andrassy on September 24<sup>th</sup>, and ultimately the treaty marking the formation of the Dual Alliance was signed on October 7, 1879.

During the negotiations, Andrassy, William, and Bismarck had very different preferences for the commitments of the alliance. Andrassy was focused on securing German backing against Russia, but did not want to make any general commitment that might pull Austria into a Franco-German quarrel. Austria had no interests in western Europe and also worried that anything that appeared anti-French would offend the British, with whom the Austrians had been cooperating, and who they hoped to pull into a trilateral agreement with Germany. The kaiser wanted pretty much the

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<sup>437</sup> See Pflanze, vol. II, p. 503.

<sup>438</sup> See Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 264.

<sup>439</sup> See Langer, p. 181; and Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 264.

opposite. If there was going to be an alliance at all, he wanted to make sure it did not appear to be anti-Russian, so he preferred it to be either an anti-France alliance or an alliance with a vague commitment. Bismarck, on the other hand, wanted a permanent pact, or a so-called “organic union” which would have broad-ranging commitments and be ratified by both parliaments. In addition to not wanting the general commitment, Andrassy argued that Bismarck’s “organic union” formal alliance would not get approved by Austria’s legislature and this idea was dropped.<sup>440</sup> Ultimately, not only was the kaiser’s opposition to any treaty overruled, but his suggestions for the type of alliance were as well, as the alliance ended up being solely directed against Russia.<sup>441</sup>

The terms of the Dual Alliance committed either side to support the other if attacked by Russia, or from another power attacked by Russia. If either was attacked by another power (other than Russia), the other was committed to benevolent neutrality. The terms of the treaty completely fulfilled Austria’s needs. It protected Austria from an attack by Russia or from a Russo-German agreement to partition Austria, and it did so without antagonizing the French. Although the alliance may appear more favorable to Austria, virtually all of Germany’s demands were met. The threat of a Kaunitz coalition (France, Austria, Russia) or a Crimean coalition (France, Britain, Austria) was

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<sup>440</sup> On the domestic problems Andrassy feared he would confront in this type of alliance, see Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 264. For discussions of these negotiations and the different positions of the principals, see Albertini, vol. I, p. 35; Langer, p. 179; Craig, *Germany*, p. 114; and Pflanze, vol. II, p. 504.

<sup>441</sup> Despite the kaiser’s preference for improving relations with Russia and stern opposition to the Dual Alliance, Bismarck was able to convince him of the wisdom of the alliance, through intense debates and Bismarck’s threats to resign. As these debates took place in letters to each other, there is a detailed written record of their correspondence. Given that Germany could have just as easily decided to make sure its relations with Russia were firm instead, Bismarck’s arguments provide insight to his logic, although some of the points were most likely exaggerated to convince the Kaiser. Perhaps most importantly, Bismarck played up the Russian threat as a reason to ally with Austria and suggested that the recent friendliness shown by the Russians was merely a trick and it would use it against Germany in the near future. He focused on the internal stability in Austria and played up the instability in Russia, with rising pan-Slavism and revolutionary activity. He argued that allying with a revisionist power like Russia would be sure to drag Germany into crises and wars in the future that would waste its resources and damage its relations with Britain and Austria. He also used his famous horse and rider analogy that he said characterized all alliances. If Germany allied with Austria, Germany would be the rider and it could influence and control Austria and steer where the alliance went. Whereas if Germany allied with Russia it would be the horse and Russia would be in control. Moreover, if Germany allied with Russia, Austria would surely revive the Crimean coalition, especially with its solid relations with Britain and Britain’s *entente* with France. See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*; Gall, vol. II, p. 118-120; Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 13; and John Lowe, p. 56. Geiss also argues that Austria was the natural choice for an ally given structural, historical, and ideological affinities. See Geiss, p. 35.

eliminated through Austria's commitments to Germany. Although it appeared that Germany did not gain Austrian support in the case of a French invasion of Germany, Bismarck figured that the only scenario in which France would consider invading Germany in the near future was one in which it had the support of Russia, in which case Austria would be obligated to come to Germany's defense.<sup>442</sup> The treaty protected Germany from the coalitions that Bismarck feared most and committed Austria to the defense of Germany under the most likely situations in which Germany would be attacked.

Although the Dual Alliance prevented the formation of either the Kaunitz or the Crimean coalition, it risked driving Russia into the revanchist arms of France. However, Bismarck judged that this was not likely to happen, but also made efforts to make such an alliance look less appealing. First of all, Russia would have been unlikely to antagonize a united central Europe while it was weak and recovering from the Russo-Turkish War. This was especially true because France itself was still relatively weak, and therefore not the best potential ally for Russia. If Austria was successful in bringing Britain into the Dual Alliance, as it had hoped, a weakened Franco-Russia combination would be unlikely to challenge such a powerful trilateral arrangement. Moreover, even if they did share an opposition to Germany, French and Russian interests were very different and France had already shown during the Balkan crisis that it was not willing to support Russian interests in the Balkans. That could have changed, and they might have found a way to cooperate despite differing interests, but it would have been a great risk to take.

Even though France remained in search of a continental ally for its war of revenge against Germany, it is not clear that France would have seen Russia as a suitable ally in 1879. First, Russia was weak. Second, allying with Russia would likely mean that France would have had to sacrifice its relations with Britain, given that Britain and Russia remained at each other's throats over the Balkan

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<sup>442</sup> See Rich, p. 228; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 259.

crisis and the future of access to the Straits. Bismarck's defense of the Dual Alliance to Britain and France, justifying it on the grounds of the Russian threat, not only helped reassure them about German motivations, but also probably helped show France that a revisionist Russia may not have been the most suitable ally. Bismarck's attempts to highlight how Russia had just threatened European stability and was likely to in the future, citing Russian threats to Germany and the rise of pan-Slavism as evidence, probably helped make France see that an alliance would have been a poor choice, if they did not already conclude this themselves. Moreover, improvements in Franco-German relations since 1877, especially when all of these other factors were taken into account, helped make France less eager to ally with Russia. Last, in addition to all of the other reasons, the ideological differences between the two countries also helped keep them apart.<sup>443</sup> According to Bismarck's hopes, rather than leading to a Franco-Russian alliance, the Dual Alliance and the isolation it imposed on Russia, would force Russia to try to improve its relations with Russia and Austria.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> For discussions of these factors hindering a Franco-Russian rapprochement, see Allan Mitchell, *Bismarck and the French Nation* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972), p. 99; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 260; and Langer, p. 176. Specifically on Bismarck's active attempts to reassure the French and the British, see Langer, p. 194; and Pflanze, vol. II, p. 509-10.

<sup>444</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, several historians have criticized virtually every aspect of Bismarck's decision to enter into the Dual Alliance, from his reasoning to the larger implications. Those that criticize his reasoning suggest that the coalitions he was worried about, and entered into the alliance to prevent their formation, would never have formed. Taylor suggests that any chance of a Franco-Austrian alliance died at Sedan in 1870, so both coalitions that worried Bismarck would never have materialized. Medlicott argues that Russia was so weak that it never would have been able to form an anti-German alliance. Both Medlicott and Taylor argue that Bismarck was essentially neurotic and ended up being driven to different foreign policy choices by demons and threats that only existed in his own mind. Moreover, they both suggest that the alliance was essentially an albatross that made Germany's foreign policy in the 1880s far more difficult than it needed to be. Not only did it make it more difficult to sustain friendly relations with Russia, but it pushed Germany into being more deeply involved in the next Balkan crisis than it would have without the alliance. Other historians have suggested that the Dual Alliance led directly to the Franco-Russian alliance and moved Europe onto the path of inevitable world war by beginning the system of entangling alliances that would pull the great powers into war in 1914. For examples of a critical view, see Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 266; and W.N. Medlicott, "Bismarck and the Three Emperors' Alliance, 1881-1887," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 27 (1945), p. 63-4. Although spirited historical debate over whether or not the international environment necessitated such an alliance and the alliance's implications are certainly welcome, I disagree with the main thrust of all of this criticism. In my view, Bismarck and other German diplomats gave sound, reasoned arguments for why they might fear such coalitions, and especially given the consequence of their formation for Germany's security and its rise, it was not unreasonable to take steps to minimize the chances of these occurring. Based on evidence available at the time, although I believe a Kaunitz coalition would have been more probable than a Crimean coalition, especially given the poor state of Austro-Russian relations, it does make sense that the secret agreement at Reichstadt, happening while the Three Emperors' League was still in existence, might have made Bismarck especially sensitive to the possibility of improved Austro-Russian relations.

#### **Chapter 4: Bismarck Continues Reassurance and Wilhelm II Shifts to Coercion**

After explaining Bismarck's reassurance during the 1870s and its effect on the balancing responses of the great powers of Europe, this chapter both analyzes the effect of Bismarck's continued reassurance in the 1880s and examines the shift to coercion under Wilhelmine Germany. After forming a binding alliance with Austria in 1879, Bismarck focused on reassuring the other powers of Europe in the 1880s. Through repeated binding agreements and concessions, Bismarck demonstrated that a more powerful Germany would use its increased power to protect Russian interests. Germany also tried to show Britain that it would restrain itself and not challenge British interests on the continent or around the world, as well as showing that it would use its power to protect British interests. By the end of the 1880s, no great power was making any efforts to balance against Germany even though its power continued to increase. Instead, many countries were balancing against other countries that were less powerful than Germany. I also present evidence that these European powers recognized Germany's reassurance and these efforts made them less likely to perceive Germany as a threat that required balancing. I also present evidence that leaders in European countries were grateful that German actions often benefitted their interests, and perceived a rising Germany as useful for their interests. Lastly, I also examine competing explanations for the low level of balancing against an increasingly powerful Germany.

In discussing how other powers would likely respond to Germany's increasing power, Paul Kennedy writes: "On the whole, however, the flank powers' likelihood of intervening in the affairs of west-central Europe would depend heavily upon what Germany itself did; there was certainly no

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Arguments that the Dual Alliance made relations with Russia more difficult are contradicted by the role the alliance played in bringing about the Three Emperors' Alliance. Moreover, the deterioration of Russo-German relations in the 1880s and 1890s had very little to do with Germany's commitment to Austria, as the alliance did not commit Germany to much more than it had committed itself to in 1872, the continued survival of Austria as a great power. Lastly, I completely reject the claim that the alliance directly led to World War I. It, along with a million other factors contributed to the war, which would break out some thirty-five years later. For less critical assessments of these issues, see Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 12; Bridge and Bullen, p. 213-4; and Fay, vol. I, p. 70-1.



need to become involved if it could be assumed that the second German Reich was now a satiated power.”<sup>445</sup> This quotation nicely highlights the important effect that Bismarck’s grand strategy of reassurance had on preventing a balancing response by the other European great powers during this period. The other European powers recognized and appreciated how Bismarck’s restraint and reassurance helped maintain peace and stability in Europe. According to one historian, “Bismarck’s resignation in March 1890 produced a sense of dismay all over Europe.”<sup>446</sup> In a famous 1890 British political cartoon entitled “Dropping the Pilot,” Bismarck is shown stepping off a ship, while Wilhelm II remains on board and takes control. After experiencing peace and stability for two decades with Bismarck as the “pilot,” European leaders and commentators both praised Bismarck’s role and expressed concern about a future without Bismarck in command.<sup>447</sup> Recognizing the special role of Bismarck’s reassurance strategy, Wilhelm I once said to him “I would not be in your shoes. You seem to me at times to be like a rider who juggles on horseback with five balls, never letting one fall.”<sup>448</sup> Although it is probably too extreme to suggest that only Bismarck could have successfully implemented this strategy of reassurance, other German leaders both recognized that implementing this was a difficult challenge, and this recognition foreshadowed the move away from reassurance to coercion under Wilhelm II.

After Bismarck resigned in 1890, German foreign policy under Wilhelm II abandoned the key elements of Bismarck’s reassurance and shifted to a grand strategy of coercion. Rather than trying to restrain and manage German power to prevent others from perceiving Germany as a threat, the grand strategy of Wilhelmine Germany was guided by the principle that using increased power to threaten other powers is the best way to prevent balancing. This sections shows that when a rising power implements a grand strategy of coercion, it is more likely to be perceived as

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<sup>445</sup> See Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980), p. 189.

<sup>446</sup> See Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. I (New York: Enigma Books, 2005), p. 63.

<sup>447</sup> See Geiss, *German Foreign Policy*, p. 60.

<sup>448</sup> See Albertini, vol. I, p. 62.

provocative and threatening and will likely produce a more severe balancing response. In the early 1890s, Germany's failure to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, a cornerstone of Bismarck's reassurance, and its military build-up drove Russia to abandon its friendly relations with Germany and form the Franco-Russian alliance. In the late 1890s and 1900s, Germany's naval build-up and repeated provocative actions and threats during the Moroccan Crisis, drove the other European powers to perceive Germany as a growing threat and force them to take actions in response. As a result, by the end of the first decade of the 1900s, German coercion had provoked a very severe balancing response against Germany.

### **Bismarck's Reassurance in the Early 1880s**

#### *The Three Emperors' Alliance: Bismarck's Renewed Binding Efforts*

Although Bismarck was pleased with the Austro-German alliance, he was also focused on managing the effects of the alliance on the international environment that Germany faced. The future direction of Russo-German relations was unclear. If he was certain that Russia would be moderate and cooperative, Bismarck hoped to work to improve relations with Russia. However, if Russia continued to demand that Germany sacrifice its interests to please it, and if Russia reached out to France, then Bismarck wanted to be able to improve its position by reaching out to Britain. After it became clear that Germany and Austria would be signing an alliance, in a classic hedging maneuver, Germany reached out to improve relations with Britain, while also letting Russia know that it was open to improved relations. This hedging would hopefully leave Germany in a favorable position no matter how Russia responded to its isolation.<sup>449</sup>

Even before moving towards an alliance with Austria, there were some signs of hope for improvements in Russo-German relations. In July and August 1879, Peter Saburov, then-Russian

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<sup>449</sup> For a formulation that echoes this idea of hedging, see Pflanze, vol. II, p. 508.

Ambassador to Constantinople, vacationed at Bad Kissingen at the same time as Bismarck, and they often exchanged ideas on the state of Russo-German relations. Saburov shared Bismarck's unhappiness with the poor state of relations, also blaming the media, and talked about how they could work together to improve those relations. Bismarck appreciated these ideas, but he knew that Saburov had not yet received the tsar's permission to make an approach to improve relations. Especially after the threats from the tsar in the late summer, Bismarck was hopeful that improvements could be made, but he was also realistic in seeing the possibility of further worsening of relations after the alliance with Austria was signed.<sup>450</sup>

To guard against this threat of further deterioration of relations with Russia, Bismarck also reached out to Britain. After Austria's close cooperation with Britain at the Congress of Berlin and during its aftermath, Austrian officials made no secret of their hope to expand bilateral relations with Germany to an alliance that also included Britain. On September 16, 1879, Count Munster, the German Ambassador in London, was instructed to inquire about British support for Germany in the face of a conflict with Russia. This overture occurred after the meeting at Alexandrovo where the tsar tried to patch up relations with the kaiser, but before Bismarck visited Andrassy in Vienna for the final preparatory meetings for the alliance. During this time Saburov had also returned to Russia to meet with the tsar and try to gain support and approval for the ideas that he and Bismarck discussed over the summer in terms of improving relations. The timing of this overture to Britain is very important and shows clearly how Bismarck was reaching out to Britain while remaining open to a friendly response from Russia. Despite Britain's forthcoming response to Munster's overture, in an October 8<sup>th</sup> dispatch to Munster, Radowitz said that the reply did not "completely fulfill Prince Bismarck's expectations," and Munster was instructed not to revisit the offer.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> On Saburov's discussions with Bismarck, see Pflanze, vol. III, p. 79; and Simpson.

<sup>451</sup> In the original dispatch, Munster was instructed to "ask what would be the consequences for Germany if we, after such experiences, continued to resist the Russian demands and so became involved in conflict with this power." See

Although Bismarck's change of heart towards Britain seems difficult to understand, especially given how open Britain ended up being to improving relations, the key to the explanation lies in Russia's friendly overture to Germany coming at approximately the same time. One or two days after Munster's conversation with Disraeli, Bismarck was called on by two Russian diplomats. Saburov, along with Prince Orloff, the Russian Ambassador to France, came to express feelings of friendship from the tsar. According to one historian's discussion of why the overture to Britain was abandoned: "the deciding factor was a new approach by Russia and the czar."<sup>452</sup> With a friendly response from Russian officials, this time with the approval of the tsar, Russia had shown that it preferred to deal with its imminent isolation by reaching out to improve relations with Germany, just as Bismarck had hoped.<sup>453</sup>

Bismarck saw the Dual Alliance as the first step to a new relationship between the three emperors, and saw Russia's friendly response in late September as the next move in making that hope a reality. Bismarck hoped that improved relations with Russia would prevent any possibility of a Franco-Russian alliance. Although Bismarck may have been fairly confident that France and Russia would not form an alliance in 1879, there was the fear that it could develop in the future,

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Medlicott and Coveney, p. 114-5. Munster was finally able to arrange a meeting with Disraeli on September 26<sup>th</sup>, but what transpired during that meeting is the subject of an intense historiographical debate. According to Disraeli's story, Munster offered Britain an alliance. According to Munster, Disraeli offered Germany an alliance. For differing accounts of this controversy, see GDD, p. 145; Buckle, vol. VI, p. 486; Langer, p. 186; Ward and Gooch, vol. III, p. 147; and Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 266. For the purpose of this work, what is more important is that all sides agree that Disraeli was very receptive and forthcoming in his discussions. He spoke of Germany and Austria as "the most natural allies for England" and spoke of how Britain would try to prevent France from attacking Germany. Specific to the request of Britain's response in the case of conflict with Russia, Disraeli reportedly said: "we will in that case keep France quiet; you may depend on us." However, upon reading the dispatch from Munster, Bismarck wrote "nothing else?" after this section, indicating his dissatisfaction with the response. For the September 27<sup>th</sup> dispatch from Munster to Bismarck, reporting on the meeting with Disraeli, see GDD, p. 145; and Medlicott and Coveney, p. 115. For discussions of this exchange, see Pflanze, vol. II, p. 509; and Langer, p. 187-9. For the October 8<sup>th</sup> dispatch instructing Munster to back off, see GDD, p. 148.

<sup>452</sup> See Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 266; and Pflanze, vol. II, p. 509. In a discussion of the broader implications of Bismarck's foreign policy decisions and how he balanced relations with Russia and Austria, he writes: "Had he now taken his "option," had he chosen between the two Empires? The general impression was that he had; actually he had not. What he had really done was to choose between Russia and Britain—and in favor of Russia." See Eyck, p. 268.

<sup>453</sup> Although the Russian approach occurred before the actual signing of the treaty, and even though the treaty was secret, by this time, most European leaders and leaders were well aware that a treaty was being discussed, although they were not aware of the specific commitments or specific language involved.

especially as both became more powerful, and a new arrangement with Russia would prevent that possibility. Moreover, by pushing for a trilateral arrangement including both Austria and Russia, Bismarck hoped that the two powers would be less likely to challenge each other's interests in the Balkans. He even hoped for, and actively pushed for, a *modus vivendi* whereby each would respect the other's sphere of influence.

Russian leaders saw great opportunities in improved relations with Germany, but they were less interested in a trilateral arrangement. In the late 1870s, Russia worried that Britain's interpretation of the Straits clause could allow it to enter the Black Sea and threaten Russia whenever it wanted.<sup>454</sup> Russia hoped that if it had friendly relations with Germany, it could restrain Britain and Austria from pressuring Russia. In late 1879, focusing on the benefits that a stronger Germany could provide for Russia, Saburov wrote to the tsar: "A friendly Prussia places us in the privileged position of being the only Power in Europe which need fear no attack and which can reduce its budget without risk, as our August master did after the Crimean War."<sup>455</sup> As one historian put it, Russia's purpose in improving relations with Germany was: "to escape the isolation created by the Dual Alliance and the French-English entente."<sup>456</sup> However, the Russians were less interested in cooperation with Austria, both because they thought German support would protect them from British threats, and because they hoped to use that friendship with Germany to improve its position vis-à-vis Austria in the Balkans.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> During the negotiations at the Congress of Berlin, Britain tried to get agreement for this interpretation of the Straits clause in return for Russian annexation of port cities on the Black Sea, but Bismarck prevented this. After this defeat, Britain unilaterally declared that "her obligations, concerning the closure of the Straits, were limited to an engagement to the Sultan to respect in this matter only the *independent* decisions of the Sultan." See Fay, vol. I, p. 73. In practice, this meant that Britain could decide for itself what counted as an independent decision and what did not, allowing Britain to enter the Straits whenever it wanted.

<sup>455</sup> See Simpson, p. 60-1.

<sup>456</sup> See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 84. According to another, in looking at Russia's alliance choices after the formation of the Dual Alliance, it had no choice but to return to Germany and ultimately the Three Emperors' Alliance "in order to avoid a condition of isolation and also to gain support for the Russian interpretation of the Straits agreements." See Jelavich, *St. Petersburg and Moscow*, p. 186-7.

<sup>457</sup> For more on this, see Langer, p. 191, 198.

Austria, on the other hand, did not have any interest in joining a trilateral arrangement with Russia. Between its cooperative relations with Britain and the alliance with Germany, all of its interests were guaranteed and its security was protected. In fact, Austrian leaders hoped to use this solid position to exploit Russia and try to make gains in the Balkans at Russia's expense. Rather than sharing Bismarck's view of the Dual Alliance as the first step to a new three emperors' arrangement with Russia, Austrian leaders believed that the only way to improve its current situation would be to pursue a trilateral arrangement between Germany, Austria, and Britain.<sup>458</sup>

Given that neither Austria nor Russia wanted to enter into a trilateral arrangement, the eventual formation of the Three Emperors' Alliance in June 1881 required important leadership from Bismarck to convince both sides of the benefits of such an arrangement. Saburov left Berlin in October 1879 and was supposed to be back in December, hopefully with more specific instructions from the tsar on how to proceed in a Russo-German agreement. Saburov did not return until January 1880, but to facilitate the improvement in relations, the tsar appointed him Russian Ambassador to Germany.<sup>459</sup> During the Bismarck-Saburov meetings in January-February 1880, the Russians seemed to be in more a hurry to make an agreement than the Germans did, as Russia feared British threats in the Straits and Germany was more relaxed after signing the Dual Alliance. Although reassuring Saburov that he hoped to improve relations and that the Dual Alliance was not a threat to Russia, Bismarck informed Saburov that he no longer merely wanted a bilateral agreement, but he hoped to bring Russia into a new trilateral alliance that would include Austria.<sup>460</sup> Bismarck reasoned that an agreement with Russia would make Austria doubt Germany's commitment, thus undermining the entire Dual Alliance, and forcing Germany to face the potential

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<sup>458</sup> See John Lowe, p. 57.

<sup>459</sup> See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 80-2.

<sup>460</sup> In his explanation of why he needed to solidify Germany's relations with Austria before he could turn to Russia, he said: "I regarded you as a dear friend with whom I was taking a solitary walk and who suddenly had gone mad. I rushed off to provide myself with a pocket pistol, and now I am come back to continue my walk with you in the same amicable manner, but in a more comfortable state of mind as to my own safety." See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 80-1.

of isolation and anti-German balancing coalitions.<sup>461</sup> Trying to sell the idea of a trilateral arrangement, it was during these meetings that Bismarck made his famous reference to being “a trois” (one of three) as the goal of every country.<sup>462</sup> Knowing Russia’s concerns about British threats in the Straits, Bismarck also tried to argue that Germany did not have much power to restrain Britain, but if Russia joined together with Austria, Austria had much greater ability to keep the British out of the Straits.<sup>463</sup> Although Saburov listened to these arguments, and likely saw the logic in some of the points, he had to return to Russia as he was not empowered to discuss any agreement that would include Austria.<sup>464</sup>

Meanwhile, Bismarck tried to convince an equally unreceptive Austria to the benefits of a trilateral framework. Haymerle, Andrassy’s successor, was a Russophobe and hoped to work with Germany and Britain to permanently check Russia and make gains at its expense.<sup>465</sup> However, the return of Gladstone and the Liberals to power in Britain in April 1880 put a wrench in Haymerle’s plans. Gladstone completely reversed British foreign policy so that Britain no longer wanted to work with Austria to oppose Russia, but wanted to work within the Concert of Europe framework to oppose the Turks. Gladstone also particularly disliked Austria, which put an end to the Austrian

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<sup>461</sup> On this point, Bismarck wrote: “Austria will instinctively begin anew to seek Western alliances, and the results so laboriously secured by Germany will be lost.” See Langer, p. 197.

<sup>462</sup> The full remark from Bismarck to Saburov was: “You too often lose sight of the importance of being one of *three* on the European chess-board. That is the invariable objective of all the cabinets and of mine above all others. Nobody wishes to be in a minority. All politics reduced themselves to this formula: to try to be one of three, so long as the world is governed by the unstable equilibrium of five great powers. That also is the true preservative against coalitions.” See Langer, p. 197. Despite the penchant of some to characterize being “a trois” (one of three) as the basis for the Three Emperors’ League of 1873 or as a general characteristic of Bismarck’s grand strategy, it is more appropriate to consider it as part of a specific argument from a specific time and recognize that Bismarck is trying to sell the Russians on the benefits of being in a trilateral arrangement which they do not want to join.

<sup>463</sup> Bismarck reportedly said: “What will Germany be able to do by herself to prevent the violation of the Straits? She can protest, write notes, but her army will not be able to swim to London or pass over the body of Austria to go to fight in the Straits. The question changes in aspect if one can interest Austria in it. She is in a better position to threaten Turkey and compel her, in concert with Russia, to fulfill her obligations of neutrality.” See Langer, p. 198.

<sup>464</sup> Taylor inexplicably and incorrectly asserts that Saburov formally proposed a new Three Emperors’ League to Bismarck during the January 1880 meetings. See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 267.

<sup>465</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle*, p. 268.

vision of continued cooperation with Britain or a trilateral with Germany and Britain.<sup>466</sup> The change in government in Britain pushed back all talks related to the potential trilateral arrangement as all sides wanted to take some time to evaluate the changed international situation.

After the dust settled, talks resumed later in 1880 and Bismarck grabbed the opportunity to convince Russia and Austria to join the trilateral arrangement. In Russia, Bismarck's task was made considerably easier by the retirement of Gorchakov, who had become Bismarck's sworn enemy, and Giers' victory in the ensuing power struggle. Giers and Saburov were both very interested in improving relations with Germany, and ended up being very satisfied with the gains Russia would make in the Balkans and the Straits, according to the proposals that were discussed. Moreover, although the British threat had receded somewhat with the return of Gladstone, Britain's threat to Russia in the Straits could easily rematerialize in the future. Moreover, as the Hartmann incident soured Franco-Russian relations, Russia had few options if it wanted to avoid isolation.<sup>467</sup> In late 1880, Bismarck reassured Austria that a trilateral framework would not undermine the Dual Alliance, as Austria feared. Although all sides were generally in agreement, the signing of the Three Emperors' Alliance did not formally take place until June 18, 1881.

Unlike the Three Emperors' League of 1873, which was an agreement on general principles, the Three Emperors' Alliance contained specific agreements and specific obligations.<sup>468</sup> According to the terms of the agreement, if any member was at war with a fourth power (except Turkey), the other two would be required to at least remain neutral. It reaffirmed the support of all three

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<sup>466</sup> In a March 1880 election speech, Gladstone declared: "Austria has been the unflinching foe of freedom in every country of Europe. There is not an instance—there is not a spot upon the whole map where you can lay your finger and say: 'There Austria did good.'" See Langer, p. 201; and Pflanze, vol. III, p. 85.

<sup>467</sup> Langer and Kennan's accounts of this incident differ, but both could be true. According to Langer, France and Russia had a falling out because of French refusal to arrest Hartmann, a man accused of trying to blow up the tsar's train. See Langer, p. 202. According to Kennan's account, France's decision to release Hartman from jail in March 1880 led to such great outrage in Russia that Prince Orlov, the Russian Ambassador to France, was actually withdrawn from his post for several weeks. See Kennan, p. 59.

<sup>468</sup> Contrary to what some have claimed, the Three Emperors' Alliance was not a *renewal* of the Three Emperors' League, but a *replacement* for it. See Kennan, p. 75. For a concise discussion of the terms, see Rich, p. 228; and Kennan, p. 77. The Alliance was to last for three years, after which it could be renewed by all parties.



countries for the closing of the Straits in times of war. In terms of the Eastern question, any changes in the territorial status quo would require prior agreement. Moreover, an additional protocol allowed Austria to formally annex Bosnia and Herzegovina whenever it wished in exchange for no opposition to the reunion of Eastern Rumelia and Bulgaria if it were to happen naturally. Throughout the negotiations, Bismarck tried to convince both sides to agree to a partition of the Balkans and a division of spheres of influence in which each would have a free hand in its sphere, but neither would agree. Russia was not willing to cede control of Serbia and Montenegro to Austria, and Austria was unwilling to give up Rumania and Bulgaria.<sup>469</sup> However, Bismarck was at least satisfied that the status quo was guaranteed and hoped that they would eventually agree to a division or partition.

The Three Emperors' Alliance provided significant benefits to Germany and Russia, and fewer to Austria. For Germany, the Alliance meant that France was isolated and Germany was now protected from a Franco-Russian alliance, as well as any other anti-German coalition. The Alliance would hopefully preserve peace between Austria and Russia and lay the groundwork for cooperation and an eventual settlement of interests in the Balkans. Moreover, the agreement would hopefully never make Bismarck have to choose between Austria and Russia, and run the risk of driving one into the arms of France. For Russia, the Alliance saved them from the nightmare of constantly living under the threat of British pressure in the Black Sea.<sup>470</sup> The terms also guaranteed that Austria would not use German backing to expand its influence in the Balkans, and also allowed for the

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<sup>469</sup> For discussions of these partition plans, see Rich, p. 229; and Bridge and Bullen, p. 217.

<sup>470</sup> In practice, freeing Russia from the threat of the British Fleet also gave it a free hand to challenge British interests in Central Asia and the Near East, as Britain's main military response to such threats was now precluded by the Alliance's guarantees to keep the Straits closed. Although making it possible for Russia to divert its attention to the other side of the globe, and forcing Britain to likewise focus its attention and resources there, rather than having either country being worried about Germany's rise in Europe was certainly ended up being a benefit to Bismarck, but it is probably a stretch to argue that he manipulated the entire Three Emperors' Alliance to push Russia and Britain into war. Moreover, if this was all a master German plan, it most likely would have taken advantage of Russia and Britain both being distracted to strike against France, as these quarrels in the 1880s certainly gave him the opportunity. But just as during the Balkans crisis in the 1870s, Bismarck did not make use of a golden opportunity to maximize German relative power.

eventual creation of a big Bulgaria, even if it did not have access to the Mediterranean and would not necessarily be a Russian satellite. For Austria, who had hoped to use German support to improve its position in the Balkans, the Three Emperors' Alliance did not provide many benefits that Austria did not already think it had in the Dual Alliance. The terms guaranteed that Russia would not invade Austria or challenge its interests in the Balkans, but this was largely reaffirming a commitment that was already in place. Austria was given the right to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it was forced to agree to the formation of a big Bulgaria. Although Austria did get further promises and commitments from Bismarck regarding the Dual Alliance, it is likely that Austria only went along in the end in the hope that Germany would use its growing power to give it more support in a future crisis or in a different area.<sup>471</sup>

*The Triple Alliance: Appeasing Austria and Binding Italy for the Sake of Austria*

Although Bismarck was very pleased with the formation of the Three Emperors' Alliance, he remained wary of forces in Russia that tended to be pan-Slav, nationalist, and anti-German. These were of course the very forces that were most opposed to the Three Emperors' Alliance, and would be most likely to push Russian policy in a pro-France and anti-German direction. When Schweinitz, the German Ambassador to Russia, returned to Berlin for a meeting with Bismarck in October 1881, they discussed this issue and Bismarck voiced worries about potential activity by these forces.<sup>472</sup> In early 1882, in what became known as the Skobolev affair, these forces made a major push to improve relations with France, and ended up worrying Bismarck about the future of the Russian commitment to the Three Emperors' Alliance and its commitment to friendly relations with Germany. In January-February 1882, General Skobolev, who was a popular hero from the victory in

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<sup>471</sup> For discussions of the benefits of the Alliance for the three powers, see Kennan, p. 76; and Langer, p. 211. Taylor's discussion of how Austria lost in the terms of the treaty is particularly colorful. See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 271.

<sup>472</sup> See Langer, p. 240.

the Russo-Turkish War, and an ardent pan-Slav, made an unofficial visit to France. Before his departure he made a very warlike and anti-German speech in Moscow on January 24, 1882. While in France, Skobelev met with then-prime minister Gambetta as well as several other Russian sympathizers in and out of government, and was rumored to have proposed a Franco-Russian alliance. In an even more controversial move, Skobelev made a provocative speech to Serbian students in Paris on February 16<sup>th</sup>, in which he called Germany the enemy of Russia and all Slavs and called for a war between Teutons and Slavs.<sup>473</sup> The official Russian response was to have Ambassador Prince Orlov offer him a stern rebuke and immediately recall him. But when he was brought before the tsar in March, he reportedly only received a “good-natured washing.”<sup>474</sup>

Disturbed by these developments, and unclear about the level of official support behind these overtures to France, Bismarck decided to form the Triple Alliance with Austria and Italy in May 1882. Faced with the possible threat of a nascent alliance, Bismarck decided to seek what one historian accurately calls “additional safeguards against Russia and France.”<sup>475</sup> In 1881, Italy had proposed an alliance with Austria and Germany, but neither was interested at the time.<sup>476</sup> However, in the face of a potential Franco-Russian alliance, Italy’s status became a more important factor. On February 28, Bismarck urged Austria to re-open negotiations with the Italians about an alliance. In discussing the move towards an alliance with Italy, Bismarck reportedly said: “Sparing the Austrian forces rather than winning those of Italy, is our aim.”<sup>477</sup> Given the timing, Bismarck’s decision to

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<sup>473</sup> For the most thorough discussion of Skobelev, his pan-Slavism, and his speeches, see Olga Alekseevna Novikova, *Skobelev and the Slavonic Cause* (London: O.K. Longmans, Greene, and Co., 1883). For analysis of his visit and speeches, see Albertini, vol. I, p. 42; Medlicott and Coveney, p. 111; Langer, p. 240-2; Pflanze, vol. III, p. 92; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 274-5.

<sup>474</sup> See Kennan, p. 92.

<sup>475</sup> See Kent, p. 115.

<sup>476</sup> Italy’s approach to Austria and Germany was motivated by France’s seizure of Tunis in April 1881 as well as a desire to try to obtain a guarantee for Rome. After France took Tunis, there was no chance that Italy would seek an alliance with France, so there was no risk involved in Austria turning down the alliance. Moreover, Austria had no interest in agreeing to a treaty of guarantee related to Rome. For Bismarck, Italy hardly mattered, or if it did, it was a nuisance, so Germany had no interest in such an alliance. For discussions of these approaches by Italy in the summer of 1881, see Albertini, vol. I, p. 42; Langer, p. 236-9; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 274-5.

<sup>477</sup> See Fay, vol. I, p. 85.

begin negotiations happening less than two weeks after Skobelev's speech in Paris, when combined with Bismarck's long-standing fear of the threat of a Franco-Russian alliance, suggests that Skobelev's visit to France directly led to Bismarck's support for the Triple Alliance.<sup>478</sup>

In the final terms of the Triple Alliance, Germany made a significant and costly concession to Austria, which helped reassure it after being pulled into the Triple Emperors' Alliance against its will. The Alliance was formally signed on May 20, 1882. According to the terms, the three powers agreed not to enter into coalitions that were hostile to one another. In terms of defense commitments, if Italy was attacked by France without provocation, Germany and Austria had to assist. However, if Germany was attacked by France without provocation, *only* Italy, and not Austria, was obligated to assist. Lastly, if any of the three powers was involved in a war with another great power, the others would observe benevolent neutrality. According to these terms, Austria was guaranteed that its rear flank would be protected from a potential Italian invasion in a war with Russia, and it did not have to agree to commit to the defense of Germany in case of a French attack.<sup>479</sup> Securing Austria's southern flank would likely have proven important in a European war, but Germany opened itself up to great potential cost and risk in the process. As Taylor puts it: "in plain terms, Bismarck undertook to defend Italy in order to meet the Austro-Hungarian complaints against the League of the Three Emperors."<sup>480</sup> The threat of a Franco-Russian alliance and a desire to hedge against its formation was probably the most important factor driving Bismarck's commitment to the Triple Alliance, but there was without doubt an element of making a concession to Austria to reassure it and make up for its dissatisfaction with the Three Emperors' Alliance.

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<sup>478</sup> Moreover, in a collection of documents, two historians write: "In further instructions to Reuss on 28 February Bismarck now favored a military guarantee to Italy against France by the central powers, and said specifically that his views had changed because of the change in Russia's attitude." See Medicott and Coveney, p. 111.

<sup>479</sup> The Italians tried, unsuccessfully, to smuggle in a guarantee for Rome. For analysis of the terms, see Langer, p. 244-5; Pflanze, vol. III, p. 95; and Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 16.

<sup>480</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 276.

## 1877-1885: Solidifying Relations with Western Europe

### *Early Stages of Franco-German Détente: 1877-1882*

Beginning in late 1877, and lasting until 1885, Franco-German relations were marked by a spirit of reconciliation and détente. After the mutual antipathy that came to a climax with the 1875 “War in Sight” crisis, the French expressed a desire to improve relations and the Germans reciprocated. Germany not only stopped trying to isolate France, and promised that it would not threaten it any longer, but also tried to help it feel like a great power by facilitating French annexation of territories in North Africa. Although he still wanted to limit the French military buildup and economic growth, as such developments would make France into a more appealing potential ally, Bismarck also realized that being too firm and threatening towards France in trying to deter war and military modernization was leading other states to worry about the German threat in Europe, especially as German power continued to increase. The hope was that in being cooperative with France, and helping to meet French desires for great power status by helping them make gains in North Africa, the revanchist sentiment over Alsace-Lorraine would fade away and the two countries could live together in peace, without France actively looking for an ally for a war of revenge.<sup>481</sup>

The turning point for Franco-German relations was the October 1877 electoral victory by the Republicans, led by Gambetta. Although Gambetta was not particularly well-liked in Berlin as he was seen as one of the leaders of revanche, German leaders were very happy that MacMahon was no longer in power and no longer represented a threat. Moreover, Gambetta was openly conciliatory, including a decision to withdraw Gontaut-Biron as Ambassador to Germany and install someone who was more interested in improving relations. From Germany, the conciliatory moves

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<sup>481</sup> For some of the best work on the détente, see Pearl Boring Mitchell, *The Bismarckian Policy of Conciliation with France, 1875-1885* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935); Allan Mitchell, *Bismarck and the French Nation*; and Robert H. Wienefeld, *Franco-German Relations, 1878-1885* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1929).

were met by a fundamental change in policy from trying to isolate France to one of trying to bring them out into the world. However Germany still tried to shape French interactions with the rest of the world, recognizing that with a strong revanchist sentiment still in France, Germany needed to limit French contacts with potential hostile coalition partners.<sup>482</sup>

The most important example of Germany's new conciliatory policy towards France was its active support of French claims in North Africa. As discussed earlier, at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, despite France's negligible role in the proceedings, Bismarck told the French that Germany would be very supportive of any move to take Tunis. Although France seemed to welcome the offer, French leaders were a little suspicious as to why their enemy was encouraging them to take new territory. In the fall of 1880, Bismarck tried to explain the reasoning to the French Ambassador Saint-Vallier, and continue to show his support for French moves into Tunis. Bismarck said that he recognized that a great power like France would need to seek increased glory and status in the world, and as Germany was not willing to give back Alsace-Lorraine to meet this need, he had hoped that gaining such status in North Africa, which he later referred to as France's "natural sphere of expansion," would end the obsession with the "lost provinces."<sup>483</sup> Helping France to gain new status by seizing Tunis, in early January 1879, Herbert von Bismarck told the French that Germany: "hold[s] the French claim to be justified and would support his Government diplomatically, as far as possible."<sup>484</sup> On January 5, 1879, while Saint Vallier was visiting to inquire about making demands on parts of Tunis, Bismarck reportedly said: "I believe the Tunisian pear is ripe and that the time has come for you to pick it; the insolence of the Bey has acted like an August sun on this African fruit,

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<sup>482</sup> See Allan Mitchell, p. 89-90; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 282, 292.

<sup>483</sup> In the complete quotation, Bismarck said: "I am convinced that a great country like France needs to find satisfaction in her foreign policy, and as I cannot unhappily give it to you in Alsace-Lorraine, I desire to make it somewhere where no German interest conflicts with French interests. . . . there is the secret of the good will I have always shown you in Tunis, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, or Greece. Do not search for hidden motives. I prefer to tell you frankly, I desire and hope to turn your thoughts from Metz and Strasburg in aiding you to find some satisfaction." See Pearl Mitchell, p. 108. For the "natural sphere of expansion" remark, see William L. Langer, "The European Powers and the French Occupation of Tunis, 1878-1881, I," *American Historical Review*, vol. 31, no. 1 (October 1925), p. 76.

<sup>484</sup> See GDD, p. 127.

which may well rot or be stolen by another if you leave the tree too long.”<sup>485</sup> Germany not only pledged its own support to French occupation of Tunis, and urged France to take this action quickly, but also promised to prevent other powers from interfering.

When France finally moved to occupy Tunis, Germany followed through on its offer of support. On May 12, 1881, the Bey signed the Treaty of Bardo, which accepted Tunis as a French protectorate. Britain, who sought to control the Mediterranean, and Italy, who also hoped to make gains in North Africa, were not pleased with this move. Reminding Britain that it was given Cyprus at the Congress of Berlin, with no opposition from anyone, Bismarck helped convince Britain that France had a right to occupy Tunis. Even before France moved to take Tunis, Bismarck reached out to Disraeli and told him “to remember the engagements assumed at Berlin and not to allow Anglo-French relations to be clouded by a ‘secondary agent.’”<sup>486</sup> Although Italy would have liked to intervene and prevent this action, it did not have the power to do so unilaterally, and Bismarck convinced every other potential supporter not to interfere.<sup>487</sup> According to Langer’s overall assessment: “That the French were able to carry through the occupation of Tunis without calling forth European complications was due in very large part to Bismarck’s attitude.”<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> For the quote, see William L. Langer, “The European Powers and the French Occupation of Tunis, 1878-1881, I,” p. 76. For more discussion, see Albertini, vol. I, p. 39.

<sup>486</sup> See Langer, “The European Powers and the French Occupation of Tunis, 1878-1881, I,” p. 76. See also Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, p. 219-20.

<sup>487</sup> Some have accused Bismarck of a master plan behind the support of the occupation of Tunis that was designed to sow tension between France and Italy. Those who support this view suggest that Bismarck hoped that such support would push Italy into the arms of Germany and Austria, and believed that he only supported France in Tunisia to try to form the Triple Alliance. This view is nonsense. First of all, Italy barely registered on Bismarck’s radar screen, as he showed again when Italy first reached out to Austria for an alliance. Secondly, as I have already shown above, it was only when there was some evidence of Franco-Russian contacts that Bismarck became interested in the Triple Alliance for insurance against the coalition. Lastly, if his aim was truly to provoke tension between Italy and France and divert tensions from Europe towards North Africa, it seems more likely that Germany would have encouraged others to intervene rather than pressuring them to accept the French occupation. Although it is certainly not the case in other examples, this is one where Bismarck’s own justification seems to be what was really driving policy—the hope that French gains in North Africa would satisfy its demands as a great power and reduce tension in western Europe. For a discussion of these criticisms of Bismarck, see Langer, p. 225.

<sup>488</sup> See Langer, p. 224. For a similar view, see Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 15.

Although France proved very grateful for the German support in Tunis, French officials remained suspicious of Germany's motives for offering this concession. This is consistent with the expectation of how others would respond to an early concession offer from a rising power, especially one that was as mistrusted as Germany. As Langer writes: "They did not trust the offers that came from the 'monster' in Berlin and suspected that an attempt was being made to divert the attention and the energies of the French nation from the 'hole in the Vosges.'"<sup>489</sup> Gambetta was clearly, and understandably, worried about Germany's ulterior motives and feared that Bismarck was setting a trap for him. Even though relations improved after German support in Tunis, the French were still "suspicious of Bismarck's 'Machiavellian motives'"<sup>490</sup> Relations continued to improve after France learned that Bismarck's support was genuine and there were no tricks involved. Bismarck was even ready to accept a visit from Gambetta, who was a revanchist leader, but it later fell through.

*Egypt: German Restraint and Support for Britain and France*

Britain and France considered Egypt to be an important interest. For Britain, once the Suez Canal opened in 1869, Egypt was the key to the quickest route to India. For France, not only was Egypt important for its desire to control the Mediterranean, but France also wanted to strengthen its position in North Africa. In 1875, financial problems in Egypt forced the khedive to sell his shares in the Suez Canal to the British. By 1876, as this still did not stabilize the financial situation, a system of dual control was established whereby France and Germany took control of the government. France was the chief bondholder and Britain had purchased the khedive's holdings. Germany, without great interests in Egypt, supported this arrangement and any other move on

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<sup>489</sup> See Langer, p. 220. He also writes: "This very eagerness on the part of Bismarck acted as a deterrent rather than a stimulus upon the French statesmen." See Langer, p. 221.

<sup>490</sup> See Fay, vol. I, p. 99.



which both Britain and France agreed. By the late 1870s and early 1880s, Bismarck was more concerned with the continuation of the Anglo-French entente. As Britain and Russia continued to compete over influence at the risk of war, as long as France continued to value its relations with Britain, France would be unlikely to sacrifice these relations by forming an alliance with Russia. So to help keep France away from Russia, Bismarck continued to support anything in Egypt that both powers agreed on, in an attempt to keep the entente in place.<sup>491</sup>

However, in 1882, events in Egypt led to a British occupation, which angered France and others in Europe and made it more difficult to Germany to continue supporting both. Although the dual control system worked great for the imperialists, not surprisingly, this arrangement led to nationalist resentment. As nationalist forces increased in power and popularity, both France and Britain grew nervous. When a group of army officers established a nationalist government in early 1882, due to worries about stability, both Britain and France sent gunboats off the coast of Alexandria in June. However, this show of force led to riots and even more resentment. Viewing stability in Egypt as a national interest, the British bombarded Alexandria in July and landed troops to protect the Suez Canal. On September 13, with General Woolsey's defeat of rebel forces at Tel-el-kebir, the anti-colonialist Gladstone government had unintentionally acquired a new colony for the British Empire.

Even though Gladstone may not have intended to expand the British Empire, the occupation of Egypt enraged Russia and France, and it was only due to German support that crisis was averted. Russia, who at this point was in the midst of a competition for power and influence with Britain all over the Near East, Central Asia, and the Far East, opposed any British advances,

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<sup>491</sup> For background on the situation in Egypt, see Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991); Prosser Gifford and W.R. Louis, *France and Britain in Africa* (London: Yale University Press, 1971); Paul Knaplund, *The British Empire, 1815-1939* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941); Bernard Potter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1983* (Harlow: Longman, 1983). For a brief discussion of this background, see Temperley and Penson, p. 416-7. For specific discussions of how Bismarck drew connections between Egypt and larger geopolitical issues, see Langer, p. 267.

but especially those that would put Britain in a position to prevent Russia from taking Constantinople. France had its own eye on taking Egypt, and although it accepted the situation of dual control, British occupation was highly objectionable. The occupation of Egypt destroyed the Anglo-French entente and forced the two into deep rivalry for the next twenty years. As one of Bismarck's aides noted: "Egypt had become the Alsace-Lorraine of the Anglo-French relationship."<sup>492</sup> With keeping the entente in place no longer possible, Germany now needed to make sure that the crisis in Egypt did not lead to a greater chance of an anti-German coalition. Given that both France and Russia were on one side in opposition to Britain, a possibility of a crisis or war over Egypt might push these two closer together than Bismarck was willing to allow. With the British already having occupied Egypt, the best and quickest way to end the crisis was for Bismarck to actively prevent open opposition by others to the occupation. Moreover, such open support of Britain would hopefully gain British goodwill, which might be needed as a hedge against the potential for improved Franco-Russian relations.

Not only did Bismarck's support for Britain prevent a potential crisis, but it also led the British to see how a stronger Germany could benefit them and led to many expressions of gratitude toward rising Germany. According to Langer, Bismarck's support of Britain's position in Egypt "may be truly said to have....made the occupation of Egypt possible."<sup>493</sup> Moreover, Granville, the foreign minister, expressed his delight and appreciation with Germany's active support.<sup>494</sup> In a June

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<sup>492</sup> See Rich, p. 234.

<sup>493</sup> See Langer, p. 278. In his analysis of why there was no international response, Langer also argues that the other powers "were kept in line by Bismarck." See Langer, p. 277. A memo from Dr. Moritz Busch to Crown Prince Frederick William also summarizes Germany's views of its actions and their importance. The memo reads: "We prevented an attempt by Russia to combine the four Eastern powers in a joint protest against England's isolated action in Egypt." Busch also wrote: "[When Britain occupied Egypt] thus greatly perturbing public opinion in every country, the reserved attitude of Germany insured that the British Government suffered no embarrassment due to this action." See GDD, p. 160-1.

<sup>494</sup> According to a September 13, 1882 memo to Bismarck recounting his conversation with Granville, Herbert von Bismarck wrote: "he was delighted at hearing that England would experience no objections or difficulties, raised by us, in her reorganization of the affairs of Egypt...he appeared to be gratified, when I said that even annexation would be compatible with our interests." See GDD, p. 161.

14, 1884 memo to Russell, Granville provided even stronger evidence that Britain realized the importance of the support of a stronger Germany. He wrote: "As regards Egypt, I relied upon the support of the Chancellor. My reliance was based on two grounds; firstly, the very friendly attitude which His Highness had invariably maintained towards us, both in words and deeds; and secondly the general policy which during the four years I had been in office, his Highness had consistently and successfully pursued with a view to maintaining the peace of Europe."<sup>495</sup>

After 1882, Bismarck continued to support Britain in Egypt, but tried to make sure that France's interests were not too greatly damaged. Gladstone refused to fully annex Egypt. Moreover, in trying to keep with the spirit of the Concert of Europe, he turned control of Egypt's finances over to the six powers of Europe.<sup>496</sup> The result of this move was to put Germany in a position where they could dominate this arrangement. as Britain was usually joined by Italy on one side. But Russia, who opposed Britain due to their ongoing rivalry, joined together with France, who had started a new rivalry with Britain after the occupation of Egypt, to try to oppose most British decisions. This left Germany, and Austria which would follow Germany's lead, to cast the deciding votes and ultimately make the decisions. From 1882 until the summer of 1884, it continually supported Britain. Luckily, none of these votes or issues harmed France's interests, so it was also able to limit the damage to Franco-German relations. It is important to point out that even

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<sup>495</sup> See Temperley and Penson, p. 425. It is particularly interesting to note how this positive assessment of Bismarck's role at the time differs from later assessments of Germany on the eve of World War I, especially as others looked to focus on the continuity between Bismarck and William II. Probably the most famous, and completely incorrect analysis, comes from the Crowe Memorandum. In a paragraph discussing how trying to push other powers into tension and conflict was a key part of Bismarck's policy, the text continues: "It is now no longer denied that he [Bismarck] urged England to occupy and to continue in occupation, because, he rightly foresaw that this would perpetuate the antagonism between England and France." See G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914: Vol. III, The Testing of the Entente, 1904-6* (London: Stationary Office, 1928), p. 400. Although the Triple Entente was a threat to Germany when Crowe was writing his memorandum in 1907, this assessment completely overlooks that Bismarck was not threatened by France having good relations with Britain, and despite certainly benefiting from both France and Britain being dependent on Germany during their rivalry, Bismarck became more worried about the end of the entente pushing France into Russia's arms. Although Bismarck certainly did sow discord when it served German interests, the idea of the occupation of Egypt being Bismarck's idea or pushed by Bismarck is pure fantasy.

<sup>496</sup> The Caisse de la Dette Publique, which supervised Egypt's finances, was to be governed by an international council consisting of a representative from Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Germany, and Austria. For more on this, see Bridge and Bullen, p. 231; and John Lowe, p. 87.

though Britain had put itself in a situation where it could be coerced and blackmailed by Germany, Germany did not use the *baton Egyptienne* (Egyptian lever) to improve its situation at Britain's expense until 1884. It was only when Bismarck felt that Britain was unnecessarily trying to check Germany's limited moves into imperialism that he felt compelled to do so. Overall, Germany was very supportive of Britain's occupation of Egypt and continued to support it in international conferences until 1884, leading Britain to appreciate and value the support of a stronger Germany. A situation where both France and Britain depended on Germany was certainly a positive development for Bismarck, but he hoped that the Anglo-French fallout did not drive France into improved relations with the Russians, which could turn into an anti-German alliance.

### *German Colonial Restraint and Eventual Limited Move into Imperialism*

#### Early Refusals and Restraint

For many years, Germany and Bismarck consistently refused to get into the colonial game. As Germany's economy grew, and traders from places like Bremen expanded across the world, they sent lots of requests to the German government for formal support and asking Germany to claim various overseas areas. Throughout the 1860s, 1870s, and early 1880s, Bismarck consistently rebuffed these offers.<sup>497</sup> In 1871, when it was suggested that Germany could take Vietnam or Pondicherry after the defeat of France, Bismarck responded: "I don't care for colonies at all. They are only good as supply posts." Focusing on how inappropriate they would be for a country like Germany, he famously said that colonies would be "like sable coats worn by Polish noblemen who don't have shirts."<sup>498</sup> In the early 1870s, when he explained why Germany did not need colonies, he constantly argued that colonies would force Germany to waste its already scarce resources on

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<sup>497</sup> For a discussion of the expansion of trade and the many opportunities for colonialism that Germany refused, see Mary Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918* (New York: Macmillan, 1930).

<sup>498</sup> See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 114.

developing a navy, which would only serve to unnecessarily threaten other European powers.<sup>499</sup> In 1881, Bismarck famously proclaimed: “As long as I am imperial chancellor we shall not pursue a colonial policy.”<sup>500</sup> According to Langer, into the early 1880s, demands for colonial expansion “were rejected on the plea that the new empire must first be consolidated, that it needed its strength for home problems, that Germany could not afford to antagonize other states, and that there was no really popular demand for expansion in Germany itself.”<sup>501</sup>

### Germany’s Move into Colonies

In November 1882, Adolf Luderitz, a Bremen tobacco importer, wanted to set up a trading post in southwest Africa and wanted German protection.<sup>502</sup> In February 1883, Bismarck sent a dispatch to the British Foreign Office inquiring as to its view on Luderitz’s enterprise. Germany wanted to know whether Britain claimed authority over Angra Pequena (in present-day Namibia), and whether it would be willing to extend protection to German traders in the area. Germany received no reply from Britain. Shortly thereafter, Luderitz set up operation and began buying land around Angra Pequena from local chiefs, but he reported back to Berlin that some British traders disputed his right to do so. As a result, Bismarck made another cautious inquiry in August 1883 as to what part of southwest Africa Britain claimed, and on what grounds. In November 1883 Britain replied that any claim to sovereignty on the western coast from Portuguese Angola to the Cape

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<sup>499</sup> In 1873, Bismarck said to Russell: “Colonies...would be a sign of weakness, because colonies could only be defended by powerful fleets, and Germany’s geographical position did not necessitate her development into a first-class maritime power.” See William Osgood Aydelotte, *Bismarck and British Colonial Policy: the Problem of South West Africa, 1883-1885* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937), p. 19. Sontag puts this very succinctly: “Colonies, he argued, called for a navy to protect them; a navy would divert money from the army and would antagonize England.” See Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 25.

<sup>500</sup> See John Lowe, p. 95. He also repeatedly said: “I am no man for colonies.” See Taylor, *Bismarck*, p. 215.

<sup>501</sup> See Langer, p. 288. Although Langer’s point is correct overall, there were certainly specific groups that demanded colonies, and their voices were growing louder in the early 1880s.

<sup>502</sup> For excellent shorter treatments of the key historical events, see Pflanze, vol. III, p. 123-4; and Craig, *Germany*, p. 120.

would infringe on Britain's legal rights.<sup>503</sup> In response, the German Embassy in London was instructed to ask for the basis of such a wide-ranging claim. After receiving a very vague answer on November 21<sup>st</sup>, the request for clarification was repeated on December 31<sup>st</sup>. This request was apparently forwarded on to the Cape government and Germany did not receive a reply for six months.<sup>504</sup> Although Bismarck was trying to be very accommodating and not challenge British claims in Africa, the lack of response from London or the Cape government made Bismarck fearful that Britain may move to claim the area and try to push the Germans out. In February 1884, Britain and Portugal signed a treaty giving Portugal sovereignty over the mouth of the Congo, making Bismarck more nervous that Britain may move to exclude Germany.<sup>505</sup> On April 24, on what would later be regarded as the birthday for German colonialism, Bismarck telegraphed the German consul in Cape Town and Count Munster in London announcing that Luderitz had "a claim on the protection of the German Reich for his holdings."<sup>506</sup>

The next phase of Germany's advance into colonialism led to a great misunderstanding that resulted in Bismarck's belief that Britain was intentionally blocking its reasonable colonial demands and Britain's claim that these demands were never communicated. Bismarck's frustration with what he believed to be intentional British opposition towards Germany's limited colonial claims led Germany to adopt a more aggressive policy towards Britain and a brief downturn in Anglo-German relations. Although Bismarck's colonial policy was restrained and reactive, some use this shift to a more confrontational colonial policy to argue that Bismarck's colonial policy was always aggressive and provocative. However, in following the background of German colonialism from early 1883, rather than just using examples in late 1884, it is clear that Bismarck bent over backwards not to provoke Britain, and it was only when Bismarck believed Britain was unwilling to accede to limited

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<sup>503</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 134.

<sup>504</sup> See GDD, p. 174-5; and Medlicott and Coveney, p. 134.

<sup>505</sup> See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 125.

<sup>506</sup> See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 126; and Craig, *Germany*, p. 121.

and reasonable colonial claims that he felt forced to become more aggressive. There are several examples from 1883 and even 1884 that show just how cooperative Bismarck was trying to be as he moved into the colonial realm. According to Bismarck, Germany should look for “sure advantages without disproportionately great risks, especially without conflict with older and stronger sea powers.”<sup>507</sup> Holborn writes that from the start Bismarck was careful not to make any colonial claims that threatened vital British interests.<sup>508</sup> When Bismarck extended German support and protection to Luderitz, he instructed the local press to emphasize that “the Bremen firm could count on the protection of the German government as long as its enterprises did not collide with the rights of foreigners.”<sup>509</sup> Although it is certainly true that by the end of 1884 Bismarck was more confrontational towards Britain, he started out very conciliatory and only became more aggressive when a misunderstanding led him to believe that the British were unwilling to compromise.

The crux of this misunderstanding was a meeting in early May 1884, in which Count Munster, the German Ambassador in London was instructed to inquire about Britain’s openness to Germany’s limited moves into colonialism. The origins of this misunderstanding lay in a May 5<sup>th</sup> dispatch from Bismarck to Munster. According to Bismarck’s apparent understanding of his instructions to the ambassador, Munster was to put the idea of German colonies into the overall context of Germany’s friendly policies towards Britain to see whether or not Britain would support this move into colonialism. Secondly, Munster was supposed to inquire as to the possibility of Germany annexing Heligoland, a set of islands north of Germany.<sup>510</sup> When Munster met with

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<sup>507</sup> See Smith, “Military Strategy versus Diplomacy,” p. 48.

<sup>508</sup> See Holborn, p. 245. Langer echoes this when he writes: “He [Bismarck] did not want to fly in the face of the English.” See Langer, p. 292. Kennedy highlights the tentative nature of Bismarck’s initial approaches and moves into colonialism. See Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Naval Antagonism*, p. 171.

<sup>509</sup> See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 124.

<sup>510</sup> For the full text of the dispatch, see Medlicott and Coveney, p. 140-1. In my view, from the text of the dispatch, it is not particularly clear that this is what Bismarck’s instructions were. Although upon reading subsequent writings it is clear what he meant and what he thought he was instructing Munster to do, but it seems perfectly understandable to me that Munster might have missed this part of the dispatch. For more analysis, see Medlicott and Coveney, p. 134; Pflanze, vol. III, p.130; Rich, p. 234; and Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire*, p. 278-9.

Granville, he appears to have not brought up the broader issue of German colonialism and only asked about Heligoland, which to Bismarck was a far less important issue. In a later discussion of his meeting with Munster, Granville wrote that the contents of the May 5<sup>th</sup> dispatch “containing an exposition of the policy of Germany as to colonization, and of the understanding which he desired to bring about between England and Germany, was never communicated to me.”<sup>511</sup> If Munster did not explicitly raise the issue of Germany’s interest in colonies, or if Granville did not understand that Munster was trying to allude to this, it is not surprising that Granville viewed this move with surprise. So Munster’s report back to Bismarck on his meeting with Granville did not include any discussion of Britain’s general views on German colonialism, which to Bismarck was the most important issue. Especially after Britain’s slow responses to previous inquiries, Bismarck thought the worst and believed that Britain’s ignoring the issue was a way to prevent Germany from establishing colonies.

Expressing this frustration, in a May 25<sup>th</sup> dispatch to Munster, Bismarck wrote: “in view of the presumptuous attitude of the English over Angra Pequena, which exceeds my expectations, I beg your Excellency to make no further mention of Heligoland in your discussions.”<sup>512</sup>

Unfortunately, given Munster’s failure to understand that Bismarck originally wanted him to inquire about German colonies broadly, when he received this dispatch he apparently concluded that this meant he should not mention anything at all related to colonies, as he thought that Heligoland was the most important part of the May 5<sup>th</sup> dispatch. Unfortunately Bismarck’s point seemed to be that given that Britain was more hostile than expected, Munster should forget Heligoland, which was less important, and just focus on the broad response to German colonies in Africa, which was the more

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<sup>511</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 146. According to Granville’s reports of these conversations in mid-1884, colonies did not come up. See Sontag, *Germany and Britain*, p. 195.

<sup>512</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 141.



important question.<sup>513</sup> To make matters even worse, on May 29<sup>th</sup>, the Cape government finally responded to Germany's inquiry from the previous year, and it recommended annexing all territory to Walfish Bay, which would include Angra Pequena.<sup>514</sup> The Cape government likely did not coordinate this with the British home government and the new developments in Munster's discussion with Granville, and even if they did, Granville had not yet realized that Germany wanted to enter the colonies game. So the upshot was that by the end of May Bismarck was not only frustrated by Britain's "presumptuous attitude" reflected in Granville's lack of response to the original inquiry, but he must have also been infuriated by the May 29<sup>th</sup> response from the Cape government. In a June 7<sup>th</sup> report to Bismarck based on a later conversation with Granville, Munster reported that Granville wanted him to pass on that Britain was not trying to obstruct German colonial aspirations, but to that point they had not received any indication that Germany had such aspirations. Bismarck's frustration with the British must have reached new heights with this response.<sup>515</sup>

In June 1884, after Herbert von Bismarck explained to Britain that Germany did in fact have limited colonial aspirations, the British immediately consented and conceded. During Herbert von Bismarck's visit, he appears to have done exactly what his father had originally asked of Munster, highlighting Germany's cooperative policies toward Britain and asking for Britain's support in Germany's limited colonial claims in Africa. In an early 1885 letter, Granville wrote that before receiving a report from Lord Ampthill of his June 14<sup>th</sup> conversations and his own conversations with Herbert, "[He] was under the belief that the Chancellor was personally opposed to German

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<sup>513</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 134. In a June 1<sup>st</sup> dispatch from Bismarck to Munster, he reprimands him because his May 8<sup>th</sup> reply, which was the dispatch that summarized his conversation with Granville after receiving the original May 5<sup>th</sup> dispatch, only addressed Heligoland and that "the acquisition of Heligoland was of secondary importance." Focusing on what he thought was most important Bismarck wrote further that he "preferred to ascertain whether England is inclined, in her present situation, in return for our firm offer of greater support than before for British policy, to satisfy our overseas grievances by ceasing to lay hindrances in the way of the legitimate enterprises of German nationals." See GDD, p. 175; and Langer, p. 294.

<sup>514</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 133; and Langer.

<sup>515</sup> See GDD, p. 177-8.

colonization.”<sup>516</sup> The letter continued: “But after the information received in June, Lord Derby and I, together with our colleagues, desired to meet the Prince’s views with regard to Angra Pequena in every way compatible with the private rights of British subjects.”<sup>517</sup> On June 22, Lord Granville informed Herbert von Bismarck that his government had resolved “not to question the protection claimed by Germany in that part of Africa.”<sup>518</sup> Once they understood what Germany wanted, “British ministers then fell over backwards to placate Berlin.”<sup>519</sup> Unfortunately in June, the Cape government tried to annex all lands between the Cape and Angola. Bismarck would not recognize this as he had already claimed Angra Pequena for Germany. Moreover, this provocative response made him more furious and he criticized Britain’s new Monroe Doctrine for Africa.<sup>520</sup> Although Bismarck and the German government may not have fully understood the distinction, while the Cape government tried to frustrate Berlin, once the British government understood Germany’s desire for colonies, it tried to accommodate these desires.

### *Shifting Allegiances: Reassuring France and then Back to Britain*

Even though the British government ended up being very forthcoming when it finally understood what Germany wanted, the delays and perceived obstructions were too much and Bismarck began to challenge Britain and support France. Bismarck thought that given Germany’s recent support for Britain and the limited nature of its demands, Britain should not have stood in the way. However, as Langer writes: “Far from securing aid from England, the German chancellor found her everywhere in the way. He turned to France as a matter of necessity, not choice.”<sup>521</sup> At

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<sup>516</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 146. Other sources on British foreign policy date June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1884 as the first time Granville learned that Germany had colonial ambitions. See Temperley and Penson, p. 424.

<sup>517</sup> See Medicott and Coveney, p. 146. For further discussion of British recognition of German claims, see Craig, *Germany*, p. 121-4.

<sup>518</sup> See GDD, p. 178-80.

<sup>519</sup> See Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Naval Antagonism*, p. 179.

<sup>520</sup> See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 196; and Medicott and Coveney, p. 135.

<sup>521</sup> See Langer, p. 317.

an international conference on Egypt's finances at the end of June, Bismarck wielded the baton Egyptienne for the first time and voted with France.<sup>522</sup> By September 1884, if not earlier, Germany was working with France to oppose Britain not only in Egypt, but also in the Congo and western Africa.<sup>523</sup> This Franco-German cooperation reached its apex when they worked together to frustrate Britain and Portugal over the Congo at the Berlin Conference, which opened in November 1884.<sup>524</sup>

Following on Britain's willingness to recognize Germany's position in Angra Pequena, once it understood Germany's position, by early 1885 Britain had recognized Germany's claims in southwest Africa, Togoland, Cameroons, east Africa, and parts of New Guineau.<sup>525</sup> Although others have claimed that Britain only agreed to these claims after Germany supported the French and threatened Britain over Egypt, this is not true. On the contrary, Granville communicated Britain's willingness to recognize Germany's position in Angra Pequena to Herbert von Bismarck on June 22, almost a week before Bismarck first wielded the baton Egyptienne by supporting France at an international conference on Egypt's finances.<sup>526</sup> In addition to the chronology, internal statements between British officials strongly suggest that Britain really did not understand what Germany was asking for, which further undermines the argument that the British were intentionally obstructing Germany and only conceded under pressure. In a letter to another British official, Granville wrote that Bismarck's belief that Britain was "intentionally hostile" to German colonization is "devoid of any real foundation."<sup>527</sup> If Britain was indeed intentionally trying to block German colonization, and only gave in under pressure, it seems unlikely that British officials would deny to themselves that

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<sup>522</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 135; Temperley and Penson, p. 424; and Pflanze, vol. III, p. 131.

<sup>523</sup> See John Lowe, p. 97.

<sup>524</sup> For an excellent discussion, see Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Stif Forster, and Ronald Robinson, eds., *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford University Press, 1989). For shorter discussions, see Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 297-8; Bridge and Bullen, p. 232; and Rich, p. 239. By this point, the entente was beginning to weaken due to Germany's interest in free trade and France's interest in extending protectionism.

<sup>525</sup> See Rich, p. 236.

<sup>526</sup> See Temperley and Penson, p. 424.

<sup>527</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 146.

they were being obstructionist. Although Britain obviously knew that Germany could do great damage to British interests in Egypt, it recognized German colonial claims before Bismarck ever wielded this power.<sup>528</sup>

As for subsequent British concessions to Germany, the threats over Egypt likely played a role, but so did Germany's active effort not to make any claims that threatened Britain's vital interests. Moreover, even though there was a brief period where Germany was more aggressive towards Britain in the colonial realm, when Herbert von Bismarck visited London in March 1885 and worked out the colonial settlement with the British, he conducted himself "in a modest and thoroughly friendly manner." On his father's orders, he made sure to communicate that Germany had very limited colonial claims, and hoped to cooperate in a new spirit of friendship. Recognizing that Germany's requests were limited and did not challenge vital interests, and that German power could work for Britain's benefit if Bismarck supported it in Egypt, they settled the colonial question and put aside differences on the Egyptian question.<sup>529</sup> Gladstone reportedly said: "if Germany is to become a colonizing power, all I say is 'God speed her!'"<sup>530</sup>

Although there was a short period of tension between Germany and Britain in late 1884 and early 1885, the friendly March summit, as well as other international developments, forced Germany and Britain to repair their relations, as they realized they needed each other. For Germany, the most important international change was the fall of French Prime Minister Ferry on March 30, 1885, after French forces were defeated in Indochina. Although Ferry was interested in colonies, his successors

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<sup>528</sup> Gladstone wrote to Derby in late 1884 that Germany could do "extraordinary mischief to us at our one really vulnerable point, Egypt." See Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-American Antagonism*, p. 180-1.

<sup>529</sup> For discussions of this ultimate settlement, see Pflanze, vol. III, p. 131-2; and Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 199-201. In his discussions with Gladstone, Herbert von Bismarck reportedly said: "We are the youngest of the Great Powers and we wish to undertake this function of colonization, which belongs to a Great Power. But we only hope to do it in a small and humble manner, and we are in doing it giving to you the strongest proof of confidence in the future friendship of the two countries. For we know that if a Continental Power were to attack our little colonies, we could invade them in return. But we also know that you can assail our colonies with effect, and that we cannot get at you in return, as you are masters of the seas." See Sontag, *Germany and England*, p. 200-1.

<sup>530</sup> See Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 181.

were focused on continental affairs, which meant the friendship of the Franco-German entente was replaced by the desire for revenge of the 1870s, forcing Germany to look to improve its relations with Britain. For the British, serious setbacks in Sudan and Central Asia made Britain realize that it needed German friendship and German support. After rebels defeated the government in Sudan, the British sent General Charles Gordon to evacuate Khartoum. The rebel armies defeated his Anglo-Egyptian forces and on January 26, 1885, Gordon and his troops were massacred.<sup>531</sup> In Central Asia, once Germany promised to prevent the British from threatening Russia in the Black Sea, the Russians were free to extend their influence. They conquered the Turcomans in 1882 and occupied Merv in 1884, but when the Russians defeated the Afghans at Penjdeh in spring of 1885, the Russians were pushing dangerously close to India.<sup>532</sup> Given these great challenges near two areas of vital interest, Britain could not afford to compete with Germany in areas of little strategic value, and hoped to obtain Germany's support for Britain's vital interests.

After the Battle of Penjdeh, the British wanted to send the fleet into the Black Sea to threaten Russia, but once again Bismarck pressured the Sultan to keep the Straits closed. Once again Bismarck actively intervened to prevent war, even when war in the Near East would have likely given Germany an opportunity to make greater colonial gains or perhaps invade France, with whom cooperation no longer seemed possible.<sup>533</sup> Unable to resort to force, the British had no choice but to settle the dispute by negotiating with Russia regarding Afghanistan's boundary. Despite the recent tension with Germany, and British disappointment with Bismarck's decision to keep the Straits closed, the British still trusted the Germans enough that they approached the kaiser to arbitrate the boundary dispute.<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> See Langer, p. 308.

<sup>532</sup> See Hugh Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, p. 569; and Sneh Mahajan, *British Foreign Policy, 1871-1914: The Role of India* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 75-9.

<sup>533</sup> See GDD, p. xxi-xxii; and Sontag, *European Diplomatic History*, p. 25

<sup>534</sup> See Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Naval Antagonism*, p. 184.

Despite Germany's intervention preventing Britain from threatening Russia, and contrary to the claims that Germany's colonial policy alienated the British, the Germans and the British moved to improve relations and solidify their friendship. Bismarck stopped pressuring the British in the colonial field, rejected demands to annex Samoa, and refused to establish a protectorate in Zanzibar, arguing that "British interests there are more important than our own."<sup>535</sup> Salisbury, in a July 2, 1885 private letter to Bismarck, expressed his wish to recover "the good understanding between the two countries which we value as of supreme importance, but which in recent times has been slightly clouded."<sup>536</sup> After 1885, Bismarck made no more claims to colonies, did not develop the existing colonies, and in 1889 even tried to give the claims in southwest Africa back to Britain. In explaining these moves, Herbert von Bismarck wrote to another German official: "Salisbury's friendship is worth more to us than the whole of East Africa; my father is of the same opinion."<sup>537</sup> Both sides were able to move past the brief period of antagonism to form a more solid relationship.

### ***Explaining the Minimal Balancing Response by Europe, 1875-1890***

Despite Germany's continued economic growth since 1875, the balancing response by European great powers became less severe, even as Germany became more powerful. During this period several formal alliances and informal alignments emerged, but none of them were targeted at Germany; many of them included or were proposed by Germany, and others were focused on responding to other European powers who were viewed as more threatening than Germany.

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<sup>535</sup> See Rich, p. 242.

<sup>536</sup> See Temperley and Penson, p. 429.

<sup>537</sup> See Townsend, p. 115. When a German explorer inquired about establishing a new sphere of influence in central Africa in the late 1880s, Bismarck famously replied: "That takes us too far. The English sphere of influence extends to the source of the Nile. Your map of Africa is certainly very beautiful, but my map of Africa lies in Europe. Here lies Russia and the lies France, and we are in the middle. That is my map of Africa." Although the last part of the quote is usually cited, the entire quote makes clear that Bismarck wanted to make sure not to challenge British interests. See Pflanze, vol. III, p. 42; and Albertini, vol. I, p. 64.

Throughout this 15 year period, there is little evidence of any less extreme balancing responses against Germany.

After learning important lessons of how constrained rising Germany was and how worried others were by Germany's rise, Bismarck moved to implement a more complete and comprehensive reassurance effort to prevent any balancing responses. This analysis includes both convergence tests and process tracing evidence. During this period, Germany's well-developed reassurance strategy occurred at the same time as minimal, and even less severe, balancing responses against Germany. This is strong evidence for my theory of reassurance. In the rest of this section, I argue that process tracing evidence is very strong in support of the causal role of German reassurance minimizing the severity of the balancing response against it, even as its power continued to rise.

#### *Simple Congruence Test: Changes in Material Power and Hard Balancing*

This section will briefly assess the degree to which balancing behavior tracks with changes in the distribution of power. Overall, even though one would expect this theory to be most persuasive during a period in which there is a rising power, changes in material power poorly predict the balancing behavior of the other powers. In the dissertation as a whole, drawing on insights from the debate on soft balancing and arguing that a broader range of international reaction can threaten a country's rise, I have adopted a broader definition of balancing by using the variable of balancing severity, rather than the usual dichotomous balancing or no balancing that scholars have traditionally used. However, as a first cut at this analysis, I will try to use the traditional measures of hard balancing. For external balancing, I will use the formation of formal alliances. For internal balancing, which has always been more difficult to measure, I will use military personnel and military expenditures.

For the congruence test, I have reproduced a chart that I used earlier, comparing the relative power of the European states. The two obvious trends characterizing European international politics are: 1) the rise of German power; 2) the relative decline of British power, although it retained the largest relative share. So at the broadest level, predictions about balancing, if they are based solely on relative power, should relate to these two countries. Mearsheimer, more than Copeland, uses geography as a variable to show that projecting power across water is more difficult. Therefore it might seem reasonable to discount British power somewhat. Given the discount in British power, and the rise in German power, it seems reasonable to suggest that worst case realism might predict balancing against Germany. Or, given the continued greater overall share of European power, it might also predict balancing against Britain.

**Relative Share of European Power**

	1869	1872	1875	1880	1885	1890
Great Britain	42.7%	40.8%	39.9%	37.6%	37.5%	33.1%
Germany	14.6%	16.8%	17.4%	18.3%	19.8%	23.2%
France	19.6%	17.7%	17.8%	18.6%	17.4%	17.5%
Russia	15.5%	16.8%	16.9%	17.9%	17.9%	17.5%
Austria-Hungary	7.6%	7.9%	8.0%	7.6%	7.6%	8.7%

Note: Power is based on the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score, which combines iron/steel production, energy consumption, military expenditures, military personnel, total population, and urban population, for each country as a percentage of the total power of the five great powers.

Source: All data are from Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities.



I first test these predictions for external balancing behavior. Below I have created a chart of formal alliances based on the two most widely-used data sets on alliances.<sup>538</sup> Contrary to the predictions of the theory, none of the alliances are targeted at Germany, the rising power. In addition, none of the alliances are targeted at the still-predominant Britain either. Moreover, Germany, who according to the theory is the power that alliances are supposed to be formed against, is actually a member state in six of the eleven alliances counted in the data set. If one only wants to count great power alliances, then that number drops to three, but this is still at odds with the prediction.<sup>539</sup> Based on the targets of the alliances listed in the chart, one might expect Russia or France to be either the most powerful countries or rising powers during this period. An attempt to explain the alliances formed against Russia or France might rest on an assessment that they were viewed as the true revisionist powers at the time. However, such an explanation, while perhaps true, cannot repair worst case realism, which would predict that all countries view every other country as revisionist at all times. Perceptions of Russian or French revisionism can not be used to explain these alliances, as their revisionism should be a constant according to the theory, and it should only be fluctuations in power that explain changes in behavior.<sup>540</sup> Therefore, the patterns of external balancing do not conform to the predictions of worst case realism.

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<sup>538</sup> These two data sets are the “Formal Alliances” dataset from the Correlates of War (COW) and the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions project (ATOP). The COW data are available at [www.correlatesofwar.org](http://www.correlatesofwar.org). For further discussion of the data set, see Douglas M. Gibler and Meredith Sarkees, “Measuring Alliances: the Correlates of War Formal Interstate Alliance Data Set, 1816-2000,” *Journal of Peace Research*, forthcoming. The ATOP data is available at [atop.rice.edu](http://atop.rice.edu).

<sup>539</sup> I am agnostic on whether or not one wants to consider an alliance with a rising Germany as a form of bandwagoning, but it is certainly not balancing. According to a Waltzian definition, bandwagoning would be joining the most powerful side, which at this point would still be Britain, so it would not count as bandwagoning. According to a Waltian definition, it would likely not count as bandwagoning because the powers that allied with the rising Germany would likely perceive another state to be even more threatening than Germany, based on factors other than material power, so would be allying with Germany to balance against the greater threat.

<sup>540</sup> One could perhaps put Russia in the late 1870s into a different category given that they had used force and were close to directly challenging Austrian and British interests in the Balkans and Near East, but balancing against Russia later in the 1880s was based on the potential threat of Russia, which according to the theory, is only supposed to be assessed based on relative power.

## **Formal Alliances: 1871-1890**

<b><u>Alliance Name</u></b>	<b><u>Alliance Members</u></b>	<b><u>Dates of Alliance</u></b>	<b><u>Target State of Alliance</u></b> <sup>541</sup>
Three Emperors' League <sup>542</sup>	Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary	1873-1878	None (social revolution)
Budapest Conventions	Russia, Austria	1877-1878	Ottoman Empire (secured Austrian Neutrality in Russo-Turkish War)
No formal name	Britain, Ottoman Empire	1878-1880	Russia <sup>543</sup>
Dual Alliance	Austria, Germany	1879-1918	Russia
Serbo-Austrian Treaty	Serbia, Austria	1881-1895	Russia
Three Emperors' Alliance	Russia, Germany, Austria	1881-1887	None <sup>544</sup>
Triple Alliance	Germany, Austria, Italy	1882-1918	France
Rumanian Alliance	Germany, Austria, Rumania	1883-1918	Russia
1 <sup>st</sup> Mediterranean Agreement <sup>545</sup>	Italy, Britain, Austria, Spain	1887-1897	France
Reinsurance Treaty	Germany, Russia	1887-1890	Third parties
2 <sup>nd</sup> Mediterranean Agreement	Italy, Britain, Austria	1887-1897	Russia

<sup>541</sup> The coding of the target state is based on the code sheets from the data sets and my own thorough research in the period.

<sup>542</sup> Unlike the COW data set which codes the Three Emperors' League as one entry, the ATOP data set includes the original military agreement between Germany and Russia as a separate entry from the Three Emperors' League. Given that logic, it is unclear why they don't include the political agreement between Austria and Russia that Germany ultimately acceded to in the formation of the Three Emperors' League. In any case, I only count the League as one entry.

<sup>543</sup> According to this treaty, Britain would defend Turkey if Russia took more territory after the close of the Congress of Berlin. Moreover, if Russia returned territory that it was given at Berlin, Britain agreed to return Cyprus. This Anglo-Turkish treaty does not capture the British efforts to assist Turkey during the Russo-Turkish War, including loans to buy arms, dispatch of the British Fleet to the Black Sea, and mobilization of colonial troops.

<sup>544</sup> The treaty text did not name a target. However, for the Germans, the hope was both to strengthen relations with Russia, and prevent a Franco-Russian alliance. But it is too strong to say the alliance targeted France, as Germany also maintained friendly relations with France during this period. For the Russians, the alliance was targeted at Britain, in the hopes of limiting its ability to pressure Russia by sending its fleet into the Black Sea.

<sup>545</sup> Both the COW and ATOP data set have two different entries for the 1<sup>st</sup> Mediterranean Agreement, because Spain acceded to it a few months after the initial members did and it pulled out two years earlier in 1895. Given that this data is for more illustrative purposes than running regressions, and given that it was essentially one agreement, I combine the two into one entry.

Internal balancing has proved to be more difficult to measure. The idea is that in an anarchic world, when another state becomes so powerful that it is threatening, if the state does not want to externally balance by forming an alliance, it can internally balance by trying to increase its own capabilities to be better able to counter a potential aggressor. As two of the classic measures of internal balancing, both due to available data, and because they are focused on aggregating military power, I will use military personnel and military expenditures. Below I include a chart showing the annual increases in both measures for the other great powers in response to the rise of Germany. Given the greater threat that should come from Germany's increased capability, worst case realism would likely predict increases in both. One could also say that given the lack of external balancing against Germany, it might be even more likely to expect internal balancing.<sup>546</sup>

Although the specific prediction of how much these indicators should increase along with Germany's rise is not clear, the small increases do not seem to suggest that states were internally balancing against a rising Germany with much vigilance, if at all. For a rough comparison, over the same period, Germany's annual increase in iron and steel production was approximately 10%, suggesting that European internal balancing did not track with the changes in the distribution of power. Moreover, many of these increases were clearly focused on powers other than Germany, suggesting that the balancing response to Germany's rise was even less than these small aggregate numbers show. For instance large changes in Austrian military expenditures from 1887-8 and 1886-7 were clearly related to crises in the Balkans and were targeted at Russia. Moreover, other internal developments such as French and Russian naval development, and Britain's Naval Defense Act were not aimed at Germany. Overall, using the classic measures of hard balancing, increases in German power, and therefore threat, did not produce concomitant external or internal balancing.

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<sup>546</sup> The trade-offs and choices between internal and external balancing is another issue that requires further research. The initial realist work suggested that states have these two choices, but given that Waltz was not as interested in explaining a state's foreign policy, did not go into how a state decides which way to balance. There has been some formal work on this question, but little empirical work.

**Measuring Internal Balancing: Average Annual Increases, 1872-90<sup>547</sup>**

	Military Personnel	Military Expenditure
France	1.3%	3.1%
Austria	1.3%	2.2%
Russia <sup>548</sup>	0.1%	1.1%
Britain	0.5%	2.7%

Source: All data are from Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities

*Moving beyond Hard Balancing: Explaining More, but also Less*

I have suggested in this dissertation that taking a broader look at balancing behavior, by using the continuous variable severity of balancing, helps to account for a broader range of behavior that is consequential for world politics, and is especially important for a rising power. Therefore, this section will use this broader view to see if the responses to Germany's rise have moved in the direction of hard balancing, but did not reach the required magnitude to count according to the usual measures of hard balancing. If this is true, then the overall logic behind the worst case realism alternative may be strengthened, and the real issue may be that German power was not great enough to fully activate the hard balancing dynamics. Overall, the responses by European powers in the early 1870s, and especially the firm response during the "War in Sight" crisis confirm this view of Germany's rise leading to more balancing, even if it was still not very severe. However, later in the

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<sup>547</sup> I have excluded 1871 for all countries due to the Franco-Prussian War and the artificial increase that would be reflected in the data.

<sup>548</sup> For the Russia data I have excluded the years 1877 and 1878 as these data include a large increase in military expenditures and military personnel in preparation for and in fighting the Russo-Turkish War. However, these increases have little to nothing to do with the rise of Germany or German power, so I have excluded them from the data.

1870s and into the 1880s, balancing responses, both those that rise to the level of hard balancing and those that are less severe, are directed at other states. This is particularly troubling for the worst case realist theory because as Germany is rising, even if other states are not actively balancing against it, they at the very least should not be wasting assets balancing against less threatening powers or conducting adventures overseas. I will first attempt to evaluate which country was perceived as the most threatening and then will evaluate the less severe balancing actions and who they were targeting.

### Threat Perception

In other non-realist work, threat perception can be a very complicated and involve many factors and biases. In worst case realism however, it is relatively simple. Given that states are judged to be pretty good at assessing changes in relative power and they know that the only prudent course of action is to assume that all states are revisionist, threats are defined solely in terms of capabilities. The general prediction from the theory is that countries with the greatest capabilities should be viewed as the largest threats. The specific prediction related to the case of Bismarckian Germany would be that in the face of rising German power, Germany should be perceived as the most threatening state. One could argue that because Germany's material power did not rise to the level of a potential hegemon, in Mearsheimer's terms, its capabilities did not rise to the level that it should be perceived as a threat. First, given that Germany was located in the center of Europe, for a theory that takes geography seriously such as Mearsheimer's, Germany's location would likely make these capabilities even more threatening. Second, to be fair to this critique, I will add that another specific prediction is that no country with fewer capabilities than Germany should be perceived to be more threatening than Germany.

As the historical analysis showed, this prediction of Germany as the greatest threat certainly held for the early 1870s. Although the analysis also shows that perceptions of changes in power did not occur as smoothly as the worst case realists might suggest, in the early 1870s every country was most worried about what a rising Germany would do with its increasing power. Each country had an area of specific concern, but all worried that as Germany continued to rise, it might, or would be likely to wield this power in a more aggressive way to challenge these interests. This culminated in coordinated threats against Germany during the “War in Sight” crisis of 1875, discussed in the next section.

However, after 1875, as Germany continued to rise, European powers began to view others as more threatening than Germany. I will summarize these developments that are covered in greater detail in the historical analysis. For Britain, in the late 1870s until 1885, Russia, who is far weaker than Germany, is perceived as a greater threat. After 1882, and especially in the late 1880s, Britain perceived France as a greater threat than Germany. In the words of the Britain’s Director of Military Intelligence of April 1887: “The countries with which we are most liable to go to war are France and Russia, and the worst combination which we have any reason to dread is an alliance of France and Russia against us.”<sup>549</sup> Even for France, who not only had a rising Germany on its border, but was full of revanchist sentiment, there was a time in the 1880s when Britain was seen as a greater threat than Germany. Strictly speaking, although it may not be expected due to the geographical proximity with Germany, France viewing Britain as more threatening than Germany probably does not violate the prediction, given that Britain remained the most powerful. However, Austria’s perception of Russia as the greatest threat from the mid-1870s onward, and its perception that Germany and Britain, the two most powerful countries in the system, were not a threat at all, is a challenge for the theory. For Russia, even though it also bordered on Germany, and even though

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<sup>549</sup> See Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Naval Antagonism*, p. 191-2. In the late 1880s, Salisbury also wrote to the Queen: “France is, and must always remain, England’s greatest danger.” See Langer, p. 488.

it was the most firm in the proto-balancing response in 1875, by the late 1870s and 1880s, Austria and Britain were perceived as greater threats.<sup>550</sup> Although the evidence from the early 1870s, when all countries were particularly worried about the threat from Germany seems to confirm the prediction, the rest of the period does not support the predictions of the theory. Even as Germany continued to rise, almost every other power perceived another power as more threatening.

### Balancing against Threatening States

According to the theory of worst case realism, capabilities determine threats, and in the face of threats, states should either buckpass or balance. I will address buckpassing, which is the preferred strategy according to Mearsheimer, in a subsequent section. However, Mearsheimer is clear that when an adversary becomes powerful enough, states are compelled to balance against them for their own survival. I have already tested the case for hard balancing, and found the theory inadequate, but I will now look for less severe forms of balancing. The general prediction from the theory is that when faced with a threatening power, the other states will react by balancing, even if they take actions short of hard balancing.<sup>551</sup> The specific prediction for this case is that even if short of hard balancing, in the face of the German threat, the balancing that does occur should be targeted at Germany. Or phrased differently, if balancing occurs, it should not be targeted at states with less capability than Germany. Similar to the discussion of threat perception, this prediction is supported

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<sup>550</sup> As Russo-German relations deteriorated in the late 1870s and at various points in the 1880s, there was much displeasure voiced towards Germany, and some forces moved into Poland to express this displeasure. However, as I will discuss in a later section, the causal logic behind this was not one where Germany was perceived to be more threatening, but dissatisfaction with the level of support and assistance Germany was providing for Russia.

<sup>551</sup> The exact threshold for when an adversary's power becomes so great that buckpassing should be abandoned and the switch should be made to balancing is not clearly spelled out in Mearsheimer's theory. He has a very thorough analysis of the "art" of buckpassing and all of the various factors that need to be balanced and guarded against in buckpassing. However at the end of the day one is left only being able to explain what is sufficiently threatening by working backwards from when states decide to balance. To make this aspect of the overall theory easier to test, more work needs to be done on what the expectation is for when the shift from buckpassing to balancing is likely to occur. For more discussion, see Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 157-62, pp. 267-72.

in the early 1870s, especially during the “War in Sight” crisis, but then European international behavior violates the prediction.

In the early 1870s, much of Europe’s response to a rising Germany seems to support this prediction. France, although too weak to either balance Germany internally or attract allies, is focused on recovery in the hopes that it can attract just such an ally to at least protect itself from Germany, if not get its revenge. In the early 1870s, although it is often not viewed in this way, uncertainty and fear regarding Germany pushed Austria and Russia to improve relations and cooperate, a very early move towards balancing. Although it is underemphasized in most analysis of the 1870s, Europe’s response to the “War in Sight” crisis in 1875 looked very much like proto-balancing and followed the logic that a worst case realist might predict. As Germany grew more powerful and threatened France and Belgium, Britain and Russia coordinated a firm response to inform Germany that any further moves would not be accepted. Britain looked to coordinate its response with Russia and also looked to bring other European countries onto this incipient balancing coalition. Even though Germany grew more powerful, contrary to expectations of the theory, Russia and Britain did not end their competition in the periphery to cooperate of the Near East and East Asia to focus their efforts against the growing concentration of German power in the center of Europe. Moreover, this concentration of power in the center of Europe also pushed Britain to abandon its policy of non-intervention and brought it back onto the continent when there was sufficient power to warrant the return of such a focus. In many ways, this is the best evidence short of hard balancing, in support of the alternative null theory that changes in power determine the severity of the balancing response, and the rising power’s grand strategy does not matter.

However, the problem is that after 1875, almost all of the balancing is focused on other powers, even though German power continues to rise. For example, in the Balkan crisis of the 1870s, to deal with the Russian threat, Austria tries to gain the support of Germany and Britain. In



this case, Austria is trying to join with the two strongest states of the system, by definition the most threatening states in the system, to cope with the supposed threat of a much weaker power. In the historical analysis, I detailed the various measures the British took in late 1877 and early 1878 to try to balance against Russia. These moves included loans to Turkey for purchase of weapons, trying to establish a formal alliance with Austria to counter Russia, deploying the British Fleet on several occasions to nearby waters and even waters off Constantinople, and calling up several thousand expeditionary troops from India and deploying them to nearby Malta.<sup>552</sup> Although there were other examples of states balancing against a state other than Germany, one of the most interesting developments that seems to disconfirm the prediction is the naval arms race that developed in the late 1880s. After Britain's threats to Russia in the Black Sea and the deterioration of Anglo-French relations after the occupation of Egypt in 1882, both France and Russia implemented pretty extensive naval development plans. In response to this, Germany passed the Naval Defense Act in 1889, which developed the idea of the "two power standard." As one historian succinctly argues, it was "designed to meet the challenge of Franco-Russian sea power."<sup>553</sup> As German power continues to increase in the center of Europe, with the potential to challenge the fundamental interests of Britain, France, and Russia, rather than devoting resources to counter the German threat, or at least conserving resources to be able to do so in the future, these countries are diverting resources into a naval arms race. In the 1880s, virtually every country is taking actions to balance against someone else, and in few of those cases are they balancing against a rising Germany. Although the balancing responses to the rise of Germany in the early 1870s seem to validate the theory and its predictions, the behavior of European powers after 1875 disconfirms these predictions. When Germany is

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<sup>552</sup> For further details of these maneuvers see GDD; and Gooch and Ward, vol. III, p. 127. Although Britain's response is during a war, given that Britain is intervening in a war long before Russia challenges British territory, even critics of balancing would likely consider such action as reflecting the logic of balancing.

Even Paul Schroeder, who is well-known for his argument that balancing rarely happens in historical practice, suggests that the British moves could probably count as balancing. See Schroeder, in Elman and Vasquez, p. 119.

<sup>553</sup> See Rich, p. 249.

relatively weak in 1875, the balancing response is relatively firm, but as it grows stronger in the late 1870s and 1880s, there is less balancing. Using softer measures of balancing shows that the severity of balancing is almost inversely related to German power.

*The Logic of the Theory: Discounting Concessions Today for Fears of Tomorrow*

A fundamental foundation of the worst case realist theory is the certainty of intentions, especially future intentions, forcing states to believe all states are revisionist and worry about the future. A prediction which follows is that especially as Germany's power increases, there should be several examples of statesmen expressing worries about the future, and explicitly making this type of worst-case assessment. Through a thorough, but not exhaustive historical research of the available sources, I found only one reference that seems to perfectly capture this sentiment and show that the logic that Copeland and Mearsheimer say should be animating all assessments of intentions were indeed operating. Unfortunately, this one example is a *German* assessment of the French threat. At the famous dinner during the "War in Sight" crisis where Radowitz threatened Gontaut-Biron, he is also reported to have said: "You are reassured to the present: perhaps! But can you answer for the future? Can you give your assurance that France, regaining its former prosperity, and having reorganized its military forces, will not then find alliances which it lacks at the moment, and that then these resentments that she cannot fail to foster, and that she naturally feels at the loss of these two provinces, will not drive her inexorably to declare war on Germany?...and if we have allowed France to revive, to expand, have we not everything to fear?..."<sup>554</sup> My inability to find more examples confirming that the worst case logic was an important part of the thought process of how leaders evaluated Germany, or anyone else for that matter, does not disconfirm the prediction. However, if this incentive to worst-case is omnipresent, and it would be more likely to hold in the case of a rising

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<sup>554</sup> See Medlicott and Coveney, p. 89

power, one might expect to see many examples of leaders making these kinds of claims, and the absence of such evidence should lead one to question the centrality of this logic.

*Buckpassing: the Preferred Response to Threat*

I have already noted the underspecification in the theory of exactly when another state becomes so powerful, and therefore threatening, that a state can no longer buckpass, but is forced to pass the costs of balancing themselves.<sup>555</sup> Before that point, according to Mearsheimer, a state would prefer to buckpass and let others pay the cost of balancing against the potential aggressor. It is conceivable that Germany was never powerful enough, throughout the 1870s and 1880s, that a balancing response by anyone should have been expected.<sup>556</sup> Even if that were the case, the theory would still have trouble explaining the large amount of hard balancing and other balancing behavior that was directed at weaker states throughout the late 1870s and 1880s. Returning to the theory itself, if it was indeed the case that Germany was a rising power but had not yet crossed the threshold that would trigger a shift to balancing, on the basis of its material power, as well as its potentially threatening geographical position, it seems likely that the other European states would have buckpassed to try to force other European states to counter the potential threat. Implicit in the discussion of buckpassing is that the threat, in this case Germany, is grave enough that it needs to be countered, but not so grave that it compels others to balance. Given this threat, and the

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<sup>555</sup> As discussed in the theory section, in addition to Mearsheimer's discussion of buckpassing, for the seminal theoretical work see Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*; and Christensen and Snyder. However, these two earlier works conceive of buckpassing in the context of alliance options, not necessarily in overall responses to threats. Moreover, neither of those pieces adopt the worst case realist overall view.

<sup>556</sup> As noted earlier, with this underspecification in the theory, it essentially becomes tautological. The theory is clear in positing a relationship between power, and therefore threat, and balancing behavior. And it is clear that in cases where the power or threat is too extreme for buckpassing to be a wise strategy, the state is forced to switch to balancing. Without any attempt to make ex ante predictions about how much power is too much, the theory is forced to work in reverse in explaining state responses. In cases where balancing behavior occurred, the potential adversary was powerful enough to provoke such balancing and in cases where it does not, the potential adversary was not yet powerful enough. In addition to power, the theory also places considerable emphasis on geography, which might suggest that even if Germany's overall material power did not put it in Mearsheimer's category of potential hegemon, its location in the center of Europe would have likely made that growing power especially threatening, suggesting that the switch from buckpassing to balancing might be made earlier than sheer power might suggest.

challenges in implementing a buckpassing strategy, Mearsheimer argues it is likely that the other powers will choose to build up their resources a little to guard against others not catching the passed buck or to guard against the buckcatcher becoming too powerful in the process of checking the potential aggressor. Following from this discussion, a general prediction is that for states trying to buckpass, they should at the very least conserve their resources to be prepared in case buckpassing fails and needs to be replaced by balancing. In the specific form, faced with the threat of a rising Germany, the other European powers should at the very least conserve their resources to be prepared in case they need to balance Germany as it becomes more powerful. The evidence from Europe in the 1870s, and especially the 1880s, does not confirm this prediction, suggesting that these states were not buckpassing.

As a rising threat emerged in central Europe, if states were buckpassing, they would have been unlikely to exhaust their resources by expanding overseas empires, competing on the periphery, or building up navies. Yet that is exactly how European states responded as German power grew. The Austrians and the Russians spent most of the 1870s and 1880s struggling over spheres of influence in the Balkans. Moreover, the Russians focused on trying to take over Constantinople, seize ports on the Black Sea, and develop a Navy. As the dominant land power in central Europe continued to grow, Russia and Britain expended vast amounts of resources competing in the Near East and in East Asia. France, with Germany on its border, turned its attention to North Africa and Egypt, and sunk resources into developing a navy to counter the British. At the very moment that most of Europe should have been at the very least warily watching the developments in central Europe, most of their attention and resources were focused on the peripheries. In the words of two British historians: “It was not on the Rhine and the Danube but in Tunis, Egypt, Nigeria, Manchuria, that the Chancelleries of Europe now found the centre of gravity of their diplomacy.”<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> See G.P. Gooch and J.H.B. Masterman, *A Century of British Foreign Policy* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1918), p. 31.

Even if German power was insufficient to compel any of these states to balance in response, this behavior was not consistent with states trying to buckpass.

Taking geography into account, Mearsheimer suggests that more distant states are more likely to buckpass to states that are more proximate to the potential threat. In the German case, this would mean that Britain and Russia would pass the buck to Austria and France, and that Austria and France would be more likely to balance than the distant states. First of all, Austria, one of the states more likely to balance German power, instead formed an alliance with Germany to balance against the Russian threat, which is inconsistent with worst case realism's predictions about balancing and buckpassing. Secondly, rather than encouraging the proximate powers (France and Austria) to pay the costs to balance against Germany, Britain and Russia both antagonized and threatened these very states who were supposed to catch the buck. Britain threatened France over Egypt and the Mediterranean. Russia threatened Austria over the Balkans. These rivalries made the potential buck catchers far less likely to pay the costs so that the distant states could continue to free ride, but in forcing them to divert their attention from the threat in the center of Europe, these rivalries reduced the chances that a threatening Germany would be efficiently balanced against.<sup>558</sup> Rather than pushing the proximate powers to catch the buck and focus on Germany, such antagonism pushed them to look the other way, neglect the German threat, and waste resources that could have been used to check the German threat. Overall, the evidence from this period does not support the view

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<sup>558</sup> As mentioned at various points in the historical analysis, the behavior of European states in the late 1870s and 1880s gave Germany many opportunities in which it could have increased its relative power. If Bismarckian Germany behaved as an offensive realist suggested it should, it would have likely taken advantage of some of these opportunities. At various points in the book, Mearsheimer refers to Bismarck as trying to uphold the status quo and Bismarckian Germany as a status quo power. However, he never explains how a status quo state should ever exist in his offensive realist world which compels all prudent states to be revisionist. In a very short discussion of Bismarckian Germany, Mearsheimer argues that Germany did not behave aggressively until William II took over because during Bismarck's time, Germany was not powerful enough to be a potential hegemon. Once again without a stricter ex ante definition of when a state becomes a potential hegemon, this decision ends up being very ad hoc and requires one to work backwards and say that it is only when a state starts behaving aggressively that it becomes a potential hegemon. Given Mearsheimer's thorough and excellent treatment of Germany in the 1860s and Wilhelmine Germany, his relative neglect of Bismarckian Germany is a puzzle.

that the reason these states were not balancing against Germany was that they were trying to buckpass to others, and force others to pay the costs of countering the German threat.

### ***The Power of Reassurance: Evidence for Causal Mechanisms***

My theory begins with the same starting point as worst case realism, and most of the theoretical discussions of rising powers, that the emergence of a rising power tends to make the other states in the system, particularly the other great powers, nervous and anxious about the possibility that the rising power will challenge its interests and try to overthrow the system. Worst case realism suggests that uncertainty about intentions forces all other states to adopt worst case assumptions about the future behavior of the rising power, and their responses of whether or not to balance are driven by material power. Starting from the same observation about rising powers tending to provoke anxiety and worry among other states, my theory argues that the grand strategic choice by the rising power affects how the other powers come to perceive the rising power, and how they respond to its continued increase in power. Rising powers that are aware of the anxiety their power tends to provoke, what I call spiral-aware states, can send reassurance signals by passing up opportunities and making concessions to prevent this natural anxiety from leading to a balancing response. In short, I argue that a reassurance strategy can delay or even prevent a balancing response.

Especially given that the major alternative theory considers grand strategy to be irrelevant to state responses, it is important to demonstrate theoretically and verify empirically, not only that reassurance and non-balancing correlate, but also to show the causal pathways through which reassurance affects the balancing response. I suggest that reassurance delays balancing through two causal mechanisms. According to the first causal mechanism, *the strategic manipulation of ambiguity*, the rising power's sending of reassuring signals and passing up opportunities prevents the natural

response of anxiety from developing into a relative certain conclusion that the rising power will use its new power to challenge the interests of other and the system as a whole. Convincing other states that the rising power is definitely benign is likely to be too difficult, given the worries that will naturally result from its rising power, but such reassuring signals can prevent the other powers from concluding with great certainty that the rising power is a threat. Given that balancing is very costly for the state undertaking it, the more the rising power can keep the other powers uncertain about whether or not it is clearly a revisionist power that needs to be balanced against, the less likely they are to pay the large costs of balancing.

I call the theory's second causal mechanism *reaping the benefits of a rising power*. Although the worst case realist theory asserts that states *should* respond to other states based on worst case assumptions about their intentions, particularly rising powers, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that they *do* behave this way, even in cases of extreme power shifts. Although this worst-case realist view has the appeal of parsimony, the theoretical and empirical analysis in this dissertation shows that other factors can influence a state's decision calculus in how to respond when faced with a rising power. The worst case realist argument suggests that states should focus on the rising power's increased ability to do harm to the other powers with its increased power and increased ability to threaten the survival of the other states. My theory suggests that states do not just look at what German power can do *to* them, but also what it can do *for* them. Through this mechanism, the rising power can use its increased power to help protect the interests of other states and provide benefits to them, which affects the cost-benefit calculations of various potential responses to the rising power. If sharing these spoils leads the other powers to see the benefits that come from the increased power and shows them how they might be dependent on the support of the rising power for endeavors, it is far less likely that the other power would sacrifice this by deciding to balance, and alienating the rising power.

In the remainder of this section, I will lay out the key predictions from my theory of reassurance and evaluate how well the evidence from the case validates my theory. In the previous section I argued that with the exception of the firm response to French threats during the “War in Sight” crisis, most of the predictions from the worst case realist theory are not supported by the evidence. In contrast, I argue that most of the predictions from my theory of how reassurance can delay balancing are supported by the evidence. The general prediction of the theory is that when a rising power implements a grand strategy of reassurance, the other powers should be less likely to respond by balancing, particularly not by taking measures that would count as hard balancing. The firm response by Britain and Russia during the “War in Sight” crisis does not confirm this general prediction, but Europe’s response to a rising Germany in the late 1870s and 1880s lends it much more support. I will lay out and evaluate several other predictions that flow from the broad theory.

#### *Rising Power Provoking Worries and Anxiety*

In the theoretical discussion, I asserted that due to concerns for security and survival in an anarchic world, the emergence of a rising power is likely to produce worries and anxiety among other great powers. Although this makes sense theoretically and there are other cases which have supported it empirically, to show that my theory of reassurance is operating, I need to demonstrate that this was the case for the response to the rise of Germany. The reason is that if Bismarckian Germany was recognized as a rising power but most countries were not particularly anxious or worried about what that might mean for their interests or security, then it would not be surprising that the states did not balance. If another factor allowed other states to perceive Bismarckian Germany as a rising power, but not be worried about what that meant, then whatever other factor explained their lack of worry would likely also be the explanation for the lack of balancing. My theory can only be shown to be working in cases where there is some existing uncertainty, which



means that balancing could be an eventual result. If there is no worry, then there is nothing for the other powers to need to be reassured about. If there was no baseline of anxiety, then one could see a correlation between reassurance and non-balancing, but the grand strategy would have no causal power in driving the outcome.

Therefore, the specific prediction is that the other great powers, after they recognized Germany to be a rising power, should have expressed worry and concern about how a rising Germany might threaten their interests. As I detailed in the historical analysis, this prediction is very well supported. In short, in 1871, when they thought about what a rising Germany meant for their security and interests, all European powers expressed worries and concerns. France worried that Germany would invade it again to finish the job, especially given the ongoing military occupation. Austria worried that Germany would try to pull the rest of the Austrian Germans into the new German Empire. Russia worried that Germany would move into Russian Poland and potentially the Baltic, both to unite all the Germans under one leader and to increase its overall power. Britain worried that Germany would threaten Belgium or the Netherlands, or perhaps even try to invade Britain itself. This prediction is clearly supported by the historical evidence. This meant that Bismarckian Germany did face the rising power's dilemma, where others worried about the rising power based on its power increase, which meant that reassurance was needed and could potentially have a causal impact on behavior.

#### *Recognition of Reassurance Signals by Others*

Another prediction of the theory is that there should be plenty of examples of Germany passing up opportunities to challenge the interests of others, as well as examples of Germany making concessions and sending conciliatory signals. Although this is obvious, in a summary of the evidence it is useful to provide a few examples of such behavior, to demonstrate empirically that my

coding of Germany as implementing a reassurance strategy is correct. This prediction is verified empirically, much more in the post-1875 period than in earlier times. However, it is true that in the early 1870s, Germany did make many peaceful promises, engage in military restraint, and sent a signal of its peaceful intentions by being willing to join the Three Emperors' League in 1873.

In the late 1870s and 1880s, Germany passed up many opportunities to increase its power and challenge the interests of other powers that a revisionist power would have likely seized. To uphold peace, which was clearly in Germany's interests, Bismarck intervened many times to prevent wars from breaking out that would have diverted the attention of the European powers onto somewhere on the periphery. A revisionist rising power would have been likely to hope for such developments, if not try to push them, in order to give the rising power an opportunity to make gains while the other powers' backs were turned. In fact, several European powers worried that this was Bismarck's grand plan all alone. For a quick example, Britain worried that Germany was looking forward to a war breaking out between Britain and Russia in 1878 after the Russo-Turkish War, and that Bismarck would use such an opportunity to invade France again. However, Bismarck actively intervened to maintain peace, thus removing a potential golden opportunity. A similar pattern occurred over several colonial disputes that could have escalated to war, as well as continued Anglo-Russian tension. As detailed in the historical analysis, at several points in the late 1870s and 1880s, Bismarck helped other European great powers annex territory, both by giving Germany's approval and even promising to prevent other powers from opposing such annexations. In many ways this is the textbook example of a conciliatory move that reduced Germany's relative power, when others were worried that it might be trying to maximize it. The historical analysis shows many examples of concessions and passing up opportunities for Germany to benefit.

In the previous section evaluating the worst case realist explanation for balancing behavior, I discussed in detail the balancing behavior of the European powers in the 1870s and 1880s. This behavior obviously also relates to my theory as well. Whereas worst case realism expected balancing behavior to track with changes in the balance of power, my theory explains how grand strategy can short-circuit the material forces that would push others to respond to a rising power by balancing. Moreover, the reassurance strategy is not only aimed at convincing the other powers that they should not balance against the rising power, but in not challenging the interests of others, the reassurance strategy also allows for the possibility that another power can behave in an aggressive manner and provoke a balancing response. Although the prediction is that others should not balance against the rising power, evidence that the other powers viewed someone else as more threatening and worth balancing against may also indirectly reveal the success of the reassurance strategy. Many realist theories suggest that if there was going to be balancing in the system it should be against the rising power, especially if the rising power is a continental state in the center of Europe with a large army. If there is evidence that states recognize the rising power, but decide to balance against others, this would suggest that at some level they were at least uncertain as to whether the rising power was likely to threaten them, and could also suggest they were reassured. Although this is not a unique prediction from the theory or a particularly strong test, as many other factors could explain it, my theory explains how reassurance could make it more likely that the other powers would balance against others instead of balancing against the rising power.

Given that I reviewed the evidence in greater detail above, I will only summarize it now. With the exception of the Russian and British firm response in 1875, the rest of the balancing, both hard balancing and soft balancing, targeted states other than the rising Germany. As I argued above, although this does not prove that German reassurance was the cause of this, most theories would

suggest that if balancing were to have occurred in this period it would have been most likely to have been targeted at Germany. For example, the fact that Austria was more threatened by the potential of a weaker Russia's threat to its sphere of influence in the Balkans than it was by the potential of a stronger Germany's threat to Austria proper suggests that Austria was at least relatively comfortable with German power, even though it had much more of it than the country it considered to be the real threat.

In addition to the several examples of balancing against other powers, the diversion of resources and activity to colonial affairs and the periphery served as even more important behavioral indicators that most of Europe was not particularly worried about the German threat on the continent by the 1880s. With the rise of a new great power in the center of Europe, one would expect European powers to have their attention focused on developments on the continent, and if not devote resources to preparing for meeting a challenge on the continent, at least keep them in reserve in case it was needed. One would expect European powers to pull back from the periphery and focus their attention on Europe. In fact, throughout the late 1870s and 1880s we see the opposite happening, as powers expanded their interests all over the globe. Although the reasons for this are multi-faceted, it shows that they were at least comfortable enough with a rising Germany in Europe while they focused their attention and resources abroad. The fact that attention was focused on places like Egypt, the Near East, Asia, and Africa, is in many ways further illustration of the success of Bismarck's reassurance strategy of at least making it seem unlikely that Germany would challenge the European status quo. This is neither a particularly strong, nor unique prediction of the theory, but my theory does provide an explanation for behavior that seems strange at first glance.

Although the ideal result is for the other powers to recognize on their own how the rising power is a force for peace and how it helped others attain benefits, it is very likely that to get there the rising power would try to actively show the other powers how its power was beneficial. My theory predicts that Germany would actively try to make sure that the others understood the constructive role Germany played in avoiding wars and crises, and how they benefitted as a result. In many ways, this is the public relations campaign that would accompany actual actions to make sure that Germany received credit for its role. It is likely that for this to be most effective, the rising power would be focused on consistency, both between words and deeds and also consistency of message before, during, and after taking a certain action. However, trying to take credit for something that the rising power was not really involved in could backfire and end up making the countries more suspicious.

There is much evidence to support this prediction. Bismarck's declarations of Germany as a peaceful and satiated power were more credible and influential when he started taking more actions to preserve the peace. One of the best and most successful attempts to match a message of peace with consistent action in support of peace was Bismarck's behavior during the 1878 Congress of Berlin. From his "honest broker" speech to his congratulatory message to close the Congress and the many concessions he made at the Congress itself, for every power but Russia, he was able to make sure every power understood that it was German assistance that brought peace and gave them spoils. Even for Russia, as relations deteriorated in 1879, Bismarck had the ambassador try to remind the Russians all of the concessions they were granted on the back of Bismarck's hard work. The Congress of Berlin was hardly the only example where Bismarck was able to push a consistency between words and deeds that made sure others recognized the utility of Germany. Bismarck's encouragement of France's occupation of Tunis is another episode that confirms this prediction.

Before France annexed it Germany encouraged it to do so on several occasions, and promised to prevent the international community from being too upset, and delivered on this promise. A similar consistency occurred when Britain occupied Egypt and Germany promised to prevent active opposition and delivered on the promise. Another strong piece of evidence in support of this was Bismarck's May 5, 1884 memo to Count Munster, German Ambassador to Britain, in which he instructed him to emphasize that "our friendship can be of great help to British policy."<sup>559</sup>

*Germany as a Threat?: Reduced Estimate of the Threat from Rising Germany*

The best evidence would be European leaders or diplomats making overt connections between being uncertain as to whether or not Germany was a threat, the immense costs of balancing against it, and why putting these two together would make balancing an unwise policy response. Unfortunately, I have not found such smoking gun evidence that would put the logic of the causal mechanism exactly. However, it is useful to disaggregate these two steps and test to see if they are both at work in the case. On the issue of whether or not Germany was perceived to be a threat, the prediction from the theory is that when European leaders or diplomats talked about Germany, they should not talk about Germany as an imminent threat, not talk as if Germany was likely to challenge their interests in Europe, and not talk about likely aggression or aggressive behavior. However, this does not mean that they should be convinced Germany could never be a potential threat, as this would be unlikely in the face of a rising power. Wariness and concern in response to a rising Germany is perfectly consistent with the theory, as it is this wariness and concern that the grand strategy of reassurance tries to manage.

The evidence for this prediction is mixed. In the early 1870s and especially in 1875 during the "War-in-Sight" crisis, many European leaders and diplomats, but especially those in Britain and

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<sup>559</sup> See GDD, p. xxx.

Russia talked very openly as if they were quite certain Germany was a threat. Comparisons were made to Napoleon and many claimed that if Bismarck and Germany were not checked, they would continue such aggressive behavior and undermine European stability. Clearly, this assessment sounds very close to being certain that Germany was a threat is inconsistent with the prediction. However, in the late 1870s and throughout the 1880s, these assessments changed, even though Germany grew more powerful, and very rarely did one speak or write such harsh words about Germany. Although specific comparisons to Napoleon were not made, at various points in the 1880s, France, Britain, Austria, and Russia referred to countries that were the greatest threat or the most likely to threaten their interests, and for each country at various times, they were referring to a country besides Germany. Consistent with the theory, some wariness remained in most capitals, but for the most part throughout the late 1870s and 1880s, the assessments of leaders and diplomats seemed far more uncertain about whether or not Germany was a threat than the earlier assessments in 1875.

#### *Welcoming Germany's Rise: Reaping the Benefits of a Rising Power*

Given that many theoretical discussions about responses to rising powers, and not just those who assume worst-case assessments, focus on a rising power's increased capacity to challenge the interests of other powers and threaten their security, demonstrating that others recognized the positives and benefits that Germany's rise created for them is particularly important for my theory. An earlier prediction was that Germany should actively help the other powers see that Germany was a force for stability and its power was helping to secure the interests of others. A prediction that follows from the theory is that leaders and diplomats of the other European states should recognize the benefits that German power helped them obtain, express gratitude and appreciation for

Germany's role, and perhaps even recognize that if it did not continue to have friendly and stable relations with Germany, they would be likely to lose the access to such benefits and support.

There is a large amount of evidence to support this prediction. In the historical analysis I have already included several pieces of evidence that demonstrate how European leaders were grateful for Germany's support at many points in the late 1870s and 1880s. However, with the importance of this prediction for the theory, I will include a few more pieces of evidence in support. In late 1879, focusing on the benefits that a stronger Germany could provide for Russia, Saburov wrote to the tsar: "A friendly Prussia places us in the privileged position of being the only Power in Europe which need fear no attack and which can reduce its budget without risk, as our August master did after the Crimean War."<sup>560</sup> In 1883, Granville expressed Britain's gratitude for Germany's support in the annexation of Egypt and also showed that he realized that with Germany's increased power, it could also cause problems for Britain if it did not maintain stable relations with Germany. Lord Granville said "We are uncommonly grateful to prince Bismarck, for the friendly attitude of German policy this summer was of great service to us. Our being left with a free hand in Egypt we owe, when all is said, to Germany's goodwill. We are all aware that at a particular moment Prince Bismarck could have upset the coach if he had chosen to, and we realize with much thankfulness that he refrained from doing so."<sup>561</sup> In 1887, Count Hatzfeldt reported back to Bismarck that during a meeting with Salisbury, he "admitted with fervent thanks that in his eyes a friendly Germany was as a protecting bulwark against any French aggression."<sup>562</sup> In 1880 when Count Munster, the German Ambassador to Britain, met with Lord Granville after Gladstone's return to power, in a very simple, yet powerful message, Granville that he "considered

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<sup>560</sup> See Simpson, p. 60-1.

<sup>561</sup> See GDD, p. 167-8.

<sup>562</sup> See GDD, p. 290.



that a strong Germany meant happiness for Europe.”<sup>563</sup> For skeptics who would disregard this evidence as diplomatic niceties, it is important to remember that European leaders were not only expressing these thoughts, but also were focusing their balancing responses on other powers, even as Germany grew more powerful in the center of Europe. These expressions showed that European leaders recognized the benefits that German power provided help to explain why they did not balance against a rising Germany and strongly confirm my theory.

### **Balancing Against Wilhelmine Germany: A Brief Illustration of Coercion Backfire**

#### *The Causes of the Franco-Russian Alliance: Germany Abandons Reassurance and Builds up the Army*

The formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance so quickly after Bismarck's departure, and the belief that it was aimed at Germany, has led some to conclude that Bismarck's reassurance strategy would have fallen apart even if he had remained in power. According to this view, although Bismarck's genius postponed the formation of this anti-German coalition, this merely delayed the inevitable balancing coalition provoked by Germany's rising power. This view, however, is in direct contradiction with the vast majority of the historical evidence. The first step of the Franco-Russian alliance, which was a broad political agreement signed in 1891, was not a response to German power. On the contrary, Wilhelm's move away from reassurance by failing to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, and Russian perception that Britain had joined the Triple Alliance, forced an isolated Russia to reach out to France. The second step of the alliance, a military convention first agreed to in 1892 and ratified in 1893 and 1894, was directed at Germany. However, rather than just responding to German power, it was the coercive threat of two large Army Bills that pushed Russia to see Germany as a greater threat that needed to be addressed.

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<sup>563</sup> See GDD, p. 152.

After Wilhelm II took power in 1888 and Bismarck resigned in 1890, with General Leo von Caprivi succeeding him as chancellor, Germany moved away from Bismarck's approach to managing relations in Europe. Believing that the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia was incompatible with the Triple Alliance and could entangle Germany in conflict unnecessarily, Germany decided not to renew the Reinsurance Treaty. As part of the "New Course," Germany tightened its relationship with Austria and reached out to Great Britain.<sup>564</sup>

The Reinsurance Treaty successfully reassured Russia by binding it to Germany and making sure that it did not feel isolated. When Germany failed to renew the Reinsurance Treaty, it abandoned reassurance, which made Russia wary that it would become isolated. Germany's abandoning of its commitment to Russia and Russian fears that Britain was joining with the rest of Europe forced an isolated Russia to reach a political settlement with France. Germany's move away from reassurance contributed to Russia's feeling of isolation and helped trigger the formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance.<sup>565</sup>

In 1890, as part of its reaching out to Britain, Germany and Britain resolved their colonial disputes in the Treaty of Helgoland. The Russians feared that this was a move towards an alliance.<sup>566</sup> The Russian Ambassador to Britain, Staal, wrote back in a cable that "the entente with Germany has been virtually accomplished."<sup>567</sup> In June 1891, Italian Foreign Minister Rudini, in an attempt to increase domestic support for the Triple Alliance, gave the impression that Britain had joined the

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<sup>564</sup> For more on the shift from Bismarck to Caprivi and the "New Course," see Michael Balfour, *The Kaiser and His Times* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), especially Ch. 5-7; J. Alden Nichols, *Germany after Bismarck: The Caprivi Era* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1958), especially Ch. 2-4; J.C.G. Rohl, *Germany without Bismarck: The Crisis of Government in the Second Reich, 1890-1900* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967); Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II: Prince and Emperor, 1859-1900* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), especially pp. 188-211; and Rich, Ch. 13.

<sup>565</sup> For more on the Franco-Russian alliance, see William Leonard Langer, *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967); Georges Michon, *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1891-1917*, translated by Norman Thomas, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969); George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order*, George F. Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia, and the Coming of the First World War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); and William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism: 1890-1902*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), pp. 1-68.

<sup>566</sup> See Rich, p. 260.

<sup>567</sup> See Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 330

Triple Alliance.<sup>568</sup> In July 1891, the Kaiser's visit to London only reinforced this perception in Europe. In combination with British naval visits to Flume and Venice, these events made it seem like Britain had in fact joined the Triple Alliance.

Faced with the prospect of isolation in Europe, with all other powers in one broad coalition, Russia decided it had no other choice but to reach out to improve relations with France.<sup>569</sup> The diaries and cables of Russian diplomats such as Lamsdorff and Morenheim are filed with evidence that British involvement in the Triple Alliance was the key driver for the 1891 political agreement with France.<sup>570</sup> In the clearest evidence that worries about England drove the formation of the alliance, Giers invited the French Ambassador Laboulaye to join him in July 1891 and "took the initiative in suggesting that the renewal of the Triple Alliance and the indirect accession of England to it had created for France and Russia a new situation which might make it desirable to take a further step in the direction of an entente."<sup>571</sup> According to Albertini, "the first decisive impetus to an alliance was given in 1891 by the renewal of the Triple Alliance announced by Rudini in the Senate in a form which created the impression that it had been in some measure joined by England."<sup>572</sup>

Although France was interested in drawing Russia into an anti-German alliance, as it had been interested in getting revenge for Alsace-Lorraine, but Russia only supported a general political agreement and opposed any anti-German interpretations of the alliance. In fact, the area of greatest common interests for France and Russia was in weakening Britain in the colonial realm. According to Albertini, "The Franco-Russian alliance seemed at the beginning to be directed against England,

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<sup>568</sup> See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 19-20.

<sup>569</sup> See Laurence B. Packard, "Russia and the Dual Alliance," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (April 1920), pp.391-410; Langer, *The Franco-Russian Alliance*, pp. 137-69; and Kennan, *Fateful Alliance*, pp. 55-57, pp. 89-90.

<sup>570</sup> See Langer, p. 20.

<sup>571</sup> See Langer, p. 21.

<sup>572</sup> See Albertini, p. 74.

with who France and Russia were in conflict in the Mediterranean and in Asia.”<sup>573</sup> In one of the classic books on the formation of the alliance, Michon argues that in 1891 Russia was solely concerned with the threat from Britain and France grew increasingly frustrated at its inability to gain Russia’s commitment and support for any other types of issues. In his discussion of 1891 negotiations, he explicitly argues, “the Russians were primarily concerned with the British threat to their interests, not the German.”<sup>574</sup>

The 1891 agreement was a general political agreement, not an anti-German agreement, and one driven more by concerns that Britain was joining the Triple Alliance than German power. This suggests that the move away from Bismarckian reassurance did not cause the alliance and it was not provoked by German power. The military convention ratified in 1893 and 1894, however, was focused much more on the German threat. However, it was not a sudden realization of a change in German power that drove Russia to support such an anti-German arrangement, but it was German hostility and coercion that threatened Russia and drove it into an explicitly anti-German alliance. This move to a coercive strategy and increased military build-ups, clear deviations from Bismarck’s reassurance, were the real driver of the anti-German aspects of the Franco-Russian Alliance.

In the early 1890s, Germany imposed a series of coercive economic measures that the Russians resented.<sup>575</sup> Though these were minor annoyances, Germany’s move to rapidly build-up its armed forces was a major step away from Bismarck’s reassurance and towards a hostile policy. The German Army Bill, introduced in 1892, planned to increase German forces by more than 80,000 men. In part to sell this increase domestically, Germany also explicitly adopted a two-power standard, with Russia as the other potential threat that it needed to prepare for. Not only did

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<sup>573</sup> See Albertini, p. 77.

<sup>574</sup> See Michon, p. 34.

<sup>575</sup> See Geiss, p. 69.

Germany dramatically increase the size of its army, but it explicitly targeted Russia.<sup>576</sup> This was a far more coercive and provocative approach than just simply not renewing the Reinsurance Treaty.

In case the Russians had not noticed this development, the French wrote to Russia repeatedly in 1893 to call their attention to it. French military leaders continuously highlighted the threatening nature of such a development, and Russian military officers and diplomats also perceived this as a threat.<sup>577</sup> Russia responded to the army bill by moving more forces into Russian Poland, opposite Germany, and in late 1893, the Russian sent a squadron to Toulon to strengthen the alliance. Moreover, in an exchange of notes in December 1893 and January 1894, the military convention was adopted. It had been agreed to earlier in 1892, but Russia had been dragging its feet in agreeing to ratify it.<sup>578</sup> The threat from Germany's military build-up was enough to push the Russians over the edge and into the arms of the French.

Mearsheimer argues that "France and Russia came together because they were scared of Germany's growing power, not because Germany behaved aggressively or foolishly."<sup>579</sup> This argument is completely wrong for the 1891 agreement, which was not driven by concerns about Germany, and Russia explicitly prevented it from covering Germany. It is always difficult to assess the relative explanatory power of rising material power and increasingly coercive behavior, especially when they are occurring at the same time. However, the rapid shift in Russia's force deployments and desire to tighten its relations with France, coming so soon after Germany's Army Bill, which was clearly noticed by Russian officials, suggests that German coercion is a stronger explanation for Russia's desire to adopt a stronger balancing response. In Russian discussions and decision calculus, there is very little evidence to support the argument that it was German power, and not Germany's

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<sup>576</sup> See Nichols, *Germany after Bismarck*, pp. 192-264; Langer, *Diplomacy to Imperialism*, p. 42; Taylor, *Struggle*, p. 340; and Craig, *Germany*, p. 237.

<sup>577</sup> See Kennan, *Fateful Alliance*, p. 216-7; and Michon, *Franco-Russian Alliance*, p. 59.

<sup>578</sup> See Bridge and Bullen, p. 246.

<sup>579</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 214.

aggressive military build-up, that drove Russia into France's arms. This not only suggests that the Franco-Russian alliance was not a natural or inevitable result of rising German power, but also that it is at least possible that if Germany had continued to implement reassurance, it may have prevented the formation of such an alliance, especially the anti-German shift.

### *Browbeating into Friendship? German Coercion of Britain in the Colonial World*

Although Wilhelm II was interested in improving relations with Britain, he adopted a coercive approach that was based on the idea that threatening and pressuring it would make them more likely to join with Germany and Austria. In the mid-1890s, Germany entered the colonial fray and repeatedly challenged and irritated Great Britain through what one historian called "bullying behavior and bombastic pronouncements."<sup>580</sup> In the Congo Treaty of 1894, Britain had cleverly concluded an agreement to deny France access to the upper Nile and give Britain a continuous strip of territory from Cape Town to Cairo. Though it had limited interests in these issues, Germany very publicly joined with France to push the humiliating cancellation of the treaty.<sup>581</sup> In the 1895 intervention against Japan, Germany joined with Russia and France against British interests.<sup>582</sup>

In an even more confrontational affair, Germany confronted Britain over South Africa. In 1896, Dr. Leander Jameson, who had connections to the British government, tried to overthrow President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal in the Jameson Raids. Wilhelm II explored several potential responses including declaring the Transvaal a German protectorate and sending in German troops.<sup>583</sup> In the end he decided to send the less provocative Kruger telegram, which expressed support for President Kruger and challenged Britain's position and interests in South Africa.<sup>584</sup> In a

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<sup>580</sup> See Rich, p. 262. For more on Germany's overall approach, see Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 349.

<sup>581</sup> See Bridge and Bullen, p. 249; and Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p.349-50.

<sup>582</sup> See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 441.

<sup>583</sup> See Cecil, *Wilhelm II*, p. 286-9; Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, pp. 228-44; and Geiss, p. 71.

<sup>584</sup> See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 237.

demarche to the German Ambassador in Paris, Marschall shared the government's strategy. He wrote, "if this kind of pressure could be brought to bear, the British would cave in and join the Triple Alliance."<sup>585</sup> Based on other German-language documents, Langer agrees that Wilhelm's strategy was completely coercive. He writes that, "The main objective was to frighten the English into closer relations with the Triple Alliance, and in the pursuit of this end the Emperor and his advisors had reckoned on the friendly support of France and Russia."<sup>586</sup>

Although not producing any serious balancing responses by Great Britain, British officials were clearly annoyed by these unnecessary provocative moves. Referring to the Kruger telegram, the Queen thought it "outrageous and very unfriendly" and the Prince of Wales called it "a most gratuitous act of unfriendliness."<sup>587</sup> British newspapers were also outraged by these challenges and views of Germany certainly were negatively affected.<sup>588</sup>

### *Weltpolitik, Naval Build-Up, and Coercion*

The German naval build-up launched in the late 1890s under the leadership of Alfred von Tirpitz was the classic example of a coercive strategy for a rising power. Tirpitz returned from his time in the Far East, having witnessed British-German commercial rivalry, and concluded that German sea power was at a huge disadvantage. Given Germany's geography and lack of bases, cruiser warfare would be difficult to implement. He concluded that, "the only decisive factor would be the battle-fleet in the North Sea."<sup>589</sup>

Although there were domestic drivers in support of Germany's move to Weltpolitik, Wilhelm and Tirpitz had a clear strategy through which they believed naval coercion would improve

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<sup>585</sup> See Craig, *Germany*, p. 245.

<sup>586</sup> See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 247.

<sup>587</sup> See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 248-9

<sup>588</sup> See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 240-1.

<sup>589</sup> See Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 433.

Germany's international position.<sup>590</sup> Facing the supreme British Navy, Tirpitz aimed to build a Germany Navy that would be powerful enough to force concessions from Britain. According to Kennedy, his overwhelming motivation was to create a "political power factor" against England.<sup>591</sup> As Wilhelm explained to another German official, using the famous metaphor that came to be associated with Wilhelmine Germany's coercive approach, "Only when we can hold out our mailed fist against his face, will the British lion draw back, as he did recently before America's threats."<sup>592</sup> The concept of the "Risk Fleet" was that Germany aimed to build a navy that was so powerful that unless it wanted to leave the British Navy weakened in key areas such as the Mediterranean and in the colonies, Britain would have no choice but to concede to German demands. Rather than risking either a challenge to Germany or leaving itself vulnerable elsewhere, the Royal Navy would have no choice but to accommodate Germany's demands. The plan was endorsed in 1897 and Germany began to implement it with Navy Laws passed in 1898 and 1900.

#### *British Internal and External Balancing: Anglo-French Entente Not Aimed at Germany*

British officials took notice of Germany's naval build up and responded by increasing its own naval build-up early in the 1900s and redeploying some of its forces to the North Sea to protect Britain from the growing German threat. As early as 1902, Britain began to take notice. Over the next few years, it increased the concentration in home waters, established a new naval base at Rosyth

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<sup>590</sup> For the classic statements of Weltpolitik, see Fritz Fischer, *Germany's War Aims in the First World War* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967); and Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975). For more on Weltpolitik and the "risk fleet," see Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980); Paul Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy, 1870-1945* (London: Fontana Press, 1984), Ch. 4-5; Paul Kennedy, "Tirpitz, England and the Second Navy Law of 1900: A Strategical Critique," *Militargeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, Vol. 2 (1970), pp. 33-57; Jonathan Steinberg, *Yesterdays's Deterrent: Tirpitz and the Birth of the German Battle Fleet* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965); Holger H. Herwig, *"Luxury" Fleet: The Imperial German Navy, 1888-1918* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1980), pp. 17-53; Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, pp. 415-44; Cecil, *Wilhelm II*, pp. 315-39; and Robert J. Art, *The Influence of Foreign Policy on Seapower: New Weapons and Weltpolitik in Wilhelmine Germany* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1973)

<sup>591</sup> See Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 224.

<sup>592</sup> See Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*, p.224



to cover North Sea, and launched Cawdor program of December 1905 for 4 capital ships per year.<sup>593</sup> In the early 1900s, recognizing that the German fleet would be more powerful than Russian fleet by 1906, the Royal Navy talked of the need to strengthen North Sea deployments.<sup>594</sup>

However, when Britain and France signed the Entente Cordiale in April 1904, neither country viewed it as aimed directly at Germany.<sup>595</sup> For both countries it was a broad agreement to settle economic and colonial differences that had brought trouble to their relations for decades.<sup>596</sup> The British were overextended and happy to put an end to struggles in Egypt and elsewhere in Africa. If the Entente was aimed at any power, from Britain's standpoint, it was aimed at Russia, as Britain hoped that a friendly France might restrain Russia from challenging British interests in Asia.<sup>597</sup> For both sides, this was an agreement that both sides had sought for many years and would improve the security and economic interests of both sides.

#### *The Morocco Crisis and German Attempts at Alliance-Breaking*

Although the Entente was not aimed at Germany, Wilhelm and others in Germany perceived it as a deterioration of the security environment and increasing threat to Germany. Sontag very clearly explains how German leaders saw this increased threat, and how they felt they needed to

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<sup>593</sup> For on these British internal responses, see Marder, *British Naval Policy*, especially p. 464; E.L. Woodward, *Great Britain and the German Navy* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1964 [1935]), pp. 54-66; and John Lowe, *The Great Powers, Imperialism, and the German Problem, 1865-1925*, p. 155.

<sup>594</sup> See Kennedy, *Anglo-American Antagonism*, p. 251-2.

<sup>595</sup> According to one historian, "There is not a shred of evidence that Landsdowne and his colleagues wished to form a coalition against Germany." See Sontag, p. 93.

<sup>596</sup> For more on the formation of the Entente Cordiale, see P.J.V. Rolo, *Entente Cordiale: The Origins of the Anglo-French Agreements of 8 April 1904* (London: Macmillan, 1969); Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., *The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969); and Dwight E. Lee, *Europe's Crucial Years: The Diplomatic Background of World War I, 1902-1914* (Hanover, N.H.: Clark University Press, 1974), Ch. 3. On French motivations and policies, see Christopher Andrew *Theophile Delcasse and the Making of the Entente Cordiale* (London: Macmillan, 1968). For British motivations and policies, see G.W. Monger, *The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy, 1900-1907* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), especially Ch. 6; C.J. Lowe and M.L. Dockrill, *The Mirage of Power, Volume 1: British Foreign Policy, 1902-1914* (London: Routledge, 1972), pp. 1-10; and Keith M. Wilson, *The Policy of the Entente: Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy, 1904-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)..

<sup>597</sup> See Lowe and Dockrill, *Mirage of Power*, p. 5; Rich, p. 394; and John Lowe, *Great Powers, Imperialism, and the German Problem*, p. 125.

respond. He writes, “Holstein said, smash the entente by force if necessary; otherwise Germany will soon be surrounded by hostile states. . . . William II said, draw France and Russia away from England; unite the Triple and Dual Alliances. . . . Bulow attempted to combine the policies of the Kaiser and Holstein.”<sup>598</sup>

Germany’s naval build-up continued, but in 1905, it took advantage of the crisis in Morocco to try to dramatically improve its security position. In late 1904, France sent a mission to Morocco to demand reforms, which was the first step towards establishing a protectorate. France had gained the support of most European powers first, but did not consult with Germany because Germany had minimal interests. Germany was angered to have been left out of these consultations and decided to challenge French plans.

Germany was motivated by several factors in its decision to stand up to France<sup>599</sup>. First it wanted to demonstrate that German interests and Germany needed to be taken seriously. Perhaps more importantly, German leaders believed that bullying behavior during the Morocco crisis would lead to the dissolution of existing alliances and attract new partners to Germany. As the mastermind behind this strategy, Holstein was convinced that if put in a real crisis situation over Morocco, France and Britain would doubt the reliability of each other and this would split the alliance. If Germany refused to let France take Morocco, England will only provide weak diplomatic support, which will force France to turn against it, thus splitting the alliance.<sup>600</sup> According to one historian, -- “Bulow thought that by threats he could instill fear and thus accomplish the twin purposes of testing—possibly disrupting—the newly formed Entente and ultimately extracting a higher price for

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<sup>598</sup> See Sontag, p. 100.

<sup>599</sup> For more on Germany’s approach to the 1905 Moroccan Crisis, see Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II, Volume II: Emperor and Exile, 1900-1941* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 91-98; Geiss, *German Foreign Policy*, Ch. 10; and Raymond J. Sontag, “German Foreign Policy, 1904-1906,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (June 1928), pp. 278-301. For an analysis that uses political psychology and prospect theory to explain German behavior, see Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, *Balancing Risks: Great Power Intervention in the Periphery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), Ch. 3.

<sup>600</sup> See Sontag, p. 101.

Morocco.”<sup>601</sup> Germans believed that the Morocco crisis presenting an opportunity through which bullying France would prove to it that its allies were unreliable, and would end up pushing them to improve relations and side with Germany. This was a classic example of bandwagon beliefs in action, as German leaders believed they could gain allies through intimidation and browbeating.

Wilhelm II was to land at Tangier, ignore the French and deal directly with the Sultan, to whom he was to express support for independence.<sup>602</sup> As part of this challenge to France, German officials not only prevented French control of Morocco, but they also argued that improved relations were impossible as long as Delcasse was in office, and they demanded his removal. This demand was a challenge to France as an independent great power and other great powers as well. However, France conceded and Delcasse was removed from office. After Delcasse was replaced by Rouvier, rather adopting a friendlier attitude towards France, Bulow used even more threatening language.<sup>603</sup> Despite given what it demanded, Germany still seemed unsatisfied and placed greater demands on France and others and elevated the hostility of its approach and rhetoric. The Moroccan Crisis resolved itself, but German bullying left its mark on the perceptions of European great powers.

### Balancing Responses

After Germany continued and accelerated its naval build-up and combined it with aggressive, bullying tactics during the Morocco Crisis, European powers, and especially Great Britain, moved to balance more aggressively against Germany. Firstly, Britain not only strengthened its support to

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<sup>601</sup> See Albrecht-Carrie, p. 247.

<sup>602</sup> For analysis of how the crisis unfolded, see Eugene N. Anderson, *The First Moroccan Crisis 1904-1906* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930); and Lee, *Europe's Crucial Years*, Ch. 5.

<sup>603</sup> See Albertini, p. 158.

France, but what also started out as a colonial agreement turned into an anti-German alliance.<sup>604</sup> According to two historians, “Insofar as it convinced the British that Germany was seeking to establish her domination over France, her Russian ally, and the states system as a whole, it [the Moroccan Crisis] transformed the Anglo-French entente from an essentially extra-European arrangement into an anti-German power grouping in Europe.”<sup>605</sup> After the Moroccan Crisis, Britain supported joint military discussions with France and defense planning targeted against the German threat.<sup>606</sup> These were not only naval discussions, but for the first time since 1875, Britain also contemplated sending troops to Europe. In fact, it is during this period that the beginnings of the phrase “continental commitment” can be found.<sup>607</sup> Although the alliance was already formed for reasons having little to do with Germany, the German naval build-up and bullying behavior turned it into an anti-German alliance.

The threat from the German fleet, especially when combined with its bullying behavior, drove Britain to accelerate its naval modernization plans and concentrate deployments and planned deployments around the home islands to defend against Germany.<sup>608</sup> Despite German claims that its fleet was not targeted at Britain, the size and range of its warships could only fight in the North Sea.<sup>609</sup> With further huge investments in ships, and the Kiel Canal in 1906, Britain internally balanced very vigorously and by 1907, there was a large-scale naval arms race underway between Britain and Germany.<sup>610</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> For more on this transformation in the Entente Cordiale, see Monger, *The End of Isolation*, Ch. 8-10; Lowe and Dockrill, *Mirage of Power*, pp. 11-28; K.A. Hamilton, “Great Britain and France: 1905-1911,” in F.H. Hinsley, ed., *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 113-32; George Aston, “The Entente Cordiale and the ‘Military Conversations,’” *Quarterly Review* (April 1932), pp. 363-83; and J.D. Hargreaves, “The Origin of the Anglo-French Military Conversations in 1905,” *History*, Vol. 36 (1951), pp. 244-48.

<sup>605</sup> See Bridge and Bullen, p. 281.

<sup>606</sup> See Monger; and Glenn Snyder, p. 276.

<sup>607</sup> See Lowe, p.174.

<sup>608</sup> See Arthur Jacob Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power. A History of British Naval Policy in the pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1940), Ch. 25; Kennedy, *Anglo-British Antagonism*; and Woodward, *Great Britain and the German Navy*, Ch. 4.

<sup>609</sup> See Lowe and Dockrill, *Mirage of Power*, p. 29

<sup>610</sup> See Kennedy, *Anglo- German Antagonism*.

Although the risk fleet made sense in theory, it could only be successful if Britain behaved in exactly the way that Germany hoped. One of the major problems with this approach was that it did not take into account the possibility that when threatened by Germany's build-up, Britain could retrench or form alliances with others.<sup>611</sup> As Jack Snyder argues, Germany "ignored the possibility that Britain would react to the rising German naval threat by aligning with France and Russia, who were also threatened by offensive German war plans and belligerent German diplomacy."<sup>612</sup>

Lastly, Britain moved to support an agreement with Russia, which culminated in the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention, and the combination of France, Britain, and Russia. Although this was similar to the Anglo-French Entente in that it was in part a settlement of colonial issues, Britain was driven much more strongly by an anti-German element than it was in 1904.<sup>613</sup> According to Snyder, "constructing a balance of power against the German threat was an important secondary motive, however, in contrast to the entente with France in 1904, when this motive was barely present."<sup>614</sup> Much more than in 1904, in 1907, the German threat drove Germany to resolve colonial issues so that it could focus its efforts on the German threat. According to one historian, "In Britain King Edward VII and his foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey, were anxious to make an agreement, largely because of the increasing competition of Germany in the naval field."<sup>615</sup> Balancing Germany would become a more important consideration for Russia after German bullying during the 1908 Bosnian Crisis.<sup>616</sup> After this, Russia, was much more interested in cooperating with France and Britain against Germany and true united anti-Germany coalition had formed.

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<sup>611</sup> See Craig, *Germany*, p. 310.

<sup>612</sup> See Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 76-7.

<sup>613</sup> See Monger, *End of Isolation*, Ch. 11; Lowe and Dockrill, *Mirage of Power*, pp. 59-65; and Beryl Williams, "Great Britain and Russia, 1905 to the 1907 Convention," in F.H. Hinsley, ed., *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 133-47.

<sup>614</sup> See Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 278.

<sup>615</sup> See Jelavich, p. 254.

<sup>616</sup> See Jelavich, pp. 254-73.

*Coercion versus Power: Explaining the Balancing Response*

By the end of first decade of the 1900s, the rise of Germany had provoked a strong Anglo-French-Russian balancing coalition that was targeted at Germany on land and at sea and had found itself in an arms race with Great Britain, the most powerful navy on the planet. Given that this balancing response is correlated with rising German power and German coercive behavior, it is difficult to separate out which has a stronger causal explanation for European balancing.

Mearsheimer, adopting the balance of power perspective, argues that this balancing response “was motivated more by Germany’s growing power than by its aggressive behavior.”<sup>617</sup> He offers several pieces of evidence to support this view. First he suggests that Germany passed Great Britain in economic output in 1903, and when it became a regional hegemon, it was powerful enough to provoke a balancing response. He further argues that the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War shifted the balance of power even further in Germany’s favor, making it even more likely to be balanced against. He admits that Germany behaved aggressively, but dismisses this as a potential factor to explain the balancing response.

Although there were clear power shifts during this period, my argument of coercion backfire, where countries that implement grand strategies of coercion are particularly aggressive and provoke a hyper-balancing reaction, has very strong evidence in support of it as well. Firstly, Mearsheimer cites the historian Paul Kennedy in support of his argument that shifting power provoked the balancing response. However, Kennedy’s detailed analysis of the Anglo-German naval arms race repeatedly characterizes Britain’s naval build-up as a response to German provocations and its provocative build-up, which would be more in support of a coercion backfire argument. Citing the effect of German aggressive behavior, not German power, Kennedy suggests:

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<sup>617</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, p. 215.

“It is unlikely that they fully understood...how swiftly and deleteriously such means would affect the Anglo-German relationship.”<sup>618</sup>

Secondly, the diplomatic record contains repeated reference to the brusqueness, arrogance, and assertiveness of German behavior. British and French diplomats repeatedly used this type of language to assess German behavior in the Moroccan Crisis or to explain Germany’s naval build-up.<sup>619</sup> After his careful survey of the historiography of the period, Glenn Snyder also situates the origins of the German threat in its coercive behavior, and not in its increasing power. He writes: “By 1907, the naval arms race and the experience of the Morocco crisis had brought a clear perception of Germany as an enemy.”<sup>620</sup> There are few examples in the available documents of diplomats highlighting Germany surpassing Britain economically as a reason for balancing against Germany. European countries clearly paid attention to Germany’s rising power, but there is little evidence of diplomats highlighting changes in the German-British power balance as a reason to balance. Mearsheimer argues that “the United Kingdom was pushed toward accepting a continental commitment by the simple fact that Germany had the earmarkings of a potential hegemon by 1905.”<sup>621</sup> This claim is consistent with his theory, but there is little evidence of British diplomats highlighting these “earmarkings” as a reason to balance against Germany. There is some support, however, for the defeat of Russia as shifting the balance of power in Germany’s favor, but Britain had accelerated its balancing efforts earlier than the defeat of Russia.

Lastly, it is striking just how quickly Germany became self-encircled, and how close in time this was to its coercive challenges over the Moroccan Crisis and its naval modernization finally beginning to bear fruit. As Lowe correctly notes, “until 1905, Germany’s relations with the other great powers were quite cordial; including those with Britain.” Between 1905 and 1908, Germany

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<sup>618</sup> See Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 223.

<sup>619</sup> See John Lowe, *Great Powers, Imperialism, and the German Problem*, p. 153.

<sup>620</sup> See Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 278; and Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 68.

<sup>621</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, p. 299.

found itself encircled by tight alliances aimed at defeating it and mired in a naval arms race that it could not win. It is possible for the balance of power to shift so dramatically as to produce such a rapid turn of events, but as Germany's rising power itself had not produced such a rapid change earlier under Wilhelm's reign, it seems more convincing that its coercive behavior provoked this hyper-balancing response.



## **Chapter 5: The Rise of China and Its Grand Strategy**

This chapter identifies the start of the rise of China and lays out its grand strategy for trying to manage its international environment as it rises. After a series of developments that gradually increased China's relative power, the shift to using purchasing power parity measures in 1992-3 increased the size of China's economy by 2-5 times. The shock of such a massive increase of material power led the United States and other regional powers to perceive China as a rising power. After establishing the start of China's rise, I sketch out the domestic and international threats to China's rise. For China, domestic challenges and domestic threats were most important, and the purpose of foreign policy was to keep the international environment peaceful so that China can focus its efforts and energies on economic modernization and solving its numerous domestic challenges. Then I lay out the general approach of China's reassurance and how it aims to cooperate with countries to communicate benign intentions while also showing that as it became more powerful it would help others benefit. Lastly, I briefly illustrate how China used the tools of reassurance.

### **1992-3: Defining the Start of China's Rise**

Even though by most standard statistical measures of power China remained quite weak in the early-to-mid 1990s, a series of events produced shocks that led the United States and the rest of East Asia to perceive a qualitative shift in China's power in 1992-3. As a result of these shocks, leaders, experts, and the public in these countries paid more attention to China, explicitly talked about it as a rising power, and began to question what impact this rise will have on regional and world order. Even though China still perceived itself as a weak, developing country, the rest of the world began to perceive it as a rising power, and China recognized the changed nature of how its

power position was perceived by the rest of the world. Although some suggest that it was only after Chinese aggressiveness in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1995-6 that China was perceived as a rising power. This analysis clearly demonstrates that it was perceived as a rising power before these events, which meant that China's attempts to shape perceptions of its rise would affect how others would respond to it and whether or not they would balance against it.

During the Cold War, China had been a major player. It battled the United States to a stalemate in Korea, engaged in disputes with the Soviet Union, acquired nuclear weapons, and took over the seat as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Moreover, in the second half of the Cold War, China was a key factor in the balance of power. Both superpowers played the "China card" at various points in the Cold War, and within the "strategic triangle," China's support helped determine which bloc was more powerful.

After the Cold War ended, China's importance dropped dramatically. There was no longer a "strategic triangle," so it no longer occupied such a vital position in international affairs. The close cooperation that China enjoyed with the United States throughout the 1970s and 1980s was built on the foundation of the Soviet threat. When the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union ended, this foundation also disappeared and China's position dropped from vital geopolitical player to weak, backward power. The massacre and crackdown against students and workers in Tiananmen Square in June 1989 also severely strained China's relations with the United States, Japan, and the Western world and led to a further decrease in China's image and importance. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, there were many experts in the West who looked at China's internal political problems and believed that China would soon follow suit and collapse. At the same time, international attention was focused on the dramatic economic rise of Japan and many believed it was going to challenge or threaten the United States for regional or

global supremacy. By 1990 or so, China became much less important and when the world paid attention to China, it was to criticize it for human rights atrocities.

A series of factors, some international and some domestic, led to a dramatic reverse in the perception of China. By 1992-3, the United States and the rest of Asia was increasingly talking about the rise of China and trying to understand the implications of this development. The rest of this section will highlight these factors and show that leaders and experts perceived China as a rising power.

In the international and regional environment, several developments increased China's relative power, especially within East Asia. First, although the end of the Cold War decreased the importance and position of China, it had other effects as well. The Soviet Union had been a powerful force not only around the globe, but also in East Asia. Its collapse led to a substantial decrease in its power in East Asia, especially as it was more focused on Europe than Asia, and led to something of a power vacuum in East Asia. Although in 1989 and 1990 it appeared that Japan would step into this power vacuum and play a much more prominent role in Asia and the world, perhaps breaking away from the alliance and challenging the United States. However, in the early 1990s, the Japanese economic bubble burst and its economy sank into deep recession. Although it was not known in the early 1990s that this would lead to a "lost decade" for Japan, this economic downturn did put an end to speculation that Japan's growth would continue inevitably and it would surpass the United States. Japan's economic downturn not only increased China's relative power, but showing that Japan would not keep growing forever significantly changed the perceptions of Japan's growth potential and outlook, all leading to a relative increase in China's power. In addition to the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the early 1990s it appeared that tension with Japan and a desire to enjoy a "peace dividend" were pushing the United States to severely reduce its presence in East Asia, and perhaps withdraw completely. By 1992 or so, all of the other major powers in East

Asia dramatically decreased their presence or power in East Asia, leading to a relative increase in China's power<sup>622</sup>.

As the other major powers in Asia were either running into difficulties or willingly reducing their role in Asia, China had recovered from its economic problems in the late 1980s. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping's "Southern Tour" (Nanxun) gave new support and drive for continued opening and reforms and led to increased economic growth. As the rest of the region was in the economic doldrums, China appeared to become an economic juggernaut. Moreover, in the early 1990s, China dramatically increased its defense budget and began acquiring advanced weaponry from the former Soviet Union. As the rest of the world and region seemed to be building down and encountering economic problems, China seemed to be an economic juggernaut that was modernizing its military and seeking to play a greater role in the world.<sup>623</sup> According to a well-known *Foreign Affairs* article, written in 1993, "China is the fastest growing economy in the world, with what may be the fastest growing military budget."<sup>624</sup>

In addition to these other developments that showed China was increasing its power while other powers were declining, the most important shock that led to an even stronger perception of China as a rising power was the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's decision to adopt purchasing power parity (PPP) as a metric to measure economic strength.<sup>625</sup> Previously, these measures were based on exchange rates. According to PPP measures, China's economy was 2-5

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<sup>622</sup> For an excellent analysis and assessment of these developments, see David Shambaugh, "China's Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Era," *Survival*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Summer 1992), pp. 99-106.

<sup>623</sup> For excellent discussions of the developments within China in 1992 and how they changed perceptions of China, see Herbert Yee and Ian Storey, "Introduction," in Herbert Yee and Ian Storey, eds., *The China Threat: Perceptions, Myths, and Reality* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), p. 1-20; Herbert Yee and Zhu Feng, "Chinese Perspectives on the China Threat: Myth or Reality," in Yee and Storey, eds., *The China Threat*, pp. 21-42; and Yong Deng, "Reputation and the Security Dilemma: China Reacts to the China Threat Theory," in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), especially p. 192.

<sup>624</sup> See Nicholas D. Kristof, "The Rise of China," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 5 (November/December 1993).

<sup>625</sup> See World Bank, *World Development Report, 1992: Development and the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

times bigger than it was according to exchange rate accounting.<sup>626</sup> Based on one set of PPP measures for 1993, “China’s GDP increased suddenly by 400 percent.”<sup>627</sup> The World Bank’s standard PPP measures for 1995 estimates that China’s GDP was 4.7 times as large as it was based on exchange rates.<sup>628</sup> This changed method of accounting was a tremendous shock that overnight turned China was a country that was on the verge of collapse a couple of years earlier into a serious economic player in the world. In comparison with other rising powers and the shocks that led others to perceive them as a rising power, which usually included battlefield victories, this change in method of accounting increased China’s power by an order of magnitude more than any victory in war could have, and it happened overnight. Moreover, others incorrectly used this method of accounting to adjust the PLA’s budget as well. So according to one estimate in 1993, the PLA’s budget of \$18 billion according to exchange rates was really as much as \$90 billion at PPP.<sup>629</sup>

As if the dramatic increase in overall numbers was not enough, this massive increase in relative power showed that China was nearly as powerful as other major countries in Asia and the world. In 1993, according to some PPP measures, China’s economy surpassed Japan.<sup>630</sup> Almost overnight, China had surpassed the economy that a few years earlier seemed poised to challenge the United States. According to a 1992 World Bank report, in PPP terms, “China’s total GDP was already approaching that of major Western developed states.”<sup>631</sup> Lawrence Summers, former World Bank chief economist asserted in 1992 that according to PPP China’s economy was around 45% of

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<sup>626</sup> See Yan Xuetong, “Xulun”[Preface], in Yan Xuetong, chief ed., *Zhongguo Jueqi: Guoji Huanjing Pinggu* [The Rise of China: Assessment of International Environment], (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1998), p. 2.

<sup>627</sup> See “China’s Development is Beneficial to World Peace and Progress-Refuting the ‘China Threat Theory,’” *Renmin Ribao (Overseas Edition)*, December 22, 1995.

<sup>628</sup> See Yan Xuetong, “The Rise of China and Its Power Status,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2006), p. 5.

<sup>629</sup> See Kristof, “Rise of China.”

<sup>630</sup> See Chu Shulong, “The Security Challenges in Northeast Asia: A Chinese View, in *East Asian Security: Two Views*, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), p. 15.

<sup>631</sup> See Yee and Storey, “Introduction,” *China Threat*, p. 2.

that of the United States.<sup>632</sup> Much as they had done with the rise of Japan, these reports, as well as journalists and other experts, extrapolated these high growth rates far into the future. According to one World Bank report, if it sustained its level of growth, it would pass the United States in 2020.<sup>633</sup> Another scholar suggested: "If recent growth rates persist, China could overtake the United States as the world's largest economy in a decade or so."<sup>634</sup> Especially against the background of other factors showing China's increasing power, this shift of accounting to PPP, and the overnight expansion of China's economy, led to a perception of China as a rising power by 1992-3.

Before drawing on sources that show the perceptions of America and other regional countries, I will quickly examine the Chinese assessments of when others began to take notice of China. Perhaps not surprisingly, Chinese experts and media followed how other countries talked about and perceived China especially closely. Chinese analysts have combined anything said by foreigners that exaggerates China's power, questions how China will use that power, or is critical of a more powerful China into the concept of "China threat theory" (Zhongguo Weixielun). Although these are somewhat different perceptions and sentiments, the Chinese analysis of Western perceptions also suggests that the "China threat theory" began in the 1992-3 period.

According to Chinese scholars, the first mention of anything that falls under the category of "China threat" appeared in an August 1990 article by a researcher at Japan's National Defense Academy.<sup>635</sup> Zhu Feng, a professor at Peking University who has followed this issue very closely, argues that "the issue of the China threat emerged in early 1993 in the United States."<sup>636</sup> Another scholar argues that discussions of the China threat that are based on erroneous exaggerations and

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<sup>632</sup> See Yan Xuetong, "Waiguoren Kan Zhongguo de Jueqi" [China's Rise in the Eyes of Foreigners], in Yan, chief ed., *Zhongguo Jueqi: Guoji Huanjing Pinggu*, pp. 38-87.

<sup>633</sup> See Yee and Storey, "Introduction," p. 2

<sup>634</sup> See Samuel Kim, "China's Pacific Policy: Reconciling the Irreconcilable," *International Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Summer 1995), p. 462.

<sup>635</sup> See Wang Zhongren, "'China Threat' Theory Groundless," *Beijing Review*, July 14-20, 1997.

<sup>636</sup> See Yee and Storey, "Introduction," p. 2.

extrapolations began in the early 1990s.<sup>637</sup> An article in the official *People's Daily* dates the rise of the China threat theory to 1992. Wang Jisi argues that since early-to-mid 90s, people have been exaggerating the rise of China and how it is a threat.<sup>638</sup> Writing in 1995, researchers at Chinese government-affiliated think tanks also argued that the rise of China has been an issue of international interest. Wang Zaibang writes, “Whether or not China can rise to be a challenger of US and finally achieve world leader position, and how to deal with rising China, has become an important topic that has already perplexed countries.”<sup>639</sup> Yan Xuetong argues that increase in Chinese power has led to widespread concerns and has led the international community to ask: “Will a resurgent China adopt an expansionist FP?”<sup>640</sup> Several other Chinese-language articles on the “China threat theory” agree that it emerged between 1992 and 1994.<sup>641</sup>

The perception of the American government and government officials is most important, as governments decide whether or not to balance once they perceive a rising power. The East Asia Strategy Initiative (EASI) reports, which would later become the East Asia Strategy Report (EASR) clearly show that in the early 1990s, China was not perceived as a country of great importance, but by the 1995 report, there was a wholesale shift in emphasis and focus, revealing that China was perceived as a rising power. In the 1990 and 1992 reports, China was discussed as a troubled country that faced great challenges. The 1990 report focused on the “political volatility and

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<sup>637</sup> See Zhou Jianming, “Zhongguo yijing Jueqi le ma?” [Has China Already Risen], *Daguo Xinlu: Zhongguo zouxiang Shijie de Sikao* [New Road to Becoming a Great Power: Reflections on China heading toward the World], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 7-10. This article was originally published in *Huanqiu Shibao* [Global Times] in 1999.

<sup>638</sup> Wang Jisi, “‘Ezhi’ haishi ‘Jiaowang?’ Ping Lengzhanhou Meiguo duihua Zhengce” [‘Containment’ or ‘Engagement?’ Assessing America’s post-Cold War Policy towards China], *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* [International Studies], No. 1 (1996), p. 1.

<sup>639</sup> See Wang Zaibang, “Shijie Lingdao zhe Diwei Jiaoti de Lishi Fansi” [Historical Reflections on Replacing the Position of World Leader], *Zhanlie yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 6 (1995).

<sup>640</sup> See Yan Xuetong, “Lengzhanhou Zhongguo de duiwai Anquan Zhanlüe” [China’s Post-Cold War Foreign Security Strategy], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 8 (1995), pp. 23-28.

<sup>641</sup> See Ge Yi, “Qianxi ‘Zhongguo Weixielun’” [An Analysis of the ‘China Threat Theory’], *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* [Studies of International Politics], No. 3 (1994); Zhao Xiaochun, “‘Zhongguo weixielun’ dui Woguo Zhoubian Huanjing de Yingxiang ji youguan Duice” [The Influence of ‘China Threat Theory’ on China’s Peripheral Environment and its Countermeasures], *Guoji Guanxi Xueyuan Xuebao* [Journal of the University of International Relations], No. 2 (1995), pp. 9-14, and Lu Gang and Guo Xuetang, chief eds., *Zhongguo Weixie Shei? Jiedu ‘Zhongguo Weixielun’* [Who Does China Threaten? Analyzing ‘China Threat Theory’] (Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe, 2004).

turbulence” that will characterize China, the challenges of generational leadership change, and the political volatility that would likely affect China after Deng Xiaoping stepped down from power. In neither of these reports was there any mention of China’s economic growth or international importance, other than how its instability and fragility might affect others. One of the key political issues within China that both reports commented on was whether China would turn isolationist or whether it would integrate with the world.

In stark contrast to these earlier reports, the 1995 East Asia report described what was clearly perceived as a rising power.<sup>642</sup> China’s economic growth and military modernization were mentioned multiple times in the report. According to the report, “China’s economy has grown over nine percent per year for the last decade. The People’s Republic of China’s southern and coastal areas are enjoying a market-oriented manufacturing boom and are increasingly integrated with other economies, particularly Hong Kong, and Taiwan.” This was a clear recognition that in the space of a few short years, China had become far more significant in the region and the world. Rather than focusing on whether or not China would turn isolationist, this report was much more interested in questions of how China would use its rising power and what kind of power it would become. The report speculated on China’s intentions and suggested that increased transparency might alleviate some worries of how a rising China would use its power.

In addition to the evidence from these reports, several American officials highlighted China’s increasing power. In 1994, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell cited China’s increasing defense budgets and acquisition of sophisticated military technology, and suggested that these changes “are rapidly transforming China into a major military power in Asia.”<sup>643</sup> Winston Lord, a Department of

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<sup>642</sup> See U.S. Department of Defense, “United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region,” February 1995 (hereafter EASR for East Asia Strategy report).

<sup>643</sup> Robert G. Sutter and Shirley Kan, “China as a Security Concern in Asia: Perceptions, Assessment and U.S. Options,” Congressional Research Service, December 22, 1994, p. 2.



Defense official, emphasized China's increasing economic and military power in Congressional testimony as well.<sup>644</sup>

Articles and discussions about the rise of China started appearing in 1992 and became more widespread in 1993 and 1994. Ross Munro, a journalist who would later co-write *The Coming Conflict with China*, published one of the first articles that warned that a rising China would likely become a challenge and a threat.<sup>645</sup> Other academic articles from this period were not as hawkish as Munro, but China's rising economic and military power was an important factor as analysts tried to understand how China would behave in the post-Cold War world.<sup>646</sup> Popular newspapers and magazines also paid greater attention to China and how its increased power would change the world.<sup>647</sup> In 1993, *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Kristof published an article entitled "The Rise of China," in *Foreign Affairs*, one of the leading journals of international policy. At the beginning of the article, Kristof wrote, "The rise of China, if it continues, may be the most important trend in the world for the next century."<sup>648</sup> William Overholt, an economist at the Rand Corporation, published a book in 1993 entitled, *The Rise of China: How Economic Reform is Creating the New Superpower*.

As international relations scholars and think tank researchers tried to make sense of the future of East Asia, the rise of China became an increasingly central issue in their analysis.<sup>649</sup> While

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<sup>644</sup> See Chu Shulong, "'Ezhi Zhongguo' lun Keyixiuyi" [Time to Stop the Theory of 'Containing China'], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 10 (1995).

<sup>645</sup> Ross Munro, "The Awakening Dragon: The Real Danger in Asia is from China," *Policy Studies*, (Fall 1992), pp. 10-16.

<sup>646</sup> Ronald N. Montaperto, "Whither China? Beijing's Policies for the 1990s," *Strategic Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer 1992), pp. 23-33; Barber B. Conable, Jr. and David M. Lampton, "China: The Coming Power," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1992/1993); Chen Jian, "Will China's Development Threaten Asia-Pacific Security?" *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (June 1993).

<sup>647</sup> See "When China Wakes," *Economist*, November 28, 1993; and "Thunder out of China," *Time*, April 12, 1993.

<sup>648</sup> See Kristof, "Rise of China."

<sup>649</sup> See Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter, 1993-1994), pp. 5-33; Richard K. Betts, "Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter, 1993-1994), pp. 34-77; Denny Roy, "Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 149-68; Robert G. Sutter and Shirley Kan, "China as a Security Concern in Asia: Perceptions, Assessment and U.S. Options," Congressional Research Service, December 22, 1994; Robert G. Sutter, "East Asia: The New Triangular Relationship: Implications for U.S. Influence, and Options for U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, May 31, 1994; and David Shambaugh, "Growing Strong: China's Challenge to Asian Security," *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 53-7.

some authors were still trying to come to terms with the implications of China's rise, others feared that it would mean the worst, and the United States needed to take active measures to prevent China's further rise.<sup>650</sup> Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 1996, Thomas Christensen began his article: "Scholars and policy analysts seem almost obsessed with China's continuing rise toward the status of a great power."<sup>651</sup>

Due to these developments, experts in Japan, India, and Russia also perceived China as a rising power and began to focus on how to respond. As mentioned earlier, the first "China threat theory" article appeared in Japan in 1990. By 1993, there were many more articles highlighting China's increased economic prowess and military modernization and speculating on its implication for regional security. In addition to changes in material power, China's 1992 territorial waters law suggested that China might use its increased power in ways detrimental to Japanese interests, especially in the East China Sea.<sup>652</sup> Other analysis of the Japanese discourse suggests that Japan also worried that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, combined with the U.S. withdrawal from the region, and Japanese weakness, China might try to fill that power vacuum.<sup>653</sup> To India, China had been a source of concern since the 1962 war, but in the early 1990s, Indian experts noticed China's economic growth and perceived it as a rising power. According to Garver, "In 1980, India's GNP was 133 percent the size of China's. By 1996 the two countries had traded places; India's economy

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<sup>650</sup> See Gerald Segal, "The Coming Confrontation between China and Japan," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Summer 1993); Nayan Chanda, "Fear of the Dragon," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 13, 1995; James Mann, "China's Growing Threat Worries U.S. Strategic Planners," *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1995; Charles Krauthammer, "Why We Must Contain China," *Time*, July 31, 1995.

<sup>651</sup> See Thomas J. Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 5 (September-October 1996), p. 37.

<sup>652</sup> See Jian Yang, "The Rise of China: Chinese Perspectives," in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato, *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 13-37.

<sup>653</sup> For more on Japanese perceptions, see Wenran Jiang, "The Japanese Assessment of the 'China Threat,'" in Yee and Storey, *The China Threat*, especially p. 153-5; Satoshi Morimoto, "Chinese Military power in Asia: A Japanese Perspective," in Jonathan D. Pollack and Richard H. Yang, *In China's Shadow: Regional Perspectives on Chinese Foreign Policy and Military Development* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1998), pp. 37-49; and Robert G. Sutter, "China's Recent Approach to Asia: Seeking Long Term Gains," in "Regional Approaches in Asia: Foreign and Domestic Policy Concerns in Russia and China," National Bureau of Asian Research, *NBR Analysis* (March 2002), p. 33.

had fallen to only 68 percent of China's."<sup>654</sup> Russia, whose material power had dropped dramatically at the end of the Cold War perceived China's increasing material power and worried how its increasingly powerful neighbor might use that power, especially in Russia's weakened and fragile state.<sup>655</sup>

### **Likely Responses to the Rise of China: Expectations of Balancing**

Although balance of power theory does not offer specific predictions about when balancing behavior should occur, it is reasonable to expect that the rise of China should have provoked an increasingly intense balancing response. Based on the perceptual definition used in this project, the rise of China started in 1992-3. For the next two decades, China maintained double-digit annual increases in economic growth and military budget. Given China's increased material capability, as it became more powerful, a stronger balancing response from the United States and major powers in the region seems reasonable.

Moreover, several experts predicted that others should balance against China if it continued to rise. Shambaugh writes, "Realists of various stripes thus argue that China must be 'balanced,' 'checked,' 'offset,' 'countered,' or 'hedged against.'"<sup>656</sup> In a recent book, another scholar argues that : "The PRC has already experienced a major shift in the relative distribution of power in its favor. Given the scale and the speed of its rise, conventional wisdom would have us expect a hostile

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<sup>654</sup> See Sujit Dutta, "China's Emerging Power and Military Role: Implications for South Asia," in Pollack and Yang, eds., *In China's Shadow*, pp. 91-114; John W. Garver, "Asymmetrical Indian and Chinese Threat Perceptions," Sumit Ganguly, ed., *India as an Emerging Power* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 104-127; C. Uday Bhaskar, "Role of China in the Emerging World Order," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (April 1993), pp. 3-19; and Jasjit Singh, "Post-Cold War Security Situation in Southern Asia," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (April 1994).

<sup>655</sup> See Alexander Lukin, "Russian Perceptions of the China Threat," in Yee and Storey, *The China Threat*, pp. 87-114; and Evgeniy Bazhanov, "Russian Perspectives on China's Foreign Policy and Military Development," in Pollack and Yang, *In China's Shadow*, pp. 70-90.

<sup>656</sup> See David Shambaugh, "Correspondence: China Engages Asia?: Caveat Lector," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 209-10.

balance of power characterizing China's international relations."<sup>657</sup> Some realist scholars are very clear in their expectations of a balancing response against the rise of China. After laying out his vision of how China is trying to maintain peace and stability, Tellis argues, "as China continues to successfully expand its national power over time, it is likely to be resisted by both its regional competitors and the United States, no matter how much it trumpets its doctrine of peaceful ascendancy."<sup>658</sup>

### **China Views its Rise: Domestic and International Threats**

Although most of this thesis will examine China's international relations, Chinese leaders have remained focus on addressing internal domestic challenges and will continue to devote the vast majority of their energies to handling domestic issues. To understand how China views the threats to its rise and its grand strategy, one must fully recognize that the CCP views itself as a fragile regime facing numerous economic, political, and social challenges. Foreign policy takes place in the context of immense domestic challenges and is meant to serve domestic interests by keeping the international environment stable and peaceful, so that the regime can focus on the real problems. When asked about the greatest threats to China's rise, an official in the Department of Policy Planning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared: "They are all domestic. China faces a wide range of potential threats in its international environment, but if you ask what can threaten or prevent China's rise, 99 of the top 100 issues on the list are domestic issues."<sup>659</sup> With the context of supreme importance of domestic issues in mind, this section will examine the domestic and

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<sup>657</sup> See Deng Yong, *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 6.

<sup>658</sup> See Ashley J. Tellis, "China's Grand Strategy: The Quest for Comprehensive National Power and its Consequences," in Gary Schmitt, ed., *The Rise of China: Essays on the Future Competition* (New York: Encounter Books, 2009), pp. 45-6.

<sup>659</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Spring 2006.

international challenges and threats that China faces, before moving on to examine how its grand strategy aims to prevent these from becoming reality.

### *Domestic Threats to China's Rise*

The importance of domestic threats and the difficulties of the challenges the leadership faces in managing these threats cannot be overstated. Most foreign analysis of Chinese foreign policy will pay lip service to these domestic challenges and then move on to discuss international issues as if these domestic challenges did not matter.<sup>660</sup> Chinese experts spend much time assessing its international environment and the international situation, but when analyzing issues such as China's rise, even experts in international relations begin their analysis with these domestic challenges and spend a considerable amount of time discussing them.

For one excellent example, Yan Xuetong and his colleagues from CICIR published a book in the mid-1990s on the international environment for China's rise. However, before moving into a detailed discussion of these international factors, Yan laid out a wide range of domestic challenges and threats that China faced in its rise. His long list of difficulties, which he said was not comprehensive, included: the burden on population is too heavy, difficulties of increasing per capita income, lack of natural resources, inability to meet demands of high growing economy, low level of education, quality of worker force insufficient for needs of modern economy, lack of political institutions, and social problems that influence the long-term implementation of economic reform.<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>660</sup> For analysis by Americans who put the appropriate focus on the domestic challenges and the domestic context for China's rise and China's foreign policy, see Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics could Derail its Peaceful Rise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Kenneth Lieberthal, "How Domestic Forces Shape the PRC's Grand Strategy and International Impact," in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2007-08: Domestic Political Change and Grand Strategy* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2007), pp. 29-68.

<sup>661</sup> See Yan Xuetong, "Xulun," in Yan, *Zhongguo Jueqi: Guoji Huanjing Pinggu*, p. 3

When other experts analyze challenges to China's rise or China's development, they are almost always emphasize domestic or economic issues. In a 2004 speech, Zheng Bijian, the inventor of the "peaceful rise" (heping jueqi) doctrine suggested that China faces three big development challenges—1) natural resources; 2) environment; and 3) lack of coordination between economic and social development.<sup>662</sup> In a thorough and wide-ranging analysis of China's rise, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Vice President Huang Renwei highlights three development bottlenecks for China's rise: 1) the population burden as it relates to employment pressure and aging society; 2) weak level of per-capita resources; 3) the environmental problems that come with fast economic growth.<sup>663</sup> Wang Jisi, Dean of Peking University's School of International Studies argued that China faces at least four big challenges on its development road. These included: 1) material resources, especially shortages of energy and water resources; 2) deterioration of the environment; 3) unequal domestic and economic development which have led to a widening of rich-poor gap, regional gap, city-countryside gap; and 4) possibility of large-scale natural disaster or infectious disease. To deal with these immense challenges, he argues further, the government raised peaceful development concept and advocated the promotion of harmonious society.<sup>664</sup>

Although many foreign commentators look at China's double digit growth for the last three decades as a source of strength, it was a difficult challenge for China to continue economic reform, integrate with the global economy, and maintain this economic growth. Although Chinese leaders were successful in fostering economic growth and maintaining social and political stability throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Chinese leaders understand that they are still dealing with the problems that such growth has created. In recent years, China's leaders have publicly acknowledged

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<sup>662</sup> See Zheng Bijian, "China's Development and New Path to a Peaceful Rise, September 2004," in *China's Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian, 1997-2005* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2005), pp. 40-1.

<sup>663</sup> See Huang Renwei, *Zhongguo Jueqi de Shijian he Kongjian* [Time and Space for China's Rise], (Shanghai: Shanghai Shekeyuan Chubanshe, 2002), p. 13.

<sup>664</sup> See Wang Jisi, "Dangdai Shijie Zhengzhi Fazhan Qushi yu Zhongguo de Quanqiu Juese," [Development Trends of Contemporary World Politics and China's Global Role], *Beijing Daxue Xuebao* (Zhhexue Shehui Kexueban) [Journal Peking University [Philosophy and Social Science]], Vol. 46, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 11-14.

that China's growth model is not sustainable, has led to new problems, and needs to be changed. In March 2007, Premier Wen Jiabao declared: "China's economic growth is unsteady, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable."<sup>665</sup> This unbalanced growth has led to newer challenges for the regime, and arguably more difficult ones to handle. The growth model has produced incredible aggregate growth, but as these benefits have been distributed unevenly, there are immense gaps between urban-rural, coastal-interior, and in several other areas. Those who are less well-off are becoming increasingly unhappy with the regime, and as the number of "mass incidents" increase, the leadership is becoming more worried about maintaining social and political stability. This widespread social unrest, when combined with other challenges facing the regime, such as corruption, unemployment, under-provision of social welfare goods, environmental degradation, and problems facing farmers, provide a long list of challenges and issues facing the regime. Hu Jintao's new "Scientific Development Concept" (Kexue Fazhanguan), which was formally endorsed at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2007, is an attempt to respond to this uneven and unequal development by pursuing more sustainable economic growth, which maintaining political and social stability.<sup>666</sup>

In the conclusion of a recent edited volume, two American scholars nicely capture the wide range of internal threats facing the regime. They write: "China faces a veritable litany of internal challenges and impediments as it navigates the path toward parity with the advanced industrial states. Rising inequality between city dwellers and villagers, between educated and unskilled, and between residents of the coastal provinces and the vast rural interior could ignite political or economic disruption. China is in the midst of a great migration, with many millions moving to the cities each year. China's one-child policy had led to a significant gender imbalance and a rapidly

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<sup>665</sup> See C. Fred Bergsten et al., *China's Rise: Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2008), p. 105.

<sup>666</sup> For further analysis of these challenges, see Zhang Youwen in "Guanyu Zhongguo Heping Jueqi Daolu de Tantaoyan" [Explorations on China's peaceful Development Road], *Shijie Jingji Yanjiu* [World Economy Study], No. 5 (2004), p. 4; and Ni Lexiong in "Zhongguo Dazhanlüe: Wenti yu Silu" [China's Grand Strategy: Issues and Thinking], *Xueshujie* [Academics in China], No. 2 (March 2006), p. 12.

aging population. Unfunded pension systems and inadequate health care will pose major hurdles. Unrestrained economic growth has exacerbated environmental degradation. While these and other difficulties could obstruct future growth, it would be unwise to underestimate the capacity of China's leadership or its populace to overcome adversity."<sup>667</sup> As Wang Yizhou puts it, for the regime in Beijing, there are "still lots of things to do and [it] needs stability to do them."<sup>668</sup>

### *International Threats Facing China*

This section will discuss the international threats that might prevent or slow China's rise. According to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, "The scope [of international threats] is very broad. It includes anything prevents China from focusing all of its efforts on economic modernization and national rejuvenation."<sup>669</sup> A high-ranking official in a government think tank suggested that "any instability that could complicate China's international environment or increase pressure on China, forcing it to divert resources from modernization [would be a threat to China's rise]."<sup>670</sup> In interviews with Chinese officials and experts, anything that increases "strategic pressure" (*zhanlüe yali*) on China and forces it to "disperse resources" (*fensan ziyuan*) to international issues rather than focusing resources on economic modernization and solving domestic problems.<sup>671</sup> Drawing on China's own Cold War experience, experts recognized that war and instability negatively affected China's economic growth. According to Qu Xing, Vice President of the China Foreign Affairs College, "In internal work, the crisis mentality of [preparing for and fighting wars during the

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<sup>667</sup> See William W. Keller and Thomas G. Rawski, *China's Rise and the Balance of Influence in Asia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), p. 195. See also Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, Ch. 1-2.

<sup>668</sup> See Wang Yizhou, "Mianxiang 21Shiji de Zhongguo Waijiao: San zhong Xuqiu de Xunqiu jiqi Pingheng [Chinese Diplomacy Facing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Pursuing and Balancing Three Needs], *Zhanlüe yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 6 (1999), pp. 18-27.

<sup>669</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Spring 2006.

<sup>670</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Fall 2010.

<sup>671</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Spring 2004, Fall 2005; Shanghai, Spring 2010. For an excellent analysis that highlights the importance of strategic pressure and the need to minimize it, see Chu Shulong and Wang Zaibang, "Guanyu Guoji Xingshi he wo duiwai Zhanlüe ruogan Zhongda Wenti de Sikao" [Reflections on the International Situation and Major Issues in External Strategy], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 8 (1999), pp. 1-6.



Cold War] . . . . . used up a great amount of manpower, material power, and financial resources, and restricted the development of the national economy.” He argued further that focusing resources on the military made sense with war being imminent, but this was not conducive to economic modernization, and “the economic burden was great.”<sup>672</sup>

The greatest potential threat in its international environment was large-scale war. New developments such as economic globalization made Chinese officials and experts more optimistic about the ability to avoid major power, but the outbreak of such a war would do immense damage to China’s modernization drive. Although no potential area for major power seemed likely in the 1990s or 2000s, with the potential exception of a war over Taiwan, but given the disastrous consequences, China needed to work hard to avoid this from occurring.

Although war seemed unlikely, a second major potential threat to China’s rise was a strengthening of alliances against China, especially those with the aim of containing China. Given that the United States had already established an alliance system in East Asia, the threat to China would be to strengthen these existing alliances and target China as their potential enemy. The greatest threat to China was strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance, as these two powerful countries would be able to place tremendous pressure on China and complicate its security environment. However, after the late-1990s, there was a greater worry about a U.S.-India alliance, which could also place great pressure on China. Chinese experts also worried that the United States could form or strengthen alliances with smaller countries on China’s periphery, such as Southeast Asia or Central Asia, and use these relations to threaten or contain China. Although alliances involving the United States would be the greatest threat to China, other hostile combinations could complicate China’s international environment. Chinese experts constantly emphasize that with 15

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<sup>672</sup> See Qu Xing, “Deng Xiaoping Wajiao Sixiang de Xianshi Yiyi” [The Realistic Significance of Deng Xiaoping’s Diplomatic Thinking], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], No. 11 (2004), p. 15, and p. 16-7.

countries sharing a land border with China, there are lots of potential threats that could develop in China's international environment.<sup>673</sup>

Third, a hostile relationship with any major power, especially the United States, would be a great threat to China. Hostility could obviously lead to major war or the formation of an anti-China coalition. But even if it did not, hostility could also lead to arms races that would force China to divert resources away from economic modernization. Given China's large number of neighbors, including several cases of territorial disputes or other potential conflicts of interest, ending up in a hostile relationship with a major power remained a possibility. Huang Renwei argued that one of his major conclusions from the Soviet and Chinese experiences during the Cold War was that hostility often led to arms races, which greatly damaged economic development.<sup>674</sup>

Fourth, instability on China's periphery could end up threatening China's interests and undermining its focus on economic modernization. In China's history, instability on its border has ended up directly affecting it—either by drawing China to intervene abroad or by instability spreading into China. According to Zhang Yunling, “The adjacent areas are vitally important for China's existence and development. Historical facts have shown that the instability of its adjacent areas brings instability to China, and if the adjacent areas are stable and friendly with China, China benefits from this stability and friendliness.”<sup>675</sup> Given the large number of neighbors, preventing instability on its borders is a difficult task, but one of the set of more plausible threats that could complicate China's rise include “regional hotspots losing control” (*diqu redian shikong*).<sup>676</sup>

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<sup>673</sup> For a discussion of the danger of these encircling alliances, see Men Honghua, *Jianguo Zhongguo Dazhanlüe de Kuangjia: Guojia Shili, Zhanlüe Guannian yu Guoji Zhidu* [Building a Framework for China's Grand Strategy: National Power, Strategic Concepts, and International Institutions], (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2005), p. 291.

<sup>674</sup> See Huang Renwei, “Daguo Jueqi Daolu de Lishi Bijiao” [Historical Comparisons of the Paths of Rise of Great Powers], Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, *Bianhuazhong de Shijie yu Zhongguo Yinsu* [Changes in the World and the China Factor], (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2006), p. 15.

<sup>675</sup> See Zhang Yunling, “Goujian Zhongguo yu Zhoubian Guojia zhijian de Xinxing Guanxi” [Constructing China's New-type of Relations with Peripheral Countries], *Dangdai Yatai* [Contemporary Asia-Pacific], No. 11 (2007), pp. 3-11.

<sup>676</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005, Spring 2006.

The fifth potential international threat mentioned by Chinese experts is increased international support for separatism or internationalization of territorial disputes. Given that China faces potential separatists threats in Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet, international support for these independence activists represent a direct threat to the security of the regime and can also force the regime to divert resources away from economic modernization to deal with these threats. In addition to support for separatism, other countries could increase their support for regional countries involved in territorial disputes with China. The most likely sources of such threats include support for Japan in the East China Sea, Southeast Asian countries in the South China Sea, and India in its land disputes with China.<sup>677</sup>

In recent years, there has been a greater emphasis on non-traditional security (feichuantong anquan) threats and a greater concern for how they can damage China. Closely related to worries of how instability on China's periphery could spill over into China, there is a growing concern that non-traditional security issues within a country on China's periphery—such as terrorism, civil war, ethnic tension, or domestic unrest—could end up threatening China.<sup>678</sup> According to one expert, “If there is internal chaos in peripheral countries, this will also probably have an influence on China.”<sup>679</sup> Wang Yizhou also ties these concerns to globalization, arguing that “under globalization, one country's security is closely linked with its neighbor's security.”<sup>680</sup> In recent years, Chinese officials have emphasized “comprehensive security” (zonghe anquan), which includes traditional and non-traditional security threats.

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<sup>677</sup> See Huang, *Zhongguo Jueqi de Shijian he Kongjian*, p. 5.

<sup>678</sup> For more on nontraditional security threats, see Li Bin, “Zhongguo Muqian Mianlin de Zhuyao Feichuantong Anquan Wenti jiqi Paixu” [Major Non-traditional Security Issues Facing Contemporary China and Their Prioritization], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], No. 3 (2004), pp. 44-48 ; and Yu Xintian, “Weixie Xinbianhua: Heping Jueqi de Zhanlüe Xuanze” [New Changes in Threats: Strategic Choice of Peaceful Rise], in Yu Xintian, chief ed., *Zai Heping, Fazhan, Hezuo de Qizhi xia: Zhongguo Zhanlüe Jiyuqi de duiwai Zhanlüe Zonglun* [Under the Banner of Peace, Development, and Cooperation: Discussion of China's Period of Strategic Opportunity and Foreign Strategy], (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 48-62.

<sup>679</sup> See Lu Zhongwei et al., “Jiedu Zhongguo Dazhoubian” [Analyzing China's Grand Periphery], *Shijie Zhishi* [World Affairs], No. 24 (2004), p. 24.

<sup>680</sup> See Wang Yizhou, “Mianxiang 21Shiji de Zhongguo Waijiao.”

## *China's General Grand Strategy of Reassurance*

Through cooperation and attempts to demonstrate its benign intentions, China's grand strategy of reassurance aims to prevent the formation of balancing coalitions as China rises. For China's leaders, the next 5-10 years correspond to the important "period of strategic opportunity" (*zhanlüe jiyuqi*) for China's economic modernization and development during which the leadership hopes to focus its efforts on building a "moderately well-off society" (*xiaokang shehui*).<sup>681</sup> During this "period of strategic opportunity," China's grand strategy is focused on maintaining a peaceful and stable international environment that will allow it to increase China's "comprehensive national power" (*zonghe guoli*), focus on economic modernization and development, and rise to great power status.

Scholars have characterized this grand strategy in different terms, but I argue that China's grand strategy should best be conceptualized as one of reassurance.<sup>682</sup> The goal of this diplomatic strategy is to prevent complications in China's international environment that may distract attention from this focus on development and force China to divert resources to deal with external challenges. For a rising China, the goal is to increase power and influence without provoking a balancing coalition. In implementing this grand strategy of reassurance, China will continue to cooperate with major powers and regional powers in an effort to demonstrate that it has benign intentions and

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<sup>681</sup> At the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2002, the CCP leadership formally declared the first twenty years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be a period of strategic opportunity that needed to be effectively grasped. For more on the diplomatic aspects of this report, see Chu Shulong, "Quanmian Jianshe Xiaokang Shiqi de Zhongguo Waijiao Zhanlüe" [China's Diplomatic Strategy in the Period of Building a Well-off Society in an All-Around Way], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], No. 8 (2003), pp. 8-13; and Shi Yinhong, "Zhongguo Heping Jueqi de Zhanlüe Jiyu he ruogan Jiben Tiaojian" [The Strategic Opportunity of China's Peaceful Rise and Several Fundamental Conditions], *Guoji Guancha* [International Survey], No. 3 (2004), pp. 22-23, 26.

<sup>682</sup> The official characterization is one of a strategy of peaceful development (*heping fazhan*). For the official white paper, see "China's Peaceful Development Road," (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council: December 2005). For analysis of China's grand strategy, see Huang Renwei, *Zhongguo Jueqi de Shijian he Kongjian*; Ye Zicheng, *Daguo Dazhanlüe: Zhongguo Chengwei Shijie Daguo de Zhubiao Wenti ji Zhanlüe Xuanze* [China's Grand Strategy: Important Issues and Strategic Choices for China in Becoming a World Great Power] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 2003); Yan Xuetong et al., "Daguo de Jueqi yu Zhongguo de Xuanze" Bitan" [Pen Discussions on "The Rise of Great Powers and China's Choices"], *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue* [Social Sciences in China], No. 5 (2004), pp. 51-63. For a thorough English-language analysis of China's grand strategy, see Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*; and Michael Swaine and Ashley Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000).

show that as it gets more powerful it will not threaten the interests of these countries, but will use its increased power to help protect those interests. China is trying to convince the United States and the region that its increasing power will actually provide these countries with new opportunities to benefit as well, and rather than a “zero-sum” outcome, the rise of China can and will produce “win-win” (*shuangying*) outcomes.

### *The Tools of China's Reassurance*

China employed all of the tools of reassurance discussed in the theory chapter. I will discuss the implementation of these tools in greater detail later, and focus on the causal impact these reassurance efforts on the balancing response of others. In each section, I briefly illustrate how China's leaders implemented these tools of reassurance.

### Self-Restraint

In the mid-1990s, China overreacted to what it perceived as threats to domestic interests by taking counter-productive provocative military actions against Taiwan and in the South China Sea. However, from the late 1990s on, China became much more restrained in its relations with many countries. In the face of U.S. moves that harmed China's interests, such as development of missile defense, enhancing its commitment to Taiwan, and deploying forces in its backyard in Central Asia, China remained constrained and restrained. Moreover, it restrained its criticism of the United States. In response to Prime Minister Koizumi's repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, China tried to be patient and restrained by continuing to emphasize cooperative relations.

### Self-Binding

China's deeper engagement in international and regional institutions, starting from the mid-to-late 1990s, signaled to the region that it was willing to be constrained by these institutions and had accepted their legitimacy and utility. Deeper involvement in regional institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization showed that China was willing to engage and be engaged in a multilateral manner. As major powers and small powers had been urging China to play a more active role in these institutions in the early 1990s and interpreted their unwillingness to do so as a sign of hostility and revisionism, China's shift to embrace multilateralism and regional institutions helped signal benign intent. China also reduced its challenge to the American alliance system and through explicit endorsement of this system and the U.S. presence in the region, signaled a willingness to become an even more integral part of this regional order.

### Sharing the Wealth

This is perhaps the tool that China used most effectively in improving its relations with regional powers and demonstrating that it will not threaten their interests. Despite concerns that China would use its increased power to undermine the interests of others, China repeatedly used its power and influence in ways that helped important regional powers. In general, all countries benefitted dramatically from China's economic growth, thus proving that China's "win-win" rhetoric had some empirical basis behind it. China used its increased power to help benefit the United States by convincing Pakistan to support American efforts after 9/11 and in launching the Six-Party Talks. In its relations with India, China showed that even though it was more powerful, it would move towards a more neutral position in South Asia and reduce some aspects of its support for Pakistan.

## Binding

Through its strategic partnerships, China bound the other major powers to China. Although these were usually not formal arrangements that explicitly limited the partner's options or ability to cooperate with another power against China, but through demonstrating a spirit of cooperation and showing that partnership was beneficial, Chinese binding efforts helped make these countries less interested in moving to balance against China. The 2001 treaty with Russia was a more explicit form of binding which gave each party more control over the other's ability to cooperate with others, thus restricting Russia's options to join with others against China.

## Limited Military Build-Up

China's rapid military modernization and sustained double-digit increases in military budget were a major source of concern for the United States and the region and continue to be today. Although China's defense build-up appears rapid and massive, Chinese leaders have tried to emphasize that defense spending as a percentage of GDP and as a percentage of overall government expenditure actually fell over the period of China's rise. In reality, however, China's defense spending has grown faster than the economy over the last twenty years. Though factually correct, these arguments did not prove particularly successful, so China tried to manage how its military build-up was perceived through a sustained effort of confidence-building measures, military cooperation, and an attempt to highlight PLA activities that were positive such as peace-keeping operations. Although the PLA has modernized over the last two decades, since the mid-1990s, it has been restrained in its use of force internationally.

## Chapter 6: China Reassures the United States

In the previous chapter I discussed how based on press reports, academic writings, and government speeches, I date the beginning of China's rise as 1993. I then laid out the external challenges that China sees to its rise and its broad grand strategy for preventing these from emerging. In this chapter I discuss China's reassurance towards the United States, the most important relationship that China needs to manage to keep a stable external environment and the most important potential balancer. I divide this chapter into three broad periods, 1993-1996, 1996-1999 and 1999-2005, and examine the effect of China's reassurance on American balancing responses in each period. For each time period I will first lay out China's attempts at reassurance, then discuss the balancing responses by the U.S. during that period, and lastly evaluate the explanatory power of my theory of how reassurance can minimize the severity of the balancing response.

Many scholars and government officials have argued that as China's power increases, relations between a rising China and a dominant United States will become more acrimonious, hostile, and could even lead to great power conflict. Although forces such as economic interdependence and nuclear weapons may reduce the chances for the outbreak of war, many prominent realists and materialist theories have suggested that as China rises, other countries, and especially the United States, will respond competitively to the rise of China. Rather than cooperating with a rising China, many of these experts argue that the United States should and will strengthen existing alliances, form new alliances, and increase military modernization to balance against a rising China. According to one prominent scholar, "The structural imperatives of the international system, which are powerful, will probably force the United States to abandon its policy of constructive engagement in the near future. Indeed, there are signs that the new Bush



administration has taken the first steps in this direction.”<sup>683</sup> These analysts have never been particularly clear on how powerful China will need to become to incite this balancing response, but predictions of a rising power provoking American balancing behavior began in the early-to-mid-1990s, shortly after China was perceived as a rising power.<sup>684</sup> Given China’s near double-digit increases in economic growth and military spending, it is reasonable to expect that according to these popular theories, increases in Chinese power throughout the 1990s and 2000s should have produced less cooperation with China and an increasingly severe balancing response driven by fears of China’s increased material power.

According to my theory, however, China’s grand strategy should affect the severity of America’s balancing response, and the American decision calculus should reveal the importance of the rising power’s grand strategy. Put simply, if a rising power implements a grand strategy of reassurance, this should minimize the severity of the balancing response by the other powers. In this case, even though China’s economic growth is increasing during this period, China’s reassurance strategy should make the U.S. less likely to severely balance against China and more likely to adopt a cooperative posture. Not only should reassurance correlate with less severe balancing behavior, but the decision calculus should also show the causal importance of these reassurance signals in shaping the balancing response. According to my theory, China’s reassurance tools should minimize the American balancing response by reducing the estimate that a rising China is a threat or demonstrating that the United States can benefit from a rising China.

To summarize the results, in the mid-to-late 1990s, when China was rising but relatively weak, the U.S. severely balanced against it. Whereas by 2005, when China had experienced ten more

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<sup>683</sup> See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 402

<sup>684</sup> For examples, see Roy, “Hegemon on the Horizon;” Krauthammer, “Why we Must Contain China;” and Avery Goldstein, “Great Expectations: Interpreting China’s Arrival,” *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Winter 1998-1998), pp. 36-73.

years of economic growth and military modernization and therefore should have been far more threatening, the U.S. responded in a more cooperative manner with much less severe balancing. In general, this chapter argues that China's coherent and comprehensive implementation of a reassurance strategy towards the U.S. after 1999 helped create the resulting minimal balancing and overall cooperative relations.

During the first period, 1993-1996, I argue that China attempted to reassure the U.S., but this proved unsuccessful. During this period, China used very few of the tools of reassurance and when it perceived its fundamental interests to be challenged, its aggressive response in defense of these interests, which was defensive in China's view, ended up being perceived as coercive and provoked a severe balancing response. This "defense" of Chinese interests led the United States to deploy massive military power to the region, make coercive threats against China, strengthen alliances with an increasing focus on China, and led other regional actors to come together to stand up to China. A rising China provoking a balancing response may not seem surprising, but the timing, speed, and justifications offered by the U.S. and other actors for the severe balancing responses in the mid-to-late 1990s suggest that it was not China's power that provoked this response, but Chinese behavior, which was perceived as especially aggressive. Chinese incomplete attempts at reassurance and overly aggressive defense of national interests show how a relatively weak rising power can end up prematurely provoking a hostile response from other powers.

During the second period, 1996-1999, I argue that there is some limited support for my theory of successful reassurance. China implemented a strategy of reassurance, and the U.S. deepened its cooperation with China and took steps to conditionalize its support for Taiwan. Although reassurance and a less severe balancing response occurred at the same time, the U.S. decision calculus showed that Chinese reassurance was not the driving factor in the U.S. decision to become more cooperative, but Chinese reassurance help sustain this cooperation and even push it

further. After the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-6, the United States hoped to avoid future confrontation and was eager to improve Sino-American relations. During this period, China began to use more of the tools of reassurance and make active efforts to cooperate with the U.S. in managing affairs in South Asia and the on the Korean peninsula, which helped sustain the cooperative relationship and prevent balancing, even as China's rise continued. American policymakers pointed to this actual cooperation, as well as the potential for future gains from cooperation, to argue that a cooperative relationship with China would be beneficial to American interests, and as a reason to avoid more competitive balancing responses.

During the third period, 1999-2005, there is very strong evidence that China's strategy of reassurance helped limit the severity of the balancing response by the United States. After learning lessons from its earlier experiences that strong defense of national interests could be seen as provocative, and recognizing that the United States and others were worried about the future trajectory of a rising China, by the end of the 1990s, China began to implement a more coherent and comprehensive reassurance strategy towards the United States that used a wider variety of the available tools of reassurance. Although the U.S. balanced severely early in the Bush administration by increasing U.S. commitments to Taiwan and reinforcing alliance relations around China's periphery, after the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> the U.S. reduced the severity of its balancing and reciprocated China's reassurance with an intense expansion of cooperation. This desire to expand cooperation and focus on engagement was codified in the "responsible stakeholder" framework which Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick announced in 2005, and which became the organizing framework for the administration's China policy thereafter. There is strong evidence that not only did China's reassurance efforts and the U.S. less severe balancing occur at the same time, but that China's reassurance signals also heavily influenced the U.S. decision calculus. I show that administration officials not only recognized and appreciated the value of these reassurance signals,

but U.S. officials also invoked China's cooperative behavior in their estimates that China was not a threat, and U.S. officials cited the benefits from ongoing cooperation and potential future cooperation as a reason to cooperate with China.

### **A False Start: China's Failed Attempts at Reassurance, 1993-6**

#### *China's General Approach to U.S.-China Relations in the Post Cold-War World*

China's approach to the U.S.-China relationship in the post Cold-War world can be characterized by an overall desire to be pragmatic and cooperative, based on the U.S. sole superpower status and its critical role in either assisting or preventing China's economic modernization. But this overall cooperative approach also included a need to struggle and fight back when China perceived its fundamental interests as being challenged and attacked. In the early 1990s the focus of China's foreign policy was to improve its relations with western countries to end China's diplomatic isolation from the Tiananmen Massacre, improve its international standing, and convince them to lift the sanctions. China also tried to rebuild trust with neighboring countries that had been damaged by Mao Zedong's attempts to spread revolution and further improve these relations to keep its international environment stable to focus on economic modernization, and hope that stable relations with other countries would further facilitate economic exchange.<sup>685</sup>

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<sup>685</sup> For an excellent discussion of how the regime viewed the end of the Cold War, the international response to the Tiananmen massacre, and its precarious situation from the memoir from the then-foreign minister, see Qian Qichen, *Waijiao Shiji* [Ten Episodes in Diplomacy], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2003), pp. 163-202. For other analysis, Robert Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press), Ch. 4; Chen Qimao, "New Approaches in China's Foreign Policy: the Post Cold-War Era," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (March 1993), pp. 237-251; Bonnie S. Glaser, "China's Security Perceptions: Interests and Ambitions," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (March 1993), pp. 252-271; Gerald Segal, "China and the Disintegration of the Soviet Union," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 32, No. 9 (1992), pp. 848-68. For Chinese-language analysis, see Yan Xuetong, Yu Xiaoqiu, and Tao Jian, "Dangqian Woguo Waijiao Mianlin de Tiaozhan yu Renwu" [Challenges and Tasks Currently Facing China's Diplomacy], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], No. 4 (1993); and Yan Xuetong, "Shixi Zhongguo de Anquan Huanjing [Analyzing China's Security Environment], *Dangdai Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* [Research on Contemporary International Issues], No. 4 (1993), pp. 35-41.

In its policy and strategy toward the United States at this time, the Chinese were very reactive, but still focused on improving relations. As a source of investment, advanced technology, and an export market, as well as the most powerful country in the system, the U.S. was the most important country for China's continued economic modernization, which proved the basis for regime legitimacy. According to two Chinese scholars: "Reviewing contradictions, frictions, clashes and even confrontations in U.S.-China relations after reform and opening—all are provoked by the U.S.....China on the other hand, under the prerequisite of upholding principle, works hard to safeguard the fundamental stability of bilateral relations."<sup>686</sup> According to Chu Shulong, a well-known America expert and then-researcher for a government intelligence think-tank, China's policy towards the U.S. in the post-Cold War period had always been "pragmatic and flexible" and China had always chosen "cooperation over confrontation."<sup>687</sup> In the early 1990s, the Chinese government proposed a *tifa* (formulation) of guiding principles China's policy towards the United States and Sino-American relations--"increase understanding, reduce trouble, develop cooperation, and avoid confrontation" (zengjia xinren, jianshao mafan, fazhan hezuo, bugao duikang). According to the memoirs of Tang Jiaxuan, then-Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs and later Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Councilor, President Jiang initially proposed these principles to a visiting Congressional delegation in November 1992 and put them in writing in responding to a letter from President Clinton in April 1993.<sup>688</sup> President Jiang repeated these guiding principles during a November 1993 meeting with President Clinton in Seattle for APEC, and scholars and government

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<sup>686</sup> See Wang Qing and Chu Shulong, "ZhongMei Guanxi: Hezuo yu Fangfan Reng shi Jidiao" [Sino-U.S. Relations: Cooperation and Remaining on Guard are still the Central Theme] *Dangdai Shijie* [Contemporary World], No. 1 (2006), p. 13.

<sup>687</sup> See Chu Shulong, "Mianxiang Xin Shiji de ZhongMei Guanxi Zhanlüe Kuangjia" [A Strategic Framework for Sino-U.S. Relations when Facing a new Century], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 10 (1997).

<sup>688</sup> See Tang Jiaxuan, *Jingyuxufeng* [Strong Rains, Calm Wind], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2009), p. 294. For a discussion of these principles from the memoirs of another diplomat, see Wu Jianmin, *Waijiao Anli* [Cases in Diplomacy], (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 2007), p. 184.

officials repeatedly invoked them to characterize U.S.-China relations and China's approach to the relationship.<sup>689</sup>

Although Chinese strategy towards the U.S. was guided by this pragmatic, flexible, and cooperative spirit, whenever China judged the U.S. to be challenging its fundamental interests, China would be “forced” to respond by trying to protect its these interests. The response to threats and challenges to China's core interest was often referred to as the need to “uphold principle” (jianchi yuanze), “maintain principle” (baochi yuanze), or “uphold struggle” (jianchi douzheng).<sup>690</sup> Two very well-known America watchers capture this dual dynamic in China's strategy. First, Yang Jiemian writes: “on issues of principle need to uphold struggle, but at the necessary time should be adept at compromising.”<sup>691</sup> In his discussion of China's policy towards the U.S., Wang Jisi writes: “China has consistently upheld principle, on the one hand firmly struggling against US actions that attempt to damage sovereignty, unification, or fundamental interests, on the other hand, also work hard and realistically to improve Sino-U.S. relations.”<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>689</sup> For an official discussion of these principles, see “Jiang Zemin Siwu Kelindun” [Jiang Zemin's Four Meetings with Clinton], available at <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/HIAW/112989.htm>. For other discussions of this “tifa” and its implications for U.S.-China relations, see Niu Jun, “Zhuanxingzhong de ZhongMei Guanxi” [Sino-U.S. Relations in Transition], *Guoji Jingji Pinglun* [International Economic Review], Vol. 1-2 (2000), p.53.

<sup>690</sup> This idea of “uphold principle” or “uphold struggle” is applied in all of China's diplomatic relationships, not just relations with the U.S. Moreover, when this phrase was invoked as a description of how China was forced to respond to U.S. challenges in the 1990s, it is almost always discussed in terms of China not having a choice in the matter and the responsibility being with the U.S. Phrases such as “cannot but” (budebu) or “have no other choice” (meiyou biede xuanze) are often invoked in explanations of upholding struggle. Author's interviews, Beijing and Shanghai, Summer 2001, summer 2002, fall 2005-spring 2006.

<sup>691</sup> See Yang Jiemian, “Shilun Zhongguo duiMei Zhengce de Tiaozheng” [On Adjustments in China's Policy towards the U.S.], *Fudan Xuebao* [Fudan Journal], Vol. 2 (1997), p. 50-2.

<sup>692</sup> See Wang Jisi, “Ezhi' haishi 'Jiaowang': Ping Lengzhanhou Meiguo duiHua Zhengce” [‘Containment’ or ‘Engagement’: Assessing America's post-Cold War Policy towards China], *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* [International Studies], No. 1 (1996), p. 6.

Limited Reassurance: Relying on Words to Address Concerns

When China's perceived rise began in 1993, China was still focused on its own internal predicament. Although newspaper, scholars, and sometimes leaders in other countries talked about China's booming economy and fast economic growth, China still saw itself as weak and under extreme international and domestic pressure. Viewed from Beijing, China was not a rising power, but a regime trying to avoid the fate of the former Soviet Union, break out of international isolation, and survive.

When other countries, especially the United States, characterized China as a rising power, Chinese mostly used words to try to reassure them that China was still weak and that there was nothing feel potentially threatened by. In addition to pointing out China's weak economy, especially when considered in GDP per capita terms, China tried to call attention to its own recent economic turmoil to rebut any possibility of a rising China or a China threat. The constant refrain from Chinese leaders and scholars was that China was still a poor developing country that could not and would not threaten any other country, and therefore other countries had no reason to worry. Chinese leaders also invoked its own history of being humiliated by imperialist aggression to argue that this history proved that China would never threaten other countries, no matter how powerful it ever became. China tried to set others at ease by drawing on its supposed historical tradition as a "peace-loving country" (*aihao heping de guojia*) and invoking peaceful rhetoric such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and claims to "never seek hegemony" (*yongyuan bu chengba*). Moreover, China often turned the claim of a rising China around on its adherents, and suggested that if another country tried to "spread China threat theory," then that country was anti-China and was trying to keep China weak and not allow it to be a normal power.<sup>693</sup> Chinese leaders, though

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<sup>693</sup> For an excellent discussion of this approach, see Yee and Storey, eds., *The China Threat*, ch. 2.

hoping to develop a cooperative relationship with the United States and disabuse it of any reason to worry about China, used words and appeals to Chinese weakness as the only tools to reassure the United States and the region.

### Responding to Perceived Challenges: Aggressive “Defense” of National Interests

During this period, although hoping for cooperation, China perceived several challenges to its fundamental interests that compelled it to take defensive measures and struggle against these threats. In the 1992 presidential election campaign, Bill Clinton attacked President Bush for “coddling” dictators and tyrants and suggested that as president he would not be as close to the “butchers of Beijing.” When Clinton became president, one of his first initiatives in policy towards China was to try and link the annual review of China’s most-favored nation (MFN) status with political reform within China. The Chinese perceived this as intervention in their internal affairs, an attempt to collapse the regime, and saw any push for political reform as a challenge against China’s political stability. In the face of President Clinton’s demands that China make significant headway in political reform before MFN status would be granted, China did not give in at all, and fought hard against this threat to its core interests. In 1994, this failed experiment of linkage was abandoned and President Clinton was forced to look for other ways to promote political reform in China.

China also perceived several international challenges to its national interests that required a defensive response. In the early 1990s, the Chinese believed that other countries in Southeast Asia had designs on improving their positions and their claims on disputed areas in the South China Sea, and were increasing their military capabilities to be able to do so.<sup>694</sup> Viewing this as a challenge to China’s territorial sovereignty, China took what it viewed as a defensive response and not only

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<sup>694</sup> In a dispute that began in the 1970s, five countries and six governments—China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei—claim all or some of the Spratly Islands and the surrounding areas in the South China Sea. These areas are valuable due to their proximity to shipping lanes, the believed presence of oil and natural gas resources, and abundant fishing.



passed a maritime territorial law in February 1992 affirming China's sovereignty over the Spratlys, the Paracels, and the Diaoyutai islands in the East China Sea, but it also awarded an exploration contract for a disputed area near the Spratlys later that year.<sup>695</sup> In late 1994, after feeling threatened by increased naval patrols around the area by other countries, and worries that these other countries were improving their positions at China's expense, China responded by boldly occupying and building structures on Mischief Reef. To China, these moves in the South China Sea were responses to provocations and threats by others, should not be seen as threatening, and in no way should be viewed as a challenge to others.

In 1995-6, China also decided it needed to struggle against what it perceived to be the challenge of separatism, as Taiwan seemed to be moving further away from the mainland. In the early 1990s, after Taiwan ended martial law and instituted democratic reforms, President Lee Teng-hui launched a campaign of "pragmatic diplomacy" in which he tried to increase Taiwan's international position and international space. President Lee tried to increase the status of Taiwan by interacting with as many world leaders as possible and joining international organizations, activities which were unacceptable to Beijing. In parallel with this push for more space and more recognition, there were cross-strait negotiations between the non-official Straits Exchange Foundation and Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, that the mainland hoped would make progress in moving towards unification. To help encourage unification, or at least movement in that direction, President Jiang made a speech in January 1995 in which he laid out his vision of

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<sup>695</sup> For a discussion of Chinese justifications of these moves as a necessary defensive response, see Chen Jie, "China's Spratly Policy: with Special Reference to the Philippines and Malaysia," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 34, No. 10 (October 1994), pp. 893-903; Glaser, "China's Security Perceptions," p. 265. For Chinese-language sources, see Liu Zhongmin, "Lengzhanhou Dongnanya Guojia Nanhai Zhengce de Fazhan Dongxiang yu Zhongguo de Duice Sikao" [Post-Cold War Development Trends in Southeast Asian Countries' South China Sea Policies and Reflections on China's Countermeasures], *Nanyang Wenti Yanjiu* [Research on South Seas Issues], No. 2 (2008); and Ju Hailong, "Heping Jiejue Nanhai Wenti de Xianshi Sikao" [Realistic Reflections on Peacefully Resolving the South China Sea Question], *Dongnanya Yanjiu* [Southeast Asia Studies], No. 5 (2006). For an analysis that suggests the push into the South China Sea was not endorsed by the central government, but rather was the initiative of local military officials, see John W. Garver, "China's Push through the South China Sea: The Interaction of Bureaucratic and National Interests," *China Quarterly*, No. 132 (December 1992), pp. 999-1028.

eight points for improvement in cross strait relations. This was a very moderate speech that focused on enhancing trade and exchanges, ending hostilities, and creating a mutually acceptable basis for unification.

In response to what Beijing viewed as a very moderate proposal and speech, President Lee responded in April by repudiating all of Jiang's points and suggesting that for any progress to occur on the cross-strait issue, the mainland needed to accept the reality that the two sides were governed by two separate governments. Shortly after this hostile response by Taiwan to what Beijing believed a moderate proposal, the government in Beijing was informed that President Lee, under heavy Congressional pressure, was going to be granted a visa to enter the United States for a private visit to his reunion at Cornell University.<sup>696</sup> To China, this was tantamount to official recognition by the U.S. of the sovereignty and authority of the Taiwanese government; it also sent the wrong signal to Taiwanese separatists who would now be emboldened to push even harder for independence. Coming after Secretary of State Warren Christopher's promise the previous month that Lee would not be given a visa, this showed China that not only were the Taiwanese trying to separate from the mainland, but that they were also gaining support from the United States. These worries about separatism were amplified when Lee repeatedly mentioned the "Republic of China on Taiwan" and referred to his "country" and "nation" in a speech that was not supposed to be political.

Faced with this bold attack against Chinese interests, sovereignty, and security, China believed that it had no choice but to respond. According to one Chinese scholar, "when the US

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<sup>696</sup> Congressional support for President Lee and the outrage at how the U.S. was treating him was fueled by an apocryphal story that spread regarding President Lee's stopover in Hawaii in May 1994 on his way to Nelson Mandela's inauguration in South Africa. According to the story, which spread through the world and the U.S. Congress, not without some help from the Taiwanese, the United States would not even allow President Lee to exit his plane during his transit. In reality, he was allowed to exit the plane, although the area set up for him in the airport was quite sparse. For a discussion of Lee's pragmatic diplomacy and America's policy response, see John W. Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), Ch. 3, 6; James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1999), ch. 17; Robert L. Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations 1989-2000* (Washington, D.C., Brookings, 2003), Ch. 6; and Alan D. Romberg, *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice: American Policy toward Taiwan and U.S.-PRC Relations* (Washington, D.C., Stimson Center, 2003).

violated their promises and invited Lee Teng-hui to the United States, China had to ‘resolutely struggle’ with the United States” (jinxing jianjue de douzheng).<sup>697</sup> China responded with strongly worded protests, canceled a PLA Air Force delegation to the U.S., called off the next round of the cross-strait negotiations, postponed the planned trip to the U.S. of Defense Minister Chi Haotian, recalled its ambassador from Washington D.C., and delayed the approval of James Sasser as the new ambassador in Beijing. In response to Lee’s visit, China launched a week of live-fire exercises in July 1995, and lobbed a few missiles towards Taiwan’s major ports. China followed this up with another round of military exercises in December 1995 before Taiwan’s legislative elections, in the hopes of convincing voters not to vote for pro-independence candidates. On the eve of Taiwan’s first presidential election in March 1996, China announced more live-fire exercises and another round of missile firings, this time with target boxes even closer to Taiwan’s ports. The aim was to decrease support for President Lee, who ended up winning the election anyway, and by a higher than expected margin.<sup>698</sup>

Although it was certainly not designed as a way to reassure others and convince them that China was not a threat, to China, these defensive actions during the Taiwan Strait crises of 1995-6 were an absolutely necessary response to the provocations of others. From China’s perspective, this did not signal a shift to a coercive strategy, and China still hoped to develop a cooperative relationship with the United States. According to two observers: “On the issue of military exercises in and around the Taiwan Strait, China neither offers nor feels the need to offer any explanation....Chinese officials consider this merely an internal matter.”<sup>699</sup> To China, the views of

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<sup>697</sup> See Yang Jiemian, “Shilun Zhongguo dui Mei Zhengce de Tiaozheng,” p. 48-9.

<sup>698</sup> See James R. Lilley and Chuck Downs, eds., *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1997); Andrew Scobell, “Show of Force: Chinese Soldiers, Statesmen, and the 1995-6 Taiwan Strait Crisis,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 2 (Summer, 2000), pp. 227-246; and Robert S. Ross, “The 1995-6 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 87-123.

<sup>699</sup> See Wendy Frieman and David B.H. Denoon, “China’s Security Strategy: The View from Beijing, ASEAN, and Washington,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (April 1996), especially p. 428. For attempts to explain these actions from

other countries on the Taiwan Strait crisis were seen as completely irrelevant, as China was just defending its interests and its territorial sovereignty, as any other nation would do.<sup>700</sup> According to one Chinese expert: “If China’s sovereignty is seriously harmed—e.g. if certain countries support Taiwanese or Tibetan independence and try to separate Taiwan or Tibet from the PRC—China has no choice but to adopt all necessary means to protect its sacred sovereignty and will spare no blood and life in doing so.”<sup>701</sup> Although China tried to convince others that it was not a threat and was not a rising power, it struggled against challenges when it perceived its fundamental interests were being challenged.

Lastly, in 1995 and 1996, China accelerated its testing of nuclear weapons, and performed tests even though other powers asked them not to. However, China believed that what it did on its own territory could not be seen as threatening, especially given the defensive nature of the weapons and China’s declared “no first use” policy. China believed that any country that objected to China’s improving its ability to defend itself must have an ulterior motive and did not want China to feel secure. Moreover, given that China saw nuclear weapons as a means to keep China secure and free from blackmail by stronger powers, these tests were defensive measures and internal issues that no other country should object to.

### *Balancing Against China:*

In response to China’s assertive behavior, the United States and other regional countries responded by balancing against China. These moves included the formation of new alignments,

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China’s point of view, see Chen Jian, “Understanding the Logic of Beijing’s Taiwan Policy,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1996), pp. 459-62; Chu Shulong, “National Unity, Sovereignty, and Territorial Integration,” *China Journal*, No. 36 (July 1996), pp. 98-102; and Jia Qingguo, “Reflections on the Recent Tension in the Taiwan Strait,” *China Journal*, No. 36 (July 1996), pp. 93-97.

<sup>700</sup> For one of the most influential analyses of the Taiwan Strait crisis and Chinese views on it, see Su Ge, *Meiguo duiHua Zhengce yu Taiwan Wenti* [U.S. Policy towards China and the Taiwan Question], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1998). See also Tao Wenzhao and He Xinqiang, *ZhongMei Guanxiishi* [A History of Sino-American Relations], (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 292-300.

<sup>701</sup> See Chen Qimao, “New Approaches in China’s Foreign Policy,” p. 249.

strengthening of existing alliances, massive deployments of coercive military forces, and new coercive threats. Although this mix of responses did not include the most severe types of balancing responses, these balancing responses involved a departure from existing policies and a significant move up the severity scale.

China had seized islands at the expense of Vietnam in the past, but the occupation of Mischief Reef was particularly provocative because it was the first time that China had challenged a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—in this case, the Philippines. At the April 1995 Senior Officials Meeting in Hangzhou, all of the Southeast Asian countries that attended, including Malaysia who had usually supported China, strongly criticized China's unprovoked aggression and warned that any similar behavior in the future would not stand.<sup>702</sup> Probably most importantly, this coercive behavior pushed all of the members of ASEAN to overlook their own bilateral problems with each other, and stand firm in offering a joint warning.

In May 1995, the Clinton administration took a much stronger position on U.S. interests in the South China Sea and the importance of keeping the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) open for safe passage. Congress openly debated the possibility of normalizing relations with Vietnam and several Congressmen invoked the threat from China in Southeast Asia as a principal justification for taking this step.<sup>703</sup> Not only did the U.S. feel the need to warn China and increase its commitments to the region, but Southeast Asian countries were also trying to pull the U.S. back into the region to enhance their security. This included calls by the Philippines for the U.S. to offer greater assistance to stand up to Chinese incursions. Southeast Asian countries also responded by expanding the membership of ASEAN, in the hopes that bringing Vietnam in would strengthen the region's ability to respond to China. After some of China's maritime claims even threatened Indonesia, China's

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<sup>702</sup> Although this may not seem like a particularly strong reaction to someone steeped in European politics, ASEAN countries very rarely criticized other countries for anything, making this both a very unusual and very stern response.

<sup>703</sup> For more on this, see Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Policy Priorities and their Implications for the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 50.

assertiveness pushed the Indonesians to sign a defense agreement with the Australians, bringing another power into the region to try to enhance regional security and protect themselves from an aggressive China.<sup>704</sup> Moreover, the threat from China's aggressive behavior pushed Southeast Asian countries to consider not only external balancing, but also led to discussion of the need to increase defense budgets and internally balancing against China.<sup>705</sup>

After not responding militarily to Chinese missile tests and exercises in the Taiwan Strait in 1995, the United States sternly warned China not to escalate the situation with a coercive use of force on the eve of the March 1996 election. On March 7, 1996, Secretary of Defense William Perry, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and National Security Advisor Anthony Lake together met with Liu Huaqiu, China's vice minister of foreign affairs.<sup>706</sup> Secretary of State Christopher "emphasized that U.S. national security officials were of the unanimous view that these coercive military actions should be stopped. To underline this point, he said, he had invited the secretary of defense to the meeting to convey a message directly to the People's Liberation Army."<sup>707</sup> Secretary of Defense Perry, citing his experience as an artillery officer and knowledge of the importance of bracketing a target, sternly warned Vice Minister Liu that "the United States has more than enough military capability to protect its vital national security interests in the region, and is prepared to

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<sup>704</sup> For discussions of this balancing response in Southeast Asia, see Ian Storey, "Creeping Assertiveness: China, the Philippines and the South China Sea Dispute," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 21, no. 1 (April 1999), pp. 95-118; Allen S. Whiting, "ASEAN Eyes China: The Security Dimension," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (April 1997), pp. 299-322; Frieman and Denoon, "China's Security Strategy;" M. Taylor Fravel and William J. Dobson, "Red Herring Hegemon: China and the South China Sea," *Current History*, Vol. 96, No. 611 (September 1997); Lee Lai To, "East Asian Assessments of China's Security Policy," *International Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (April 1997), pp. 251-62; and Michael A. Glosny "Heading toward a Win-Win Future?: Recent Developments in China's Policy towards Southeast Asia," *Asian Security*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2006), pp. 24-57.

<sup>705</sup> According to one article, the Chinese aggression in the South China Sea "is a grave challenge to the poorly equipped armed forces," and "led to a near universal recognition of the need for military modernization." See V.G. Kulkarni, "Philippines Mid-Term Blues," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 27, 1995.

<sup>706</sup> For a recount of this exchange, see Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), especially pgs. 92-97; Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), ch. 29; Robert Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, Ch. 6; and James Mann, *About Face*, Ch. 17.

<sup>707</sup> See Carter and Perry, *Preventive Defense*, p. 96.

demonstrate that.”<sup>708</sup> Lake then repeated the key message that “the United States had vital national security interests in the Western Pacific, and the recent Chinese military actions threatened those interests.”<sup>709</sup> In one unanimous voice, these three officials warned Liu that any further military action by the Chinese would have “grave consequences.”<sup>710</sup>

After Beijing ignored these warnings and announced more live-fire exercises and missile firings on March 9, 1996, American officials decided that a serious response and firm commitment was called for, so they decided to send two carriers to the area around Taiwan.<sup>711</sup> Illustrating the severity of this response, one scholar writes: “The result was that the United States deployed its largest armada in Southeast Asia since the end of the Vietnam War.”<sup>712</sup> Noting the seriousness of the crisis, a Chinese scholar writes: “This constituted the first potential military confrontation between the two countries since the normalization of relations after Nixon’s visit to China in 1972.”<sup>713</sup> According to another: “by March 1996, Beijing confronted an international environment potentially more dangerous than at any time since the late 1970s.”<sup>714</sup> Chinese defensive response against the challenge to its sovereignty reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the region and to Taiwan, and compelled the U.S. to bring an incredible amount of military power in response.

The United States also strengthened its existing alliance relations with Japan and Australia and increased the ability of these alliances to respond to a potential China threat. In 1996, President Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto announced a joint declaration and this was followed by revisions of the guidelines for defense cooperation. This note included a reaffirmation of the importance of the security alliance, but new references to defense cooperation in “areas surrounding

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<sup>708</sup> See Carter and Perry, *Preventive Defense*, p. 96.

<sup>709</sup> See Carter and Perry, *Preventive Defense*, p. 97.

<sup>710</sup> See Mann, *About Face*, p. 336.

<sup>711</sup> See Carter and Perry, *Preventive Defense*, p. 97-8.

<sup>712</sup> See Mann, *About Face*, p. 337.

<sup>713</sup> See Chen Qimao, “The Taiwan Strait Crisis: Its Crux and Solution,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, No. 11 (November 1996), p. 1055.

<sup>714</sup> See Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, p. 47.

Japan” and new cooperation to develop ballistic missile defense (BMD) technologies and capabilities. In July 1996, shortly after the crisis in Taiwan, the U.S. and Australia signed a joint declaration reaffirming their relations. There were calls for joint exercises in the future, sharing of intelligence about the region, and other forms of military cooperation. Secretary of Defense Perry began to talk of the U.S.-Japan alliance and the U.S.-Australia alliance as the two anchors in America’s Asia-Pacific defense strategy.<sup>715</sup>

*Explaining the Balancing Response: Limited Reassurance and Perceived Coercion*

In the period from 1993 to 1996, China implemented a reassurance strategy, but the United States and other regional powers responded by severely balancing against it. For the convergence test, the evidence for this period does not support my general theory that reassurance can mitigate the severity of the balancing response. The process tracing evidence, however, shows that China’s aggressive behavior, not merely its increasing material power, provoked this response. The timing of the balancing response (very early in China’s rise), the rapidity with which it came together, and the justifications offered by decision-makers suggest that China’s aggressive “defensive” actions made the United States and others feel more threatened by China and provoked a relatively severe balancing response. Moreover, China’s reassurance efforts in this period were very limited, focused only on words, and were overwhelmed by China’s more aggressive and assertive actions. Chinese aggressive behavior compelled the U.S. and others to respond by balancing against China relatively severely, and forced them to respond early in China’s rise, while it was still very weak and had just been perceived as a rising power.

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<sup>715</sup> For discussions on the revitalization of the U.S.-Australian relationship in the wake of the Taiwan crisis, see Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*; and John Baker and Douglas H. Paal, “The U.S.-Australia Alliance,” in Robert D. Blackwill and Paul Dibb, eds., *America’s Asian Alliances* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), Ch. 5.



This evidence and causal explanation does not support my overall theory of successful reassurance minimizing balancing, but the process tracing evidence does help to show the conditions under which reassurance is more or less likely to be effective and the tools that need to be used for a successful reassurance effort. During this period, other than emphasizing China's weakness and promises of a peaceful future even as it grows more powerful, Chinese leaders took very few actions to try to reassure the United States that it was not going to threaten its interests. At the same time, faced with what it perceived to be many direct challenges to its national interests, Chinese leaders believed they had no other choice but to stand up for itself and defend its interests, mostly through taking assertive and aggressive actions. China's overall approach to its grand strategy and relations with the United States were aimed at reassurance and cooperation, but it combined limited reassurance with a stronger defense against challenges to its national interests. At an early stage in a country's rise, while it is still rather weak, it may not require the most well-developed and comprehensive reassurance efforts to help mitigate the balancing response. But when limited reassurance efforts are combined with actions that can easily be perceived as aggressive and assertive, relying on limited tools of reassurance are likely to be insufficient in addressing concerns about a rising power. During this period, China's aim was to reassure and maintain cooperation with the United States, while still defending its own national interests, but its implementation of reassurance was incomplete, insufficient, and overshadowed by its aggressive defense of its interests which ultimately proved counterproductive and provoked a relatively severe balancing response.

It was not the gradual increase in China's material power, but China's aggressive behavior that compelled this stern balancing response. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the United States and others in the region had been paying more attention to China as a result of its rapid economic growth and incipient military modernization, but these countries did not talk about China as a threat or respond by balancing against it until after China aggressively defended its interests

through a series of missile tests and joint exercises near Taiwan. In the mid-1990s, American defense officials were much more focused on Haiti, Bosnia, Iraq, and North Korea until almost overnight, China's aggressive posture and action forced others to pay attention to, be concerned about, and respond to Chinese actions. The reaction of Secretary of Defense Perry serves as an excellent illustration for the rapidity with which many recognized the need to take steps to balance against China and the impact of Chinese behavior on such a decision. Secretary Perry had been one of the biggest advocates for friendly relations with the Chinese and even early in the crisis had pushed for moderate responses. However, after the March 1996 missile tests and exercises, almost overnight, Perry took the lead in pushing for an even more assertive military response to Chinese provocations.<sup>716</sup>

Interviews with U.S. government officials also demonstrate that the change in perceptions about the threat from China happened very quickly, and that Chinese behavior was the most important driver. According to one Department of Defense official: "Those missile tests did more to make us see China as a potential threat than another decade of economic and military modernization could have."<sup>717</sup> Another State Department official characterized Chinese actions as "a wake-up call within the building and within the government."<sup>718</sup> In 2009, a senior intelligence official in the Bush and Obama administrations argued that "Calibrating the appropriate response to China's charm offensive is a difficult challenge. Back in the mid-1990s when China was clearly aggressive, the choice of how to respond was much clearer."<sup>719</sup>

As a result of China's aggressive actions, the U.S.-Japan alliance became more focused on responding to the China threat. When the affirmation of the U.S.-Japan alliance began in 1995, these efforts were not focused on China, but on a need to improve overall relations and coordinate

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<sup>716</sup> See Mann, *About Face*, p.336-7.

<sup>717</sup> Author's Interviews, Washington D.C., November 2002.

<sup>718</sup> Author's interviews, Washington, D.C., Summer 2003.

<sup>719</sup> Author's interviews, Washington, D.C., Summer 2009.

responses to potential North Korean contingencies. Although this overall improvement in alliance relations was not a response to China, the timing of China's coercive actions pushed the alliance to focus more on the need to respond to a rising China. The Clinton-Hashimoto summit that produced the joint declaration was initially scheduled for late 1995, but had to be pushed back to April 1996. In the meantime, the escalation of the threats from China during the Taiwan Strait crisis forced the United States and Japan to pay more attention to the China threat. In addition to being a general threat to regional stability, Chinese missiles landed very close to Japanese territory in Okinawa, and Chinese naval exercises occurred in important waterways for Japanese shipping. In the process of strengthening the alliance, not only did the U.S. and Japan strengthen their military coordination in operations to defend Japan, and tasked Japan with providing logistical and rear area support, but it also extended the scope of the alliance's defense commitment to include "areas surrounding Japan." When the phrase was initially introduced in 1995 it most likely referred to the Korea peninsula, but after China's aggressiveness, officials on both sides began privately discussing the role of the alliance in dealing with a rising China, and refused to publicly clarify whether or not "areas surrounding Japan" included the Taiwan Strait.

The timing of Chinese aggressive behavior, the Taiwan Strait crisis, and strengthening of the alliance suggests that Chinese strong defense of its interests triggered this balancing response. Moreover, interviews with U.S. government and military officials provide even stronger evidence of the causal role of Chinese provocations and the growing focus on China within the alliance. According to a Department of Defense official closely involved in the alliance improvements in the mid-1990s, "Chinese exercises and missiles forced us to think about responses to a rising China in an alliance context much sooner than any of us had anticipated."<sup>720</sup> Several other officials from Defense, State, the Joint Staff, and the National Security Council shared these sentiments and drew

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<sup>720</sup> Author's interviews, Washington, D.C., Summer 2009.

this explicit connection between Chinese behavior and the need to respond to China by taking countervailing actions unilaterally, as well as paying more attention to the China threat in regional alliances.<sup>721</sup>

An alternative explanation for the increasing severity of U.S. balancing responses during this period is that it was a natural countervailing response to increases in China's material power. This is plausible as China's material power did increase during this period, but the process tracing shows little evidence that decision makers were focused on shifting power dynamics alone. On the contrary, many still perceived China to be a rising power, but still early in its rise. There is little evidence from 1995 or 1996 that shows decision makers focusing on changes in material power as a driver for a move to a more severe balancing response. However, the timing of the response and supporting evidence shows strongly that China's aggressive defense of its national interests triggered these moves by the United States to take countervailing balancing actions against China.

***Preaching to the Converted: The Effect of China's Limited Reassurance Strategy, 1996-9***

*China's Increased Reassurance Efforts:*

China learned some very important lessons from its unsuccessful attempts in the early-to-mid-1990s to reassure other powers, and the severe balancing response by the United States and other regional powers. Beijing's arguments that it was weak and not really a threat to anyone were undermined by its aggressive behavior. Its arguments that Chinese defensive actions and struggles against threats to its interests "should not be perceived as threatening" were unpersuasive. It learned that even if it was not trying to threaten others, actions perceived by China as defense of its interests could end up threatening others and lead to strong responses that were counterproductive for Beijing's security objectives. Writing in 1996, Wang Jisi nicely encapsulates this learning process

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<sup>721</sup> Author's interviews, Washington, D.C., Summer 2003, Summer 2009, Spring 2010.

when he writes: “There are even people who speak of China’s attack against Taiwanese independence forces as a threat to regional security.”<sup>722</sup>

The balancing response against a weak China by the United States and others showed Beijing that being a rising power led to new difficulties and constraints in its attempts to manage its international environment. After perceiving China as a rising power, other countries would pay more attention to China’s behavior, and be hyper-sensitive to evidence of aggression and potential revisionist challenges by the rising power. As a rising power, China’s freedom to maneuver was severely constrained and the consequences of diplomatic mistakes increased dramatically. In the mid-1990s, Chinese scholars wrote articles about power transition theory and how the emergence of rising powers often ended up leading to instability and war.<sup>723</sup> After the firm responses and increasing concerns about a threat from China in the mid-1990s, Chinese leaders and scholars seemed to recognize that they were in danger of repeating the tragic historical cycle of rising powers provoking instability and war.<sup>724</sup> Repeating this cycle would complicate its international

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<sup>722</sup> See Wang Jisi, “Ezhi haishi Jiaowang?” p. 1-2. Phil Saunders also echoes this realization when he writes: “the crisis forced Chinese leaders to recognize the implications of confrontational relations with the United States. Although Chinese analysts have difficulty taking foreign concerns about Chinese military power seriously, discussions of a “China threat” following the missile tests showed that aggressive military actions might drive the United States and Japan into an anti-China alliance.” See Phillip C. Saunders, “China’s America Watchers: Changing Attitudes towards the United States,” *China Quarterly*, No. 161 (March 2000), p. 60.

<sup>723</sup> See Shi Yinhong, “Guoji Zhengzhi de Shijixing Guilu jiqi dui Zhongguo de Qishi” [The Pattern of Century Cycles in International Politics and Lessons for China], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 5 (1995); Tang Yongsheng, “Guoji Zhengzhi Changzhouqi Guilu zai Dangdai de Yanbian” [Contemporary Evolution of the Pattern of Long Cycles in International Politics], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 1 (1996); Wang Zaibang, “Shijie Lingdao zhe Diwei Jiaoti de Lishi Fansi” [Historical Reflections on Replacing the Position of World Leader], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 6 (1995); Yang Zheng, “Shijie Zhengzhi Jincheng de Zhouqixing Guilu yu Zhongguo de Jiyu” [The Cyclical Pattern of World Politics and China’s Opportunity], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 6 (1995).

<sup>724</sup> See Shi Yinhong, “Anquan Liang’nan yu Dongya Quyu Anquan Tizhi de Biyao” [The Security Dilemma and the Necessity of an East Asian Regional Security System], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], No. 4 (2000); Zhang Yunling, “Zonghe Anquanguan ji dui Woguo Anquan de Sikao” [Comprehensive Security and Reflections on its Implications for China’s Security], *Dangdai Yatai* [Contemporary Asia-Pacific], No. 1 (2000); Zhang Xizhen, “Zhongguo tong Dongmeng de Mulin Huxin Huoban Guanxi” [Sino-ASEAN Partnership of Good-Neighborliness and Mutual Trust], *Dangdai Yatai* [Contemporary Asia-Pacific], No. 2 (1999), pp.25-29; Zhang Yunling, “Anquan Gainian de Yanbian” [Evolution of the Concept of Security], *Liaowang* [Outlook], No. 14 (2000); Tang Shiping, *Suzao Zhongguo de Lixiang Anquan Huanjing* [Constructing China’s Ideal Security Environment], (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 2003); and Yong Deng, “Reputation and the Security Dilemma: China Reacts to the China Threat Theory,” in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 186-216.

environment, making it more difficult to focus on economic modernization and national rejuvenation.

In recognizing that others were much more focused on a rising China and hyper-sensitive to potential threatening behavior, and seeing the potential danger of repeating the historical patterns of rising powers provoking conflict, Chinese government officials and experts recommended that China needed to take additional steps to moderate its foreign policy behavior and focus even more on cooperation to assuage concerns about a rising China. According to Jia Qingguo: “Confronted with this situation [more people talking about the China threat in the mid-to-late 1990s], the Chinese government realized that it needed to do something to maintain a peaceful international environment.”<sup>725</sup>

In the previous chapter on China’s grand strategy, I argued that this experience in the mid-1990s helped China realize that as a rising power, if it wanted to maintain a peaceful international environment conducive to growth, it would need to implement a grand strategy of reassurance that clearly addressed worries about a rising China. I also argued that although Chinese leaders reached a broad understanding in the mid-to-late-1990s of the need for reassurance to prevent encirclement, rather than altering its approach to its relations with all countries, China implemented this reassurance in an evolutionary and step-by-step manner. Seizing the opportunity of the Asian financial crisis and hoping to prevent further encirclement by improving relations with potential American allies, China initially focused its reassurance efforts on the countries of Southeast Asia and Central Asia.<sup>726</sup> In the late 1990s, China took more active steps to cooperate with and reassure the United States, but it did not develop a coherent, comprehensive reassurance strategy towards the United States until 1999 or 2000. As argued above, this was in part because China was focused on

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<sup>725</sup> See Jia Qingguo, “Peaceful Development: China’s Policy of Reassurance,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (December 2005), p. 494.

<sup>726</sup> See Glosny, “Heading toward a Win-Win Future?: Recent Developments in China’s Policy towards Southeast Asia.”

improving its relations with Southeast Asia to prevent balancing. Moreover, although China recognized that the firm response by the United States was against Chinese interests, American moves after the Taiwan Strait crisis to improve relations with China suggested that Chinese coercion was not altogether unsuccessful.<sup>727</sup> Although China would not move to bend over backward to reassure the United States until 1999-2000, Beijing placed additional emphasis on cooperation and reassurance during this period.

#### *Expanding Cooperation with the United States and Making More Use of the Tools of Reassurance*

Given the central importance of Sino-American relations for China's modernization efforts, China adopted a generally pragmatic and cooperative strategy towards the United States.<sup>728</sup> Given American concerns about a rising China, Beijing tried to take additional steps to meet these concerns and deepen bilateral cooperation. Beijing adopted a new sixteen character phrase to guide U.S.-China relations--"increase understanding, expand consensus, develop cooperation, create the future together (*zengjia liaojie, kuoda gongshi, fazhan hezuo, gongchuang weilai*). This new formulation not only recognized the common interests that both sides shared, but also emphasized the importance of active efforts by both sides to achieve cooperation that would be necessary to protect these interests.<sup>729</sup> This new formulation shows an early move to use the tools of sharing the wealth and binding to make the United States less likely to balance against China. "Create the future together" suggests a willingness by China to use its power to take more active efforts and steps to

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<sup>727</sup> See Ross, "The 1995-6 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force."

<sup>728</sup> For Chinese-language analysis of China's approach to the U.S.-China relationship during this period, see Yang Jiemian, *Houlengzhan Shiqi ZhongMei Guanxi: Wajiao Zhengce Bijiao Yanjiu* [Post-Cold War China-U.S. Relations: Comparative Foreign Policy Research], (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 2000); Chu Shulong, *Lengzhanhou ZhongMei Guanxi de Zouxiang* [Post-Cold War Trends in China-U.S. Relations], (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2001); and Jia Qingguo and Tang Wei, eds., *Jishou de Hezuo: ZhongMei Guanxi de Xianzhuang yu Qianzhan* [Thorny Cooperation: China-U.S. Relations in the Present and Future], (Beijing: Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 1998).

<sup>729</sup> See Yang Jiemian, "Shilun Zhongguo duiMei Zhengce de Tiaozheng," p. 52; and Chai Lu and Chu Shulong, "Zhongguo duiMei Zhanlüe de Lishi Yanbian yu Weilai Qushi" [Historical Evolution of China's Strategy toward the U.S. and Future Trends], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 6 (2006), p. 19.

address concerns and to help both sides achieve goals that are in mutual interests. Joint desires to work toward the creation of a “constructive strategic partnership,” announced during President Jiang’s October 1997 visit to America, shows a desire by China to bind the United States to it, in the hopes that addressing American fears and helping to achieve cooperative outcomes through a deeper relationship would obviate the need to join with others to encircle China. This broad outlook, and some of the specific reassurance steps implemented during this period, showed that China was taking active steps to address worries about a rising China in the hopes that this would prevent any need to balance against a rising China.

In addition to focusing on a more cooperative approach to relations with the United States, China also took several steps to address specific American concerns. In June 1996, as Chinese violations of intellectual property rights was having a greater effect on the U.S. economy, China announced a massive crackdown on violators of intellectual property, closed several factories making pirated goods, and arrested many criminals.<sup>730</sup> Recognizing that proliferation was seen as a greater threat now that China was a rising power, China restrained itself and reduced its nuclear cooperation with other countries. China’s commitment to limit nuclear assistance to Iran was an important concession and one of the major deliverables from President Jiang’s October 1997 visit.

China also displayed a willingness to use its power and influence to play a more positive role in supporting regional stability (sharing the wealth) and showed a greater willingness to accept and embrace regional arrangements through self-binding. Although initially proposed by the United States and South Korea, China supported the Four Party talks and helped convince North Korea to participate in this new mechanism designed to help bring peace and stability to the Korean Peninsula.<sup>731</sup> After India and Pakistan tested their nuclear weapons in 1998, China worked in very

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<sup>730</sup> See Mann, *About Face*, p. 344.

<sup>731</sup> See Li Fuxing and Qin Shisen, “Chaoxian Bandao Wenti Sifang Huitan jiqi Yingxiang” [Korean Peninsula Four-Party Talks and its Influence], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 2 (1998), pp. 10-11; B.



close cooperation with the United States, both bilaterally and in the United Nations, to maintain regional stability and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. China also showed self-restraint by limiting published critiques of U.S. alliances around the time of the 1997 and 1998 leadership summits, hoping to maintain an atmosphere of goodwill and cooperation.<sup>732</sup> These moves were not all completely taken with reassuring the United States as their primary aim, but this was an important element in all of them. In addition to these moves to cooperate with and reassure the United States, China continued its rhetoric of never seeking hegemony and always being a force for peace. Moreover, China specifically addressed worries about the lack of military transparency by issuing its first white paper of national defense in 1998. These measures show a clear step forward in taking actions to reassure the United States, but these were still relatively limited moves that reflect limited reassurance.

### Challenging U.S. Alliances and Regional Presence

Although China made efforts to reassure the United States that it was not a threat, China also pushed back against U.S. alliances and U.S. presence during this period. From China's viewpoint, this was simply a defensive response against challenges to its interests, but this somewhat hostile approach to U.S. alliances and presence showed that Beijing had not yet embraced a comprehensive reassurance strategy towards the United States. For example, although China's embrace of regional institutions and multilateralism was an example of self-binding and an attempt to reassure Southeast Asian countries of China's benign intentions, Beijing tried to use these multilateral organizations to constrain U.S. activities in the region. For example, in March 1997, China used an ASEAN Regional Forum Intersessional Group on Confidence Building Measures to

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Meldrum and J. Cotton "The US-DPRK Agreed Framework, KEDO, and the Four Party Talks: The Vicissitudes of Engagement," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 11 (November 1998), pp.121-143; and Victor Cha, "Engaging China: Seoul-Beijing Detente and Korean Security," *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Spring 1999), pp. 73-98.

<sup>732</sup> See Sutter, *Chinese Policy Priorities and their Implications for the United States* p. 207.

aggressively push for prior notification of joint exercises. Given that the U.S. was involved in joint exercises, this was a clear attempt to limit and constrain U.S. activities in Asia, which were viewed as a threat to China.

After the announcement of the “New Security Concept” (Xin Anquan Guan) in March 1997, some officials, and especially PLA officers, used this to attack U.S. alliances and U.S. presence in the region. The main features of the New Security Concept (NSC), based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, were mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and cooperation.<sup>733</sup> This vision of cooperative relations was proposed by officials in the MFA’s Asia Department, and was meant to include a new embrace of regional multilateral institutions. However, PLA officials used the NSC as a way to openly criticize and attack U.S. alliances as a Cold War relic and called on regional countries to withdraw from alliances.<sup>734</sup> Chinese officials also strongly opposed and criticized National Missile Defense (NMD) and Theater Missile Defense (TMD) plans as a threat to China’s deterrence and challenge to China’s security and regional stability. Although China took more active steps to

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<sup>733</sup> See David M. Finkelstein, “China’s New Security Concept: Reading between the Lines,” *Washington Journal of Modern China*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1999), pp. 37-49; David M. Finkelstein, “China’s ‘New Concept of Security,’” in Stephen J. Flanagan and Michael Marti, eds., *The People’s Liberation Army and China in Transition* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2003), pp. 197-210; David Finkelstein and Michael McDevitt, “Competition and Consensus: China’s ‘New Concept of Security’ and the United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region,” *PacNet Newsletter*, January 8, 1999; Bates Gill, “China’s Evolving Regional Security Strategy,” in David L. Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift: China and Asia’s New Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 247-65; and David L. Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 292-4. For China’s first official discussion of the New Security Concept in the 1998 Defense White Paper, see *China’s National Defense* (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, July 1998). For Chinese-language discussions of the new security concept, and its less confrontational version, see Yan Xuetong, “Zhongguo de Xin Anquan Guan yu Anquan Hezuo Gouxiang” [China’s New Security Concept and Conceptions of Security Cooperation], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 11 (1997); Wang Yong, “Lun Zhongguo de Xin Anquan Guan” [On China’s New Security Concept], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], No. 1 (1999); Meng Xiangqing, “Bawo Houlengzhan Shijie Fazhan Qushi: Shixian Kuashiji Guojia Zonghe Anquan—Jiang Zemin Xin Anquanguan Chutan” [Grasping the Trends of Post-Cold War World Development: Achieving Comprehensive National Security into the Next Century- Starting with Jiang Zemin’s New Security Concept], *Waijiao Xueyuan Xuebao* [Foreign Affairs College Journal], No. 2 (1999). For an English language discussion of the NSC and its evolution, see Alastair Iain Johnston, “Socialization in International Institutions: The ASEAN Way and International Relations Theory,” in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 107-62.

<sup>734</sup> My understanding of the origins of the NSC and the bureaucratic battles surrounding its implementation was informed by interviews with MFA officials, PLA officers, and government think tank researchers. Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer-Fall, 2005. For a discussion of how the PLA used the NSC to attack alliances in early 1997, see Ronald N. Montaperto and Hans Binnendijk, “PLA Views on Asia Pacific Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Strategic Forum*, No. 114 (June 1997).

reassure the United States, it remained willing to stand up to the United States when Beijing perceived challenges to its interests.

### *Less Balancing by the United States*

During this period, even though China continued its economic growth and military modernization, the United States did not increase the severity of its balancing response and even took active steps to deepen cooperation with China and welcome its increasing role in the world, rather than try to constrain it. Almost immediately after the Taiwan Strait crisis ended, American officials tried to improve relations with China. As Robert Ross nicely puts it: “Following the March 1996 confrontation, there was widespread recognition in the administration that the U.S.-China relationship had been damaged and needed to be repaired.”<sup>735</sup> This resulted in “greater American sensitivity to the risks of mismanaging U.S.-Taiwanese relations and greater attention on the part of the White House to managing U.S.-China relations.”<sup>736</sup>

Secretary of State Warren Christopher’s May 1996 speech showed that U.S. policy was moving away from any sort of balancing at all, towards a more cooperative approach to the rise of China. Only two months after the missile crisis, he said that the U.S. viewed China’s development as a “secure, open, and successful nation that is taking its place as a world leader” as “profoundly in the interest of the United States.” He continued: “The wisdom of encouraging a stable and thriving China is best shown by considering the dangerous consequences of its opposite.”<sup>737</sup> The overall theme of this speech was that China was going to be too important and too powerful in the future

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<sup>735</sup> See Ross, “The 1995-6 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force.”

<sup>736</sup> See Andrew Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China’s Search for Security* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), p. 74. Subsequent newspaper reports suggested that the U.S. and China were closer to a real confrontation in 1996 than most realized, and this no doubt helped fuel U.S. desires to improve relations. See Barton Gellman, “U.S. and China Nearly Came to Blows in ’96,” *Washington Post*, June 21, 1998, p. A1.

<sup>737</sup> See Warren Christopher, “American Interests and the U.S.-China Relationship,” speech to the Asia Society, The Council on Foreign Relations and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, New York, New York, May 17, 1996.

to have a poor relationship with, and that if they developed a cooperative relationship, it would be better for the interests of both parties and the region as a whole. The United States not only adopted more cooperative rhetoric, but in an early July visit to Beijing, National Security Advisor Lake also offered President Jiang the possibility of a state visit, which the U.S. was not willing to offer in 1995. Rather than trying to limit the rising power's role in the world, which would be a low-level balancing response, these actions show that the United States has been offering China more international prestige and status, the opposite of balancing.

The Clinton administration's cooperative approach to China continued and deepened in 1997 and 1998. In a June 1997 speech, the new National Security Advisor Samuel Berger attempted to forge a domestic consensus for a cooperative policy of engagement with China. He repeated Christopher's emphasis on the importance of China in international affairs and the vast potential for cooperation. He clearly stated that "the emergence of China as a great power that is stable, open and nonaggressive...is in America's interest."<sup>738</sup> Granting President Jiang a "state visit" to the United States in 1997 and President Clinton's 1998 visit to China showed that the United States was interested in developing a more cooperative relationship with China. During these state visits, both leaders proclaimed a desire to work toward a "constructive strategic partnership."<sup>739</sup> Although this was a limited commitment, and one that ultimately failed to be successfully implemented, this is clear evidence that U.S. policy towards China was moving further away from balancing and towards cooperation, albeit far short of a real partnership or alliance. Moreover, President Clinton's decision to spend a week in China, and not visit Japan on his trip to Asia, further showed the administration's emphasis on cooperation and willingness to enhance China's international position and prestige. In addition to these leadership exchanges, both countries tried to develop lower-level mechanisms for

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<sup>738</sup> See Samuel R. Berger, "Building a New Consensus on China," speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, June 6, 1997.

<sup>739</sup> For more on these visits, see Tao and He, *ZhongMei Guanxiishi*, pp. 301-8; Chu Shulong, *Lengzhanhou ZhongMei Guanxi de Zouxiang*, and Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen*, Ch. 8.

exchange and cooperation. Official documents and speeches emphasized cooperation and engagement rather than balancing or preparing for crisis or conflict. For example, the Pentagon's 1998 East Asia Strategy Report (EASR) had two sections devoted to China, one entitled "Comprehensive Engagement with China" and the other entitled "Engaging China: Confidence Building to Cooperation."<sup>740</sup>

In addition to the U.S. push for improved relations, the Clinton administration moderately weakened and circumscribed its commitment to Taiwan. In 1997, when the U.S. granted transit visas to Taiwanese officials, the terms were far more restrictive in the public interactions they were allowed to have.<sup>741</sup> In a more important move, while in Shanghai in 1998, President Clinton publicly endorsed the "three nos"—no support for Taiwanese independence, no support for two states or "one China, one Taiwan," and no support for Taiwanese membership in any organization that required statehood. Although other officials had stated this position on earlier occasions, a presidential endorsement elevated the importance of this position and further reduced the commitment to Taiwan, although still representing a modest shift.<sup>742</sup> If a strengthened commitment to Taiwan would represent a move to constrain and pressure China, this modest shift to weaken the commitment to Taiwan was a move away from balancing against China.

#### *Explaining Less Balancing: Chinese Reassurance Helping Maintain the Momentum*

As less severe U.S. balancing behavior during this period correlated with China's reassurance strategy, my theory is supported by the convergence test. However, the process tracing evidence only provides some support for my theory of reassurance. The initial decision by the Clinton administration to improve relations, give China greater international status and space, and balance

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<sup>740</sup> See "The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region: 1998," Washington, DC: Department of Defense, pp. 30-35, 64-5. (Hereafter EASR)

<sup>741</sup> See Ross, "The 1995-6 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force," p. 112.

<sup>742</sup> See Romberg, *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice*, p. 178-82.

less severely preceded active reassurance efforts by the Chinese. When the United States decided to improve relations with China, officials offered a need to avoid crisis and the potential benefits of cooperation as the justification, but they did not invoke Chinese reassurance efforts. Chinese reassurance efforts, however, showed that cooperation could be beneficial for U.S. interests and helped to reinforce, sustain, and deepen America's more cooperative approach. The 1998 East Asia Strategy Report specifically mentioned China's constructive role in supporting the Four Party talks and in maintaining regional stability after the South Asian nuclear tests.<sup>743</sup> Several former government officials cited China's less aggressive behavior and occasional attempts to work with the United States and others in the region as reasons why there was less concern about the China threat, illustrating the causal mechanism of reduced estimate that rising power is a threat. Official statements and reports not only emphasized the existence of common interests, but also highlighted how cooperation with China was helping to achieve them. One State Department official said that "China was showing that it could be a part of the solution, rather than a part of the problem."<sup>744</sup> Officials repeatedly cited China's future power and importance as the exact reason why cooperation was the necessary response, illustrating the causal mechanism of reaping the benefits of a rising power. Although the Clinton administration's move to lessen balancing and deepen cooperation before Chinese reassurance efforts, these reassurance efforts helped sustain and reinforce this deeper cooperation during this period.

### ***Robust Reassurance in Action: China's Successful Attempts at Reassurance, 1999-2005***

*1999-2000: A Time for Reassessment on Policies Towards the United States and Taiwan*

Although some argue that China fundamentally shifted its grand strategy in 1996, I argue that China's implementation of reassurance towards the United States evolved over time, and China

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<sup>743</sup> See EASR, p. 6, 31.

<sup>744</sup> Author's interviews, Washington, D.C., Spring 2010.

did not adopt a comprehensive and coherent reassurance strategy towards the United States until 1999 or 2000. Several Chinese scholars and think tank researchers support this assessment<sup>745</sup>. In his analysis of China's approach to its relations with the United States, Shi Yinhong calls the period from 1989 to 1999 a "difficult learning process" and argues that it was only after the Kosovo War in 1999 that China really "optimized" its strategy and its approach to the United States.<sup>746</sup>

In 1985 Deng Xiaoping made the basic judgment that peace and development (*heping yu fazhan*) were the trends of the times (*shidai zhuti*), which meant that China should adopt a generally cooperative foreign policy and maintain stable relations with all countries. This assessment remained unchallenged until 1999, but the Kosovo War and bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade ignited a vigorous debate within Chinese official and academic circles about China's international environment and its approach to the United States.<sup>747</sup> Those who argued that peace and development were no longer the trend of the times pointed to America's interventionism, hegmonism, and power politics as negative developments. They argued that because confrontation with America was inevitable, China should stop trying to cooperate, and should instead respond with a hostile policy and confront the threat from the United States.<sup>748</sup> This debate raged throughout 1999, until the leadership meeting resolved it in favor of maintaining the judgment that peace and development remained the trend of the times, which meant that China should continue to cooperate with the United States.<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>745</sup> Author's interviews, Shanghai, Summer 2002; Beijing, Spring-Summer 2006.

<sup>746</sup> See Shi Yinhong, "Zhongguo duiMei Waijiao he Zhanlüe 15nian: Yanhua Guocheng, Jiben Jingyan he Shangcun Wenti" [15 Years of China's Diplomacy and Strategy towards the United States: Process of Evolution, Fundamental Experiences, and Remaining Issues], *Guoji GuanCha* [International Observer], No. 2 (2004), p. 3.

<sup>747</sup> For the best English-language discussion of this debate, see David M. Finkelstein, "China Reconsiders Its National Security: The Great Peace and Development Debate of 1999," Center for Naval Analysis (December 2000).

<sup>748</sup> For a review of some of the challenges that China faced in its international environment in 1999 that forced many to reconsider the "peace and development" line, see Jin Canrong, "ZhongMei Guanxi de Bian yu Bubian" [Change and Consistency in Sino-U.S. Relations], *Guoji Jingji Pinglun* [International Economic Review], No. 11-12 (1999); and Li Shaojun, "ZhongMei Guanxi yu Meiguo duiHua Zhengce de Kunjing" [Sino-U.S. Relations and the Predicament of U.S. Policy towards China], *Guoji Jingji Pinglun* [International Economic Review], No. 5-6 (2000).

<sup>749</sup> For an excellent English language analysis of this debate, see Finkelstein, "China Reconsiders Its National Security: The Great Peace and Development Debate of 1999." The results of this meeting were the "Three No Changes" and the

This debate about China's international environment and foreign policy also led to a deeper reassessment of China's strategy towards the United States. As I suggested earlier, China's strategy towards the U.S. had been to emphasize cooperation and pragmatism, but to "maintain principle" and strongly defend its interests when challenged. According to a very insightful 2000 analysis by Ye Zicheng, China needed to rethink how to balance these two demands in its strategy. In his view China's strategy in the 1990s had been too "anti-American" and China needed to "know how to struggle and what is worth struggling over." To Ye, the lesson was "if [China] overreacts and struggles too much, it is not good for relations and not good for America's view of you as you look like you are trying to be confrontational."<sup>750</sup> According to one government researcher, by the late 1990s, Chinese officials recognized that China "has struggled too much, with too much intensity, and over too many small things....which ran counter to [beidao'erchi] China's objectives and interests."<sup>751</sup>

Recognizing that American unilateralism and hegemonism and increasing criticism of China in American domestic politics could drive China to repeat its counterproductive vigilant defense of its interests, several officials and experts argued that China needed to maintain self-restraint and cooperation, even in the face of these challenges. Several scholars argued that China needed to pay more attention to Deng's suggestion that one should observe calmly (*lengjing guan*), even if America challenges its interests. Yang Chengxu writes: "If the US insists on doing missile defense, moving more troops into Asia, and placing more emphasis on China as an adversary, China's response should be to observe calmly (*lengjing guan*)." When asked how China should respond

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"Three New Changes". The Three No Changes were: peace and development remained the trend of the times and the world continued moving towards multipolarity; economic globalization continued; and the major trend is toward the relaxation of international tensions. The Three New Changes were: hegemonism and power politics are on the rise; the trend toward military interventionism is increasing; and the gap between developed and developing countries is increasing.

<sup>750</sup> See Ye Zicheng, "Zhongguo Shixing Daguowaijiao Zhanlüe Shizaibixing: Guanyu Zhongguo Waijiao Zhanlüe di Jidian Sikao" [The Necessity for China to Implement a Great Power Diplomatic Strategy: Some Reflections Concerning China's Diplomatic Strategy], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], No. 1 (2000), p. 8.

<sup>751</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing summer 2001, summer 2002, fall 2003; Shanghai, summer 2004.



to the fluctuations in U.S.-China relations, Vice Premier Qian Qichen responded: “When there are setbacks or difficulties in Sino-U.S. relations, we must deal with it in a calm manner and with firm confidence in victory.”<sup>752</sup> Several government think-tank researchers and scholars invoked the idiom that China should not “make mountains out of molehills” (*dajingxiaoguai*) as wisdom that should guide China’s approach to the U.S. in the future.

In explaining the “splendid process of recognition” in China’s approach to relations with the United States from the end of the Cold War until 2001, Shi Yinhong argues that Chinese leaders developed “much more strategic patience” and shifted from thinking that all interests were fundamental to “recognition of order of importance” (*qingzhonghuanji yishi*).<sup>753</sup> Hyper-vigilant responses to all perceived challenges to Chinese interests had led to a perception that China was a threat to stability in America and the region, and China needed to prevent others from developing such perceptions. As part of these discussions in 1999-2000, several experts suggested that if China maintained its calm and its patience in the face of challenges, and continued to focus on cooperation and addressing concerns about the rise of China, the United States would not feel as threatened by China, and would be much less likely to take measures to constrain or encircle a rising China.<sup>754</sup>

In addition to self-restraint and patience in the face of challenges from the United States, Chinese experts increasingly advocated the need to be more active in making concessions to improve the bilateral relationship and China’s overall international security environment. In a 2001 article, Vice President of the Chinese Foreign Affairs College Qu Xing wrote: “Yes we should struggle if the U.S. interferes with our sovereignty, but it needs to be reasonable, and in our

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<sup>752</sup> See “‘9/11’ Shijianhou de Guoji Xingshi he ZhongMei Guanxi” [The International Environment and China-U.S. Relations After “9/11”], interview with Qian Qichen, *Xuexi Shibao* [Study Times], October 14, 2002. He later quoted Su Shi from the Song dynasty who said: “There are brave men in the world who are not frightened when confronted suddenly or become angered when accused without reason. Those with such qualities are truly great.”

<sup>753</sup> See Shi Yinhong, “Zhongguo duiMei Waijiao he Zhanlüe 15nian: Yanhua Guocheng, Jiben Jingyan he Shangcun Wenti.” p. 1. Other scholars connected this reassessment to a suggestion that China should abandon its victim mentality (*shouhaizhe xintai*) and instead adopt a normal mentality (*zhengchang xintai*) or great power mentality (*daguo xintai*), according to which China would no longer be hypersensitive to every wrong perpetrated against it.

<sup>754</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005-Spring 2006.

advantage...[China] needs to struggle and to compromise—but need to figure out when each is appropriate.”<sup>755</sup> Wang Jisi, one of the government’s chief advisors on U.S.-China relations, recommended that, “to safeguard national interests, we cannot but make some necessary concessions (tuirang) and compromises (tuoxie).”<sup>756</sup> Chinese government think tank researchers and academics emphasized that even before September 11<sup>th</sup>, more and more Chinese experts recognized that even though the United States remained far more powerful, China needed to take more actions to try to convince the United States that it was not a threat.<sup>757</sup>

My analysis, based on Chinese-language sources and interviews, is consistent with other English language arguments of a shift in approach to America around 2000. David Shambaugh’s excellent discussion is worth quoting at length: “Some Chinese interlocuters have also indicated that a comprehensive review of China’s foreign policy was undertaken during November-December 2000....Chinese officials and analysts judged that there had been far too much volatility in the relationship [with America] over the previous decade, that this turbulence was not conducive to Chinese interests and goals, and that there was now an opportunity to stabilize and improve relations with a new American administration.”<sup>758</sup> Robert Sutter also agrees, suggesting that: “Chinese officials carried out a reevaluation of China’s strategy against the United States in 2000-2001 and concluded that China did not want to be in a position of confronting alone the U.S.

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<sup>755</sup> See Yang Chengxu, Qu Xing, Yang Xiyu, and Yan Xuotong, “Women de Waijiao Huanjing you Duoda Bianhua,” in Liu Jiangyong, chief ed., *Kuoru 21 Shiji: Shijie yu Zhongguo* [Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The World and China], (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 2005), p. 197. This initially appeared as a discussion in *Huanqiu Shibao* [Global Times] in 2001.

<sup>756</sup> See Wang Jisi, “Zai Xin Xingshi xia Jixu Tuijin ZhongMei Guanxi Fazhan” [Continue to Promote the Development of Sino-American Relations in New Situation], *Xuexi Shibao* [Study Times], January 28, 2002.

<sup>757</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer 2002, Fall 2005-Spring 2006.

<sup>758</sup> See David Shambaugh, “The New Stability in U.S.-China Relations: Causes and Consequences,” in Jonathan D. Pollack, ed., *Strategic Surprise? U.S.-China Relations in the Early Twenty-First Century* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2003), p. 25. Based on my own interviews, no Chinese interlocuters confirmed that such a meeting took place, but it is quite plausible that one did, as the timing and outcome of the meeting is consistent with this broader reassessment. Author’s interviews, Beijing, summer 2001, summer 2002, fall 2003, fall 2005.

superpower.”<sup>759</sup> After this change in assessment, the Chinese were far more restrained in their reactions to unfavorable events in the relationship with the U.S. and became far more active in cooperating with the United States.

Chinese strategy towards Taiwan underwent a similar evolutionary process and became more patient and cooperative in 2000. Many Chinese experts recognized that China’s aggressive behavior during the 1995-6 Taiwan Strait crisis damaged its relations with countries in the region, but moves towards independence in the late 1990s and fears of the election of a pro-independence president led Chinese leaders to conclude that intimidation and aggression was necessary. To threaten voters in Taiwan demonstrate the seriousness of China’s desire to prevent permanent separation and achieve unification, the PRC issued a White Paper on Taiwan in February 2000 that threatened to use force if Taiwan refused to negotiate indefinitely.<sup>760</sup> On the eve of the March 2000 presidential election, Premier Zhu Rongji issued a very ominous warning voters and reminded them that China is “willing to use all their blood” to prevent Taiwanese independence.<sup>761</sup>

These threats backfired, as they had in 1995-6; not only did Chen Shui-bian, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate more in favor of independence, win the election, but China’s continued heavy-handed tactics also further alienated the people of Taiwan and increased worries about the China threat in America and the region. After this experience, Chinese leaders and scholars realized that this aggressive was proving counterproductive and shifted to an approach that

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<sup>759</sup> See Robert G. Sutter, *China’s Rise in Asia: Promises and Perils* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), p. 13. For a similar view, see Bonnie S. Glaser, “Sino-American Relations Beyond September 11,” *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2002), p. 226.

<sup>760</sup> See “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue,” (Beijing: Taiwan Affairs Office and Information Office of the State Council), February 21, 2000.

<sup>761</sup> See “Full Text of Premier Zhu’s Press Conference,” *People’s Daily*, March 16, 2000; Elisabeth Rosenthal, “Beijing Says Taiwan Election Could Hold Seeds of War,” *New York Times*, March 16, 2000; and Erik Eckholm, “The Threat From China Makes Campaign Fodder for Taiwan Presidential Candidates,” *New York Times*, March 16, 2000.

was more patient, more moderate, and more focused on trying to make unification more appealing to the people of Taiwan.<sup>762</sup>

According to several scholars in Beijing, China had focused too much on deterring independence and not enough on convincing Taiwan of the appeal of unification. Similar to analyses of China's counterproductive hypersensitivity in its relations with the United States, several Chinese interlocuters suggested that overreacting to every small challenge in cross-strait relations and responding with hostile rhetoric or threatening shows of force ended up making the Chinese look like they were the ones challenging regional stability.<sup>763</sup> Through a learning process, China realized that it needed to be more patient and moderate in its approaches to both America and Taiwan if it wanted to avoid confrontation, prevent balancing, and maintain an international environment conducive to economic modernization.

#### *China's Pre-9/11 Reassurance Efforts Towards the United States*

After the reassessment of strategy towards America and Taiwan, China began implementing a far more coherent reassurance strategy in late 1999 and early 2000, before September 11, 2001. There was no specific event or speech that marked a clear shift, but several interlocuters highlighted the importance of Premier Zhu Rongji's "China opportunity theory" (Zhongguo Jiyulun), which he first proposed during his April 1999 visit to the United States.<sup>764</sup> During a press conference, Premier Zhu said, "I don't think there currently exists any 'China threat theory,' [we] should change that name and call it 'China opportunity theory.'"<sup>765</sup> Citing the beneficial effects for the world of China's

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<sup>762</sup> For a similar analysis of this dynamic, see Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 6 (November-December 2003), p. 28-9; Steven M. Goldstein, "China's Taiwan Strategy: Status Quo or Disequilibrium?" in Jonathan D. Pollack, *Strategic Surprise*; and Alan D. Romberg, "Some Thoughts on Cross-Strait Relations," *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2002), pp. 243-54.

<sup>763</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2002, Fall 2003-Spring 2004; Shanghai, Summer 2002, Spring 2004.

<sup>764</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2004, Spring 2006, Spring 2010.

<sup>765</sup> Although Premier Zhu's emphasis on opportunity and use of "China opportunity theory" were widely-reported and widely-discussed at the time, the complete quote from the press conference only recently became available in the book

WTO accession and China's increasingly responsible international behavior, Premier Zhu's emphasis on China's rise as an opportunity for America and the world became an integral part of China's grand strategy and approach to the United States after the "peace and development" debate ended in late 1999.<sup>766</sup> "China opportunity theory" was repeated in general statements of strategy, invoked in connection with cooperative behavior, and would later become incorporated in the "peaceful rise" and "peaceful development" discourse.<sup>767</sup> After the August 1999 leadership judgment that peace and development remained the trend of the times, even after the Kosovo War and embassy bombing incident, China made active efforts to reassure the United States not only by remaining patient and restrained, but also by taking more active steps to deepen cooperation with the United States and address worries about the rise of China.

#### Self-Restraint and Less Hostile Rhetoric:

In the face of negative developments, Chinese leaders showed greater restraint and patience, which made China seem less threatening. In the fall of 1999, after the United States decided not to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and voiced continued support for missile defense programs, Chinese official criticisms and opposition were relatively muted.<sup>768</sup> Throughout the spring and summer of 1999, along with the Kosovo War and Embassy bombing, there was an increase in

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*Zhu Rongji Answers Reporters Questions (Zhu Rongji Da Jizhe Wen)*, a collection of his press conferences published in 1999. For the complete quote cited above, see "Zhu Rongji Da Jizhe Wen xuanzhai: Xianzai shi 'Zhongguo Jiyulun,'" [Selection from Zhu Rongji Answers Reporters Questions: Now it is "China Opportunity Theory"], *Wenhui Dushu Zhoubao*, September 16, 2009.

<sup>766</sup> See "China not a Threat but an Opportunity for U.S., Says Zhu," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, April 9, 1999, available at [www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmgx/zysj/zrjfm/t36216.htm](http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmgx/zysj/zrjfm/t36216.htm); and "Fast Developing China an Opportunity for All," *Xinhua*, December 22, 2002.

<sup>767</sup> See Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Guoji Zhanlüe Yanjiusuo [Central Party School Institute for International Strategy], *Zhongguo Heping Jueqi Xin Daolu* [China's New Road of Peaceful Rise], (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 2003); Kan Gongjian, "Weishenme Yao Ganxie Zhongguoren: Cong 'Zhongguo Weixielun' dao 'Zhongguo Jiyulun'" [Why the Chinese People Must be Thanked: From "China Threat Theory" to "China Opportunity Theory"], *Qiushi*, No. 6 (2004), pp. 70-1; and Men Honghua, "Zhongguo Jueqi jiqi Zhanlüe Yingdui" [The Rise of China and its Strategic Response], *Guoji GuanCha* [International Observer], No. 3 (2004), pp. 9- 16.

<sup>768</sup> Two experts raised this as one of the first examples of a newer and more sophisticated approach to relations with America. Author's interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005.

official use of phrases critical of America, such as “hegemonism,” “power politics,” and “neo-interventionism.” At the end of 1999, in an attempt to be less provocative and confrontational towards the United States, the Propaganda Department issued an order that the media should tone down the anti-America rhetoric.<sup>769</sup> The Chinese put the tensions created by the Embassy bombing behind them and curtailed aggressive criticism of U.S. hegemony and power politics in international meetings, in an effort to repair relations.<sup>770</sup> From 1999 to 2000, there was a substantial decrease in the number of references to “hegemonism” (baquanzhuyi) in the *People’s Daily*, the CCP’s official newspaper.<sup>771</sup> Chinese experts emphasized that just as hostile rhetoric led to perceptions of a threatening and revisionist China, patience and more cooperative rhetoric would hopefully produce more friendly perceptions of China.<sup>772</sup>

#### Active Efforts to Deepen Cooperation and Partnership with the United States

Not only were the Chinese trying to tone down their anti-American rhetoric, but Chinese officials also started to reach out to the United States in unprecedented ways. For example, a few days after the May 2000 House vote to facilitate China’s entry into the WTO, President Jiang took the “unusual step” of making a phone call to President Clinton to express his gratitude to the United States and in particular to President Clinton for his assistance. This was reportedly the first time that Jiang had ever initiated a call to the president.<sup>773</sup> Further demonstrating China’s active attempts to improve relations, during Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Henry Shelton’s October 2000 visit to Beijing, he was permitted to observe a live fire, combined arms military exercise in the

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<sup>769</sup> See Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 241. Others suggest that these denunciations subsided in early 2001. See Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Policy*, p. 46.

<sup>770</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, “Taiwan Tops the Bilateral Agenda” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (April 2000); and Glaser, “Progress on PNTR Boosts Relations, but Only Slightly,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 2000).

<sup>771</sup> See Xiong Zhiyong, “ZhongMei Guanxi Fazhan Qushi Fenxi” [“Analysis of Development Trends in Sino-American Relations], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 6 (2001), pp. 26-8. This article includes an excellent graph that tracks the mentions of “hegemonism” from 1991 to 2001 and explains the drop in 2000.

<sup>772</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Spring 2004, Fall 2005, Spring 2009.

<sup>773</sup> See Glaser, “Progress on PNTR Boosts Relations.”

Nanjing Military Region. This was the first time the Chinese had been this forthcoming and this transparent.<sup>774</sup> In November 2000, China also agreed to publish an export control list of nuclear technologies and signed an agreement not to export nuclear-capable missiles.

China's leaders took the initiative in trying to repair relations after the Embassy bombing and push relations towards the constructive strategic partnership agreed upon in 1997-8. In the face of growing criticism within the United States over China's human rights abuses, nuclear espionage, and attempts to interfere with America's democratic process, Chinese leaders continued to emphasize cooperation. At Beidaihe in the late summer of 2000, President Jiang publicly expressed a very conciliatory view on U.S.-China relations and a desire to stabilize and improve relations moving forward. He told CBS's Mike Wallace that "whoever becomes the president of the United States, he will try to improve Sino-U.S. relations, for this is the strategic interest of the whole world.....as the new century approaches, it is imperative to 'build towards a constructive strategic partnership' between China and the United States." Shortly before the September 2000 Millennium Summit at the United Nations, President Jiang repeated that: "Both the Chinese and the U.S. government should...jointly dedicate ourselves to build a constructive strategic partnership between China and the United States that is oriented toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>775</sup> These speeches and several other initiatives show that during this period, unlike the 1997-8 period, China was actively trying to improve relations and push to create a consensus in the U.S. to improve relations, rather than simply passively reacting to cooperative overtures from the United States.<sup>776</sup> According to one China

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<sup>774</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, "Bilateral Relations on Reasonably Sound Footing as 2000 and the Clinton Administration Come to a Close," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 2001).

<sup>775</sup> See Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, p. 156-7.

<sup>776</sup> For analysis from Chinese government think tank researchers of the need to emphasize cooperation and restraint in China's approach to relations with America, see Chu Shulong, "Lengzhanhou ZhongMei Shuangbian he Diqu Zhanlüe yu Anquan Guanxi" [Post-Cold War Sino-American Bilateral and Regional Strategic and Security Relations] *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 5 (2000); Fu Mengzi, "Meiguo duiHua Zhengce de Zhanlüe Sikao" [Strategic Reflections on America's China Policy] *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 6 (2001); and Wang Jisi, "ZhongMei Guanxi Zonghengtan: dui Zhong-Mei Guanxi de jidian Fenxi" [Talks on Sino-

watcher, these concessions were evidence of “Beijing’s efforts to put bilateral relations on a firm footing in preparation for the transition to a new U.S. president.”<sup>777</sup>

### Flexibility in Taiwan Policy as Cooperative Signal to the United States

Shortly after Premier Zhu’s unsuccessful and counterproductive threats against Taiwan in early 2000, China adopted a more moderate and flexible approach to Taiwan. Although this changed approach to Taiwan was not primarily aimed at reassuring the United States, just as Chinese coercive threats led to American concerns of a growing China threat, a more moderate approach to Taiwan would address one of the main American concerns of how China could challenge regional stability and American interests. Chinese leaders hoped that a more moderate approach to Taiwan would improve cross-strait relations, address American concerns about potential threats from a rising China, and make the United States less likely to support Taiwan independence forces.<sup>778</sup>

China demonstrated a greater willingness to accommodate Taiwan by offering a more flexible definition of the “one China” principle, which Beijing demanded Taipei recognize as a precondition to any official negotiation.”<sup>779</sup> In July 2000, Qian Qichen introduced what came to be known as the “three new sentences.” According to the new definition: “there is only one China in the world; the mainland and Taiwan all belong to one China, and China’s sovereignty and territorial

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American Relations: Analysis of Some Points on Sino-American Relations], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 6 (2001).

<sup>777</sup> See Glaser, “Bilateral Relations on Reasonably Sound Footing as 2000 and the Clinton Administration Come to a Close.”

<sup>778</sup> For Chinese-language discussions of China’s more recent approach to Taiwan, see Jiang Xiyuan, “Zuguo Tongyi: Guoji Yinsu yu Liang’an Yinsu de Huodong” [Unification of the Motherland: The Interaction of International Factors and Cross-Strait Factors], in Yu Xintian, chief ed., *Zai Heping, Fazhan, Hezuo de Qizhi xia: Zhongguo Zhanlue Jiyuqi de duiwai Zhanlue Zonglun* [Under the Banner of Peace, Development, and Cooperation: Discussions on Foreign Strategy of China’s Period of Strategic Opportunity], (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 78-96; and Guo Zhenyuan, “Taiwan Wenti dui woguo Zhanlue Jiyuqi de Yingxiang” [The Influence of the Taiwan Issue on China’s period of Strategic Opportunity], in Xu Jian, chief ed., *Guoji Huanjing yu Zhongguo de Zhanlue Jiyuqi* [International Environment and China’s Period of Strategic Opportunity], (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2004), pp. 210-221.

<sup>779</sup> The old formulation, from the 1993 White Paper on Taiwan, defined it as: “there is only one China in the world, Taiwan is a part of China and the government of the PRC is the only legitimate government of China.” See “The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China,” (Beijing: Taiwan Affairs Office and Information Office, State Council, August 1993).



integrity are indivisible.”<sup>780</sup> This new formulation showed greater flexibility on the relationship between the two entities, suggesting that they both belonged to one China rather than Taiwan belonging to China. It also suggested that the regime that Taiwan would one day unify with would not have to be the PRC, but could be some other mutually accessible political entity. Recognizing that it also had to improve relations with the people of Taiwan, China also initiated efforts to facilitate cross-strait flows of trade, investment, and people, and hoping that such interactions and exchange could stabilize the situation and make formal negotiation more likely.<sup>781</sup>

#### Self-Restraint in the Face of New Threats and Challenges Early in the Bush Administration

During the 2000 presidential campaign George W. Bush attacked President Clinton as too soft on China and labeled China a “strategic competitor.” In early 2001, he and his foreign policy advisors moved to implement an Asia policy that was consistent with this more adversarial view of China and focused on strengthening alliances, reaffirming its commitment to Taiwan and pursuing missile defense. In early 2001, plans and policies were announced to improve relations with Australia, Japan, India, and South Korea, withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, increasingly emphasize missile defense, sell large packages of arms to Taiwan, increase its commitment to Taiwan, and meet with the Dalai Lama in the White House. Even though candidate Bush’s rhetoric had been more hostile to China, Chinese officials tried to address some of these worries in the hopes of preventing a deterioration in bilateral relations. Premier Qian Qichen visited the United States in March 2001 and repeatedly expressed China’s desire to maintain a stable and

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<sup>780</sup> See Steven M. Goldstein, “China’s Taiwan Strategy,” p. 218; and Romberg, “Some Thoughts on Cross-Strait Relations,” pp. 244-5.

<sup>781</sup> For a discussion of some of these developments, see Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, ed., *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-China-Taiwan Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Scott L. Kastner, *Political Conflict and Economic Interdependence Across the Taiwan Strait and Beyond* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Shelley Rigger, *Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011).

cooperative relationship with the United States, and tried to emphasize common interests and partnership as a foundation for bilateral relations.<sup>782</sup>

China's cooperative moves at the end of the Clinton Administration and early in the Bush administration were mostly not reciprocated, and many of these new policies pursued by the Bush administration directly challenged China's national interests. Beijing did not overreact or pick unnecessary fights, but remained "relatively muted" in its response and did not respond with fiery anti-American rhetoric or challenge any of these claims.<sup>783</sup> Secretary of State Powell reported that in response to July 2001 explanations for missile defense programs, the Chinese "really did not want to belabor the discussion with their side, other than to say, to make it clear to me that they do not think we are moving in the right direction, and they still think the ABM Treaty is at the cornerstone of strategic stability. But they're listening."<sup>784</sup> This moderate response was a marked change from the hostile rhetoric that Chinese officials used in response to challenges in the mid-1990s and late 1990s.

Even in China's response during the EP-3 incident, China tried to prevent too serious a downturn in bilateral relations. On April 1, 2001, an American EP-3 surveillance plane and a Chinese J-8 fighter collided over the South China Sea. The Chinese pilot died and the U.S. plane, along with its crew of 24, was forced to land on China's Hainan island. Although China unnecessarily held the U.S. servicemen for eleven days, it tried to control and limit the negative effect on bilateral relations. Unlike during the Embassy bombing in 1999 when the government provided buses to and from demonstration sites, during the EP-3 crisis, it ordered universities to

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<sup>782</sup> See Liu Jianfei, "Wei ZhongMei Guanxi Fazhan Chuangzao Tiaojian" [Create Conditions for the Development of Sino-American Relations], *Liaowang Xinwen Zhoukan* [Outlook News Weekly], march 26, 2001, p. 54; and Yang Jiemian, "ZhongMei Guanxi Mianlin Kaoyan: Bushi Xin Zhengfu duiHua Zhengce" [Sino-American Relations Face a Test: The New Bush Administration's China Policy], *Meiguo Yanjiu* [American Studies], no. 2 (2001), pp. 21-35.

<sup>783</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, "Mid-Air Collision Cripples Sino-U.S. Relations," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 2001); Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, p. 12-3; Shambaugh, "The New Stability in U.S.-China Relations," p. 24; James Kynge, "China Adopts Muted Tone to Limit Row," *Financial Times*, April 27, 2001; "U.S.: Chen Shui-bian's Transit 'Private and Unofficial,'" *People's Daily*, May 15, 2001.

<sup>784</sup> See Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State, "Briefing on Trip to East Asia," July 29, 2001, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/4347.htm>.

keep their students in school to keep protests under control. The media was also forced to exercise control and was not allowed to publish overly anti-American stories or editorials and it also didn't report aggressive statements by American officials.<sup>785</sup> Although many in the U.S. viewed Chinese behavior as needlessly aggressive, the Chinese did free the U.S. servicemen after receiving far less than they initially demanded in terms of an apology. The wording of the apology and the level of official expressing the apology were far below China's demands and desires, but in the interests of minimizing damage to the relationship, China abandoned its hard negotiating position.<sup>786</sup>

### Self-Binding and Welcoming American Forces in the Region

In addition to China's broader embrace of and willingness to bind itself into regional multilateral institutions, Chinese officials and experts recognized and acknowledged the positive role of U.S. alliances and presence in the region. As many Americans feared that a rising China would try to push the U.S. out of Asia and overturn the existing regional order, these moves to accept and bind itself into this order were important attempts to assuage these worries. In a briefing describing his July 2001 trip to China, Secretary of State Powell said: "And they [China] welcome American presence in the Asia-Pacific region as a stabilizing factor."<sup>787</sup> Chinese officials would continue to recognize the positive role of the U.S. in the region, but these efforts began before 9/11.

### *September 11<sup>th</sup> as an Opportunity for U.S.-China Cooperation*

In hindsight, 9/11 appears to be the important driver for U.S.-China cooperation. However, Zoellick's May 2001 trip to China and Powell's July 2001 trip to China helped repair the damage

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<sup>785</sup> See Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, pp. 237-9; and Zhang Tuosheng, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision: Lessons for Crisis Management," in Michael D. Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng, eds., *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), pp. 391-422.

<sup>786</sup> See Zhang Tuosheng, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision: Lessons for Crisis Management;" and author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2001, Summer 2002.

<sup>787</sup> Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State, "Briefing on Trip to East Asia," July 29, 2001, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/4347.htm>

done to bilateral relations by the EP-3 crisis, and moved relations on a more cooperative trajectory before 9/11. As the deadly terrorists attacks on 9/11 showed the U.S. government that terrorism was a more pressing and more dangerous threat than a rising China, attention shifted from the China threat to the threats of al-Qaeda, terrorism, and proliferation.<sup>788</sup> In discussing how September 11<sup>th</sup> and the war on terror changed U.S.-China relations, one scholar notes: “The United States now needs China’s help on issues such as counterterrorism, nonproliferation, the reconstruction of Iraq, and the maintenance of stability in the Middle East.”<sup>789</sup> A relationship in which the U.S. looked to China for potential cooperation was far preferable and far more conducive to a stable international environment and economic modernization than one in which the U.S. considered China to be a “strategic competitor” and a potential threat that needed to be countered. 9/11 was a “strategic opportunity” that needed to be grasped properly and used effectively if a rising China hoped to maintain cooperative relations with the United States and maintain a favorable international environment for economic modernization.

Chinese government officials and experts repeatedly discussed 9/11 in terms of an “opportunity.” The CCP’s 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress work report in the fall of 2002 declared that the relatively peaceful international environment would make the first twenty years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a “period of strategic opportunity” (*zhanlüe jiyuqi*) that would allow for a focus on economic modernization and dealing with social and political problems. According to Liu Jianfei, an expert at the Central Party School: “From China’s point of view, the adjustment in the U.S.’s new security strategy provides China with a new opportunity to improve relations with the U.S.”<sup>790</sup>

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<sup>788</sup> See Tao Wenzhao, chief ed., “9/11”*hou de Guoji Xingshi* [The International Situation after 9/11], (Beijing: Huayi Chubanshe, 2003); and Fu Mengzi, chief ed., *Fankong Beijing xia Meiguo Quanguo Zhanlüe* [U.S. Global Strategy in the Age of Anti-terrorism], (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2004).

<sup>789</sup> See Wang Jisi, “China’s Search for Stability with America,” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2005).

<sup>790</sup> See Liu Jianfei, “‘Zhanlüe Jiyuqi’ yu ZhongMei Guanxi” [‘Period of Strategic Opportunity’ and Sino-U.S. Relations], *Liaowang*, January 20, 2003, p. 56-7. For a related discussion, see Yang Jiemin, “Zhongyao Zhanlüe Jiyuqi he ZhongMei Guanxi” [Important Period of Strategic Opportunity and Sino-U.S. Relations], in Yu Xintian, chief ed., *Zai Heping, Fazhan, Hezuo de Qizhi xia: Zhongguo Zhanlüe Jiyuqi de duiwai Zhanlüe Zonglun* [Under the Banner of Peace, Development,

Although welcoming a shift of emphasis away from the potential China threat, few Chinese experts expected America's long-term strategy to focus on terrorism. Many Chinese analysts argued that terrorism was not a life or death issue (shengsicunwang) for America and any changes in U.S. strategy were temporary (zanshixing) and improvements in U.S.-China relations were likely tactical (zhanshuxing).<sup>791</sup> Liu further argued that "the adjustment in U.S. national security strategy is just a phase," and after the war on terror, the U.S. would emphasize issues of greater geopolitical importance, such as the rise of China, and may try to constrain China's power and growth.<sup>792</sup> In observing the international environment after 9/11, Qian Qichen, former vice-premier, minister of foreign affairs, and architect of China's foreign policy in the late 1990s, argued that the "dual nature of America's policy toward China had not changed."<sup>793</sup> Putting it most bluntly, even after September 11<sup>th</sup>, "the U.S. actually has not abandoned its hegemonic strategy."<sup>794</sup> Even moderate

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and Cooperation: Discussions on Foreign Strategy of China's Period of Strategic Opportunity], (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 2005), pp. 97-110.

<sup>791</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2002, Fall 2003-Spring 2004; Shanghai, Summer 2002, Spring 2004. My interlocuters, at the same time as pointing out the opportunities and space for potential cooperation that came with the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, always argued that the war on terror and September 11<sup>th</sup> did not change fundamental facts about the world and U.S. China relations. Two examples that came up repeatedly were the "structural contradiction" (jiegouxing de maodun) between the U.S. and China and the fundamental fact that "it is difficult for one mountain to contain two tigers" (yishan nanrong erhu). For an example, see Yang Jiemin, "Sino-U.S. and Cross-Strait Relations under the Post-'11 September' Strategic Settings, *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 11, No. 33 (2002), p. 657-672, esp. p. 658. See also Liu Jianfei, "ZhongMei Guanxi Fazhan Qushi ji Zhongguo Yingdui Fanglue" [Development Trends in Sino-U.S. Relations and China's Plan of Response], in Ba Zhongjue, chief ed., *Daguo Xingqi zhong de Guojia Anquan* [National Security of Emerging Great Powers], (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2005), p. 124. In another article, Liu invokes realism to argue that a non-state actor can't be threats to the survival of a great power, as such threats can only come from other great powers. This is but one of the many reasons he views the terrorist threat as a temporary phenomenon. See Liu Jianfei, "Zhongguo duiMei Zhanlüe de Xianshi yu Lilun Yiju" [The Reality and Theoretical Foundations of China's Strategy towards the United States], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 6 (2006), p. 25.

<sup>792</sup> See Liu Jianfei, "'Zhanlüe Jiyuqi' yu ZhongMei Guanxi." See also Yuan Peng, "Lun ZhongMei Guanxi Weilai Fazhan de Kongjian" [On Space for Future Developments in Sino-U.S. Relations], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 4 (2005); and Yuan Peng, "ZhongMei Guanxi: Xin Bianhua yu Xin Tiaozhan" [Sino-U.S. Relations: New Changes and New Challenges], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 5 (2006).

<sup>793</sup> See Qian Qichen, "'9-11' zhihou de Guoji Xingshi yu ZhongMei Guanxi" [The International Situation and Sino-American Relations After 9/11], *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* [Studies of International Politics], No. 4 (2002).

<sup>794</sup> Liu Jianfei, "ZhongMei Guanxi Fazhan Qushi ji Zhongguo Yingdui Fanglue," p. 124. Liu invokes his own analysis of the position of realists and neo-conservatives in the U.S. to support his view. He argues that neo-conservatives want to continue to prosecute the war on terror, but also want to contain China. Whereas realists, who are more focused on great power politics, believe that the greatest threat comes from China and therefore the U.S. should spend less time and fewer resources on the war on terror and return its focus to containing China. For other examples that viewed the

scholars such as Peking University Professor Jia Qingguo argued that a more hostile approach from the United States “threatens to come back when circumstances change.”<sup>795</sup>

Implicit, and often explicit, in this formulation of 9/11 as an “opportunity” was that China’s response and whether or not it grasped this opportunity would determine the real effect of 9/11 on bilateral relations. China and the United States now shared common interests in addressing issues such as terrorism and proliferation, and there were clear expectations from the United States that being constructive and responsible meant cooperating on these issues. This focus on cooperation with China presented opportunities to improve bilateral relations, but given the growing importance of these issues for U.S. security, insufficient or inadequate Chinese cooperation on these issues could lead to an even more severe deterioration in bilateral relations.

Invoking the metaphor of a dual-edged sword (*shuangrenjian*), numerous Chinese experts worried that if China did not properly grasp this opportunity, 9/11 could prove to be a negative factor in bilateral relations. If China seemed unwilling to cooperate to address these common threats, this would strengthen the view of China as a threat, might push America to shift its focus from terrorism back to China earlier than it otherwise might, and would lead to an even more hostile perception of China. For example, Robert Kapp, head of the U.S.-China Business Council warned: “There still exists the possibility of a very serious degradation of U.S.-China relations if expectations are disappointed.”<sup>796</sup> In the fall of 2001, several American experts on Asia policy voiced a concern that China would not actively cooperate with the U.S. in these areas of common interest, which

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fundamental position of the Bush administration as a hard-line one, see Zhang Ruizhuang, “Bush duiHua zhengce zhong de ‘lanjun’ yinying [The ‘Blue Team’ Shadow in Bush’s Policy towards China]”, *Meiguo Yanjiu* [America Studies], No. 1 (2002); and Lu Gang and Guo Xuetang, chief eds., *Zhongguo Weixie Shei? Jiedu “Zhongguo Weixielun”* [Who does China Threaten? Interpreting the “China Threat Theory] (Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe, 2004).

<sup>795</sup> Jia Qingguo “One Administration, Two Voices: U.S. China Policy during Bush’s First Term,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2006), pp. 23-36.

<sup>796</sup> See Michael Vatikiotis, Ben Dolven and David Murphy, “China-U.S. Relations: Terror Throws us Together, For Now,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 1, 2001, p. 40.

would end up harming the bilateral relationship.<sup>797</sup> On the other hand, the opportunity that came with U.S. demands for cooperation and support also gave China a chance to improve relations with the U.S. and possibly make officials in the U.S. less likely to view China as a threat. Grasping this opportunity and cooperating with the United States after 9/11 presented the possibility of proving that it could behave in a constructive manner, prevent a quick return of focus to the China threat, build a new foundation for a cooperative relationship, and extend the “period of strategic opportunity” for China to focus on its economic modernization.<sup>798</sup>

#### *China's Reassurance in the Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> World*

In grasping the opportunity presented by the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, China continued and even enhanced its early cooperative efforts to stabilize bilateral relations and to convince the U.S. that it was not a threat. Moreover, in the face of challenges to China's interests, it did not overreact and resolutely “struggle” against such actions, but rather showed patience, restraint, and flexibility, even in the face of challenges. The Chinese government continued its positive rhetoric about how China will not threaten anyone, will not seek hegemony, and will strive for win-win solutions, but during this period China's behavior actually supported this peaceful rhetoric. Chinese reassurance efforts included active cooperation to fight terrorism, self-restraint when anti-terror efforts had a negative effect on Chinese interest, greater acceptance of U.S. presence in the region and self-binding into the regional order, active efforts to cooperate on the North Korean nuclear issue, and restraint in response to Taiwan moves toward independence.

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<sup>797</sup> Author's interviews, Washington, D.C., Fall 2011.

<sup>798</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2002, Fall 2003-Spring 2004, Fall 2005-Summer 2006; Shanghai, Summer 2002, Spring 2004. For an excellent English-language analysis that also characterizes 9/11 as an opportunity, see Medeiros, *China's International Behavior*, p. 98.

## China's After 9/11: Sympathetic Words and Active Efforts to Cooperate and Share the Wealth

China undoubtedly benefitted from the U.S.'s need for cooperation from other powers, and tried to use this to show how China's increased power could prove useful to the U.S., rather than potentially harmful. One of the best examples of China's coherent reassurance grand strategy was its response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and its active cooperation with the U.S. as it tried to fight the war on terror.<sup>799</sup> Right after the attacks, President Jiang had his officials working frantically on a message of sympathy and support, wanting to make sure it could be dated September 11<sup>th</sup> to show the strength of China's support. The message, sent out shortly before midnight, conveyed China's "deepest sympathy and solicitude" and declared that "the Chinese government has consistently condemned and rejected all forms of terrorist violence."<sup>800</sup>

In a late September 2001 visit to the United States, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan made it clear that China was willing to undertake efforts to cooperate with and assist the United States in the Global War on Terror (GWOT), and offered such assistance without demanding changes in U.S. policy on Taiwan or other issues as a precondition.<sup>801</sup> Although there was no visible concession from the United States, China took very active steps in support of the U.S. response to 9/11 and the threat from terrorism. These active efforts to help in the GWOT were an example of China sharing the wealth, and demonstrating that as it increased its power, it would be willing to use this increased

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<sup>799</sup> For discussions of the specific actions China took in response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and in support of the U.S. as it launched the war on terror, see Fu Mengzi, chief ed., *ZhongMei Zhanlüe Guanxi Xinlun* [On Sino-U.S. Strategic Relations], (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2004); Gong Li, "Zhongguo de duiMei Zhengce yu Zhongguo Heping Jueqi Xin Daolu" [China's Policy towards the U.S. and China's New Road of Peaceful Rise], in Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Guoji Zhanlüe Yanjiusuo [Central Party School Institute for International Strategy], *Zhongguo Heping Jueqi Xin Daolu* [China's New Road of Peaceful Rise], (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 2003), pp. 232-52; and Liu Xuecheng, "ZhongMei Guanxi" [Sino-American Relations], in Xu Jian, chief ed., *Guoji Huanjing yu Zhongguo de Zhanlüe Jiyuqi* [International Environment and China's Period of Strategic Opportunity], (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2004), pp. 236-46.

<sup>800</sup> See John W. Garver, "Sino-American Relations in 2001: The Difficult Accommodation of Two Great Powers," *International Journal* (Spring 2002), pp. 301-2.

<sup>801</sup> See John Pomfret, "China Also Wants U.S. Help Against 'Separatists,'" *Washington Post*, September 19, 2001; and Charles Snyder, "Powell Assures Taipei There's no Deal with China," *Taipei Times*, September 23, 2001.



power and leverage to help protect the interests of the United States rather than threaten these interests.

China cooperated on anti-terror measures and used its growing diplomatic influence to gain Pakistan's support for the war in Afghanistan.<sup>802</sup> After Foreign Minister Tang left Washington, China dispatched a team of anti-terrorism experts to work closely with U.S. experts. They established bilateral mechanisms on intelligence sharing, financial monitoring and law enforcement. China voted for and vocally supported UN Resolution 1373, a chapter VII measure passed in late September focused on intelligence sharing and cracking down on terrorist fundraising and organization. Beijing also agreed to the opening in the U.S. Embassy of a Legal Attache Office, run by the FBI, which would help aid in cracking down on money laundering. China also allowed the October APEC summit in Shanghai, which China had hoped to use as an important forum to further improve its relations with the region, to focus on deepening cooperation in responding to terrorism.<sup>803</sup> According to one expert, Chinese attempts to cooperate in the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks were "early and intense."<sup>804</sup>

China not only publicly supported the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, but also provided necessary, and often overlooked, assistance in securing Pakistani support. Its special ties with the Taliban regime and the fluidity of the border would make Pakistani cooperation especially vital for the GWOT. Pakistani support for any U.S. military action was important not only due to

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<sup>802</sup> For a discussion of China's "rapid reaction" (kuaisu fanying) to 9/11 from the viewpoint of the then-Chinese Ambassador to France, see Wu Jianmin, *Wajiao Anli*, pp. 335-348. For thorough discussions of these moves in response to the war on terror, see Bo Yong, "ZhongMei Fankong Hezuo de Qianjing he Wenti" [Prospects and issues in Sino-American Anti-terrorism Cooperation], *Shijie Jingji Yanjiu* [World Economy Study], No. 4 (2003), pp. 10-14; Zhou Zhongfei, "Fankong Hezuo: ZhongMei Guanxi de Xianzhuang, Tedian jiqi Fazhan Qushi" [Anti-terrorism Cooperation: The Status-quo, Characteristics, and Development Trends of Sino-American Relations], *Guoji Guancha* [International Observer], No. 3 (2003), pp. 28-34; Thomas J. Christensen, "China," in Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg, eds., *Strategic Asia, 2002-3: Asian Aftershocks* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2003), pp. 51-94; Glaser, "Sino-American Relations Beyond September 11;" Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Policy*; and Michael Swaine, "Reverse Course? The Fragile Turnaround in U.S.-China Relations," Carnegie Endowment, Policy Brief No. 22 (February 2003).

<sup>803</sup> See Vatikiotis, Dolven and Murphy, "China-U.S. Relations: Terror Throws us Together, For Now;" and David E. Sanger, "Russia, China, and the U.S.: in Terror, at last a Common Enemy," *New York Times*, October 28, 2001.

<sup>804</sup> See Denny Roy, "China and the War on Terrorism," *Orbis*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer 2002), p. 512.

this special relationship with Afghanistan, but also because the most direct route for sorties into and out of Afghanistan was through its airspace. Increased U.S. support for India at the beginning of the Bush administration reduced American leverage, made President Musharraf less likely to cooperate, and made cooperation more risky given the domestic anti-American sentiment in Pakistan. Chinese officials made very active diplomatic efforts, including dispatching Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Islamabad, to encourage Pakistan to cooperate with the United States in the GWOT and in the invasion of Afghanistan. According to one expert on China's relations with South Asia, "There is considerable evidence that China's representatives encouraged Pakistan to cooperate with the United States at that critical juncture."<sup>805</sup> China also assisted U.S. operations in Afghanistan by closely monitoring its fifty-mile border with Afghanistan to prevent the inflow of arms or the escape of suspected terrorists.<sup>806</sup> Moreover, China also provided food relief for refugees and donated \$150 million in aid to Afghanistan for reconstruction.<sup>807</sup> Experts who have argued that China's cooperation in the GWOT has been limited and unimportant often overlook or neglect the constructive and active role China played in securing Pakistani support.<sup>808</sup>

China also made new commitments to control proliferation and made efforts to deepen regional cooperation on non-traditional security issues such as terrorism. Although China had been

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<sup>805</sup> See John W. Garver, "China's Influence in Central and South Asia: Is it Increasing?" in Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift*, p. 213-4. For more on these efforts, see Charles Hutzler, "China's Quiet, Crucial Role in the War," *Wall Street Journal*, December 18, 2001, p. A10; Glaser, "Sino-American Relations Beyond September 11," p. 223; Christensen, "China," in *Strategic Asia, 2002-3*, p. 55; and Garver, "Sino-American Relations in 2001: The Difficult Accommodation of Two Great Powers," p. 302; and Bonnie Glaser and Carola McGiffert, "China: Tactical Bandwagoning, Strategic Balancing," in Daniel Benjamin, ed., *America and the World in the Age of Terror: A New Landscape in International Relations* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2005), p. 12.

<sup>806</sup> See Garver, "Sino-American Relations in 2001: The Difficult Accommodation of Two Great Powers," p. 304

<sup>807</sup> See Glaser, "Sino-American Relations Beyond September 11," p. 224.

<sup>808</sup> For example, see Friedberg, "11 September and the Future of Sino-American Relations," *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 33-50; and David M. Lampton, "Small Mercies: China and America After 9/11," *National Interest*, no. 66 (Winter 2001/2002), pp. 106-113. Not only does Friedberg overlook the Chinese assistance in gaining Pakistani support, he even remarked on the "stunning reversal in America's decade-long estrangement from Pakistan," that allowed the U.S. to have Pakistani support in the war against Afghanistan and use its territory and airspace. However, China's key role in facilitating the "stunning reversal" is not mentioned. If Pakistan's shift was as important as the author suggests, and if China's role in bringing Pakistan "on board" was as important as most experts suggest, then by Friedberg's own logic China's cooperation was more important than he seems to suggest.

dragging its feet in implementing pledges made in November 2000, in 2002 China finally published an export control list for missiles and advanced technology, and promised to enforce it. Chinese experts argued that the enhanced importance of proliferation to the United States pushed the Chinese government to take additional steps on proliferation to improve bilateral relations. According to one scholar: “This [doing the export control lists] was not unrelated to America’s post-9/11 heightened interest in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>809</sup> Although China dragged its feet, it compromised by publishing the export list before sanctions from 2001 were lifted, which Chinese officials had said was the condition for moving forward. China’s implementation of the export controls was uneven, and the United States also recognized the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a terrorist group in exchange for this commitment, but this was a small step forward in bilateral cooperation.<sup>810</sup> In 2002, China issued a position paper on enhanced cooperation on non-traditional security threats and agreed to information-sharing and deeper multilateral cooperation through ARF and bilateral cooperation with other countries in East Asia.<sup>811</sup>

China continued its cooperation with America’s campaign against terrorism by supporting its efforts to disarm Iraq. In November 2002, China supported UN Resolution 1441, which called for greater pressure on disarming Iraq. This was one of the few times it supported a chapter VII measure and showed a willingness to use its power in more responsible and constructive ways. In the run-up to the Iraq War itself, it seemed clear that China would have at least abstained from a second resolution, and some Chinese interlocutors suggested that China might have even supported it, in an effort to improve relations with the United States.<sup>812</sup> In the final discussions on a second

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<sup>809</sup> See Sun Xuefeng, “Zhongguo duiMei Zhengce de Zhanlüe Xiaoying (1989-2004)” [The Strategic Effect of China’s Policy towards the U.S., 1989-2004], in Fu Mengzi, chief ed., *ZhongMei Zhanlüe Guanxi Xinlun*, pp. 305-28.

<sup>810</sup> See Evan S. Medeiros, *Chasing the Dragon: Assessing China’s System of Export Controls for WMD-related Goods and Technologies* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2005); Gill, *Rising Star*, ch. 3; and Wu Xinbo, “The Promise and Limitations of a Sino-U.S. Partnership,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Autumn 2004), pp. 115-26.

<sup>811</sup> See Glosny, “Heading Toward a Win-Win Future?” p. 40.

<sup>812</sup> Author’s Interviews, Beijing, Summer 2002; Shanghai, Summer 2002.

resolution on Iraq, China was never listed in U.S. newspaper reports as one of the “problem countries.”<sup>813</sup>

### GWOT and China’s Periphery: Self-Restraint as New Challenges Emerge

China maintained self-restraint even as American efforts to prosecute the GWOT inadvertently led to negative developments in China’s security environment. Drawing on Deng Xiaoping’s guidance on how to react to the end of the Cold War, to “remain calm, remain calm, and remain calm again” (lengjing, lengjing, zailengjing), Wang Jisi suggested that China’s patience and restraint in the face of these moves in the post-9/11 world were consistent with Deng’s advice, served Chinese interests, and help improve U.S.-China relations.<sup>814</sup> As part of its efforts to defeat terrorism, the United States established bases on China’s periphery in Central Asia, strengthened the U.S.-Japan alliance, and pushed Japan to expand its overseas military operations. China had spent much diplomatic capital and effort improving its relations with Central Asia through the Shanghai-5 and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which were aimed in part at minimizing the influence of other great powers on its periphery to prevent complications in its international environment and increased pressure on China. Almost overnight, the establishment of U.S. bases undermined much of the success in Central Asia and marked the return of American influence and military forces on China’s western frontier.<sup>815</sup> With the exception of some news articles expressing

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<sup>813</sup> See Karen DeYoung, “Three Countries Vow to Block U.S. on Iraq: War Plans Continue Despite Resistance at U.N.,” *Washington Post*, March 6, 2003; and John Tagliabue, “France and Russia Ready to Use Veto Against Iraq War,” *New York Times*, March 6, 2003.

<sup>814</sup> See Wang Jisi, “Lengjing, Lengjing, Zai lengjing: Dui Dangqian Meiguo yu ZhongMei Guanxi de jidian Guancha [Remain Calm, Remain Calm, and Remain Calm Again: Some Observations on Contemporary America and Sino-American Relations], *Guoji Jingji Pinglun* [

<sup>815</sup> See Bates Gill and Matthew Oresman, “China’s New Journey to the West: China’s Emergence in Central Asia and Implications for U.S. Interests,” CSIS, August 2003.

worry about America's efforts to secure "long-term military bases" (changqi junshi jidi), there were few official complaints and no attempts to drive these forces out.<sup>816</sup>

Perhaps even more surprising, China reacted with great restraint as the United States asked Japan to take on new military missions in its anti-terrorism efforts, including unprecedented displays of military power and power projection in its logistics support in operations in the Indian Ocean. Although some worried that these moves represented a new version of Japanese militarism, there were few official complaints about improvements in the alliance or the role Japan was playing in fighting terrorism. Chinese restraint in response to these developments and even continuing to cooperate with America in the face of them, showed that China was willing to pay costs as part of improving relations with the United States.<sup>817</sup> China was also relatively restrained and moderate in its response, though certainly concerned, both when the Nuclear Posture Review listed China as one of seven nations against which the U.S. needed to be prepared to use nuclear weapons and when the preemption doctrine became the cornerstone of the 2002 National Security Strategy.

#### Self-Binding and Greater Support for the United States in Asia

China continued binding itself into the web of international and regional institutions, and even continued to express acceptance of American military presence in East Asia. During the 2001 APEC summit in Shanghai, President Jiang reportedly told Bush that he encourages the US to play a "healthful and constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability." During the joint press conference, President Jiang also expressed his support for "long term coexistence" with the United States, even as its military presence and alliances in the region endured. This message of support for U.S. presence, and a willingness to bind itself more deeply into a regional order that includes U.S.

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<sup>816</sup> For examples, see Lampton, "Small Mercies."

<sup>817</sup> See Denny Roy, "China and the War on Terrorism," p. 518; and Sun Xuefeng, "Zhongguo duiMei Zhengce de Zhanlüe Xiaoying (1989-2004)."

alliances, sent a much more benign signal than earlier criticism of U.S. regional alliances.<sup>818</sup>

According to two Chinese experts, “Chinese leaders now appreciate that the United States plays some indispensable constructive roles in the region. This recognition has led China to repeatedly reassure the United States that China does not want to expel the United States from China and welcomes their constructive presence in the region.”<sup>819</sup>

Chinese officials increasingly expressed these positive assessments of the United States in the region. For example, in a 2003 article, Fu Ying, then Director-General of the Asia Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote: “The American presence in the region is a product of history and an objective reality. China welcomes the US to play a role in maintaining stability and promoting development in the region.”<sup>820</sup> According to Zheng Bijian, who proposed “peaceful rise,” “China holds a pragmatic attitude toward the American presence, including its military presence, in the Asia-Pacific region, and takes a position of ‘open multilateralism.’”<sup>821</sup> In 2002, China also reissued the New Security Concept, but without the focus on anti-U.S. or anti-alliance rhetoric.<sup>822</sup> Several interlocuters suggested that the reason for re-issuing the concept and changing its focus was to alleviate U.S. concerns that China was trying to attack and undermine U.S. presence. In 2002, China also took the bold step of approaching NATO for a series of negotiations.<sup>823</sup> In both words and deeds, China was expressing an acceptance of the existing international and regional order, and

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<sup>818</sup> See Wu Xinbo, “The Taiwan Issue and the U.S.-Asia/Pacific Security Strategy,” *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2002), p. 235.

<sup>819</sup> See Zhang and Tang, “China’s Regional Strategy,” p. 57.

<sup>820</sup> See Fu Ying, “China and Asia in a New Era,” *China: An International Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2003), p. 311

<sup>821</sup> See Zheng Bijian, *China’s Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian, 1997-2005* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2005), p. 11.

<sup>822</sup> See “China’s Position Paper on the New Security Concept,” August 6, 2002. Several researchers in government think tanks discussed the reissuing of the New Security Concept as a way to try to make known China’s view of international politics, but to do so in a way that was much less overtly anti-American than the previous attempts from the late-1990s were. Author’s interviews, Beijing, Fall 2003-Spring 2004, Fall 2005-Spring 2006.

<sup>823</sup> See Sutter, *China’s Rise in Asia*, and David L. Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider and Zhou Hong, eds., *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2007).

showing a desire to become more engaged with it by continuing to deepen its role in international organizations.

### Sharing the Wealth: Unprecedented Activism in Response to the Korean Nuclear Threat

China's unprecedented active efforts to promote cooperation and stability in response to North Korea's nuclear weapons program show that China is willing to use its increasing power and leverage to help strengthen regional stability and work in cooperation with the United States on issues of common interest. When the North Korean nuclear crisis emerged in the fall of 2002, most analysts believed that China would not be willing to take the necessary initiative or exert the necessary pressure on North Korea to help resolve the crisis.<sup>824</sup> Most analysts at the time believed that this was the type of real challenge that would reveal the weak foundation of post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Sino-American cooperative relations and lead to a deterioration of these relations. China's repeated activism served as one of the best illustrations of the tool of "sharing the wealth," which showed others that the rising power was willing to use its increased power to help benefit the other powers as well. China's reassurance efforts helped turned the North Korean nuclear crisis from a potential destructive force in the bilateral relationship to one of the most constructive aspects of the relationship.<sup>825</sup>

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<sup>824</sup> For an excellent discussion on the perceived likelihood of China's cooperation, see Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, p. 27. For a focus on divergent priorities, see David Shambaugh, "China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the Long Term," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 43-56. For an argument that China has been and will continue to be part of the problem, see John Tkacik, "Getting China to Support a Denuclearized North Korea," Heritage Foundation, Backgrounder #1678, August 25, 2003.

<sup>825</sup> For two recent and especially thorough analyses of China's active cooperation and assistance on the North Korean nuclear issue and how it has dramatically improved U.S.-China relations, see Bonnie S. Glaser and Wang Liang, "North Korea: The Beginning of a China-U.S. Partnership?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Summer 2008), pp. 165-180; and Christopher P. Twomey, "Explaining Chinese Foreign Policy toward North Korea: Navigating between the Scylla and Charybdis of Proliferation and Instability," *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 17, no. 56 (August 2008), pp. 401-23. See also Sukhee Han, "China's Peaceful Development and the Future of the Six Party Talks," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 2005).

The nuclear crisis occurred at a difficult time in Chinese domestic politics; the 16<sup>th</sup> party Congress was ongoing and the leadership transition would not be complete until the new appointments took place at the March 2003 NPC meeting.<sup>826</sup> Even under these constraints, when North Korea made known its intention to withdraw from the NPT, China sent Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan to express China's opposition and try to push the North Koreans to reconsider.<sup>827</sup> Moreover, China surprised many by voting in the IAEA to refer the North Korean issue to the UN Security Council; China played a constructive role, whereas Russia abstained.<sup>828</sup>

In March 2003, after the leadership transition, China adopted a far more proactive and cooperative approach to North Korea, taking measures that most others believed China never would. Deployment of American bombers in February to enhance the credibility of an American response also pushed China to be more cooperative. In early March 2003, China shut down an oil pipeline from Daqing in Northeast China to North Korea for three days, citing "technical problems" and the need for "technical maintenance;" Chinese experts later characterized this as "active efforts" or pressure.<sup>829</sup> China also sent Qian Qichen to North Korea to urge them to negotiate. In April 2003, China organized and hosted the trilateral talks. This was the first example of a trend that would last for the next several years; China would dispatch officials to North Korea and constantly drag the North Koreans back to the negotiating table.<sup>830</sup> In the summer of 2003, China even took the unprecedented move of detaining a North Korean ship.<sup>831</sup>

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<sup>826</sup> For a focus on these domestic constraints on China's policy, see Thomas J. Christensen and Michael A. Glosny, "Sources of Stability in US-China Security Relations," in Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg, eds., *Strategic Asia*, 2003-4 (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2003), pp. 53-79.

<sup>827</sup> See David M. Lampton, "China: Fed up with North Korea?," *Washington Post*, June 4, 2003.

<sup>828</sup> See Christensen and Glosny, "Sources of Stability in US-China Security Relations."

<sup>829</sup> See "China Said to Have Cut Oil to North Korea," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 10, 2003; and Gady Epstein, "From Beijing, Stern Words for an Uneasy Ally," *Baltimore Sun*, March 28, 2003.

<sup>830</sup> Twomey has put together an especially useful chart that shows each round of negotiations with the U.S. and North Korea, and details the number of high-level Chinese officials that visited North Korea beforehand to facilitate North Korea's willingness to participate. See Twomey, "Explaining Chinese Foreign Policy toward North Korea," p. 413.

<sup>831</sup> See Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy."



After agreeing to host and facilitate the trilateral talks in April 2003, China took the unprecedented step of agreeing to organize and host the Six Party talks, and was willing to put pressure on North Korea to secure its participation.<sup>832</sup> This was a particularly important and constructive move because the U.S. believed that the crisis could only be resolved through multilateral negotiations, and without the Chinese taking the lead, these almost certainly would have never occurred. In July 2003, Dai Bingguo traveled to North Korea and hand delivered a message from President Hu that urged the North Koreans to participate in the Six Party talks. Later in 2003, China not only continued to host the Six Party talks, but even agreed to serve as a more credible intermediary to relay multilateral security guarantees to the North Koreans, which they ultimately rejected.<sup>833</sup> Although some questioned the utility of the Six Party process, especially when the talks broke up in 2004 without any real breakthrough, but without China's active efforts to bring all parties to the negotiation table, there would have been even less progress.

After North Korea pulled out of the Six Party talks before the 2004 U.S. election, and remained unwilling to participate in early 2005, U.S. pressure on China to reconvene the talks increased dramatically. U.S. officials, including moderates like Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, made it clear to China that they considered it China's responsibility to get the participants to the negotiating table. Although Chinese officials indicated that America's inflexible position and threats to the North Korean regime were one of the main reasons for the collapse of the talks, the Chinese also redoubled their efforts and arranged a new round of Six Party talks to be held in early September 2005. China not only organized this round, but also took remarkable

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<sup>832</sup> See Shi Yinhong, "Beijing Liufang Huitan yu Zhongguo Waijiao Zuowei" [Beijing Six Party talks and Chinese Diplomatic Behavior], *Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu* [Teaching and Research], No. 10 (2003), pp. 21-23; and Zhu Feng, "Zhongguo de Waijiao Woxuan yu Chaohe Wenti Liufang Huitan: Weishenme Waijiao Jiejue Chaohe Wenti Zheme Nan?" [China's Diplomatic Mediation and the Six Party Talks on the North Korean Nuclear Problem: Why is it so Difficult to Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Problem Diplomatically?], *Waijiao Pinglun* [Foreign Affairs Review], No. 88 (April 2006), pp. 23-30.

<sup>833</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, "Wen Jiabao's Visit Caps and Outstanding Year," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (January 2004).

initiative in crafting the joint statement released on September 19, 2005 that outlined the steps required to move towards a resolution of the crisis and was a remarkable sign of progress. Rather than making the statement something that all parties crafted together, Wu Dawei, China's negotiator, took input of all sides, drafted the statement, and gave the parties a chance to accept it or reject it as is. The Chinese side apparently went through several drafts before getting to the one that was finally approved by all sides. U.S. officials were not happy with this process as it removed their veto power over certain sections, but without China's initiative in this regard, the statement almost definitely would not have achieved the concessions from North Korea that it did. The United States did not favor the inclusion of a provision for North Korea to eventually gain access to a light-water reactor, but it ultimately agreed in order to push North Korea to declare its nuclear weapons program. Like any successful negotiation, both the U.S. and North Korea were forced to agree to terms that they would have preferred not to, but without China's initiative, attempts to take into account everyone's interest and make them comfortable with the language, there never would have been a joint declaration.<sup>834</sup> By September 2005, one could accurately say that the Chinese and Americans were almost jointly managing this crisis. Due to China's willingness to cooperate with the U.S., the North Korean nuclear crisis transformed itself from an issue on which the U.S. and China had conflicting interests and threatened the post-September 11th honeymoon in bilateral relations, into an issue that brought them even closer together.

#### Self-Restraint and Flexibility towards Taiwan, even in the Face of Provocations

China was moderate and restrained in its response to challenges on the Taiwan issue. Although this cooperative approach was not solely aimed at reassuring the United States, just as China's aggressive behavior towards Taiwan in the 1990s led to increased worries in the United

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<sup>834</sup> For a discussion of this process, see Bonnie S. Glaser, "Katrina Wreaks Diplomatic Havoc, Too," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (October 2005). Author's interviews with U.S. Embassy officials, Beijing, Fall 2005.

States about a China threat, more cooperative behavior might reduce some of these worries and improve bilateral relations. Although President Chen Shui-bian did not immediately push for independence after being elected in 2000, he did make several moves that China perceived as pursuit of “gradual independence.” In the face of President Chen’s de-Sinicization program that tried to highlight Taiwan’s separate existence and own identity, the Chinese warned against such moves, but did not overreact and did not make a huge deal of such provocations. Even after a victory for the pro-independence DPP party in the December 2001 legislative yuan elections, China responded by appealing to moderates by inviting them to come to the mainland. Qian not only continued to offer the flexible definition of the one-China principle, but also began to suggest that because the three links were a non-political issue, they could be discussed by non-political actors.<sup>835</sup> In the broadest sense, China was not only restrained in its response, but it also resisted an opportunity to use force against Taiwan while the U.S. was distracted and focused on fighting terrorism.

Rather than overreacting as it had in the past, China remained calm and moderate even as the United States took several steps in early 2002 that suggested strong support Taiwan. During President Bush’s visit to China in February 2002, he repeatedly mentioned America’s commitment to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. These worries were further exacerbated when America allowed Taiwan’s Defense Minister Tang Yiao-ming to come to Florida in March for a meeting of the U.S.-Taiwan Business Council, where he met with Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary of State for East-Asia and the Pacific James Kelly. Wolfowitz even repeated President Bush’s earlier pledge to do “whatever it takes” to defend Taiwan.<sup>836</sup> Although China responded with a strong diplomatic protest and canceled some military exchanges, this was moderate and short-lived. According to one Chinese scholar, there was great domestic

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<sup>835</sup> See Romberg, “Some Thoughts on Cross-Strait Relations,” p. 245.

<sup>836</sup> See “US’ Wolfowitz Says Reform Trumps Weapons,” *Taipei Times*, April 11, 2002; and Bill Gertz, “White House Backs Strong Defense of Taiwan,” *Washington Times*, April 11, 2002.

pressure to “struggle” in the face of this assertive challenge, but China “maintained restraint” and did not retaliate (baofu).<sup>837</sup> Many voices within China wanted President Jiang to cancel Vice President Hu Jintao’s planned April trip to America, but China responded with restraint and Hu’s visit paved the way for continued cooperation after the domestic transition.<sup>838</sup>

Later in 2002, China continued to show restraint and flexibility, even as Taiwan continued its provocative moves towards independence. In July 2002, President Chen declared that if the mainland did not reciprocate its goodwill, Taiwan would have no choice but to “walk its own road” (zou ziji lu), which would include a referendum on the island’s political future. On August 3rd, President Chen dropped a bombshell when he characterized cross-Strait relations as “one country on each side” (yibian yiguo) and repeated calls for the need for a referendum. Although this was far more provocative, the authorities in Beijing waited for America’s reaction before responding. When the Bush administration reaffirmed its commitment to the one-China policy, American officials privately told Beijing the United States does not support Taiwanese independence, and protested to Taiwan government officials, China was convinced that America did not support these actions.<sup>839</sup> Knowing that Taiwan independence forces did not have America’s support, and recognizing that an aggressive response would threaten Taiwan and damage relations with America, China decided that a forceful, yet moderate response would warn Taiwan separatists without being counterproductive.<sup>840</sup>

China’s moderate strategy towards Taiwan continued, despite provocations from Taiwan. In October 2002, Qian Qichen adopted a more flexible approach to negotiations on the “three links.”<sup>841</sup> In October 2002, the “three new sentences,” the more flexible definition of the one China principle, was incorporated into the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress work report. There were also indications

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<sup>837</sup> See Sun Xuefeng, “Zhongguo dui Mei Zhengce de Zhanlüe Xiaoying (1989-2004).”

<sup>838</sup> See Romberg, “Some Thoughts on Cross-Strait Relations,” p. 244.

<sup>839</sup> See Christensen and Glosny, “Sources of Stability in US-China Security Relations;” and Romberg, “Some Thoughts on Cross-Strait Relations.”

<sup>840</sup> Interviews, Beijing, Summer 2002.

<sup>841</sup> See Steven M. Goldstein, “China’s Taiwan Strategy,” p. 221; and John Pomfret, “China Embraces more Moderate Foreign Policy” *Washington Post*, October 24, 2002.

that China might be willing to conduct some sort of negotiations even without a clear endorsement of the one China principle as a precondition.<sup>842</sup>

In late 2003, in an attempt to attract political support for the 2004 presidential election, Chen Shui-bian aggressively pushed Taiwanese identity and advocated an independence timeline, including referendum and constitutional revision. In the face of this provocation, reassured by the lack of American support, China continued its relatively moderate and relaxed response. In an assessment before the 2004 elections, one scholar from Taiwan writes “Hu and Wen have dealt with the boiling situation with a level of calm not seen before. They avoided employing a saber-rattling strategy altogether and relied almost exclusively on exerting diplomatic pressure to make Taipei backpeddle.”<sup>843</sup>

When China’s approach turned more aggressive by announcing the Anti-Secession Law (ASL) in March 2005, it tried to limit the negative effects on relations with Taiwan and America. After President Chen was re-elected in 2004, Chinese analysts feared that a DPP victory in the December 2004 legislative yuan elections would encourage further moves towards independence. The DPP was defeated, but Chinese officials had already drafted the ASL and had circulated drafts among government officials. According to several Chinese interlocutors, the “train had already left the station” and it was too late to withdraw it.<sup>844</sup> Contrary to earlier threats against Taiwan, which occurred without any previous warning or explanation, Taiwan Affairs Office Director Chen Yunlin visited Washington in January 2005 to explain the ASL and try to shape perceptions and responses. When the ASL was finally passed in March 2005, the final language was far less threatening than earlier drafts, but it warned that moves towards independence would compel the Chinese to use

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<sup>842</sup> See Steven M. Goldstein, “China’s Taiwan Strategy,” p 223-4.

<sup>843</sup> See Chu Yun-han, “The Evolution of Beijing’s Policy toward Taiwan during the Reform Era,” in Yong Deng and Fei-ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), p. 272.

<sup>844</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer 2005; and Thomas Christensen, “Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan Elections and Cross-Strait Security Relations: Reduced Tensions and Remaining Challenges,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 13 (Winter 2005).

non-peaceful measures in response. China also moved to repair its relations with moderates in Taiwan by inviting KMT chairman Lien Chan and PFP chairman James Soong.<sup>845</sup> Even when it felt forced to struggle against Taiwanese independence, the Chinese tried to take into account the worries of others and reach out to moderates in Taiwan.

### *A Less Severe Balancing Response*

From 2001 to 2005, even though China maintained its double-digit economic growth and military modernization, the United States adopted a less severe balancing posture towards China, including greater emphasis on cooperative rhetoric and policies. David Kang suggests that “the United States is not balancing China.”<sup>846</sup> Although this is probably an exaggeration, the moves that could count as balancing are of limited severity, often not clearly directed at China, and have taken place within a broader context of efforts to actively engage China and deepen cooperation. Increasing bilateral interactions, more positive rhetoric, U.S. willingness to give China more international status, and a moderate lessening in the commitment to Taiwan all show that America’s response to China has become more cooperative and less severe balancing, even as China’s material power has continued to increase.

### Enhanced Bilateral Interactions and Emphasis on Cooperation

The increased emphasis on bilateral interactions to stabilize and manage the relationship, show the U.S. government interest in deeper cooperation, rather than increasing the severity of the balancing response. For example, in the year after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, Bush and Jiang met each other four times—at the 2001 APEC summit, Bush’s February 2002 visit to China, Jiang’s

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<sup>845</sup> See Thomas Christensen, “Old Problems Trump New Thinking: China’s Security Relations with Taiwan, North Korea, and Japan,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 14 (Spring 2005).

<sup>846</sup> See Kang, *China Rising*, p. 192.

October 2002 visit to Crawford, and the 2002 APEC summit. These high-level visits continued after the transfer of power from Jiang to Hu. Moreover at regional and international meetings, officials from both countries would make sure to seek each other out for meetings on the sidelines. Deeper engagement also took place at lower levels of the government as dialogues on human rights, proliferation, anti-terrorism, trade, finance, and defense were launched or revitalized during this period. The two most well known examples were the Senior Dialogue launched in 2005 involving Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick and Dai Bingguo and the Strategic Economic Dialogue launched in 2006 involving Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Vice Premier Wu Yi. Although military-to-military contacts were a little slower to pick up after the EP-3 crisis, the U.S. commitment to improved military relations revealed the general direction of policy towards deeper engagement, rather than towards competitive balancing dynamics. Some of the more important military visits included Vice President Hu Jintao's visit to the Pentagon during his April 2002 visit to the U.S., three visits to China by Commander of Pacific Command Admiral Fargo, an October 2003 visit to Pacific Command and West Point by China's Defense Minister General Cao Gangchuan, an October 2004 visit to Washington by General Cao, a January 2004 visit to China by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers, and the fall 2005 visit to China by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld. During this period, bilateral ties became increasingly robust at all levels and on virtually all issues.<sup>847</sup> Victor Cha, who worked on Asia issues for the National Security Council under President Bush, emphasized the more cooperative emphasis in America's approach to China. In 2007, he wrote: "Far from being supplanted by China, the United States is enlisting Beijing's help. The Bush

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<sup>847</sup> For the most complete information on these bilateral visits, see the quarterly reports on U.S.-China relations published by Bonnie S. Glaser in *Comparative Connections* from CSIS Pacific Forum.

administration's China policy, which was once confrontational, has evolved into a hard-nosed but cooperative dialogue."<sup>848</sup>

### Increasingly Positive Rhetorical Descriptions of China

The rhetoric used to describe the Sino-American relations showed that the relationship was becoming better and more stable during this period. After describing China as a "strategic competitor" during the 2000 presidential election, at the October 2001 APEC summit, President Bush described U.S.-China relations as "constructive, cooperative, and candid." At the October 2002 Crawford summit, President Bush called Jiang a "friend," and characterized bilateral relations as "strong." According to the 2002 National Security Strategy, America "welcomes the emergence of a strong, peaceful, and prosperous China" and "seeks a constructive relationship with a changing China." In September 2003, Secretary of State Powell famously commented: "I would submit U.S. relations with China are the best they have been since President Nixon's first visit."<sup>849</sup> This led to a debate among experts in U.S.-China relations as to whether relations were the best since Nixon or "only" the best since 1989; in either case this debate showed how far relations had come since early 2001.<sup>850</sup> In his September 2005 "responsible stakeholder" speech, Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick's discussion of the relationship repeated many of these ideas and even called for China to take more responsibility to maintain the international system as a partner for the United States. The speech was full of accolades and positive evaluations of China. Zoellick not only emphasized the differences between contemporary China and historical parallels with the Cold-War Soviet Union or 19<sup>th</sup> century European great powers, but also went so far as to express respect for China's interests

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<sup>848</sup> See Victor D. Cha, "Winning Asia: An Untold American Foreign Policy Success," *Foreign Affairs* (November-December 2007).

<sup>849</sup> See Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State, "Remarks at the Elliott School of International Affairs," September 5, 2003, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2003/23836.htm>.

<sup>850</sup> See David M. Lampton, "The Stealth Normalization of U.S.-China Relations" *National Interest*, No. 73 (Fall 2003), pp. 37-48; and Bonnie S. Glaser, "The Best Since 1972 or the Best Ever?" *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (October 2003).



and a desire to work with it as a force for regional stability. During his October 2005 visit to China, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld repeated many of these ideas, including welcoming a strong China, highlighting differences between China's rise and troubling historical parallels, and emphasizing the need for cooperative bilateral relations. Having a more hard-line official such as Secretary Rumsfeld repeat this more positive rhetoric on China showed that not only had American official views moved in a more cooperative direction, but also showed that this was shared across the government.

### Giving China International Status

America's treatment of Chinese leaders as part of these interactions showed that rather than attempting to isolate China diplomatically and reduce its international influence, the Bush administration was willing to give the Chinese "face," political support, and international status. Inviting President Jiang to come to Crawford Ranch in 2002, a destination reserved for close allies, illustrated America's increasing political support for China and showed that views of China had changed over the previous few years. During Wen Jiabao's December 2003 visit to the U.S., he received unprecedented treatment, especially for someone who was not a head of state. This included a drum performance and a 19-gun salute as part of a huge ceremony on the south lawn of the White House.<sup>851</sup> Government officials also repeatedly welcomed a rising China playing a greater role in international affairs. Rather than trying to limit China's international status or constrain its role in international affairs, the United States has become more accepting of China and supportive of its greater role, even as it becomes more powerful.

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<sup>851</sup> See Glaser, "Wen Jiabao's Visit Caps an Outstanding Year."

### Some Balancing, but Cooperative Approach of Zoellick Speech is Dominant

There were examples of behavior that should be understood as balancing against China during this period, these were still limited, and the administration's focus was overwhelmingly on engagement and cooperation. One clear-cut example of balancing against China was the U.S. effort to prevent Europe from lifting the arms embargo that were implemented after the Tiananmen massacre of 1989. Although these were initially punitive, as China grew more powerful and modernized its military, the United States continued to support them to constrain China's military modernization. Though the sanctions themselves were not a new response to the rise of China, the desire to keep them in place many years later was a balancing response to China. According to the spectrum approach, this is a moderately severe balancing response.

Other examples of potential balancing behaviors were only partially directed at China. For example, the U.S. military budget increased substantially from 2001 to 2005. Although this correlated with China's continued rise, this increasing military budget was much more a product of the war on terror and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq than it was a response to China. The U.S. military shifted some military forces to the Pacific during this period. Some of these moves such as shifting nuclear submarines to Guam were a response to China, but other moves such as redeploying bombers were directed at North Korea as much, if not more than, China.

The United States strengthened its relations with regional allies, but these moves were only partially a response to China, and were also a product of the need to fight the war on terror and deal with non-traditional security threats. The real improvements in U.S.-Japan relations were not about the alliance's function in the region, but were much more about making it a "global alliance," best represented by Japan's military support in the Middle East both through logistics support in the Indian Ocean and sending troops to Iraq. Moreover, the improvements and increased coordination of the alliance for potential regional contingencies were as much about responding to North Korea

as about China. In the February 2005 2 + 2 joint statement by the U.S. and Japan declared that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait was an objective of the alliance; though the Chinese saw this as interference, it is difficult to view this statement as much of a change from earlier alliance statements. Using the Philippines as another example, although there is certainly a desire for long-term hedging that underpins recent improvements in relations, the need for U.S. support to fight a terrorist insurgency in the southern Philippines was at least as important in these improved relations. Though this was one clear example, this and other cases of partial-balancing all took place in a broader context of seeking to improve relations and help China grow into a peaceful and responsible force for regional stability.<sup>852</sup>

In early 2005, the voices within the administration in support of a stronger balancing response were particularly loud, and this is when some of the most severe actions were taken, but Zoellick's speech in September 2005 showed that the forces within the administration wanted to deepen cooperation and resist more hard-line responses were more powerful and ultimately proved victorious. Early 2005 was the period in which the pressure on the Europeans not to lift the arms embargo was strongest, as well as the period in which Japan and the U.S. made open reference to their interest in maintaining peace in Taiwan. During this period, U.S. resistance to Chinese companies buying American companies for fear of the strategic implications was also at the strongest, with the domestic backlash against CNOOC's bid to buy UNOCAL as the best example. Lastly, early 2005 also included several more hard-line statements from U.S. government officials,

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<sup>852</sup> Several experts have debated the degree to which U.S. behavior constitutes balancing against China. For a view that maritime East Asia is balancing against a rising China by improving its relations with the U.S., see Robert S. Ross, "Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia," *Security Studies* Vol. 15, No. 3 (July-September 2006), pp. 355-95. For a view that no country, except for perhaps Taiwan, is balancing against China, see Kang, *China Rising*. For a more nuanced view that uses a framework that focuses on zero-sum and positive-sum views of China's rise, and argues that although there are some cases of balancing such as the arms embargo, the U.S. has for the most part not balanced very much against China, see Thomas J. Christensen, "Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster: The Rise of China and U.S. Policy toward East Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer 2006), pp. 81-126. For an excellent discussion of U.S. responses to the rise of China focused on the concept of hedging, see Evan S. Medeiros, "Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No 1 (Winter 2005-2006), pp. 145-167.

especially intelligence and defense officials, about how China's military modernization was accelerating and represented a potential threat.<sup>853</sup> However, Zoellick's September 2005 "responsible stakeholder" speech made it clear that although U.S. policy towards China would have an element of hedging militarily in case the cooperative vision fails, the overall thrust of U.S. policy towards China would be to engage China and shape its incentives as it rises to incentivize it to become a peaceful and confident power, and one that is willing to take on more obligations and responsibilities in the international system as a "responsible stakeholder."<sup>854</sup> Rather than seeking to constrain China, the overall aim of the policy is to ask it to contribute more to the stability of the international system, while respecting its interests, and working together with the Chinese leadership. Although the speech was obviously intended to influence the Chinese leadership as it makes important choices in the future, another important audience for the speech was domestic critics of China policy who called for a stronger balancing response, and this speech directly addressed these voices and showed that they had been overwhelmed by pro-engagement voices.<sup>855</sup> This framework was subsequently adopted by the rest of the Bush administration, with the phrase "responsible stakeholder" appearing in the 2006 National Security Strategy and Quadrennial Defense Review. Moreover, as I argue below, the justifications offered in the Zoellick speech for such an approach very clearly show that China's reassurance grand strategy was influential in convincing the administration that such

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<sup>853</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, "Rice Seeks to Caution, Cajole, and Cooperate with Beijing," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (April 2005).

<sup>854</sup> For full text of the speech, see Robert B. Zoellick, Deputy Secretary of State, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" Remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, September 21, 2005, available at [http://www.ncuscr.org/files/2005Gala\\_RobertZoellick\\_Whither\\_China1.pdf](http://www.ncuscr.org/files/2005Gala_RobertZoellick_Whither_China1.pdf). For discussions of the speech and the implications for broader U.S. policy, see Richard Baum, Kurt M. Campbell, James A. Kelly, and Robert S. Ross, "Whither U.S.-China Relations?: Roundtable Discussion," National Bureau of Asian Research, *NBR Analysis*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (December 2005).

<sup>855</sup> For the focus on the domestic audience and the Zoellick speech, see Kurt M. Campbell in "Whither U.S. China Relations?" Subsequent interviews with U.S. government officials confirmed that the content of the Zoellick speech was not only meant to show the future direction of policy towards China, but also to directly refute those who would have preferred a more hard-line response to the rise of China. Author's interviews, Washington D.C., Summer-Fall 2006.

continued engagement was the correct response and could prove beneficial to U.S. security and regional stability.

#### Moderate Decrease in Commitment to Taiwan

During this period, the United States moved to moderately reduce its commitment to Taiwan. The United States responded very strongly to President Chen's "one country on each side" remarks and not only recalled Taiwan officials to express this frustration, but also began to publicly state that it "did not support" Taiwan independence.<sup>1</sup> Although this was the position that the Clinton administration adopted in the late 1990s, this was a particularly stark contrast because the Bush administration had earlier moved to solidify its commitment to Taiwan. After President Bush and President Hu met during the June 2003 G8 summit, a senior U.S. official quoted Bush as saying that within the context of the U.S.'s one China policy, the U.S. would pledge "if necessary" to "help Taiwan to the extent possible defend itself." This showed just how far the Bush administration's commitment to Taiwan had weakened from the 2001 "whatever it took" pledge to come to the defense of Taiwan.<sup>856</sup>

In the starkest example of the moderately weaker and more circumscribed commitment to Taiwan, President Bush stood side by side with visiting Premier Wen Jiabao in December 2003 and warned Taiwan that it would oppose continued moves to undermine regional instability. In meeting with reporters, President Bush said: "We oppose any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo. And the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally, to change the status quo, which we oppose." There were several other public statements by high level officials that tried to show the limited nature of the U.S. commitment to Taiwan. In April 2004 Congressional testimony, Assistant Secretary of

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<sup>856</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, "SARS, Summitry, and Sanctions," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (July 2003).

State for East Asia and the Pacific James Kelly sent a strong message to Taiwan when he declared that there were limits to how much support the U.S. could provide, that the U.S. would have to act in its own interests, and that if another party acted in ways that were not in line with U.S. interests, the U.S. would be unlikely to support them.<sup>857</sup> During Secretary of State Powell's October 2004 visit to Beijing, he either had a slip of the tongue, or purposely sent a shot across Taiwan's bow when he not only declared that Taiwan "does not enjoy sovereignty as a nation," but also encouraged dialogue to "move forward toward that day when we will see a peaceful unification."<sup>1</sup> Showing once again how far the administration policy had moved from the "whatever it took" pledge, in a December 2004 interview, Deputy Secretary of State Armitage said that according to the Taiwan Relations Act, the U.S. is "not required to defend" Taiwan and he emphasized that decisions for war were made by Congress, not the executive.<sup>858</sup> If increased commitment to Taiwan is considered to indicate more severe balancing, which it should be, these moves to limit these commitments and pull back should also be understood as a move towards less severe balancing.

### *Explaining the Less Severe Balancing Response*

The above analysis clearly showed that from 1999 to 2005, China adopted a relatively coherent and comprehensive reassurance strategy in its relations with the United States. During that period, but especially after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the U.S. engaged in less severe balancing behavior in response, even as China's material power continued to rise. During this period, there is strong support for the convergence test. In the rest of this section, I will present the strong evidence for the causal mechanisms my theory, showing that not only did reassurance and less

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<sup>857</sup> See James A. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, *The Taiwan Relations Act: The Next Twenty-Five Years*, Hearing before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, April 21, 2004.

<sup>858</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, "Slips of the Tongue and Parables," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (January 2005).

severe balancing occur at the same time, but the reassurance strategies were also an important factor when the U.S. decided how to respond.

Two long-time China hands with excellent connections in U.S. government circles have also argued that China's reassurance was a causal factor in the cooperative response by the U.S. Michael Swaine argues that: "The Chinese leadership's decision to reduce greatly the level of friction with Washington and to cooperate in the war on terror and in other important areas, such as nonproliferation, greatly facilitated the shift in Washington's stance."<sup>859</sup> J. Stapleton Roy, former U.S. Ambassador to the PRC, notes that after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the U.S. needed assistance from other countries. Roy continues: "Fortunately, and this was not an accidental decision on Beijing's part, China facilitated such cooperation by its quick and positive response to the September 11 attacks."<sup>860</sup> Although these assessments by two experts can China's cooperative behavior helped cause the U.S. to be more cooperative in response in evidence for my theory, stronger evidence would show how the reassurance signals directly affected policymakers. In the rest of this section I will show that consistent with my theory of reassurance, the reassurance signals sent by China were perceived and favorably evaluated, and these signals influenced the threat assessments made by policymakers about whether or not China was a threat, and also helped the policymakers understand that they could benefit from a cooperative relationship with the rising power and would stand to lose if that relationship turned competitive. Lastly, I will present some evidence showing that not only the behavioral prediction of the commitment problem approach incorrect, but evidence from how decision-makers seemed to think about the future was also inconsistent with the predicted decision calculus.

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<sup>859</sup> See Michael D. Swaine, "The Turnaround in U.S.-China Relations and the Taiwan Issue," in Pollack, *Strategic Surprise*, p. 37.

<sup>860</sup> See J. Stapleton Roy, "Opportunities and Challenges for U.S.-China Relations," in Christopher Marsh and June T. Dreyer, eds., *U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Policies, Prospects, and Possibilities* (Lanham, MD.: Lexington Books, 2004), p. 106.

### Receiving the Signals: Recognition and Favorable Evaluation

Although some of the reassurance signals that China sent to the U.S. earlier in 2000 and 2001 were not fully perceived or favorably evaluated, U.S. officials noticed and were very appreciative of the range of cooperative actions that China took after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Some of the earlier signals, such as the Chinese government's message on Secretary Powell's visit that they saw the U.S. presence as a force for stability, were perceived, but given the inconsistencies of that view with China's previous behavior and rhetoric, as well as the tense situation after the EP-3 crisis, the dominant response in U.S. government circles seemed to be that they welcomed the gesture but would need to see more.<sup>861</sup>

As China's cooperation accelerated after September 11<sup>th</sup>, at the time as the U.S. was in greater need of cooperation, this cooperation was recognized and government officials voiced great appreciation and satisfaction with these actions. At the October 2001 APEC summit in China, President Bush emphasized that China's assistance and support was very important, and he stressed that the help was provided "immediately" and with "no hesitation."<sup>862</sup> Citing an October 2001 briefing on cooperation in the war on terror from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, Garver argues that "U.S. officials were quite satisfied with the level of Chinese support for the U.S. effort."<sup>863</sup> After the second round of counterterrorism negotiations were held in Beijing in December 2001, General Frank Taylor, the State Department's Ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism said: "The Chinese share our resolve to shut down the global terror network linked to Osama Bin Laden. We're pleased

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<sup>861</sup> Author's interviews, U.S. Embassy, summer 2001.

<sup>862</sup> See Bonnie S. Glaser, "Face to Face in Shanghai: New Amity amid Perennial Differences," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (January 2002); and Vatikiotis, Dolven and Murphy, "China-U.S. Relations: Terror Throws us Together, For Now."

<sup>863</sup> In late 2001, Zoellick also said: "we have made a good start by working together at the UN and searching for terrorist money in Chinese banks." See Garver, "Sino-American Relations in 2001: The Difficult Accommodation of Two Great Powers," *International Journal* (Spring 2002), p. 305.



with the cooperation we have received from China since September 11.”<sup>864</sup> According to my own interviews with U.S. government officials and think-tankers in Washington D.C., the U.S. was most appreciative of China’s assistance in pushing Musharraf to support U.S. efforts. Lastly, several of my interlocuters in the U.S. government and the U.S. Embassy in Beijing suggested that they were worried that once it became clear that there was not going to be a quid pro quo from Washington for Beijing’s early cooperation in the war on terror, that Beijing would curtail its cooperative efforts. Moreover, most of these same interlocuters expressed happiness and surprise that Chinese cooperation continued even without concessions from the U.S.<sup>865</sup> Michael Swaine concisely summarizes the effect of this cooperation: “Beijing’s Political and diplomatic support in the United Nations and its provision of important intelligence on terrorist activities have earned credit in Washington.”<sup>866</sup>

Although some feared that China’s cooperative efforts would only last a short time, its continued reassurance efforts into 2002 were noticed and appreciated in Washington. The State Department’s May 2002 report on “Patterns of Global Terrorism” was downright effusive in its praise of China’s cooperation, and it listed specific actions that were noted and appreciated. According to the report: “China also has taken a constructive approach to terrorism problems in South and Central Asia, publicly supporting the Coalition campaign in Afghanistan and using its influence with Pakistan to urge support for multinational efforts against the Taliban and al-

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<sup>864</sup> See Eric Eckholm, “Official Praises China for its Cooperation in Rooting out Bin Laden’s Terror Network,” *New York Times*, December 7, 2001.

<sup>865</sup> Author’s Interviews, Washington D.C. December 2001; Beijing, Summer 2002.

<sup>866</sup> See Swaine, “Reverse Course,” p. 2; and Swaine, “The Turnaround in U.S.-China Relations and the Taiwan Issue Strategic Surprise,” p. 37. For other discussions that support this claim that the U.S. was very appreciative of these efforts, see Thomas J. Christensen, “China,” in Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg with Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2002-3: Asian Aftershocks* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2002); Denny Roy, “China and the War on Terrorism,” *Orbis*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer 2002); and Glaser, “Sino-American Relations Beyond September 11.”

Qaida....The results have been encouraging and concrete.”<sup>867</sup> In mid-2002, after discussing the specific contributions China had made to anti-terrorism efforts, Ambassador Randt declared: “China is one of America’s strongest allies in the war against terrorism.”<sup>868</sup> At the October 2002 Crawford summit, President Bush praised China’s cooperation against terrorism and even called the U.S. and China “allies in the fight against global terror.”<sup>869</sup> An official in the State Department suggested that: “the U.S. would probably not have given Jiang the Crawford summit had China not been so cooperative when the U.S. needed it.”<sup>870</sup>

U.S. acknowledged China’s reassurance efforts on the issue of Taiwan as well. At the Crawford summit, President Bush declared publicly for the first time that the U.S. “does not support” Taiwanese independence and reportedly told President Jiang privately that the U.S. opposed it. Public statements by administration officials did not explain why the U.S. shifted its public position from doing “whatever it took” to defend Taiwan to expressing non-support for Taiwanese independence. However, the timing of the switch suggests that China’s moderate and flexible responses to Taiwanese provocation and America’s improved relations with Taiwan early in the Bush administration helped convince others that China was a force for stability. At the same time, in its attempt to push de-Sinicization, Taiwan identity, and a referendum, Taiwan became the force for instability in the Taiwan Strait. In late 2002, U.S. government officials privately expressed annoyance, frustration, and irritation toward the Taiwanese government, as it seemed to be more interested in pushing its narrow agenda than respecting Washington’s need for stability in East Asia while it fought the war on terror.<sup>871</sup> At the same time, several officials privately appreciated China’s

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<sup>867</sup> See Department of State, “Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2001,” May 2002, available at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2001/html>.

<sup>868</sup> See J. Stapleton Roy, “Opportunities and Challenges,” p. 108.

<sup>869</sup> See “President Bush, Chinese President Jiang Zemin Discuss Iraq, N. Korea,” October 25, 2002, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021025.html>; and “Jiang, Bush Vow to Push Sino-US Ties Forward,” *People’s Daily*, November 26, 2002.

<sup>870</sup> Interviews, Washington D.C., November 2002.

<sup>871</sup> Interviews, Washington, D.C., December 2002. For a similar assessment, see Swaine, “Reverse Course,” p. 2.

“relative restraint” in the face of provocations from Taiwan. According to one State Department official: “Had China reacted [to President Chen’s assertion of “yibian yiguo”] in a more aggressive manner, the U.S. would have been very unlikely to have publicly taken the position of not supporting Taiwanese independence.”<sup>872</sup> Although it was difficult to publicly praise China’s restraint on the Taiwan issue, especially as the military build-up continued and China continued to have a precondition for cross-strait dialogue, U.S. officials were privately satisfied that China did not overreact to Taiwan’s “gradual independence” moves that Beijing perceived as provocative. This restraint was noted by many government officials, and although they did not publicly acknowledge that they found such moderation helpful for stability, at many points between 2002 and 2005, the Chinese and Americans were pretty close to cooperating in preventing Taiwan from challenging the status quo.<sup>873</sup> By the time of Zoellick’s speech in September 2005, what had often been called the most sensitive and important issue in U.S.-China relations, only required being mentioned three times, and dealt with very briefly.<sup>874</sup>

On China’s cooperation in establishing and leading the six-party talks regarding North Korea’s nuclear weapons, administration officials have clearly perceived the active efforts China has made to drive the process forward, and officials have praised China for its assistance at virtually every bilateral meeting since 2003. After China organized the initial trilateral meeting in April 2003, President Bush telephoned President Hu to express his gratitude for China’s hard work. Based on extensive interviews with U.S. government officials, one expert concluded: “it is quite clear to me that China has been fairly helpful to the United States in dealing with North Korea. And, while some in the U.S. government may give a little different shading on that, my impression is that the

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<sup>872</sup> Interviews, Washington, D.C., December 2002.

<sup>873</sup> See Michael McDevitt, “Taiwan: The Tail that Wags Dogs,” *Asia Policy*, Vol. 1 (January 2006); and Robert S. Ross, “Explaining Taiwan’s Revisionist Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 15, No. 48 (August 2006), pp. 443-458.

<sup>874</sup> See Robert S. Ross in “Whither U.S.-China Relations?”

Bush Administration values the assistance that China is providing.<sup>875</sup> After China “stepped up” to organize and host the Six Party talks, administration officials praise China’s contribution to the process almost every time they make public remarks on China. In September 2003, Powell said: “And we very much appreciate the leadership role that the Chinese have played in trying to find a solution to this problem.”<sup>876</sup> In his September 2005 statement at which he comments on the joint agreement, in one of Assistant Secretary of State Hill’s first lines, he expresses “deep appreciation for China’s leadership.”<sup>877</sup> In Zoellick’s September 2005 speech he notes that: “Since hosting the Six-Party Talks at their inception in 2003, China has played a constructive role.” In my interviews with U.S. government officials, recognition not only of China’s potential leverage over North Korea, but also of the positive role that it has played during the crisis has almost been a constant. After the 2005 joint agreement was signed, one official in the U.S. Embassy in China said that not only was he pleased with the result, but that China’s active and constructive efforts had gone “beyond our wildest dreams.”<sup>878</sup>

### Reduced Estimate that a Rising China is a Threat

Since 2001, there has been a pattern in most government speeches about China that illustrate both causal mechanisms through which China’s grand strategy of reassurance should reduce the severity of the balancing response. In most of these speeches, the official favorably evaluates the state of the relationship, implicitly or explicitly walks back from the earlier hard-line position from early 2001, suggests that there is optimism for China as a constructive player and force for stability in international politics, and specifically cites examples of Chinese restraint or active efforts to

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<sup>875</sup> David M. Lampton, “China and the Crisis in Korea,” *The National Interest* (on-line), July 20, 2003.

<sup>876</sup> Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State, “Remarks at the Elliott School of International Affairs,” September 5, 2003, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2003/23836.htm>.

<sup>877</sup> See Christopher R. Hill, Assistant Secretary of State, “Statement at the Closing Plenary of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks,” September 19, 2005, available at [www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/53499.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/53499.htm)

<sup>878</sup> Interviews, U.S. Embassy in Beijing, Fall 2005.

cooperate that help make the official optimistic about the current and future state of relations.

Although evidence for why threat perceptions change over time is difficult to compile, below I will show that when compared to 2001, U.S. officials seemed less likely to consider China as a threat, were more likely to openly point to the potential for China as a positive force, and often invoked specific Chinese actions as a source of this optimism.

The phrases used to characterize China and where it is headed show that there has been a change from the 2000-1 evaluation of China, and that subsequently U.S. government officials were much less likely to consider China to be a threat, or at least had concluded that it was not certain to become one. The concept of China as a nation at a “strategic crossroads,” and the notion of being able to shape China’s choices suggests that the administration had not yet concluded that China was definitely a threat or definitely going to become one. During Secretary of State Rice’s first trip to Asia in March 2005, she expressed the positive hope that “China can emerge as a constructive force in Asia.”<sup>879</sup> And during a July 2005 visit to China, she said that the goal of the U.S. is “to see the rise of a China that is a positive force in international politics.”<sup>880</sup> In Zoellick’s September 2005 speech, the key question he asked was: “How will China use its influence?” Phrasing the question that way clearly shows that the U.S. did not believe that there was an answer to this question yet, and had not yet concluded that China would use its influence to challenge U.S. interests in the future, and therefore the U.S. needed to take countervailing action today to prevent that. And perhaps even more explicitly than previous administration statements, Zoellick was very clear to draw a distinction between past powers that were seen as threats and did provoke balancing responses, such as the Soviet Union in the Cold War and Germany before World War I, and China who was not challenging the international system, but working cooperatively within it. His key phrasing of “from membership to responsibility” shows that the U.S. saw evidence in Chinese behavior that it wanted

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<sup>879</sup> See “Rice: U.S. Doesn’t Have a Posture Against China,” *People’s Daily*, March 16, 2005.

<sup>880</sup> See Tyler Marshall, “Building a Bridge to China,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 2005.

and had become a member of the international system and had accepted many of its rules and norms. Moreover, in Zoellick's speech and many other speeches made by administration officials, they cite specific examples of Chinese cooperation in anti-terror efforts, on North Korea, and restraint on Taiwan as key reasons that prevent them from perceiving China as a threat and making them more optimistic. However, as the hedging element of U.S. strategy and discussions of the rise of China as a "new factor in international politics" show, the U.S. has not concluded that China will definitely not become a threat, and is still prepared to respond should the cooperative policy fail.<sup>881</sup>

In terms of whether or not China is perceived as a threat, I would argue that China's restraint and moderation in its policy towards Taiwan has been particularly important. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the short-to-medium term threat that pessimists highlighted was China's threat to the status quo and stability across the Taiwan Strait. And even in terms of whether or not China will prove to be a long-term threat to U.S. presence in the region and the U.S. in the global order, many pointed to how China dealt with Taiwan as something that would provide a great deal of information about how China would likely behave in the future. China's moderation towards Taiwan has given pessimists much less ammunition to argue that we can clearly conclude from China's aggressive posture towards Taiwan that it will be even more aggressive when it becomes more powerful. To the contrary, China's moderation and Taiwan's provocation behavior have turned the debate around in the U.S. and the region so that far more people are talking about Taiwan as the party trying to revise the status quo and Taiwan as the threat to regional stability. Moreover, Taiwan's provocations have also made the PLA modernization effort at least more understandable, though still worrisome to many in the region. Although Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld asked why China is modernizing its military given that it faced no threats, Taiwan's provocative moves under President Chen helped others understand that to China, they were

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<sup>881</sup> See Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks at Sophia University," Tokyo, March 19, 2005, available at [www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/43655.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/43655.htm).

genuinely facing a threat of potential separatism that needed to be deterred. China's grand strategy of reassurance has made it much more difficult to argue that a rising China is or will definitely become a threat, and has undermined arguments that the U.S. should therefore take the costly actions of severely balancing against China, and create the self-fulfilling prophecy of China as an enemy.

### Reaping the Benefits from a Rising Power

The earlier discussion showed that China's active cooperative efforts were recognized and appreciated by U.S. officials. Zoellick's 2005 speech provides perhaps the best example imaginable of how reassurance efforts can make a country understand that a rising power can use its power to threaten as well as to benefit, and if it has shown a willingness to use it for your benefit, then responding by balancing would force you to lose those benefits and incur additional costs as a result of a less cooperative relationship. According to his speech: "If it isn't clear why the United States should suggest a cooperative relationship with China, consider the alternatives. Picture the wide range of global challenges we face in the years ahead—terrorism and extremists exploiting Islam, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, poverty, disease—and ask whether it would be easier or harder to handle those problems if the United States and China were cooperating or at odds."<sup>882</sup> Very important for my argument is that unlike Clinton administration statements from 1996 that focus on the potential for Chinese cooperation, in his Zoellick's speech, he is making specific references to areas where the Chinese have already made active efforts to cooperate with the United States. Although there are areas where the U.S. wished China did more, as the "responsible stakeholder" framework is an attempt to encourage them to do just that, Zoellick clearly shows that

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<sup>882</sup> See Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" Swaine also echoes these points. He writes: "A more cooperative relationship with China offers enormous potential benefits. . . . It could greatly facilitate the handling of increasing dangerous situations in Korea and South Asia and also contribute to a reduction in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction." See Swaine, "The Turnaround in U.S.-China Relations and the Taiwan Issue," p. 43.

the U.S. recognizes that China has used its power for the good and benefit of U.S. interests, and that knowing this makes it more difficult to adopt a hard-line policy towards China, knowing that one casualty of such a policy would be Chinese cooperation, which the Chinese have already shown a willingness to provide.



## Chapter 7: China Reassures the Great Powers of East Asia

The previous chapter analyzed how China's grand strategy of reassurance has affected the balancing response by the United States, the strongest power in the system and most important potential balancer against a rising China. Although China is most concerned with its relations with the United States, the major powers of East Asia also have the capability to complicate China's international security environment. Severe balancing responses by Russia, India, or Japan could dramatically increase the strategic pressure on China, forcing it to divert scarce resources away from its focus on economic modernization. As discussed in the chapter on China's grand strategy, China places great emphasis on its "periphery" or "surrounding area" (zhoubian) and tries to create a stable and peaceful periphery to focus on economic modernization. China is not only concerned with how a hostile bilateral relations could complicate its international environment, but also worries about the possibility of any of these countries joining forces with another country, especially the United States, to form an anti-China coalition. This chapter focuses on the balancing responses of the great powers of East Asia and how China's reassurance has affected the severity of their balancing responses.

Given China's increasing material power and geographic proximity to these major powers, it seems reasonable to expect China's rise to provoke more severe balancing responses. In Kang's analysis of East Asian responses to China, he argues: "By realist standards, China should already be provoking balancing behavior, merely because it is already so big and its potential rate of growth is so high."<sup>883</sup> According to Mearsheimer, if China continues its economic growth, "most of China's neighbors—including India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Russia, and Vietnam—will join with the United States to contain China's power."<sup>884</sup>

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<sup>883</sup> See Kang, *China Rising*, p. 10.

<sup>884</sup> See Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," p. 160.

Factors other than increasing material power make balancing even more likely for the great powers of East Asia. For these countries, not only is China's increasing material power a source of potential concern, but China's geographic proximity also makes it an even greater threat that should make balancing even more likely. In addition, there are significant legacies of historical mistrust in China's relations with all three of these countries, as well as a significant number of areas of potential disagreement and tension in these relationships. Given the difficult challenge of maintaining cooperative relations with these countries as China rises, leaders in Beijing recognize that achieving any deep level of trust and cooperation with these countries is very unlikely. The objective for China's relations with these countries, however, is to manage these tensions and keep them at a low level so that China can focus on its economic modernization. Even when China has been relatively successful in its reassurance efforts, especially with Russia and to some extent with India, there remain significant problems and tensions in these relationships that will become more difficult to manage as China's rise continues and will likely require even greater reassurance efforts.

This chapter will analyze China's reassurance towards Russia, India, and Japan. In its relations with Russia, even though China became more powerful, Russia took few actions that could be considered balancing and on the contrary, significantly deepened its political, military, and economic relations. During the Putin era, China took even more active steps to reassure Russia and address its worries and concerns, and these efforts both prevented Russia from perceiving China as a threat and made Russia realize that a more powerful China was protecting Russian interests and providing benefits.

In its relations with India, China did not implement comprehensive reassurance until after a short downturn in bilateral relations after India's nuclear tests in 1998. After recognizing India's increased importance in the region and globe, its increasing material power, and its improved relations with the United States and other countries in the region, Chinese leaders recognized that

maintaining stable and peaceful relations with India had become an even more vital part of China's grand strategy. As China grew more powerful, India has significantly improved its relations with the United States and others in the region in an increasingly severe balancing response. However, these improved relations are not targeted at China and India has opposed any attempt to push these relations in a more anti-China direction. At the same time, China's reassurance towards India has helped create significant improvements in political, military, and economic areas. China's reassurance and self-restraint have prevented Indian leaders from perceiving China as a threat that needs to be severely balanced against, although there are concerns and worries about China as it becomes more powerful.

In its relations with Japan, China has mostly been unsuccessful in its attempts to manage this important bilateral relationship. Even though China has tried to maintain positive relations with Japan, its behavior during the mid-1990s, such as repeated nuclear tests, moves to occupy islands in the South China Sea, and China's aggressive missile launches and military exercises directed at Taiwan, was perceived as provocative and led to a more severe balancing response by strengthening its alliance with the United States. After Jiang Zemin lectured Japan on the history question during his 1998 visit to Japan, China tried to make efforts to be more cooperative and adopt a conciliatory posture towards Japan. This produced some enhanced cooperation around the turn of the century, but after Koizumi came to power and visited the Yasukuni Shrine on an annual basis, this led to a significant deterioration of bilateral relations. Although China was more flexible in trying to maintain cooperation with Japan even after Koizumi came to power, these limited cooperative moves were often overshadowed by more provocative behavior. Domestic popular pressure also limited how far China could go in reassuring Japan without getting sufficient reciprocity from Japan, whereas China's earlier provocations made it more difficult for China to implement sufficient reassurance to convince Japan to reciprocate. As a result of this unfortunate cycle, both sides grew

more disappointed with the other and moved further away from cooperation. By 2005, relations reached their low point and China's provocative behavior pushed Japan to balance against China more severely. This included a greater willingness to call China a threat, enhanced cooperation with the United States, and a shift in force deployments and procurement in a direction that could help Japan deal with the threat from China. After Koizumi left office, China launched a renewed emphasis on reassurance and cooperation and this helped improve political and military relations. Interestingly, after Koizumi left power, even though China had become more powerful, Japan had moved to balance China less severely. Difficulties such as the history issue and domestic politics in both countries suggest it will be especially difficult to maintain the positive momentum established in the first few years after Koizumi left office.

### ***China's Reassurance Towards Russia***

#### *Balancing Expectations and Russian Fears of China's Rise*

Even after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a weakened Russia continued to be a great power in Eurasia. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the 1990s, a stable and cooperative relationship with Russia remained an important aspect of China's strategy of maintaining a stable international environment to allow a focus on economic modernization. A competitive and conflictual relationship with Russia would worsen China's international environment, increase the strategic pressure on China, and force it to shift resources and efforts to respond to this threat and pressure rather than focusing on economic modernization. Russia's large nuclear and conventional military, large stockpile of arms, and continued international stature could

create difficulties for China either through direct challenges or through tighter Russian relations with other major powers around China's periphery.

Russia's relative decline in the 1990s and the rapid rise of Chinese power to its south and east made it reasonable to expect Russian balancing against China. In the early 1990s, realist analysts highlighted the potential for Sino-Russian conflict and competition in the post-Cold War.<sup>885</sup> As China's rise has continued, some experts have explicitly predicted that Russia will balance against a rising China. Friedberg argues that large great powers, especially when they are neighbors, are likely to be rivals. He expects that as China grows more powerful it will pose a growing threat to Russia and force it to move closer to the United States and consider fundamental changes in its relations with other regional powers such as Japan, India, and South Korea.<sup>886</sup> Mearsheimer similarly argues that if China continues its growth, "most of China's neighbors—including.....Russia....will join with the United States to contain Chinese power."<sup>887</sup>

In addition to the potential for a zero-sum struggle for power, which may seem a bit extreme, scholars in the early 1990s noted other factors in the Sino-Russian relationship that could produce complications and difficulties in the bilateral relationship. Geography is an important factor that made the rise of China a greater potential threat to Russia. China and Russia share a more than 4,000 km. long border, so the geographical proximity of increases in Chinese power, especially when juxtaposed with Russian decline, make China a greater perceived threat to Russia. Although the Russian Far East and Central Asian borders are not as strategically important as Russia's western flank, as the Soviet Union collapsed, all territory still under its control remained vital to its national security. China and Russia had a history of animosity along the border including

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<sup>885</sup> See Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry;" and Betts, "Wealth, Power, and Instability."

<sup>886</sup> See Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2011).

<sup>887</sup> See John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* (April 2006), p. 160.

a series of clashes in 1969 and large deployments of forces along the border.<sup>888</sup> Many of the factors that could have mitigated the potential for a conflictual relationship--such as shared democratic regime type, regional institutional constraints, or bilateral interdependence—were absent from the relationship. Balance of power theorists often do not make predictions about who will balance against whom and when, but usually offer explanations for balancing behavior after the fact as supporting balance of power dynamics. Though it may be extreme to predict or expect Russian balancing against China in the 1990s, 2000s, or the near future, many of the factors that would lead scholars to make it a reasonable prediction are present. If the last twenty years had gone differently and Russia dramatically improved relations with the U.S. or India or Japan, it would have almost certainly been interpreted by many as balancing against China. Moreover, if Russia takes these steps to balance against China in the short-to-medium term, several scholars will declare it as a validation for theories of balancing.

In addition to the broad shifting power and other theoretical reasons to expect a potentially conflictual relationship between China and Russia, Russian leaders and experts voiced concerns in the early 1990s about the rise of China and how it may threaten Russian interests. First, several Russian experts worried that an increasingly powerful China might try to reclaim territory that Russia seized in the past, and many feared that such interests in territorial revisionism could lead to a direct invasion. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as part of China's "Century of Humiliation" (*bainian guochi*), Russia forced a weak Qing China to make huge territorial concessions as part of "unequal treaties" (*bupingdeng tiaoyue*). Especially with the importance of nationalism for CCP regime stability, there was a potential threat of a rising China trying to recover these lost territories to return China to its

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<sup>888</sup> On the 1969 clashes, see M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 201-217. For analysis of the deterioration of relations along the border in the 1970s and 1980s, see Kenneth Lieberthal, *Sino-Soviet Conflict in the 1970s: Its Evolution and Implications for the Strategic Triangle* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1978); and Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and its International Implications, 1945-1990* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992), Ch. 12-13.

former glory.<sup>889</sup> Blank cites Russian observers as saying that after the Cold War, China was the only country that posed a credible invasion threat to Russia.<sup>890</sup> In the early 1990s, Alexei Arbatov, then Deputy Chair of the Duma's Committee on Security, declared the threat from China to be "the only scenario which presents a direct military threat to the Russian territory and demands preparations for a large trans-regional operation."<sup>891</sup> A possible military challenge from a revisionist rising China trying to reclaim its lost territory in the Russian Far East was a serious potential concern for Russian strategists in the early 1990s. The legacy of Sino-Russian clashes in 1969 and threats and animosity through the rest of the Cold War made Russia even more worried about the possibility of Chinese challenges and attacks. Moreover, Russia had neglected the Russian Far East for years and its weakened position did not allow it to put up a strong defense to discourage and deter potential Chinese challenges.

Secondly, even if a direct military threat did not emerge, many Russian observers were fearful of the emergence of a new "Yellow Peril" in the Russian Far East as a result of Chinese migration and economic activities in the border areas. The fear was that rather than a direct military invasion, China would try to reclaim its lost territories and challenge Russian interests through a more subtle and longer-term invasion. The Soviet Union had neglected the economic development and social progress in the Russian Far East for many years, and saw the huge population disparities as a source of concern. In the early 1990s, Russian population east of Lake Baikal was approximately 8 million, whereas China's northern provinces that border the Russian Far East had

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<sup>889</sup> For a discussion of these historical legacies in Sino-Russian relations and how they affected Russian views of China, see Bobo Lo, *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), Ch. 1. For several examples of Russians voicing this concern, see Rouben Azizian, "The Optimists have the Lead, for Now: Russia's China Debate," *Asia's China Debate* (Honolulu, HI: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2003); and Lukin, "Russian Perceptions of the China Threat," pp. 92-3.

<sup>890</sup> See Stephen J. Blank, "Russia Looks at China," in Stephen J. Blank and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, eds., *Imperial Decline: Russia's Changing Role in Asia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 66.

<sup>891</sup> See Andrew Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China: Strategic Ambivalence," in James Bellacqua, ed., *The Future of China-Russia Relations* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), p. 38.

110 million people.<sup>892</sup> In 1994, Khabarovsk region Governor Viktor Ishaev charged that, “A clandestine policy of Chinese expansionism is being carried out in the Russian Far East, infringing upon and humiliating the Russian people.”<sup>893</sup> Some Russian politicians certainly exaggerated this threat for their own political interests and to try to attract more resources from Moscow, and in the early 1990s many dramatically overestimated the number of illegal Chinese immigrants that were “invading” Russia. However, this was a serious concern in Moscow as well. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and in the face of struggles against Chechen separatist rebels, the blow to the political legitimacy of the Russian leaders of losing the provinces in the Russian Far East was an issue of great concern<sup>894</sup>.

Moreover, as China’s power increased, many Russians saw the potential for an enhanced threat of Chinese challenges in the Russian Far East. In an article discussing China’s increasing power, a Vladivostok newspaper warned, “Pretty soon Chinese will have the upper hand in all aspects, and then they’ll resume realization of Mao’s aggressive designs.”<sup>895</sup> During China’s economic problems in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a fear that China would try to solve its own unemployment problem by sending thousands, if not millions, of people into Russia. As China’s economy took off in the early 1990s, new fears were voiced that successful Chinese businessmen would outcompete Russian businesses and end up conquering the Russian Far East economically.<sup>896</sup>

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<sup>892</sup> See Lukin, “Russian Perceptions of the China Threat,” p. 93; and Azizian, “Russia’s China Debate.”

<sup>893</sup> See Evgeniy Bazhanov, “Russian Perspectives on China’s Foreign Policy and Military Development,” in Jonathan D. Pollack and Richard H. Yang, *In China’s Shadow: Regional Perspectives on Chinese Foreign Policy and Military Development* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1998), p. 74.

<sup>894</sup> For more discussions of the concerns of Chinese threats in the Russian Far East, see Dmitri Trenin, “The China Factor: Challenge and Chance for Russia,” Sherman W. Garnett, ed., *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), p. 41, 55; Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, Ch. 4; and Gilbert Rozman, “Russian Foreign Policy in Northeast Asia,” in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), pp. 201-224.

<sup>895</sup> See Bazhanov, “Russian Perspectives on China’s Foreign Policy and Military Development,” p. 74.

<sup>896</sup> See Lukin, “Russian Perceptions of the China Threat,” pp.92-3.



Thirdly, Russians saw the emergence of China as a challenge to its influence in Asia and feared that Russian decline and China's rise would lead to Russia's marginalization in Asia. Although reduced Russian influence and importance in Europe was certainly a more prominent concern in Moscow, Russian experts also worried about being on the losing side of a shifting balance of power in Asia. Russia perceived itself as a great power in Europe, East Asia, and Central Asia, and the collapse of the Soviet Union did not lead to a significant reassessment of Russian identity or interests—despite its reduced military power, it still saw itself as a great power throughout Eurasia. Russia seemed unwilling to retrench and saw itself as a “pole” in a multipolar world, a multipolar Europe, and a multipolar Asia.<sup>897</sup> With China's rise, especially when combined with Japan's economic miracle in the 1960s and 1970s, Russia faced a situation where its influence in Asia had diminished in the 1990s. This was driven home when Russia was excluded from the negotiations and discussions during the 1993-4 North Korean nuclear crisis. It was also not involved in the crafting of the Agreed Framework, the temporary solution to this crisis. Russian observers began to voice a fear that is still held today, that a stronger and more influential China may limit Russia's ability to play the role of and be seen as a great power in East Asia. Although Asia was and still is less important to most Russian leaders than Europe, this concern of being marginalized in Asia became more important as Asia moved to become the world's center of economic activity.<sup>898</sup> Kuchins captures this broad fear when he writes, “the growing power of China evokes deep concern among Russian analysts and strategic thinkers. The striking juxtaposition of Russia's fall and China's

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<sup>897</sup> For an excellent series of essays on this issue, see Blank and Rubinstein, eds., *Imperial Decline: Russia's Changing Role in Asia*. For discussions of the impact of the end of the Cold War on Russian national identity, see Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policy, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

<sup>898</sup> For more on the evolution of this fear of marginalization, see Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, p. 118-20.

rise in the last twenty years is perhaps unparalleled among major powers during peacetime in modern history.”<sup>899</sup>

Although most analysts of the domestic China debate in Russia in the early 1990s highlight these factors as potential worries and threats that would likely make relations more difficult, there was a small group within Russia that clearly identified China as a major threat. These views were extreme views within the pro-West or Westerners camp. According to one 1994 assessment, some in this group “warned that the PRC was quickly turning into an awesome superpower, hungry for power, domination, and lands.” In response to worries about the threat from the West, in 1996 prominent Russian liberal Peter Kapitza replied, “Don’t worry about the NATO expansion, in the near future the NATO zone will become our rear in an unprecedented confrontation with the Chinese giant.”<sup>900</sup> There was also a small minority within the anti-Western camp that wanted to form an alliance with China to challenge the West.<sup>901</sup> Although minority positions saw China as either an imminent threat or a potential ally, the majority view in the early 1990s was wary of the possible threat of a rising China to its territory in the Russian Far East and its influence in Asia.

#### *China’s Reassurance towards Russia under Yeltsin*

Before the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were significant moves by both sides to normalize Sino-Soviet relations. After China adopted its “independent foreign policy of peace” in 1982, Chinese leaders were interested in stabilizing relations with Russia. Before normalization could occur, the Chinese demanded Soviet moves to resolve the “three obstacles”—war with Afghanistan, military presence on China’s northern border, and support for Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia. After lower level diplomatic exchanges, a breakthrough

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<sup>899</sup> See Andrew C. Kuchins, “The Limits of the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership,” in Andrew C. Kuchins, ed., *Russia after the Fall* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), p. 207.

<sup>900</sup> See Bazhanov, p. 70-2.

<sup>901</sup> See Bazhanov, p. 72-3.

occurred with Gorbachev's July 1986 Vladivostok speech in which he expressed a real desire to restore friendship, and announced Russia's intention to reduce forces in Afghanistan and in Mongolia. Recognizing Soviet weakness and the need to retrench, Gorbachev followed this speech with significant moves to pull back troops and downsize the overall size of the Soviet military. These moves paved the way for Gorbachev's May 1989 visit to Beijing which marked the restoration and normalization of Sino-Soviet relations, but was heavily affected and in some ways overshadowed by the protesters in Tiananmen Square that spring.<sup>902</sup> Both sides maintained the high level of leadership exchanges, including Prime Minister Li Peng's visit to the Soviet Union in April 1990 and General Secretary Jiang Zemin's visit in 1991. As both sides had an interest in stabilizing relations and focusing their efforts elsewhere, they made significant headway in demilitarizing the border and also reaching agreements to settle the disputes over border demarcations. In 1991, driven especially by Russian weakness and desire to avoid an antagonistic arms race, both sides agreed on the demarcation of the eastern section of the boundary. The early stages of discussions for complete demarcation also occurred, as did discussions of bilateral confidence-building measures that would subsequently be implemented in a bilateral context and extended to other countries in Central Asia.<sup>903</sup>

*China's Reassurance: Proving to be a Useful "Plan B" for Russia*

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<sup>902</sup> On the three obstacles and the lead up to the Gorbachev visit, see Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization*, Ch. 15; and John W. Garver, "The 'New Type' of Sino-Soviet Relations," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 29, No. 12 (December 1989), pp. 1136-1152.

<sup>903</sup> See Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, p. 27-8; Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," in Sherman W. Garnett, ed. *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), pp. 72-3; and Lowell Dittmer, "Ghost of the Strategic Triangle: The Sino-Russian Partnership," in Suisheng Zhao, ed., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), p. 213.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and Boris Yeltsin came to power, he was focused on Russia's relations with the west and hoped to launch western political and economic reforms, receive aid from western countries, and be welcomed into the liberal western order as a great power. Yeltsin came in with a pro-western orientation and western focus, but he was also especially wary of China given its perceived support for Yeltsin's political opponents. Yeltsin's hopes of a cooperative relationship with the west did not come to pass, as they provided little aid and imposed harsh demands for reform. Moreover, western countries, especially the United States, did not treat the weakened Russia with the respect and reverence that Yeltsin had hoped for and expected. After the disillusionment of his overtures to the West, Yeltsin's December 1992 visit to China marked a new initiative in relations with China and an attempt to find a more balanced position for Russia between Asia and Europe. Despite clearly being Yeltsin's second choice and "Plan B," the Chinese were ready to respond favorably to many of Russia's attempts to improve relations.<sup>904</sup> Not only were the Chinese willing to reciprocate Russia's push to make relations more cooperative, but as part of its overall grand strategy of reassurance, China also made cooperation easier and more beneficial through a series of measures designed to assuage Russian concerns over the challenges of a rising China.<sup>905</sup> Although Russia was the more active party during the 1990s and retained most of the initiative in pushing relations forward, unlike the west, China proved to be willing to meet many of Russia's demands and reduce many of its concerns.<sup>906</sup>

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<sup>904</sup> See Leon Aron, *Boris Yeltsin: A Revolutionary Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2000); Elizabeth Wishnick, *Mending Fences: The Evolution of Moscow's China Policy from Brezhnev to Yeltsin* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), Ch. 8; Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," pp. 75-7; and James Clay Moltz, "Regional Tensions in the Russo-Chinese Rapprochement," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 35, No. 6 (June 1995).

<sup>905</sup> For analysis of China's relations with Russia in the early-to-mid 1990s, see Lin Cun, "Jiemeng, Duikang, Huoban-ZhongSu, Zhong'E Guanxi Sishiwunian" [Alliance, Confrontation, and Partnership: Forty Five Years of Sino-Soviet and Sino-Russian Relations], *Guoji GuanCha* [International Observer], No. 5 (1994), pp. 5-8; and Li Jingjie, "Xinshiqi de Zhong'E Guanxi" [Sino-Russian Relations in a New Era], *Dong'ou Zhongya Yanjiu* [Eastern Europe and Central Asian Studies], No. 1 (1994), 8-17.

<sup>906</sup> For discussions of Chinese approaches and reassurance efforts after the end of the Cold War, see Feng Yujun, "Zhong'E Guanxi de Fazhan yu Qianjing" [Developments and Prospects for Sino-Russian Relations] Zhang Yunling, chief ed., *Zhongguo yu Zhoubian Guojia: Goujian Xinxing Huoban Guanxi* [China and Peripheral Countries: Building New-

### Self-Restraint and Territorial Settlements:

Although several rounds of negotiations on territorial settlements and border demarcation occurred before the collapse of the Soviet Union, China did not “bargain harder” or push the Russians to make concessions, even as China’s relative power increased throughout the 1990s. In 1991, Moscow and Beijing reached an agreement on the eastern part of the border demarcation, which was the vast majority of the disputed area. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, opponents within Russia challenged the validity of this agreement, and argued that any concession to China would encourage greater Chinese territorial demands. Especially in the Russian Far East, many worried that China had a revisionist plan and would move to seize more Russian territory in the future.<sup>907</sup>

When these negotiations began, the Soviet Union was in a much more powerful position relative to China, but even after the Soviet Union collapsed and the Russian economy stagnated as the Chinese economy took off, the Chinese showed restraint in not using its increased power to press the Russians and try to change the border demarcation to be more favorable to China. Russian observers not only worried about a more powerful China invading Russian territory, but also worried that Chinese power would push it to take a more aggressive bargaining position during these border negotiations, but the Chinese remained restrained and were more interested in resolving the disputes than trying to push the Russians around.

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Type of Partnerships], (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2008), pp. 17-34; Li Jingjie, “Zhong’E Guanxi 60nian de Huigu yu Sikao” [Review and Reflections on 60 Years of Sino-Russian Relations], in Zhang Yunling, chief ed., *Zhongguo duiwai Guanxi: Huigu yu Sikao (1949-2009)* [China’s Foreign Relations: Review and Reflections], (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 291-308; and Xing Guangcheng, “Zhong’E Xinxing Guojia Guanxi de Goujian yu Fazhan” [Constructing and Developing Sino-Russian New-type of National Relations], in Zhang Yunling, *Zhongguo duiwai Guanxi*, pp. 309-21.

<sup>907</sup> See Alexander Lukin, “Russia and China: The Politics of Solving Problems,” in Tang Shiping, Li Mingjiang, and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Living with China: Regional States and China through Crises and Turning Points* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 200-201.

### Self-Restraint in the Russian Far East:

Russia was very worried about the threat of potential cross-border migration and economic invasion of the Russian Far East. As part of normalization and improved relations in the late 1980s and early 1990s, both sides took measures to remove restraints on tourism and economic exchange. Many Chinese tourists in Russia overstayed their visas, and this large influx was perceived as a potential threat.<sup>908</sup> Several Chinese former government officials and government think tank researchers suggested that the Chinese were very aware of these Russian worries in the early-to-mid 1990s and recognized that taking actions to meet these concerns were needed to strengthen relations and stabilize China's northern border to focus on economic modernization.<sup>909</sup> One well-known Chinese expert on Russia argued that the Chinese were aware of the legitimate concerns and the exaggerations, but instead of overreacting to these extremist claims, China worked to fix the perception and solve the potential irritant in relations.<sup>910</sup> According to Gilbert Rozman, "The Chinese have been well aware of the sensitivity of this debate about 'quiet expansionism' and have sought with some success to nullify the impact on bilateral relations."<sup>911</sup>

Recognizing the significant worry about Chinese expansion and the Sinification of the Russian Far East, the Chinese took active measures to address these worries in the 1992-4 period.<sup>912</sup> Local Chinese governments and border authorities tried to limit the number of Chinese crossing into Russia, both legally and illegally.<sup>913</sup> In late 1993, the Chinese government revoked the ability of

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<sup>908</sup> For a concise analysis of these cross-border developments, see Lukin, "Russia and China," pp. 194-198.

<sup>909</sup> Author interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005, Summer 2006.

<sup>910</sup> See Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," p. 84. Other researchers and scholars also highlighted the strategic decision that it would not have been productive to focus on or draw too much attention to the extremist claims of the China threat that were particularly prominent in certain newspapers. Author interviews, Beijing Fall 2005.

<sup>911</sup> See Gilbert Rozman, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: How Close? Where To?" in Bellacqua, *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, p. 15.

<sup>912</sup> For an overview of migration and China's attempts to manage the issue in Sino-Russian relations, see Qiang Xiaoyun, *Yimin dui Dangdai Zhong'E Guanxi de Yingxiang: Feichuantong Anquan Shijiao de Fenxi* [The Influence of Migration on Contemporary Sino-Russian Relations: An Analysis from the View of Non-traditional Security (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2010).

<sup>913</sup> See Yu Bin, "China and Russia: Normalizing Their Strategic Partnership," in Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift*, p. 241.

“service use ordinary” passport holders to enter Russia without a visa, and reduced the number of service passports that were issued, under which Chinese citizens could visit Russia without a visa and stay for thirty days. In 1994, government oversight and control of tourism actively increased, including measures to hold tourist companies responsible for bringing all tourists back, requiring proper paperwork, and ensuring that tours complied with Russian regulations.<sup>914</sup> China consulted with the Russians in designing a visa system that would make illegal immigration more difficult. Chinese authorities developed greater infrastructure to monitor border crossings and enforce these laws, and trained and stationed a larger number of border guards along the border with Russia. Border authorities and Chinese police also cooperated very closely with their Russian counterparts to limit illegal immigration and return illegal immigrants to China.<sup>915</sup> Chinese officials publicly declared that Chinese citizens in Russia were subject to Russian laws and needed to obey them<sup>916</sup>. Guards and police on the Russian side often enforced these laws stringently and refused entry to Chinese who had followed the laws and should have been granted entry. Rather than making a diplomatic incident of such discrimination, the Chinese accepted it and did not openly criticize the Russians or let it damage the overall relationship.<sup>917</sup> Much of this restraint was also costly domestically as the Chinese government was perceived by those on the border as caving in to the Russians and allowing Chinese citizens to be abused by Russians. Given the vast differences in population size, it would not be too extreme to say that Chinese self-restraint and forbearance is one of the major factors that makes the Russian Far East continue to be Russian.

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<sup>914</sup> See Lukin, “Russia and China,” p. 196-7.

<sup>915</sup> See Lukin, “Russian Perceptions of the China Threat,” pp. 92-5; Li Jingjie, “From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners,” pp. 82-4; and Gilbert Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 142.

<sup>916</sup> See Lukin, “Russian Perceptions of the China Threat,” p. 107.

<sup>917</sup> In retrospect, a few Chinese scholars argued that there was a clear strategic calculation that improving relations with Russia and stabilizing relations were more important than these infringements, even if they may be serious affronts to Chinese sovereignty in other instances. Author interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005, Spring 2006.

### Self-Restraint in Central Asia:

After the fall of the Soviet Union, China hoped to develop stable and cooperative relations with the new states of Central Asia, and its engagement in the region deepened and included border demarcation, greater economic exchanges, and dealing with common threats. China remained very careful, however, not to challenge Russian dominance in Central Asia. China developed relations with the new states of Central Asia to resolve border disputes, ensure regional stability, and encourage economic development. However, China was very sensitive to Russian concerns about Chinese influence and avoided taking any actions or developing relations in ways that Russia would perceive as a direct challenge to its dominant position in the region. In the words of one scholar, China's reassurance efforts included "restraining ties with the states of Central Asia in order not to alarm Russians who saw this area as their sphere of influence."<sup>918</sup>

### Military Restraint and Self-Binding:

Although it is not clear China had any real intention to use military force to recover the "lost territories," even as its relative power position improved dramatically, China not only did not use force to seize territory, but also committed itself to self-binding confidence-building measures. Using force to reclaim this territory would have undermined China's broad message that it was peace-loving, and it could have also added new problems of how to incorporate and govern such territories, but China had an opportunity to either challenge the Russians or try to coerce them into making territorial concessions in the 1990s as its economic and military power increased and Russia dramatically downsized its military. Not only did China not press its growing power advantage, but

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<sup>918</sup> See Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*, p. 142. On China's restraint and desire not to challenge Russia's dominant position in the 1990s, see See Zheng Yu, chief ed., *Zhong'E Mei zai Zhong Ya: Hezuo yu Jingzheng (1991-2007)* [China, Russia, and America in Central Asia: Cooperation and Competition], (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2007), especially pp. 45-60; and Pan Guang, "Zhong'E Guanxi de Liangxing Fazhan yu Xin Xingshixia Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi [Positive Developments in Sino-Russian Relations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization under new Circumstances], *Shijie Jingji Yanjiu* [World Economy Study], Vol. S1 (2002).



it also committed to self-binding agreements to withdraw forces from the border and notify other parties of exercises near the border. These self-binding agreements and confidence-building measures would make Chinese efforts to use its increasing military power on the border more costly because it would violate the self-binding commitments.

#### Limited Nuclear Build-up:

China accelerated efforts to modernize its military in the 1990s, assisted by Russian arms sales, but did not make any great efforts to modernize its nuclear forces or increase the number of warheads deployed. According to an assessment by one well-known Russian expert, there was a worry that “by 2010-2015, a parity in the number of nuclear warheads may emerge between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation, at the level of 700-1,000 warheads.”<sup>919</sup> These concerns about nuclear superiority became increasingly important for the Russians in the post-Cold War era in which they increasingly relied on nuclear forces for military capabilities as well as its great power status and prestige.<sup>920</sup> Although not developing nuclear weapons was not a significant sacrifice for the PRC, as there is little evidence of any desires to launch such a modernization effort, but this limited nuclear modernization still addressed another area of concern for a weakening Russia.

#### Treating Russia as a Great Power and Enhancing its Status:

After its collapse, Russia was greatly concerned about its status as a great power in Asia and in the world, and China made some efforts to support its central role. As the two global superpowers and most powerful countries in Asia, America and the Soviet Union oversaw the

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<sup>919</sup> See Trenin, “The China Factor,” p. 49.

<sup>920</sup> For more on the role of nuclear weapons in Russia, see Pavel Podvig, ed., *Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

division of the Korean Peninsula after World War II. After the end of the Cold War, however, a weakened Russia played virtually no role in the North Korean nuclear crisis in the early 1990s. It was not involved in the negotiations, was shut out of the 1994 Agreed Framework, was not included in the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO), and was not involved in the 2 + 2 talks in the late 1990s. Its limited status in Asian affairs was a source of serious frustration for Russian officials. China's failure to support Primakov's "strategic triangle," which would unite Russia, China, and India, was also perceived as an unwillingness to help support Russia play its natural role as a great power in the world and in the region. Although perhaps not trying to shut Russia out of the region or keep it down, there were complaints within Russia that China had not done enough to enhance Russia's status in the region and world.<sup>921</sup>

Russian disappointment helped lead some Chinese researchers to recognize that Russia was increasingly relying on China to help it play a role in Asia, and to recommend that supporting Russia in this way would help stabilize relations and address Russia's key worry of marginalization.<sup>922</sup> The November 1998 joint statement included the first expression of a joint position on North Korea, which was a first step in meeting Russian concerns at not being allowed to play a role on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>923</sup> Although it did not push too hard, in the late 1990s, China also began supporting Russia's bid to join APEC.<sup>924</sup> Chinese support for Russia in Asia had its limits, but China was the only country that offered Russia any support as an Asian power.<sup>925</sup>

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<sup>921</sup> See Leszek Buszynski, "Overshadowed by China: The Russia-China Strategic Partnership in the Asia-Pacific Region," in Bellacqua, *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, p. 269-70.

<sup>922</sup> See Xi Laiwang, *21 Shiji Zhongguo Zhanlue Dacehua Waijiao Moulue* [China's Strategic Grand Plan and Diplomatic Strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century], (Beijing: Hongqi Chubanshe, 1996), p. 60. Other Chinese scholars also reaffirmed that Chinese government officials began to recognize the potential value of helping Russia continue to be an Asian power, and suggested that there were and still are ongoing discussions of how to do so without undermining Chinese interests. Author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2006.

<sup>923</sup> See Jiang Yi, *Xinshiji de Zhong'E Guanxi* [Sino-Russian Relations in a New Century], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2007), p. 124.

<sup>924</sup> See Wishnick, *Mending Fences*, p. 131

<sup>925</sup> See Wishnick, *Mending Fences*, p. 133.

Although China was inconsistent in its attempts to help Russia to play a greater role in Asia, it treated Russia with much greater respect and deference than the United States or other western major powers. Throughout the 1990s, in China's repeated calls for a multipolar world, Russia was always one of the poles and was therefore treated as a great power in the future world order. As part of China's approach to international relations under the New Security Concept and the "new type of relations" (xinxing guanxi) it tried to build with Russia, China provided Russia with respect and equal treatment, respected Russia's freedom of choice, opposed interference in its internal affairs, and supported Russia's choice of its own development path according to its own national condition. When juxtaposed with Western countries attempts to impose reforms and demanding harsh conditions as part of any economic assistance, China's support showed that it continued to treat Russia as a great power.<sup>926</sup> Chinese officials aimed to treat Russia as an important country rather than as a weak and declining power of little importance, like many of the other great powers did. Rather than using China's rising power and Russia's declining power to take advantage of Russia and force concessions, China aimed to demonstrate its good-neighborly intentions as a partner by using its increased power to help Russia benefit.<sup>927</sup> China also repeatedly supported Russia during the Chechen Wars and despite Western criticism, China defended and supported Russia's right to protect its sovereignty and opposed Western interference.

#### Emphasis on How China's Economic Rise will Promote Russia's Economic Growth:

In the 1990s, as political democratization and experiments in shock-therapy drove the Russian economy into prolonged crisis, economic recovery and growth was one of the major challenges that Russia was confronting. Although Russian officials worried that the rise of China

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<sup>926</sup> See Li Jingjie, "Zhong'E Guanxi 60nian de Huigu yu Sikao," p. 301-6; and Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*, p. 140..

<sup>927</sup> For more discussion of this approach, see Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," p. 91.

would negatively affect Russian prospects for economic recovery, especially in the Russian Far East, Chinese officials tried to convince Russia that its economic growth would provide opportunities for Russian economic growth. Starting in the early 1990s and continuing throughout the decade, PLA modernization fueled by Russian arms sales provided a great source of business for Russian arms manufacturers. Some of the severe restrictions on flows of people across the Sino-Soviet border also negatively affected bilateral trade. After Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin's 1994 visit to Beijing, which was focused on developing economic ties, the Chinese argued repeatedly that its rise would help Russian development across a range of issue areas and launched several initiatives trying to develop cross-border trade and investment flows, as well as some cooperative projects.<sup>928</sup> When Russia was ravaged by the financial crisis in the late 1990s, China also provided \$540 million in direct financial assistance, with no conditions attached.<sup>929</sup>

*Strategic Partners: Lack of Russian Balancing Against a Rising China*

Although Russian worries about the potential threats and challenges that a rising China might pose to its interests could have provoked countervailing competitive responses to obstruct China's rise, there is little evidence of any balancing efforts aimed at China or more severe balancing as China's power increased. On the contrary, even as the Russian economy was mired in crisis and the Chinese economy posted double-digit economic growth, Sino-Russian relations became more cooperative on a range of issues and very little of Russian behavior could count as even soft balancing against China.

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<sup>928</sup> On some of the Chinese initiatives to develop economic ties, see Wang Lijiu, "Guanyu Jinyibu Tuidong Zhong'E Jingji Hezuo Guanxi de Sikao he Jianyi" [Reflections and Proposals on Further Promoting Sino-Russian Economic Cooperation], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 11 (1993); and Tang Zhuchang, "Jinyibu Fazhan Zhong'E Jingmao Guanxi de Ruogan Silu" [Some Thoughts on Further Developing Sino-Russian Economic and Trade Relations], *Guoji Guancha* [International Observer], No. 2 (1997). See also Wishnick, *Mending Fences*, p. 126; and Jeanne L. Wilson, *Strategic Partners: Russian-Chinese Relations in the Post-Soviet Era* (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, 2004), pp. 61-92.

<sup>929</sup> See Vidya Nadkarni, *Strategic Partnerships in Asia: Balancing without Alliances* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 67.

After Yeltsin's December 1992 visit laid a foundation for cooperative relations, China and Russia institutionalized high-level leader summits, which also included many interactions at lower levels of government. In September 1994, Jiang Zemin visited Russia, and was the first Chinese president to visit since 1957. On this visit, Yeltsin proposed, and both sides agreed, to form a "new-type of constructive partnership" (*xinxing de jianshexing huoban guanxi*).<sup>930</sup> After inviting Jiang to join in 50<sup>th</sup> V-E day anniversary in Moscow, Yeltsin visited China in return and elevated bilateral relations to the level of a "strategic partnership." The objective of Sino-Russian relations was expanded from developing "long-term, stable, good-neighbor, mutually cooperative, constructive partnership relations facing the 21<sup>st</sup> century," which was agreed to in 1994, into a 1996 declaration "to develop an equal and trustworthy strategic partnership oriented toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Before his visit to Beijing, the Russian Embassy in Beijing informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Yeltsin thought the originally proposed characterization of relations did not go far enough and did not properly reflect the development direction of relations. Yeltsin proposed this new phrasing, and Jiang agreed.<sup>931</sup> In November 1997, China and Russia also issued a "Joint Statement Concerning World Multipolarization and Building a New World Order" which expressed their shared commitment to building a multipolar world and to protect sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference. Instead of competition, balancing, and rivalry, by the late 1990s, the Sino-Russian relationship had developed in a more friendly and cooperative direction, which was most clearly demonstrated by the formation of a "strategic partnership."<sup>932</sup> Moreover, it was Yeltsin that pushed

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<sup>930</sup> See Qian, *Waijiao Shiji*, p. 239.

<sup>931</sup> See Qian, *Waijiao Shiji*, p. 240; Dittmer, "Ghost of the Strategic Triangle," p. 211, Yu Bin, "China and Russia," in Shambaugh, p. 233; Elizabeth Wishnick, "Russia and China: Brothers Again?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 5 (September-October 2001), p. 799; and Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," pp. 80-88.

<sup>932</sup> See Li Jingjie, "Shilun Zhong'E Zhanlve Xiezuo Huoban Guanxi" [On the Sino-Russian Strategic Cooperative Partnership], *Dong'ou Zhongya Yanjiu* [Eastern Europe and Central Asia Studies], No. 2 (1997), pp. 3-15; and Feng Yujun, "Dui Zhong'E Zhanlve Xiezuo Huoban Guanxi de Zai Sikao" [Further Reflections on the Sino-Russian Russian Strategic Cooperative Partnership], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 8 (1998), pp. 2-6.

cooperation to an even deeper level, proposing the “constructive partnership” language in 1994 and adding the “strategic partnership” language in 1996.<sup>933</sup>

Agreements on border demarcations, military confidence building measures, military cooperation, and stability in Central Asia all demonstrated that even as China grew more powerful, Russia deepened its cooperation with China. In 1991 both sides agreed on the border demarcation of the eastern section, and in 1994 agreed on the border demarcation of the western section. The settlement of the vast majority of the disputed border that had led to armed conflict, multiple disputes, and militarization of the border represented a significant cooperative development.<sup>934</sup>

Throughout the 1990s, China and Russia reached a series of agreements on military cooperation. In November 1993, both sides agreed to expand military consultations and to deepen and regularize the exchange of information. In July 1994, they moved to establish early warning mechanisms to prevent crises or dangerous military activities. In 1996, China and Russia expanded their bilateral agreements to include Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan when the “Agreement on Strengthening Mutual Military Confidence in the Border Region” was signed in Shanghai. As part of this agreement, all sides agreed to confidence building measures (CBMs), including a pledge to reduce forces near the border and a promise to expand information sharing. This cooperative arrangement, which came to be known as the Shanghai Five, focused its efforts on maintaining stability in Central Asia and confronting the challenges of terrorism, extremism, and separatism. In April 1997, the Shanghai Five established a more concrete set of CBMs under “Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas.” To enhance mutual trust and strengthen regional stability, all sides agreed to limit the deployment of forces and equipment within 100 km of

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<sup>933</sup> See Yu Bin, “China and Russia,” p. 233; and Li Jingjie, “From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners,” pp. 82-88.

<sup>934</sup> See Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*, pp. 137-44; and Lukin, “Russia and China,” pp. 198-203.

the border. This agreement also restricted military activity within the 100 km zone and called for greater transparency on exercises and activities near the border.<sup>935</sup>

Rather than externally balancing against China by forming military alliances with other countries to check a rising China, Russia strengthened its military relationship with China. After more than twenty years of military tension, China and Russia began exchanging port calls by military vessels and observing each other's military exercises.<sup>936</sup> In a response that can only be characterized as the opposite of internal balancing, rather than mobilizing its military resources to deal with a rising China, Russia became the most important supplier of military equipment to China. With China's low technology base and sanctions on technology exports to China after the Tiananmen Massacre, Russia proved to be the most important source of advanced weaponry that drove PLA modernization in the 1990s. Arms sales to China during this decade included advanced aircraft such as the Su-27, Kilo-class diesel submarines, Sovremenny destroyers, advanced torpedoes and cruise missiles, and surface-to-air missile systems.<sup>937</sup> Instead of joining with the international community to put pressure on China, Russia repeatedly shielded China from such pressure by blocking resolutions to condemn China on human rights grounds.<sup>938</sup>

By the late 1990s, there was an active debate in China, Russia, and the West over whether or not the Sino-Russian strategic partnership had any substance. Trenin argued that "relations look superficial and sterile" and suggested that the strategic partnership "rings hollow."<sup>939</sup> Others argued

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<sup>935</sup> For more on these CBMs, see Xia Liping, "Zhongguo yu qita Guojia Jianli Xinren Cuoshi de Jinzhan" [Advances in China's Establishment of Confidence Building Measures with Other Countries], *Dangdai Yatai* [Contemporary Asia-Pacific], No. 8 (1996), p. 47; Ming-Ten Tsai, *From Adversaries to Partners? Chinese and Russian Military Cooperation after the Cold War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), Ch. 4; and Dittmer, "Ghost of Strategic Triangle," especially p. 213.

<sup>936</sup> See Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Policy*, p. 331.

<sup>937</sup> For the most authoritative tracking of these arms sales, see "SIPRI Arms Transfers Database," available at [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org). For analysis of these arms sales and effect on PLA modernization, see David L. Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), Ch. 6; Ming-Ten Tsai, *From Adversaries to Partners? Chinese and Russian Military Cooperation after the Cold War*, Ch. 5-6; Stephen J. Blank, *The Dynamics of Russian Weapons Sales to China* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1997); and Michael J. Barron, "China's Strategic Modernization: The Russian Connection," *Parameters* (Winter 2001-2), pp. 72-86.

<sup>938</sup> See Dittmer, "Ghost of Strategic Triangle," p. 217.

<sup>939</sup> See Trenin, "The China Factor," p. 40.

that it was deep and meaningful, or as Chinese expert Li Jingjie put it, the strategic partnership had “real substance.”<sup>940</sup> The majority of analysts ended up staking out a middle ground, covering the cooperative developments in bilateral relations during the 1990s, but also highlighting the issues and tensions that remained in the relationship that might limit and constrain the partnership from developing into a real alliance.<sup>941</sup> The debate’s focus on how far the partnership had come and how far it could potentially go shows that even as China grew more powerful, Russia’s response became more cooperative and moved further away from balancing. Some questions and concerns remained within Russia about how a more powerful China might behave, but Russia’s response throughout the 1990s did not include any of the least severe and least intense forms of balancing, but instead became more cooperative over the decade.

#### *Explaining Russia’s Lack of Balancing Against China in the 1990s*

The evidence from the convergence test for the 1990s supports my theory. In the 1990s, China implemented a reassurance strategy towards Russia and Russia’s response to a rising China became more cooperative over the decade. As China implemented reassurance, Russia responded by minimal balancing and even less severe balancing, even as China’s material power increased. The process tracing evidence also shows that China’s reassurance efforts were noticed by Russia, such cooperation was appreciated, and helped make Russia more likely to deepen cooperation and not respond to a rising China with an increasingly severe balancing response.

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<sup>940</sup> See Li Jingjie, “From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners,” p. 91.

<sup>941</sup> For examples, see Elizabeth Wishnick, “Russia and China: Brothers Again?” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 5 (Sept-Oct. 2001), pp. 797-821; Andrew C. Kuchins, “The Limits of the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership,” Andrew C. Kuchins, ed., *Russia After the Fall* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), pp. 205-220; Rajan Menon, “The Strategic Convergence between Russia and China,” *Survival*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Summer 1997), pp. 101-25; Gilbert Rozman, “A New Sino-Russian-American Triangle?” *Orbis* (Fall 2000); Jennifer Anderson, *The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Adelphi Paper 315; and Nigel Holloway and Charles Bickers, “Brothers in Arms,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 13, 1997.



### Reduced Estimate that Rising China is a Threat:

Russian decision-makers recognized Chinese efforts to address specific areas of concern by restraining itself or focusing on cooperation, and favorably assessed these Chinese actions. Potential Chinese moves into the Russian Far East were one of the major concerns about China in the 1990s. With the exception of some local politicians who inflated immigration numbers and exaggerated the China threat for their own political purposes, most Russian experts recognized that China took efforts to address these worries. By 1994, and throughout the rest of the 1990s, the number of Chinese immigrants into Russia dropped dramatically, as did the number of Chinese visitors who illegally overstayed. Drawing on his interviews and Russian-language research, Lukin argues that: “The approach of the Chinese authorities was cooperative. Not only did they not protest against them, but they supported most of the measures and cooperated closely with the Russian border, immigration, and customs officials.”<sup>942</sup> Russian government officials also explicitly referred to Chinese moves to cooperate closely with Russia in controlling flows of people in the border region. According to one official, “China did not take advantage of us during our period of weakness and its period of increasing strength. Chinese expansion into the Far East was one of our greatest concerns in the 1990s.”<sup>943</sup> Lukin explicitly draws a connection between Chinese restraint and Russia’s reduced assessment of the China threat. He argues that by the late 1990s, worries about threats from China in the Russian Far East did not come to fruition, and this helped reduced Russian assessments of the threat from China, even as it became more powerful.<sup>944</sup>

Russia was also grateful that a rising China did not actively challenge Russian hegemony in Central Asia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, maintaining this hegemony in Central Asia was

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<sup>942</sup> See Lukin, “Russia and China,” p. 198. In a different chapter, Lukin argues that China “consistently maintains that no central plan for the Sinofication of Russian territories exists, and has demonstrated a readiness to co-operate with the Russian authorities in preventing illegal immigration.” See Lukin, “Russian Perceptions of the China Threat,” p. 107.

<sup>943</sup> Authors interviews, Russian Embassy officials, Beijing, Spring 2006.

<sup>944</sup> See Lukin, “Russian Perceptions of the China Threat,” p. 96.

important for Russian power and international status, though Russia's decrease in power weakened its ability to maintain control in Central Asia. As Russia feared that a rising China might try to move into this power vacuum, Russian experts saw China's decision to not actively challenge Russia's position as a positive development.<sup>945</sup> Russian officials welcomed China's decision "not to take advantage of Russian weakness [in Central Asia] in the 1990s," and appreciated China's willingness to cooperate with and defer to Russia on issues in the region. According to another expert in Russian foreign policy: "The [PRC] government is far more aware these days of the potential consequences of its actions. This is especially true in respect of Russia, where Beijing's approach toward sensitive issues in the RFE and Central Asia has been careful and even self-effacing."<sup>946</sup> Even in the late 1990s, however, Russians worried that China might try to seize more of the initiative and control of regional affairs as it became more powerful.<sup>947</sup>

As Sino-Russian relations deepened and official exchanges and leadership visits occurred with greater frequency, Russian leaders repeatedly emphasized that China was not seen as a threat and that it was a cooperative partner. Earlier in the 1990s, Russian officials and experts clearly raised issues on which they worried China would challenge its interests and become more of a threat. China's restraint and minimal challenge to Russian interests in the Russian Far East and Central Asia proved that it was not a threat and showed Russia that it did not need to respond to a rising China by balancing more severely.

### Reaping the Benefits of a Rising China

Not only did Russian experts recognize that Chinese restraint made it less of a threat, but they also acknowledged that Chinese support benefitted Russia more and more as China became

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<sup>945</sup> See Blank, "Russia Looks at China," p. 68.

<sup>946</sup> See Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, p. 77.

<sup>947</sup> Author's interview, Russian Embassy officials, Beijing, Spring 2006.

more powerful. Russia benefitted economically from a rising China<sup>948</sup>. In the early 1990s, especially as many Russian experts worried about potential threats from a rising China, optimists on Sino-Russian relations highlighted the potential for economic benefit. Throughout the 1990s, Russia benefitted economically from an increasingly wealthy and powerful China, helping turn potential benefits of cooperation into actual benefits. The developing trade relationship was particularly valuable to Russia as its economy was in crisis throughout the 1990s. In addition to growing trade, Chinese arms purchases not only helped keep arms manufacturers in business, but also provided much needed hard currency. Writing shortly after Putin came into power, one expert argued that the increasing commercial benefits that came from a rising China was one of the main reasons why optimists on Sino-Russian relations had occupied a dominant position in the domestic debate within Russia.<sup>949</sup>

Chinese support for many of Russia's core principles in international relations helped foster cooperation, but as China became more powerful and important in the world, this support helped raise Russia's status as well. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, and Russian economic problems, the decline in Russia's international status was a source of great displeasure for Russian leaders. As Russia struggled to maintain national unity and defeat separatist threats from Chechnya, a weakened Russia voiced strong support for noninterference, national sovereignty, and respect. Sharing many of the same challenges as Russia, Chinese leaders also strongly and publicly protected these principles. During the Chechen Wars of the 1990s, as the Western world criticized Russian atrocities, China continued to defend its right to suppress rebels and take any necessary measures to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity. As both countries were worried about American "hyperpower," they also repeatedly advocated a multipolar world, which would not only

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<sup>948</sup> For more details on the growing economic relationship and how Russia benefitted, see Blank, "Russia Looks at China," p. 77; Wishnick, *Mending Fences*, p. 124; and Wilson, *Strategic Partners*, pp. 61-92.

<sup>949</sup> See Azizian, "Russia's China Debate."

mean one in which the United States was more constrained, but would also be one where Russia's status as a major power would be restored and widely accepted. Russia appreciated having China as a partner that shared the same vision for international politics, especially as it was under immense pressure internally and externally. Russia benefitted even more from having a like-minded partner whose power and status were increasing. A rising China made it more likely that their preferred vision for international relations would be taken more seriously, and Russia's association with a rising power also greatly enhanced its status.<sup>950</sup>

### ***China's Reassurance Towards Putin's Russia***

After President Vladimir Putin replaced Yeltsin, China deepened its reassurance efforts and became even more active in pushing Sino-Russian relations in a cooperative direction.<sup>951</sup> In the early 1990s, after growing disappointed with the prospects of cooperation with Europe, President Yeltsin had reached out to China to improve relations, and China reciprocated. Under Putin, this dynamic shifted as China moved into the more active position and "pursued" Russia much more than it had in the past. Putin came into office with the hopes of deepening cooperation with Europe, and also had some concerns about the state of Sino-Russian relations. Although Russia had reached a "strategic partnership" with China, President Putin came into office with more of a European

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<sup>950</sup> Author's interviews, Russian Embassy officials, Beijing, Spring 2006. Russian officials continued to see Russia as a great power, but recognized that many in the Western world did not perceive them as one in the 1990s. Although they perceived Russia's claim to great power status as undeniable, they explicitly recognize that association with a like-minded country that was rising and seen as more important helped defend Russia's interests and improve its status.

<sup>951</sup> For Chinese discussions on the need to further improve relations and suggestions on how to strengthen them, see Zhao Huasheng, "Zhong'E Guanxi Fazhan de Jiyu he Tiaozhan" [Opportunities and Challenges for the Development of Sino-Russian Relations], *Guoji Guancha* [International Observer], No. 4 (1999); and Gu Guanfu, "Zhong'E Zhanlv Xiezuo Guanxi de Xin Fazhan" [New Developments in Sino-Russian Strategic Cooperative Relations], *Heping yu Fazhan* [Peace and Development], No. 1 (1999), pp. 42-44, 41. cHECK CAJ AND SEE IF THERE IS SUPPOSED TO BE A ZHANLUE IN THERE!!!!

outlook and strong desire to focus his diplomacy on opening up to and improving relations with Europe, and especially Great Britain.<sup>952</sup>

As part of this European emphasis, Russia seemed much less interested in deepening cooperation with China. For example, Defense Minister Chi Haotian appealed for deeper cooperation and increased military exchanges during a January 2000 visit to Moscow, but the Russian government did not seem interested in pursuing this.<sup>953</sup> China pushed hard to convince President Putin to come to China for his first overseas visit, but he decided to go to Great Britain instead, revealing his greater emphasis on relations with Europe. In early 2000 Putin also talked about exploring joining NATO and developing a joint missile defense system with Europe.<sup>954</sup> One of the many sources for his focus on Europe, was a belief that although Russia was benefitting from Sino-Russian cooperation, he believed that the gains were uneven. He thought that China was benefitting more than Russia, and Russia was paying too high a price for too little benefit. Dissatisfied with this aspect of Sino-Russian relations, and believing that it could benefit even more from cooperating with Russia, Putin focused Russian diplomacy on reaching out to Europe. After the political instability and economic problems of the 1990s, Putin also aimed to restore Russian greatness and influence throughout Eurasia.<sup>955</sup>

#### *China Actively Reaches Out to Reassure Russia*

As peaceful, stable, cooperative relations with Russia was a key part of China's grand strategy, Putin's move away from China and towards the West was a negative development for

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<sup>952</sup> See Wishnick, "Russia and China: Brothers Again?" p. 801-2; Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*, p. 143; and Alexander Lukin, "Russia's Image of China and Russian-Chinese Relations," Brookings Institution, CNAPS paper (2001).

<sup>953</sup> See Yu Bin, "New Century, New Face, and China's 'Putin Puzzle,'" *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (April 2000).

<sup>954</sup> See Yu Bin, "New Century, New Face, and China's 'Putin Puzzle,'" Yu Bin, "Strategic Distancing...or Else," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 2000); and Wishnick, "Russia and China," p. 801-2.

<sup>955</sup> See Stephen E. Hanson, "Russia: Strategic Partner or Evil Empire?" in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004-05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2004), p. 181; and Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

China. Putin's refocusing of Russia's diplomatic efforts represented an effort to explore other diplomatic options and should not be viewed as a move to form an anti-China balancing alliance. However, this renewed emphasis on developing relations with the West proved to be what one Chinese expert termed a "wake-up call," and sent a clear signal to China that Russia was not completely satisfied with the state of bilateral relations. Although Chinese experts remembered that Yeltsin had also reached out to the West early in his term, with little effect, one Chinese expert suggested that deeper Russo-European cooperation would be a "negative factor" and could "increase the strategic pressure in China's international environment."<sup>956</sup> According to one government think tank expert, Chinese officials concluded early in Putin's administration that "if China wanted to maintain cooperative relations with Russia, it would have to make much greater efforts."<sup>957</sup> According to Rozman, in the face of fluctuations in the orientation of Russian leader, "China's leadership showed patience as it continued to appeal to Russia to draw closer."<sup>958</sup>

President Jiang took the first step in making "greater efforts," when he proposed exploring a new bilateral treaty as part of his push to deepen cooperation during his July 2000 visit to Russia.<sup>959</sup> As China moved to seize the initiative in Sino-Russian relations, Chinese leaders used various tools of reassurance to stabilize its relations with Russia, deepen cooperation, and prevent any possibility of Russia balancing against it. This was one of many examples in which China responded to negative developments by taking even more active efforts to reassure a country in the hopes of improving relations and stabilizing its international environment.

### 2001 Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty: Binding Russia and Deepening Bilateral Cooperation

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<sup>956</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2004; Fall 2005-Spring 2006.

<sup>957</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Spring 2010.

<sup>958</sup> See Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*, p. 143.

<sup>959</sup> See Wishnick, "Russia and China," p. 803.

Throughout 2000, President Jiang and other Chinese officials proposed and pushed a need to solidify bilateral relations through a more formal commitment and expression of friendship. This push for a more formal statement of cooperation produced the Sino-Russian Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, signed in July 2001. This treaty, which would last for twenty years, contained numerous pledges and agreements to expand exchanges and develop cooperation in many different spheres of relations.<sup>960</sup>

Although short of a real defense commitment, the Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty tied Russia closer to China and made it more difficult to reach out and cooperate with other countries. Article 9 of the treaty obliges both countries to contact each other in case of a threat of aggression, but does not obligate either to respond in any way. Article 8 commits both parties to refrain from entering into agreements with third states that would harm the security, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of the other state. These provisions of the treaty gave each side the ability to constrain, shape, and potentially veto the foreign policy of the other, especially as it relates to deepening relations with other countries.<sup>961</sup> Although usually putting more emphasis on cooperation and good-neighborliness, when discussing the role of the treaty in Chinese foreign policy, Chinese experts referred to the need to “constrain” (yueshu) and “tie up” (shufu) Russia, and “limits its space for anti-China cooperation with others.”<sup>962</sup> According to another Chinese expert, part of China’s aim in pushing the treaty was to “lock in” Putin to the importance of the Sino-Russian relationship, as he did not seem as devoted to it as Yeltsin was.<sup>963</sup> The unilateralism of the Bush administration and a stronger commitment to missile defense helped drive Russia and China closer together, but China’s

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<sup>960</sup> For discussion of the treaty, see Yu Bin, “A ‘Nice’ Treaty in a Precarious World,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (October 2001); Lo, pp. 41-2; and Dittmer, “Ghost of Strategic Triangle,” p. 218.

<sup>961</sup> On these provisions of the treaty, see Nadkarni, *Strategic Partnerships in Asia*, pp. 58-60.

<sup>962</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005-Spring 2006.

<sup>963</sup> See Yu Bin, “Treaties Scrapped, Treaties Signed,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 2001).

aim was clearly to reassure Russia that cooperation would be valuable for Russia, while also limiting Russia's ability to cooperate with others to put pressure on China.

### Self-Restraint and Renewed Push for Cooperation in the Face of Renewed Differences with Russia

Despite the Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty and repeated declarations of common opposition to American unilateralism, withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, continued development of missile defense, and other objectionable policies, Russia's response to 9/11 revealed the shallowness of Sino-Russian cooperation. Even before 9/11, the June 2001 summit between Putin and Bush in Slovenia revealed a warming trend in relations and Putin seemed to minimize his criticism of NATO expansion and the ABM Treaty.<sup>964</sup> After 9/11, Russia repeatedly abandoned China and moved to cooperate more closely with the United States on a range of issues. Without coordinating with or informing China, Russia dropped its criticism of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and development of missile defense and shifted to symbolic criticism of these moves. Russia provided intelligence on the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, supported U.S. troop presence in Central Asia, and even weakened its opposition to NATO expansion.<sup>965</sup> According to one Russian expert, "limits for a Russian Chinese rapprochement were clearly seen in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, which were used by President Putin to accelerate Russia's movement towards the West both in the political and the cultural sense."<sup>966</sup> Wohlforth argues that "Russia's role in the anti-terror campaign meant that it did not need China—or the threat of closer security ties to China—to enhance its importance to Washington."<sup>967</sup>

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<sup>964</sup> See William C. Wohlforth, "Russia," in Ellings, Friedberg, and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2002-03: Asian Aftershocks*, p. 202-3.

<sup>965</sup> For more on these developments, see Wohlforth, "Russia," pp. 202-6; Neil MacFarlane, "Is Russia an Emerging Power?" *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (2006), p. 50; and Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China," p. 41.

<sup>966</sup> See Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia's Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations since the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), p. 312.

<sup>967</sup> See Wohlforth, "Russia," p. 206



In response to being abandoned on these issues as Russia moved to reach out to the United States, rather than criticizing Russia or taking punitive action, China was restrained. According to several experts, Chinese officials were “deeply disappointed” and “frustrated” by these developments, but recognized that responding with hostility would only be counterproductive and damage China’s own interests. This self-restraint in the face of unfavorable developments and new challenges from Russia became one of the main characteristics of China’s response to Russia. According to Rozman, “When differences with Russia arose, China kept the big picture in mind and tried to avoid direct confrontation. It handled criticisms of Russia gingerly.”<sup>968</sup> Coming on the heels of signing the Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty, Russian abandonment of China after 9/11 showed Chinese that the “strategic partnership” was not as solid as China had hoped.

Rather than moving to distance themselves even further from Russia, however, the Chinese concluded that in order to accomplish its objective of forming a strong, stable relationship, China would need to bend over backwards and more actively meet Russian concerns and pursue cooperation. After Hu Jintao came to power, the new Chinese leadership launched a new cooperation offensive to improve relations. Hu’s first foreign visit as head of state was to Russia in May 2003 and Chinese leaders eagerly sought out their Russian counterparts at multilateral summits such as the G8 meeting in France later that year. With the heightened threat of terrorism, China pushed to strengthen the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and cooperate with Russia in Central Asia, especially after the United States had established a military presence there.<sup>969</sup> To deepen cooperation and mutual trust, China pushed to elevate bilateral consultations and dialogues, as well as broaden the issue areas and players involved. A senior Chinese think-tank researcher expressed the binding motive behind these moves, suggesting that “engagement at higher levels and on more issues will demonstrate China’s value to Russia and reduce the possibility of it ‘playing the

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<sup>968</sup> See Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*.

<sup>969</sup> See Yu Bin, “China and Russia,” p. 235-6.

U.S. card' again.<sup>970</sup> In the most high-profile example of these binding efforts, at China's suggestion, Russia and China launched a new consultation and dialogue mechanism on security issues in February 2005. State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan and Russian Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov participated, a much higher level of officials than had been involved in earlier consultations.<sup>971</sup>

### Self-Restraint in Central Asia:

As Putin focused on restoring Russian strength and influence, maintaining dominance and control in Central Asia was an area of great focus. Given China's increasing power throughout the 1990s and its deepening relations with the countries of Central Asia, many Russian officials feared that China would challenge Russian influence in this traditional sphere of influence. Although Russia welcomed cooperation through the SCO to deal with common challenges, there was a significant fear that this was a Chinese-dominated organization and China would use the SCO to push its own agenda and increase its influence in Central Asia. As part of its reassertion of Russian dominance, Russia pushed the establishment of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, an alternative security organization to the SCO. In 2002, Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, and Tajikistan signed a charter. Russia is wary of China's increasing influence in Central Asia and continues to perceive Russian dominance and control of the region as a fundamental national interest.<sup>972</sup>

Chinese officials and scholars clearly recognize the importance that Russia places on its influence in Central Asia and the concerns that Russia has about China displacing Russia in the region. As a result, China's approach to Central Asia has been to avoid challenging Russia, especially

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<sup>970</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Summer 2006.

<sup>971</sup> See Yu Bin, "Pollution, Politics, and Partnership," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (January 2006).

<sup>972</sup> See Stephen J. Blank, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia and the Challenges to Them* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007); and Elizabeth Wishnick, *Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition and Cooperation in the Shadow of the Georgian Crisis* ((Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2009).

on issues on which Russia has taken a strong position. Although China continues to cooperate with Russia and the Central Asian nations bilaterally and through the SCO, it defers to Russia as the dominant country in the region. China deferred to Russia in Central Asia throughout the 1990s as well, but continuing to do so was especially important as China's position and influence in the region had improved dramatically by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>973</sup> Rozman writes: "Although Chinese and Russian interests clash in Central Asia, China restrains its aspirations and defers on matters critical to Russia."<sup>974</sup> Even as Russia launched the CSTO as an alternative regional organization that did not include China, it did not criticize Russia or take any other actions that could be perceived as challenging Russia's right to dominate and control the region.

#### Self-Restraint and Compromise in Resolving Border Dispute

The vast majority of the Sino-Russian territorial dispute and border demarcation had been resolved in the 1990s, but Heixiazi Island and Abagaitu Shoal in the east remained under dispute. Even though China had become more powerful, it remained restrained when Russia tried to improve the strength of its claims and ultimately agreed to an equal settlement of the disputed area. According to then-Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, Russia tried to strengthen its claims to Heixiazi Island in the late 1990s by, for example, building a large Russian orthodox Church in late 1999. China did not respond by escalating or allow this to damage the broader bilateral relationship, but remained restrained and even proposed moving forward on resolution.<sup>975</sup>

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<sup>973</sup> See Zheng Yu, chief ed., *Zhong'EMei zai ZhongYa: Hezuo yu Jingzheng (1991-2007)* [China, Russia, and America in Central Asia: Cooperation and Competition], (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2007), especially pp. 45-60.

<sup>974</sup> See Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*, p. 146.

<sup>975</sup> See Tang, *Jingyuxufeng*, pp. 141-2.

After additional negotiations, Russia and China agreed to divide this area in half, which led to a complete demarcation of the border.<sup>976</sup> Many in Russia were concerned that as China became more powerful it would demand more of the disputed territory and even renege on the agreements of the 1990s to reclaim its “lost territory.” Even though China’s relative power has increased, it was willing to divide them in half rather than pressing for greater territory. It was even the Chinese side that proposed a new formula of dividing Heixiazi Island in half, which paved the way for the ultimate resolution.<sup>977</sup>

#### Sharing the Wealth: Helping Russia Play a Greater Regional and Global Role:

Russia’s self-perception is that of a global power, European great power, and Asian great power. However, after the end of the Cold War and the decline in Russian power and status throughout the 1990s, it has been a source of immense frustration that many powers do not treat Russia as a great power and do not perceive Russia in the same way that it perceives itself. China has made efforts to help Russia play a greater role in East Asia, as well as give it a more prominent role globally.

In his assessment of China’s major efforts in relations with Russia after the turn of the century, in addition to resolving the border dispute and working through the SCO to protect regional security, Feng Yujun argues that the third major effort was to “strengthen Sino-Russian regional security cooperation in Northeast Asia.”<sup>978</sup> Another Chinese expert on Sino-Russian relations suggests that strengthening regional security cooperation did not just mean Central Asia,

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<sup>976</sup> See Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*, p. 144; and Zhang Lijun, “Building Peaceful Borders,” *Beijing Review*, Vol. 49, No. 25 (June 2006), p. 10

<sup>977</sup> See Tang, *Jingyuxufeng*, pp. 142-60.

<sup>978</sup> See Feng Yujun, “Zhong’E Guanxi de Fazhan yu Qianjing,” p. 20.

but it also meant East Asia, especially Northeast Asia.<sup>979</sup> Russia resented that it had been excluded from any negotiations or discussions concerning the North Korean nuclear crisis and the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s, and Putin hoped that Russia would have a greater role in Northeast Asia.

China not only seemed more willing to help Russia play a greater role in East Asia, but China's increased power and position in the region also increased its ability to do so. When the second North Korean nuclear crisis broke out in 2002, Russia was disappointed that China initially organized Three-Party Talks and excluded them again, but China took many actions to ensure and increase Russia's role as an important power in Northeast Asia. When these negotiations were expanded into the Six Party Talks, Russia was included. Although the North Koreans also pushed for Russian involvement, China was the only other country that supported its participation, as the other countries opposed Russian participation.<sup>980</sup> China also repeatedly pushed for the establishment of a regional security mechanism to manage the problems in Northeast Asia, which would include Russia.<sup>981</sup> Chinese support for Russia in Northeast Asia also extended into the bilateral realm, as all subsequent meetings included discussions of the North Korean crisis and all joint statements included references to Russia's role in Asia, which showed China's support for Russia as a Northeast Asian power.<sup>982</sup> The February 2007 agreement through the Six Party Talks included a working group to establish such a regional security mechanism, which signaled broad acceptance of Russia as an important Northeast Asian country.

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<sup>979</sup> See Jiang Yi, *Xinshiji de Zhong'E Guanxi* [Sino-Russian Relations in a New Century], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2007), pp. 112-25.

<sup>980</sup> See Buszynski, "Overshadowed by China," p. 274. Russia tried to increase its importance and role in the region by deepening its relationship with North Korea.

<sup>981</sup> See Ren Xiao, "Liufang Huitan yu Dongbeiyi Duobian Anquan Jizhi de Kenengxing [Six-Party Talks and the Possibility of a Northeast Asian Multilateral Security Mechanism], *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* [International Studies], No. 1 (2005), pp. 38-41; and Zhu Feng, "Liufang Huitan de Zhidu Jianshe yu Dongbeiyi Duobian Anquan Jizhi [The Establishment of the institution of the Six-Party Talks and a Northeast Asia Multilateral Security Mechanism], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 3 (2007), pp. 1-7, 13.

<sup>982</sup> See Jiang, *Xinshiji de Zhong'E Guanxi*, p. 124.

China also tried to help Russia play an important role as a global power. In continuing to promote world multipolarization and the democratization of international relations, expressed most clearly in the 2005 joint statement on world order, China and Russia provided “mutual help and mutual support.”<sup>983</sup> As many Western countries were discounting the importance of Russia, treating it as a former great power, and challenging its interests, China continued to talk of Russia as an equal and a legitimate great power that would be an important “pole” in the future.<sup>984</sup> Close association with China, as well as with the rising powers of China, India, and Brazil as one of the BRICs, helped increase Russia’s importance in global affairs.<sup>985</sup> China not only supported Russian interests on a range of global issues such as opposing hegemonism and interference with sovereignty, but China also made clear that it would use its influence to help get Russia in the WTO.<sup>986</sup> China’s treatment of Russia as a great power and helping Russia to be associated with groups of rising countries helped enhance Russia’s international power and influence.

### Sharing the Wealth: Helping Russia Benefit from China’s Economic Growth

After Russia’s economic problems during the 1990s, economic recovery and economic growth was necessary if Russia hoped to overcome its weakness and reassert its position as a great power. To help foster this economic relationship, Chinese government officials launched many initiatives to help Russia benefit from China’s economic growth. Officials emphasized the importance of “win-win” (shuangying/gongying) and “mutual benefit” (huli) as a cornerstone of the

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<sup>983</sup> See Li Jingjie, “Zhong’E Guanxi 60nian de Huigu yu Sikao,” pp. 301-2.

<sup>984</sup> See Elizabeth Wishnick, “Why a ‘Strategic Partnership?’ The View from China,” in James A. Bellacqua, *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, p. 59.

<sup>985</sup> See Cynthia Roberts, “Russia’s BRICs Diplomacy: Rising Outsider with Dreams of an Insider.” *Polity*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 38-73; and Michael A. Glosny, “China and the BRICs: A Real (but Limited) Partnership in a Unipolar World,” *Polity*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 100-129.

<sup>986</sup> See Yu Bin, “Beautiful Relationship in a Dangerous World,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (July 2002).

evolving economic relationship.<sup>987</sup> Before high-level visits, China would often announce large purchases of Russian goods, which were important symbols, but were also meant to communicate China's commitment to advancing the economic relationship. For example, China announced a large purchase of Russian cargo planes before Zhu Rongji's September 2001 visit to Russia.<sup>988</sup> Chinese leaders not only emphasized the importance of deepening economic relations when they were in Moscow, but also often visited economically depressed areas of Russia to explore the opportunities for economic cooperation through which Russia could benefit from Chinese growth.<sup>989</sup>

China emphasized economic opportunities and the potential for mutual benefit even when Russia took economic actions that China did not like. After agreeing to build an oil pipeline from Angarsk to Daqing in the 1990s, Russia reneged on this agreement and in 2003 began exploring the possibility of building a pipeline to Nakhodka that would allow Russia to potentially have both Japan and China as customers. Although China was clearly disappointed at this result, Beijing was careful not to overreact, openly criticize Russia, or let this lead to a significant deterioration in relations. Not only did China continue to work with Russia on building the spur that would give China access to the pipeline, it also continued other activities designed to deepen economic engagement with Russia.<sup>990</sup>

*Russian Non-Balancing Under Putin: Improved Relations and a Strategic Partnership with Substance*

Even as China grew more powerful in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Russia took few actions that could reasonably be considered balancing, and instead moved much further in the other

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<sup>987</sup> See Li Jingjie, "Zhong'E Guanxi 60nian de Huigu yu Sikao," p. 307.

<sup>988</sup> See Wishnick, "Russia and China," p. 811.

<sup>989</sup> See Yu Bin, "Geo-economics for Geo-politics," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (July 2004).

<sup>990</sup> See Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, p. 127.

direction to deepen the strategic partnership. There were several potential issues of friction and problems in Sino-Russian relations, but both sides at least effectively managed these issues and took active steps to deepen cooperation. Russia expert Andrew Kuchins highlights the significant advances in cooperation under Putin, noting that “the ‘strategic partnership’ established in 1996 by Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin, which appeared long on rhetoric and thin on substance when Putin assumed power in 2000, has taken on considerable weight as economic and political cooperation have grown.”<sup>991</sup> Writing in 2008, another Russia expert observed that: “Today they can rightly claim that ties are better than at any time in their history. Ancient antagonisms and suspicions appear to have given way to an unparalleled convergence across multiple policy agendas.”<sup>992</sup> Gilbert Rozman also highlights that bilateral cooperation deepened and moved further away from balancing, even as China’s relative power increased. He writes: “only from 2003 do we observe a notable quickening of the pace of improvement, broadening as well the scope of bilateral relations to reach a new peak in 2006-2008, when Putin put emphasis on them.”<sup>993</sup> Showing just how far away Russia was from balancing against China, much of the discussion about Sino-Russian relations under Putin was whether or not they had formed a real alliance that was aimed at confronting the United States and the West. This relationship deepened and moved further away from Russian balancing through new agreements, high-level visits, military cooperation, and convergence on a vision for global order.

As China’s power increased, rather than balancing against it by forming an alliance with other powers targeted at China, Russia signed the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation together with China in 2001. This treaty was not meant to be an alliance aimed at another country, but was a manifestation of the “new type” of relations that China aimed to establish with other countries, which included the three principles of non-alignment, non-

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<sup>991</sup> See Kuchins, “Russian Perspectives on China,” p. 33.

<sup>992</sup> See Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, p. 1.

<sup>993</sup> See Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought toward Asia*, p. 14.



confrontation, and not being directed at third countries.<sup>994</sup> Russia also agreed to join the SCO and work with China against terrorism and separatism. Areas of cooperation through the SCO included intelligence sharing, suppression of groups in own country that other SCO members may be worried about, and military exchanges and training.<sup>995</sup> If Russia had felt threatened by rising Chinese power and wanted to cause problems and complications for growth in China, it could have supported regional terrorist and separatist groups that could attack China and undermine stability. Instead of supporting opponents of the CCP regime, even though Russia was wary of a China-dominated SCO becoming too important in Central Asia, it cooperated with China to defeat potential threats and challenges to China. New commitment and cooperation showed that Russia did not more severely balance China as its power grew, but instead moved to deepen cooperation.

Sustained high-level official visits and exchanges between the two countries showed that cooperative relations were deepening. Since the late 1990s, leadership summits occurred annually. Relations also seemed to become more important to each side. President Putin was the first head of state to visit China after the leadership transition at the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2002. In May 2003, President Hu's first foreign visit was to Russia. In 2008, after President Medvedev replaced Putin, he chose China as the destination for his first foreign visit, unlike President Putin who chose Britain. As mentioned earlier, both sides launched a consultation mechanism on security issues at a very high-level in 2005. Although Russian and Chinese officials interacted bilaterally, they also made a point of meeting on the sidelines of regional meetings such as ARF, APEC, and others. They even launched newer global summit meetings, such as through the BRICs, which have not only included leadership meetings, but also foreign ministers, finance ministers, trade ministers, and several other issue areas. As the Sino-Russian relationship has deepened, these exchanges have broadened from

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<sup>994</sup> See Qian, *Waijiao Shiji*, p. 241; and Zhao Huasheng, "Zhong'E Mulin Youhao Hezuo Tiaoyue yu Zhong'E Guanxi" [Sino-Russian Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Cooperation and Sino-Russian Relations], *Eluosi Yanjiu* [Russian Studies], No. 3 (2001), pp. 2-8, 15.

<sup>995</sup> See Garver, "China's Influence in Central and South Asia," p. 211.

politics to include the areas of the military, economics, and culture. 2006 was designated the “Year of Russia” in China and 2007 was designated the “Year of China” in Russia; this included lots of visits and exchanges across a wide segment of both countries.<sup>996</sup> According to one prominent Chinese expert, as the strategic partnership matured, China and Russia “achieved the institutionalization and mechanization of meetings between heads of state, cabinet ministers, and premiers, and exchanges between officials of other departments. [Through] frequent dialogues at all levels and through all channels, the two countries have....deepened and strengthened cooperation in every area.”<sup>997</sup>

Military relations expanded, even as China grew more powerful. Rather than being threatened by China’s military modernization and taking active countermeasures, Russia’s arms sales continued to be one of the most important sources of high-technology weaponry and an important source of assistance for Chinese military modernization. Under President Putin, arms sales packages included Kilo-class diesel submarines with advanced weapons platforms and anti-ship cruise missiles, advanced SAMs, long-range air-to-air missiles, advanced aircraft such as the Su-27 and Su-30, and other platforms.<sup>998</sup> Although Russian arms sales curtailed after 2007, these arms sales played a vital role in PLA modernization.<sup>999</sup>

In addition to arms sales, which had been the basis of a weak military relationship in the 1990s, both sides dramatically expanded military exchanges and military exercises. Although there had been relatively few high-level defense exchanges in the 1990s, such exchanges became the norm in the next decade. For example in a six month period, the Vice Chairman of China’s CMC and

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<sup>996</sup> For a summary of some of these visits, see Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 338-40; and Nadkarni, *Strategic Partnerships in Asia*, p. 61-3. For the best English-language coverage of visits and exchanges, see the quarterly reports by Yu Bin on Sino-Russian relations as part of CSIS Pacific Forum’s *Comparative Connections*.

<sup>997</sup> See Li Jingjie, “Zhong’E Guanxi 60nian de Huigu yu Sikao,” p. 301.

<sup>998</sup> For the most authoritative tracking of these arms sales, see “SIPRI Arms Transfers Database,” available at [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org).

<sup>999</sup> See Richard D. Fisher, *China’s Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008).

Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan visited in December 2003, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov visited in April 2004, PLA Chief of General Staff Liang Guanglie visited in May 2004, and First Deputy Chief of Staff Yuriy Baluyevskiy visited China as well.<sup>1000</sup> High-level defense consultations also became institutionalized.<sup>1001</sup>

Joint exercises also became an important part of the deepening military relationship. In October 1999, both sides held a joint naval exercise to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of relations.<sup>1002</sup> Joint exercises became more elaborate under the banner of the SCO. Peace Mission 2003, held in August, was a relatively small-scale anti-terrorism exercise. Peace Mission 2005, held in August was a much more elaborate 8-day, 3-stage exercise held off Shandong. Although it was reported as an anti-terrorism exercise, it involved bombers, submarines, and more than 10,000 troops. According to one analyst, “Not even during the 1950s, when China belonged to the Soviet bloc and had a formal mutual defense treaty with Moscow, had the two countries carried out such a large joint exercise.”<sup>1003</sup> Peace Mission 2007 was a smaller exercise based on a domestic instability scenario, but it represented the first time since 1969 that Chinese troops had been on Russian soil.<sup>1004</sup> Through these military exchanges and joint exercises, Russia and China deepened their military relationship, and these exchanges helped foster professionalism in the PLA and further modernization. In delimiting the entire 4300 km border, both sides had removed one of the major sources of friction and potential conflict in the military relationship. And now both sides were taking significant steps to deepen and broaden the military relationship, although some limitations remained.

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<sup>1000</sup> See Yu Bin, “Lubricate the Partnership, but with What?” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (October 2004).

<sup>1001</sup> See Richard Weitz, *China-Russia Security Relations: Strategic Parallelism without Partnership or Passion?* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2008); Kevin Ryan, “Russo-Chinese Defense Relations,” in Bellacqua, ed., *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, pp. 179-202; and Jing-dong Yuan, “Sino-Russian Defense Ties: The View from Beijing,” in Bellacqua, ed., *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, pp. 203-232.

<sup>1002</sup> See Yu Bin, “Back to the Future,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (January 2000).

<sup>1003</sup> See Richard Weitz, “Russia and China Hand in Hand: Will it Work?” *Global Asia*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2007), p. 54:

<sup>1004</sup> See Wishnick, *Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia*, p. 21. For further details on these military exercises, see Liu Yan and Li Yue, chief eds., *Zhong'E Guanxi de Daqingxiaoshi, 1949-2009* [The Big and Small Events in Sino-Russian Relations], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2010), pp. 249-53.

Russia and China not only shared common views on their vision for global order, but Russia also repeatedly supported China and did not challenge its interests. Russia and China had repeatedly expressed a common vision for world order in the 1990s, both in a 1997 joint communiqué and in public statements and joint communiqués after leadership visits. In 2005, they issued another joint statement on world order that contained their preferred vision. This included respect for sovereignty, non-interference, and equality, as well as a preference for a restrained American hegemon that could not interfere in the affairs of others. Not only did they share a commitment to this vision, but Russia also repeatedly took action to support China against attempts by others to violate this vision, interfere in China's internal affairs, and challenge its interests. For example, Russia continued to support China's position on Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan. Moreover, it repeatedly blocked any attempts to criticize China on human rights grounds in international organizations and worked to block U.S. reforms of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in 2005.<sup>1005</sup> If Russia had perceived growing Chinese power as a significant threat, it could have caused great problems for China's growth and stability by either changing its position on these issues or at least standing aside and not supporting or protecting China.

### ***Explaining Russia's Lack of Balancing Under Putin***

As the previous section makes clear, even though Chinese power continued to increase during this period, Russia took few actions that could reasonably count as even low level balancing against China. On the contrary, Russia deepened its cooperation with China even as it grew more powerful. In the rest of this section, I will show that China's reassurance towards Russia during this period was an important reason for why Russia deepened its cooperation. There were several areas in which a rising power could have challenged Russian interests. Chinese restraint in each of these

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<sup>1005</sup> See Deng Yong, *China's Struggle for Status*, p. 147.

areas reduced Russian estimates that China was a threat, and made it unnecessary to balance more severely against a rising China. China's reassurance also provided immense benefits to Russia. Russian officials and experts explicitly recognize that they have benefitted from a cooperative relationship with China and do not want to jeopardize it by taking hostile actions towards China, even if they are still wary about the potential future threat from China.

### *Reduced Estimate that China is a Threat*

Russian leaders and experts continued to express fears at the turn of the century of several potential issues on which a rising China could threaten Russia. These included the possibility that a more powerful China might try to settle outstanding border disputes on more favorable terms or even try to re-claim "lost territories" under Russian control, expand its influence into the Russian Far East or Central Asia, use its growing military power to threaten or coerce Russia, interfere with Russian internal affairs, or prevent Russia from playing an important role in East Asia, this resulting in further Russian marginalization. If China had made aggressive moves in these issue areas, and especially if it did so in multiple areas simultaneously, Russia would have very likely perceived China as a threat and been compelled to take actions to balance more severely against China. However, China's restraint in not challenging these sensitive Russian interests helped prevent balancing by reducing the estimates that China is a threat.

Although Russian officials and scholars are still wary about the future of China and the potential for future challenges, they recognize and admit that China has not yet taken the provocative actions that Russians fear it may. The nightmare scenarios envisioned by Russians of a Chinese invasion of the Russian Far East, either through force or migration, have not become reality. In a 2002 tour of the Russian Far East, Defense Minister Ivanov declared that China did not

represent a military threat and characterized some of the fears about China as exaggerations.<sup>1006</sup>

During the summer 2005 leadership meeting in Russia, at a private dinner hosted by President Putin, he asserted: “All big political problems in bilateral relations have been settled in essence, which created a reliable foundation for friendship and cooperation between China and Russia for a long period.”<sup>1007</sup> At meeting after meeting, Russian officials have emphasized how China is not a threat and characterized Sino-Russian relations as the best ever.

Russian officials at the Chinese Embassy suggested that it was too extreme to say that problems and potential tensions in the relationship had been “settled,” but they have been “handled” and “kept under control.” Although they were not forthcoming with praise for Chinese restraint and compromise as the source of stable relations, several Russian officials highlighted the possibility of Chinese aggressiveness and transgressions as the “most likely source of future tension.” Although they admitted that on these important issues and interests, China had not yet taken aggressive actions that would damage relations. If China took provocative actions that threatened Russia, one official suggested that Russia would need to “rethink its cooperative approach to China, at the very least.”<sup>1008</sup> This evidence from Russian officials supports the argument that Chinese restraint and reassurance made Russia less likely to perceive China as a threat and take countervailing action, even if these officials were less confident about Chinese behavior in the future. As opposed to worst-case realist expectations that uncertainty and worries about the future compels states to balance more severely in the present, Russian behavior, and this interview evidence suggests that it is only when China takes such aggressive actions that Russia might be forced to shift to a more hostile policy and balance more severely.

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<sup>1006</sup> See Yu Bin, “One Year later: Geopolitics or Geoeconomics?” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (October 2002).

<sup>1007</sup> See Yu Bin, “The New World Order According to Moscow and Beijing,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (October 2005).

<sup>1008</sup> Author’s interviews, Russian Embassy in Beijing, Spring-Summer 2006.

## ***China's Reassurance Towards India:***

### *China's Coping with and Responds to India after the Nuclear Test:*

In the early-to-mid 1990s, Sino-Indian relations improved through a series of agreements on confidence-building measures near disputed territory and leadership visits. Two separate agreements were reached to reduce tensions, build confidence, and demilitarize the disputed territory. The Joint Working Group (JWG) continued to meet and make some progress in resolving the border disputes. Military-to-military relations also improved. Even though Indian Defense Secretary Fernandez publicly complained about border incursions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied the charge and allowed General Fu Quanyou, the PLA Chief of General Staff to visit India in late April 1998, in the hopes of further strengthening the military relationship.<sup>1009</sup>

Shortly after General Fu left India, it conducted three underground nuclear tests on May 11, 1998, and then conducted two more tests on May 13. In addition to being a negative development for Chinese security interests, having it occur shortly after General Fu's visit was a slap in the face. Even more problematic for bilateral relations, Defense Ministry Fernandes publicly criticized China and declared it "potential threat number one." Prime Minister Vajpayee's leaked letter also suggested that the nuclear test was aimed at China. He wrote: "We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distrust persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem. To add to the distrust that country has materially helped another armed neighbor of ours become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of

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<sup>1009</sup> See Susan L. Shirk, "One-Sided Rivalry: China's Perceptions and Policies toward India," Francine R. Frankel and Harry Harding, eds., *The India-China Relationship: What the United States Needs to Know* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 82; and Jing-dong Yuan, "India's Rise After Pokhran-II: Chinese Analyses and Assessments," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 6. (November-December 2001), p. 980.

this bitter neighbor we have suffered three aggressions in the last 50 years.”<sup>1010</sup> It is difficult to characterize this nuclear test as balancing against China because the most common explanation for India’s test was a desire to increase international status.<sup>1011</sup> However, such a development could have led to a dramatic deterioration of bilateral relations.

#### Self-Restraint After the Nuclear Test and Active Efforts to Restore Cooperation:

Despite India’s use of the China threat as a pretext for the nuclear tests, several experts characterized China’s immediate reaction to the tests as constrained.<sup>1012</sup> After the second set of tests, and especially after Vajpayee’s letter appeared, China offered very strong official condemnations of India’s new challenge to positive global trends of peace and development.<sup>1013</sup> India repeatedly reached out to China to repair relations, including trying to arrange a meeting between foreign ministers at the July 1998 ARF summit. According to then-Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, it was too early for a bilateral meeting, but China would be willing to meet in a multilateral context. This would be an opportunity both to hear India’s explanation and to send strong signals directly to China.<sup>1014</sup> At the ARF summit in late July, Foreign Minister Tang argued that India’s actions had run counter to the non-proliferation trend and encouraged India to abandon its nuclear program, join the NPT, and sign the CTBT. Perhaps most importantly, he emphasized that using the China threat as a pretext for the tests was absolutely unacceptable.<sup>1015</sup> Although China was

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<sup>1010</sup> See Atal Bihari Vajpayee, “Nuclear Anxiety: India’s Letter to Clinton on Nuclear Testing,” *New York Times*, May 13, 1998.

<sup>1011</sup> See George Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb: the Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>1012</sup> See Susan Shirk, “Chinese Perspectives of China: Brief Comments,” in Carolyn W. Pumphrey, ed., *The Rise of China in Asia: Security Implications* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2002), p. 107; Jing-dong Yuan, “India’s Rise After Pokhran-II,” p. 979; and Leo E. Rose, “India and China: Forging a New Relationship,” in Shalendra D. Sharma, *The Asia-Pacific in the New Millenium: Geopolitics, Security, and Foreign Policy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), p. 236.

<sup>1013</sup> See Ming Zhang, *China’s Changing Nuclear Posture: Reactions to the South Asian Nuclear Tests* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), p. 26.

<sup>1014</sup> For more on China’s decisions on how to respond to the nuclear tests, see Tang, p. 408-412.

<sup>1015</sup> See Tang, p. 409.



willing to meet in a multilateral context, China decided to send strong messages to India by canceling the next Joint Working Group (JWG) on resolving the territorial dispute meeting scheduled to be held in Beijing in the fall.<sup>1016</sup> In the fall of 1998, there were discussions and rumors of a potential new security posture, including developing tactical nuclear weapons for South Asia and deploying nuclear weapons closer to India. However, none of these changes occurred.<sup>1017</sup>

Instead of treating India with hostility, in the fall of 1998, China made active efforts to signal a desire to return to a stable, cooperative relationship. Despite repeatedly suggest that “he who tied the knot should untie it,” which implied that India needed to make the first move, China actually sent a message of cooperation to India even before India had “untied the knot.” In an October 20, 1998 speech to the Indian Association of International Affairs, Ambassador Zhou Gang declared that it was China’s “sincere hope that all the South Asian countries would become its good neighbors, good friends and good partners...China’s leaders had always sought neighborly and friendly relations with India...and have made sincere efforts to achieve this goal.”<sup>1018</sup> On October 28, 1998, Brajesh Mishra, principal secretary to the prime minister, issued a statement that India did not see China as a threat. This was enough to help put relations back on track. Trying to push relations with India in an even more cooperative direction, when Jaswant Singh was appointed Minister of External Affairs in December 1998, Tang Jiaxuan sent him a congratulatory note.<sup>1019</sup>

Indian officials also repeatedly expressed their desire to improve relations with China. When Jaswant Singh became the Minister of External Affairs, he said that improving relations with China was his top priority. India also took positive actions to show that it valued relations with China and was willing to take steps to repair relations. In a January 1999 visit to India by a group of Chinese

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<sup>1016</sup> See Ming Zhang, *China’s Changing Nuclear Posture*, p. 28; and Jing-dong Yuan, “India’s Rise After Pokhran-II,” p. 981.

<sup>1017</sup> See Ming Zhang, *China’s Changing Nuclear Posture*.

<sup>1018</sup> See John W. Garver, “The Restoration of Sino-Indian Comity Following India’s Nuclear Tests,” *China Quarterly*, Vol. 168, No. 4 (2001), p. 871.

<sup>1019</sup> See Garver, “Restoration of Sino-Indian Comity,” p. 879-80; and Li Li, *Security Perception and China-India Relations* (New Delhi: KW Publishers, 2009), p. 148.

scholars, not only did they receive repeated messages that India wanted to improve relations, but they were also received at a very high level, including meetings with the president, prime minister, and defense minister. In meeting with the Chinese scholars, President Narayanan said that China was not a threat to India and expressed a wish to visit China. This was the first time since the nuclear tests that an Indian leader had declared that China was not a threat. In February, India also sent a diplomatic delegation to China to try to arrange for official talks, and repeated the pledge that India did not see China as a threat.<sup>1020</sup> These developments were enough to allow bilateral relations to improve and return to a more normal level.<sup>1021</sup>

In 1999, high-level bilateral visits resumed. In July 1999, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh visited China. Although his meeting with Foreign Minister Tang was only scheduled for 45 minutes, it lasted for 135 minutes. Tang emphasized that as long as neither saw the other as a threat, differences of opinion would likely to exist, but should not obstacles for the development of bilateral relations.<sup>1022</sup> Minister Singh repeated the pledge that China was not a threat. In these discussions, both sides agreed that on the foundation of not seeing each other as a threat and commitment to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, bilateral relations could deepen.<sup>1023</sup> Chinese leaders and experts emphasized that there were differences and potential difficulties in Sino-Indian relations, but China's goal was to manage these issues and keep these tensions to a low level so that China could focus on economic modernization. President Narayanan visited China in May 2000, which marked the first official leader visit since the nuclear tests. China showed that it valued relations with India by having President Jiang welcome him, organizing an arrival ceremony in the

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<sup>1020</sup> See Zhang Minqiu, *ZhongYin Guanxi Yanjiu, 1947-2003* [Research on Sino-Indian Relations], (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2004), p. 51.

<sup>1021</sup> See Tang, *Jingyuxufeng*, pp. 410-13.

<sup>1022</sup> See Tang, *Jingyuxufeng*, pp. 410-11.

<sup>1023</sup> See Zhang Minqiu, *ZhongYin Guanxi Yanjiu*, p. 51; and Cheng Ruixiang, book, p. 342.

Great Hall of the People, and arranging meetings with the rest of the Chinese leadership. According to Foreign Minister Tang, this visit symbolized the normalization of relations.<sup>1024</sup>

China and India arranged additional high-level meetings to push bilateral relations in a more positive direction. In July 2000, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan visited India. Li Peng visited India in January 2001 and was followed by a February 2002 visit by Premier Zhu Rongji.<sup>1025</sup> In 1999 the JWG meetings resumed. In March 2000, China agreed to first-ever formal annual security dialogue, which took place in Beijing.<sup>1026</sup> This dialogue was proposed by Chinese leaders as a way to move relations in a more cooperative direction.<sup>1027</sup> By the turn of the century, Sino-Indian relations had weathered the challenges of the nuclear tests and reached a stable level.

*Everyone Reaches Out to India: A Driver for China's Shift to Greater Reassurance at the Turn of the Century:*

As China repaired its relations with India after the nuclear tests, most other major powers reached out to improve their relations with India as well. After its nuclear tests and economic growth, India was beginning to be perceived as a power of greater consequence in Asia and the world. Chinese leaders could have perceived India's improved relations with the United States, Russia, and Japan as a threat, and they could have responded with hostility. Instead, recognizing the importance of preventing India's relations with these countries from growing too close, Chinese leaders made concessions, reached new agreements, and implemented reassurance more actively, with the aim of drawing India away from these other powers and closer to China, or at least not aligned against China. After India's nuclear tests and its increased material power, India became increasingly important in the region and the world. This increased power and status made India a

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<sup>1024</sup> See Tang, p. 412-3.

<sup>1025</sup> See C. Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 148.

<sup>1026</sup> See "China, India to Hold Security Dialogue," *People's Daily* (Online), March 8, 2000.

<sup>1027</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Spring 2006.

more important potential balancer against China, especially as other powers were also taking India more seriously and were reaching out to improve relations. With the increased importance of stable relations with India to achieve a peaceful international environment for China's rise, China made more efforts to reassure India and develop cooperative relations that would prevent balancing and stabilize China's international environment.

Just as China tried to improve its relations with India in the immediate aftermath of the nuclear tests, so did the United States. In late 1998, Undersecretary of State Strobe Talbott initiated a series of meetings with Singh, leading to an improved Indo-American relationship.<sup>1028</sup> These talks culminated in President Clinton's March 2000 visit to India and the signing of a "vision statement." In September 2000, Prime Minister Vajpayee visited the United States, addressed a joint session of Congress, and had a large state dinner thrown on his behalf. Leaders and experts on both sides began to talk of a "natural partnership" between the two. These improvements in relations were not directed at China, but were more efforts to correct the legacy of Cold War animosity and the historical oddity of two of the largest democracies having such underdeveloped relations.<sup>1029</sup> When the Bush administration came into office, one of its major foreign policy initiatives was to strengthen relations with a democratic India as another response to the rise of China. The Bush administration came into office calling China a "strategic competitor" and sought to strengthen alliances and relationships, especially with democracies. Early in his administration, President Bush lifted sanctions and tried to develop new areas of cooperation to further strengthen the relationship.

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<sup>1028</sup> See Strobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb*, revised edition (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2006).

<sup>1029</sup> See Sumit Ganguly, "The Start of a Beautiful Friendship? The United States and India," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 25-30; Robert M. Hathaway, "The US-India Courtship: From Clinton to Bush," in Sumit Ganguly, ed., *India as an Emerging Power* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 6-31; and S. Paul Kapur, "India and the United States from World War II to the Present: A Relationship Transformed," Sumit Ganguly, ed., *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 251-274.

Chinese experts followed these improvements in U.S.-India relations and the implications of these developments for China's international environment.<sup>1030</sup>

Japan and Russia also dramatically improved their relations with India. In November 1999, Singh visited Japan. He was followed by Defense Minister Fernandes in January 2000, who was the first Defense Minister to visit Japan since 1947. In August 2000, Prime Minister Mori visited India and in February 2001, Prime Minister Vajpayee returned the visit.<sup>1031</sup> Much like U.S.-Indian relations, the Cold War legacy had damaged Japan-Indian relations. Although Russia had maintained strong relations with India during the Cold War, these relations deteriorated somewhat in the 1990s. In October 2000, Putin visited India. During this visit, both sides issued a declaration on a strategic partnership, agreed on new sales, and expanded nuclear reactor cooperation.<sup>1032</sup>

Facing the potential of increased isolation as India improved its relations with the other major powers in the region, Chinese experts decided that it was necessary to make active efforts to improve relations with India and prevent the formation of coalitions among major powers. Lan Jianxue captures the recognition in China of India's rising importance, for China and for others, and the greater need for China to maintain stable and cooperative relations. He writes: "In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, China's orientation towards India is: a rising India is a country that is an important part of China's strategic periphery and in the process of going into the world, that China needs to strive to

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<sup>1030</sup> See Xiang Xuesong, "You Kelindun Nanyazhixing Kan MeiYin Guanxi" [Viewing U.S.-India Relations from Clinton's Trip to South Asia], *Nanya Yanjiu Jikan* [South Asia Studies Quarterly], No. 2 (2000), pp. 53-57; Zhang Minqian, "Mei duiYin Zhengce Tiaozheng Quxiang, Yitu ji MeiYin Guanxi Zoushi" [Trends and Intentions in Adjustments in America's India Policy and Trends in U.S.-India Relations], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 4 (2000), pp. 31-35; Ma Jiali, "YinMei Guanxi Fazhan Dongxiang" [Trends in Development of India-America Relations], *Heping yu Fazhan* [Peace and Development], no. 4 (2001), pp. 45-48; and Zhang Guihong, "Bush Zhengfu de Nanya Zhengce yu Zhongguo de Anquan Huanjing" [The Bush Government's South Asia Policy and China's Security Environment], *Nanya Yanjiu* [South Asian Studies], No. 2 (2003), pp. 26-34.

<sup>1031</sup> See Harsh V. Pant, "India-Japan Relations: A Slow, but Steady, Transformation," in Sumit Ganguly, ed., *India's Foreign Policy*, pp. 206-225.

<sup>1032</sup> See Deepa M. Ollapally, "The Evolution of India's Relations with Russia: Tried, Tested, and Searching for Balance," in Sumit Ganguly, ed., *India's Foreign Policy*, pp. 226-250.

become an important strategic cooperative partner.”<sup>1033</sup> Another expert highlights the increasing importance of India in China’s grand strategy of reassurance. According to Ye Hailin: “China’s peaceful development road, constructing an environment of peace and development, cannot occur without developing strategic cooperative relations with India. Although there are all kinds of differences, contradictions, and even potential conflicts, China should handle and develop relations with India from the perspective of grand strategy.”<sup>1034</sup>

Chinese leaders and experts began to understand that a rising India that was improving its relations with most other countries in the region could greatly complicate China’s international environment. Chinese experts were realistic that achieving a relationship of deep trust and cooperation would be difficult with the number of remaining issues, areas of potential tension, and overall mistrust in Sino-Indian relations. However, India’s increased importance meant that China needed to make more efforts to “manage” these contentious issues to ensure that these issues did not derail bilateral relations and lead to increased strategic pressure in China’s periphery.<sup>1035</sup>

Several Chinese experts highlighted the importance of improved U.S.-Indian relations as a driving force for China’s renewed reassurance efforts towards India. As one government think tank expert argued, “The improvements in relations with India during the Clinton administration were not anti-China, but a coalition that was not directed at China today could play a different role tomorrow, next week or next year.”<sup>1036</sup> Another expert suggested that “peaceful and stable relations

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<sup>1033</sup> See Lan Jianxue, “Zhongguo duiYindu Guanxi de Zhanlue Dingwei” [China’s Strategic Orientation for Relations with India], in Zhang Yunling, chief ed., *Zhongguo duiwai Kaifang*, p. 237. CHECK IF CITED BEFORE?

<sup>1034</sup> Ye Hailin, “Zhongguo yu Nanya Guanxi de Fazhan yu Sikao” [Reflections on Developments in China’s Relations with South Asia], In Zhang Yunling, chief ed., *Zhongguo duiwai Guanxi*, p. 181.

<sup>1035</sup> Chinese experts are very clear about the sources of tension in Sino-Indian relations and are familiar with India’s list of complaints and worries. But given the large number of difficult issues in the relationship, Chinese experts are not optimistic about “solving” or “resolving” (jiejue) them in the near term, but instead recognize the need to focus on successfully “managing” (chuli) them. Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer 2006; Shanghai, Spring 2010, Fall 2011. For another analysis that emphasizes the importance of managing these issues in China’s grand strategy and its approach to India, see M. Taylor Fravel, “China Views India’s Rise: Deepening Cooperation, Managing Differences,” in Ashley J. Tellis, Travis Tanner, and Jessica Keough, eds., *Strategic Asia 2011-12: Asia Responds to Its Rising Powers: China and India* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2011), pp. 65-100.

<sup>1036</sup> Author’s interviews, Shanghai Spring 2004.

between India and the United States were welcomed by China and were even in China's interests, but there were signs that these relations were growing too close. China needed to pull India back a little."<sup>1037</sup> There were those within China that were doubtful that India would reciprocate its cooperation efforts, but according to one government researcher, "China had no other choice but to make great efforts and find out [if India would respond favorably]."<sup>1038</sup> Moreover, other experts recognized that China's reaction and policy response to improved U.S.-Indian relations would have an important effect on how close these relations would get. If China reacted to improvements in U.S.-India relations with calm, and responded by showing that China was not a threat and China and India had common interests, this would limit how close U.S.-Indian relations would get and would help produce more stable and friendly Sino-Indian relations.<sup>1039</sup> Although Chinese scholars often did not draw the connection as explicitly in their writing, they emphasized that the changing international situation made it necessary to enhance cooperation with India.<sup>1040</sup> China recognized that cooperating with India could limit strategic pressure in its international environment, whereas a hostile policy would make it easier for the United States and India to cooperate and might even push them in a more anti-China direction.

Although Chinese leaders and experts usually emphasize continuity in foreign policy, several emphasized a change in approach toward India at the turn of the turn of the century. Ye Hailin, a Chinese government think tank researcher directly argues: "Since 2000, China set about adjusting its

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<sup>1037</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005.

<sup>1038</sup> Author's interview, Beijing, Spring 2006.

<sup>1039</sup> See Zhang Guihong, *Chaoyue Junshi: Lengzhanhou de Meiguo Nanya Anquan Zhanlue* [Getting Past the Balance of Power: America's Post-Cold War Security Strategy in South Asia], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Daxue Chubanshe, 2007), p. 155.

<sup>1040</sup> See Liu Xuecheng, "Shijizhijiao de Daguo Nanya Zhengce" [The South Asia Policies of the Great powers at the Turn of the Century], *Nanya Yanjiu* [South Asian Studies], No. 2 (1999), pp. 23-9; Ye Zhengjia, "Wushinian lai de ZhongYin Guanxi: Jingyan he Jiaoxun" [The Last 50 Years of Sino-Indian Relations: Experiences and Lessons], *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* [International Studies], No. 4 (1999), pp. 17-23; and Zhao Weiwen, *YinZhong Guanxi Fengyunlu, 1949-1999* [Difficulties in Indo-Chinese Relations], (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2000); and Wang Hongwei, "Zai Xinshiji Jiaqiang he Shenhua ZhongYin Guanxi de jidian Jianyi" [Some Suggestions on Strengthening and Deepening Sino-Indian Relations in the New Century], *Nanya Yanjiu* [South Asian Studies], No. 1 (2000).

policy toward India.”<sup>1041</sup> Although analysis of China’s approach to South Asia at the turn of the century discusses the need to improve relations with every country in the region, there was a special and new emphasis on developing relations with India. During President Narayanan’s 2000 visit to China and Li Peng’s 2001 visit to India, Chinese leaders proposed guidelines to improve and develop relations, illustrating a new official emphasis by China to develop bilateral relations. For example, Li Peng’s speech was entitled “Increase understanding, Develop Friendship, Strengthen Cooperation” and included a new stress on common interests.<sup>1042</sup> China was concerned that deteriorating relations with a rising India could complicate its international environment and took steps to deepen cooperation and maintain stability in its peripheral security environment.

Although few have used Chinese language resources to support their arguments, several other scholars have argued that India’s improved relations with the United States and other regional powers pushed China to make greater efforts to improve its relations with India. According to Garver, “Chinese analysts saw the US as trying to draw India into anti-China containment schemes, and Beijing worked to foil those schemes by courting New Delhi.”<sup>1043</sup> He argued further that these developments “roused Beijing to counter-action.” Medeiros also argues that Chinese moves to reach out to India came after President Clinton’s visit to India and President Bush’s expression of support for India during his campaign and early in 2001.<sup>1044</sup> Around the turn of the century, Horimoto argues, “China went from paying attention to India to *seriously* paying attention to India.” India’s rapid growth in power and President Clinton’s more proactive policy towards India are cited as the principal drivers for this shift in perception.<sup>1045</sup> Even Mohan Malik, who is usually critical of

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<sup>1041</sup> See Ye Hailin, “Zhongguo yu Bajisitan Guanxi de Fazhan yu Mianlin de Tiaozhan” [Developments and Challenges Facing China’s Relations with Pakistan], Zhang Yunling, chief ed., *Zhongguo yu Zhoubian Guojia*, p. 285.

<sup>1042</sup> See Zhang Minqiu, *ZhongYin Guanxi Yanjiu*, pp. 52-5.

<sup>1043</sup> See John W. Garver, “Evolution of India’s China Policy,” in Ganguly, ed., *Indian Foreign Policy*, p. 101; and Shirk, *Fragile Superpower*, p. 118.

<sup>1044</sup> See Medeiros, *China’s International Behavior*, p. 142.

<sup>1045</sup> See Takenori Horimoto, “India-China Relations: Bonhomie with Ambivalence,” in Srikanth Kondapalli and Emi Mifune, eds., *China and Its Neighbors* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2010), p. 175.



China, acknowledged that “A desire for stability on its southwestern flank and fears of an India-U.S. alliance have already caused Beijing to take a more even-handed approach, while still favoring Islamabad.”<sup>1046</sup> As a result of these developments, China decided to make concessions and implement a comprehensive reassurance strategy towards India.

*China's Reassurance in Action: Moves to Stabilize Relations and Deepen Cooperation*

At the turn of the century, there were serious issues and sources of tension in Sino-Indian relations that would require significant work to manage, let alone to resolve or overcome. The historical mistrust stemming from the 1962 Sino-Indian War remained, as did several more contemporary sources of tension. In an edited volume on Sino-Indian relations, one India expert characterized bilateral relations as a “troubled relationship.” He cited the slow pace of resolving the border dispute, China’s unwillingness to officially recognize India’s annexation of Sikkim, concern about military presence in Myanmar, Chinese assistance to Pakistan, and other factors as well.<sup>1047</sup> In 2001, Ashley Tellis offered a similarly pessimistic assessment of bilateral relations that also placed most of the blame on China. He argued: “Little of significance has been achieved on the critical problems bedeviling the relationship: the broader dispute, horizontal proliferation, and competitive efforts at encirclement and counter-encirclement.”<sup>1048</sup> Although these assessments were probably accurate at the time, in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as China enhanced its reassurance towards India, it took actions to try to address many of these issues, show India that China was not a threat, but instead a potential partner who could help protect Indian interests as it became more powerful. There were definitely limits to the concessions that China made on these issues, and Indian mistrust and resentment remains on most of them, but China made efforts to improve

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<sup>1046</sup> See Mohan Malik, “Eyeing the Dragon: India’s China Debate,” *Asia’s China Debate* (Honolulu, HI: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2003).

<sup>1047</sup> See Francine R. Frankel, “Introduction,” in Frankel and Harding, eds., *The India-China Relationship*, p. 10.

<sup>1048</sup> See Ashley J. Tellis, “India,” in Ellings and Friedberg, eds., *Strategic Asia 2001-2*, p. 263.

relations with India in the hopes of preventing balancing and keeping its international environment stable. The rest of this section will examine the various tools that China used and steps that it took as part of its reassurance towards India.

#### Changes in Rhetoric: Use of More Cooperative Words to Describe India and Bilateral Relations

As part of its effort to manage relations with India, Chinese leaders stopped using critical language to send strong messages to India not long after the nuclear test. By 1999, as China increasingly focused on cooperation, “harsh rhetoric from Beijing subsided significantly.”<sup>1049</sup> In 1999 or 2000, the Chinese government reportedly issued directives to scholars and newspaper reporters that they should minimize criticism of India.<sup>1050</sup> Although China’s rhetoric was nowhere near as critical of India in the 1990s as it was of the United States, this instruction was similar to the directive issued to tone down criticism of the United States. In both cases, the aim was to use more positive rhetoric to improve relations, stabilize its international environment, and minimize strategic pressure.

Chinese leaders and experts spent less time talking about areas of divergence and disagreement. During President Narayanan’s visit to China in 2000 and Li Peng’s visit to India in 2001, Chinese leaders did not mention the nuclear issue, but instead focused on areas where China and India had common interests and how to deepen cooperation in those areas.<sup>1051</sup> Chinese leaders not only emphasized common interests, but also highlighted commonalities in Chinese and Indian identities and shared positions. For example, in all statements made about India and bilateral relations, Chinese leaders repeated the shared identity as third-world countries, developing countries, and former colonies. This not only underlined the similarities between India and China, but also

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<sup>1049</sup> See Sumit Ganguly, “India and China: Border Issues, Domestic Integration, and International Security,” in Frankel and Harding, eds., *The India-China Relationship*, p. 104.

<sup>1050</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Spring-Summer 2006.

<sup>1051</sup> See Li Li, *Security Perception and China-India Relations*, p. 150.

drew attention to the differences between India and other potential anti-China allies such as the United States, Japan, Australia, and Russia. Chinese leaders also repeated common positions that China and India shared, such as opposition to American hegemony and dominance, support for a multipolar world, and strong support for sovereignty and non-interference.<sup>1052</sup> As one Chinese government think tank expert noted, “The objective was to replace India’s negative view of China stemming from Cold War hostility with warm feelings based on shared historical experiences and common identities as non-Western powers.”<sup>1053</sup> Chinese leaders repeated these common views and common positions to call attention to the commonalities in bilateral relations as a potential foundation for more stable relations. As official engagement increased in bilateral visits and in multilateral settings, Chinese leaders repeatedly used more cooperative rhetoric to emphasize this convergence in identities and interests. As I will discuss later, China not only used more positive rhetoric to describe India, but it also characterized it as a rising power, great power, and Asian power, all of which increased India’s status and influence in the region and beyond.

### China’s Attempts at Binding and a Renewed Push for Strategic Partnership

As China moved to implement a more cooperative approach towards India, one of the main features was a push towards the establishment of a partnership. During Li Peng’s 2001 visit he repeated the goal of establishing a “constructive cooperative partnership,” and Chinese officials and scholars repeatedly sent messages to India early in the new century that they hoped India would agree. This formulation of seeking to build such a partnership was agreed to in 1996, but the nuclear test led to a deterioration of relations and neither side repeating such a formulation. By 2001, binding India became more important because it was more powerful and had improved relations with many other powers. China hoped that if it could reach an agreement to form such a

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<sup>1052</sup> See Garver, “China’s Influence in Central and South Asia,” p. 223:

<sup>1053</sup> Author’s interviews, Shanghai, Spring 2004.

partnership, and eventually a “strategic partnership,” this would make India feel less isolated and reduce the need for looking to improve relations with other powers. Moreover, if China could demonstrate the utility of a rising China to India through such a partnership, India would be less likely to develop relations with others that were aimed at China. In all subsequent official interactions, the Chinese side pushed to elevate the bilateral relationship, develop new mechanisms and dialogues, and move towards the establishment of a strategic partnership.<sup>1054</sup> During Wen Jiabao’s 2005 visit to India, both sides agreed to establish a “Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity.” Similar to the “new-type of relations” that China aimed to build with Russia and other powers, China’s goal was not to form an alliance with India, but in establishing peaceful, cooperative, and stable relations, this would help manage the existing problems in bilateral relations and make India less likely to perceive China as a threat or take countervailing action to complicate China’s rise. Characterizing the realistic goals for China’s approach to India, one well-known Chinese expert uses the concept of “competitive partnership” and emphasizes the utility of this type of partnership for improving China’s security environment.<sup>1055</sup>

#### Reduced Commitment to Pakistan: Sharing the Wealth through a More Balanced Approach in South Asia:

China’s close relationship with Pakistan, India’s principal adversary, is one of the main sources of India’s mistrust towards China. During the Cold War, China’s alliance with Pakistan, and close relationship with the United States, directly competed with and challenged the Indo-Soviet relationship. From India’s perspective, China’s support for Pakistan during the Cold War was

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<sup>1054</sup> For more on these efforts to push for a partnership, see Zhang Minqiu, *ZhongYin Guanxi Yanjiu, 1947-2003*, p. 54-5. For an analysis of the importance of the strategic partnership with India for China’s overall goal of preventing balancing, see Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, p. 171.

<sup>1055</sup> See Ma Jiali, “Is Competitive Partnership between China and India Viable?” in Zhang Yunling, ed., *Making New Partnerships: A Rising China and Its Neighbors* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press (China), 2008), pp. 177-89.

targeted at creating security problems for India and preventing it from “breaking out” of South Asia and playing an important role in other regions. During the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan Wars, China even threatened to open a second front to support Pakistan. China’s continued support for Pakistan, even as it has sponsored terrorist attacks on India, has prevented India from properly dealing with its greatest strategic headache. China’s assistance to Pakistan in providing conventional arms and nuclear cooperation has increased the threat to India and complicated its international environment, which has also led to resentment and mistrust towards China.<sup>1056</sup>

Although this resentment and mistrust is understandable, China has adjusted its overall strategic approach to South Asia, to include less emphasis on unconditional support for Pakistan, a greater focus on cooperation with India, and a more balanced strategy. In response to Indian criticism about China’s continued close relationship with Pakistan, Zhang Guihong argues that “China has already adjusted its South Asia policy, and has weakened the Pakistan factor in Sino-Indian relations and the India factor in Sino-Pakistan relations.”<sup>1057</sup> Another analysis of China’s South Asia strategy characterizes it as transitioning from its focus on one pillar in the past, close relations with Pakistan, to a strategy based on several pillars and cooperative relations with all countries in the region.<sup>1058</sup> Other scholars have characterized China’s strategy in South Asia as a shift to “omnidirectional” (*quanfangwei*), in which relations with other countries in the region besides Pakistan are much more important.<sup>1059</sup> In an excellent recent book on America’s strategy towards South Asia, a Chinese scholar explores how the United States has abandoned its old position of supporting Pakistan against India and has moved to an approach that aims for

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<sup>1056</sup> For background on Pakistan and Sino-Indian relations, see Anwar H. Syed, *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974); J.N. Dixit, *India’s Foreign Policy and Its Neighbors* (New Delhi: Gyan, 2001); John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 187-215.

<sup>1057</sup> See Zhang Guihong, “Diqu Shijiaoxia de ZhongYin Guanxi” [Sino-Indian Relations under a Regional Lens], in Zhang Yunling, chief ed., *Zhongguo yu Zhoubian Guojia*, p. 262.

<sup>1058</sup> See Ye Hailin, “China and South Asian Relations in a New Perspective,” in Zhang Yunling, ed., *Making New Partnership*, pp. 217-243.

<sup>1059</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Spring-Summer 2006.

cooperative relations with both India and Pakistan at the same time. Although the author, Zhang Guihong, recognizes that China faces more difficulty in moving towards such a policy, he tries to draw lessons from America's relative success for how China could also craft a more balanced strategy in South Asia.<sup>1060</sup>

One of the major shifts in China's approach to South Asia has been to end its support for Pakistan in its dispute with India over Kashmir and move to encourage Pakistan and India to resolve the issue bilaterally through negotiation. During the Cold War, as part of China's efforts to use Pakistan to pressure India, China not only supported Pakistan in conflicts over Kashmir, but also advocated a solution to Kashmir that involved other parties. During the 1999 Kargil Crisis in Kashmir, China adopted a much more balanced and less pro-Pakistan position. In contrast to China's threat to open a second front in earlier crises, China maintained neutrality during the crisis. Even when Pakistan's prime minister and foreign minister went to China to seek support and assistance during the crisis, China turned them down and encouraged them to search for a peaceful settlement.<sup>1061</sup> According to one scholar, the 1999 Kargil Crisis "was a watershed event that saw Beijing publicly distance itself from Pakistan's tactics of using the Kashmir conflict as a means to advance its national interest."<sup>1062</sup> During the crisis, China also repeatedly called for bilateral negotiation, dialogue, and resolution.<sup>1063</sup> This marked a significant change from China's earlier interference in the resolution process by supporting Pakistan's attempts to internationalize it. Despite the importance China places on the United Nations, it did not mention it as a venue for dialogue or resolution, but emphasized the need to resolve it bilaterally.<sup>1064</sup>

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<sup>1060</sup> See Zhang Guihong, *Chaoyue Junshi: Lengzhanhou de Meiguo Nanya Anquan Zhanlue*.

<sup>1061</sup> See Jingdong Yuan, "Beijing's Balancing Act: Courting New Delhi, Reassuring Islamabad," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Spring 2011), p. 43.

<sup>1062</sup> See Yuan, "Beijing's Balancing Act," p. 41.

<sup>1063</sup> See Rollie Lal, *Understanding China and India: Security Implications for the United States and the World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), p. 41; and David M. Malone and Rohan Mukherjee, "India and China: Conflict and Cooperation," *Survival*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (February-March 2010), p. 143-4.

<sup>1064</sup> See Garver, "Restoration of Sino-Indian Comity," p. 882; and Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Policy*, p. 297.

In December 2001 and early 2002, when India and Pakistan were on the verge of war again, China played a similarly balanced role in which it did not support Pakistan, but instead emphasized the need for peace, dialogue, and negotiation.<sup>1065</sup> According to a Chinese official involved in the negotiations, “we’re trying to be unbiased.”<sup>1066</sup> In these crises, China’s more balanced role included sending clear signals to Pakistan that China did not support its actions and would not support Pakistan if the crisis escalated to war. As one government think tank researcher said “Trying to send the signal to Pakistan that Sino-Pakistan relations were strong, but China would not support it was a difficult balance. But making clear to Pakistan that China’s support was limited was more important in the diplomatic exchanges during these crises.”<sup>1067</sup> Just as having a powerful patron during the Cold War often encouraged Pakistan to challenge India over Kashmir and in other areas, as China was moving to a balanced strategy in which it would use its even greater power and influence to discourage Pakistani intransigence, this showed India that China was willing to use its increased power in a way that enhanced stability and protected India’s interests.

As part of its more balanced strategy in South Asia, and efforts to improve relations with the United States and India, China also reduced its missile and nuclear cooperation with Pakistan, although some cooperation continued. As part of improved Sino-American relations in 1997-8, China pledged to stop the transfer of missile technology to Pakistan, but it had not implemented it. As part of its attempts to reassure the United States that it was responsible on issues on non-proliferation, China reached another agreement in November 2000 in which is strengthened and solidified this earlier pledge to stop the transfer of missile technology.<sup>1068</sup> Although this pledge was mostly aimed at reassuring the United States, it also had some positive benefits for relations with

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<sup>1065</sup> See Devin T. Hagerty, “China and Pakistan: Strains in the Relationship,” *Current History*, Vol. 101, No. 656 (September 2002), p. 289; and Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Policy*, p. 297.

<sup>1066</sup> Charles Hutzler, “In Kashmir, China Tries its Hand at Peacemaking,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 7, 2002.

<sup>1067</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer 2006.

<sup>1068</sup> See Shirk, “One-Sided Rivalry,” p. 91.

India as assistance to Pakistan was one of the major areas of tension in Sino-Indian relations. According to Garver, in a move that was aimed at improving relations with India, “Beijing also agreed to hear out Indian concerns about China’s missile and nuclear cooperation with Pakistan. Earlier it had insisted such matters were a purely bilateral affair and not a topic of discussion with India, and India had sought to minimize conflict with Beijing by not pressing the issue.”<sup>1069</sup>

Although China has clearly moved towards a more balanced position in its South Asia policy, its continued support for Pakistan is a continued source of mistrust in Sino-Indian relations. Unlike the past, however, China has tried to explain the reasons for its continued support and how completely abandoning Pakistan would lead to instability and undermine China’s interests. Chinese government officials and scholars have tried to argue that China has its own reasons and interests in at least maintaining stable relations with Pakistan, and these reasons have nothing to do with India or pressuring India. Jing-dong Yuan captures this predicament for China: “The challenge for Beijing is to convince New Delhi that its continuing close ties with Islamabad are not directed at India and are largely driven by its domestic needs for economic development, energy security and campaigns against ethnic separatist activities.”<sup>1070</sup> According to Zhang Guihong, China supported Musharraf’s government because of China’s concern over the risks to Pakistan’s internal stability and the effect this would have on China’s international environment.<sup>1071</sup> Friendly relations with Pakistan are an important part of Beijing’s battle against ethnic separatism and Islamic fundamentalism in Xinjiang, its attempts to minimize dependence on sea lanes for stable energy supplies, and its plans to address regional inequalities through its “Develop the West” program.<sup>1072</sup> China’s security cooperation with Pakistan, moreover, expanded to issues that had nothing to do with India and enhanced regional

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<sup>1069</sup> See John W. Garver, “Asymmetrical Indian and Chinese Threat Perceptions,” in Ganguly, ed., *India as an Emerging Power*, p. 102.

<sup>1070</sup> See Yuan, “Beijing’s Balancing Act,” p. 38.

<sup>1071</sup> See Zhang Guihong, “Yindu dui Zhongguo Jueqi de Kanfa he Fanying” [India’s Opinions and Reactions on the Rise of China], *Nanya Yanjiu* [South Asian Studies], No. 1 (2005).

<sup>1072</sup> See Yuan, “Beijing’s Balancing Act,” pp. 37-8; and Amardeep Athwal, *China-India Relations: Contemporary Dynamics* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 120.



stability. According to a Chinese expert, “After the 1990s, attacking terrorism, separatism and religious extremism have provided a new platform for Sino-Pakistani cooperation.”<sup>1073</sup> Although India is likely to remain somewhat concerned at China’s continued support for Pakistan, China has tried to reassure India by moving towards a more neutral posture in South Asia in which it uses its increasing power to maintain stability rather than challenge India.

### Self-Restraint in Territorial Conflicts: New Commitments and Concessions

The unresolved territorial disputes between China and India, stemming from India’s colonial history and the 1962 Sino-Indian War, remain a significant irritant and source of potential conflict in bilateral relations. As China and India returned to normal relations towards the end of the Cold War, they launched a Joint Working Group to try to resolve these disputes. Although it met multiple times, it had produced little progress.<sup>1074</sup> By the late 1990s, India grew concerned and frustrated at the lack of progress on territorial disputes and demanded progress if Sino-Indian relations were going to become stable and friendly. India was concerned that China might use its increased power to physically occupy these disputed areas, or build up its military to strengthen its position and make more assertive demands in negotiations. India was also worried that China was trying to postpone any real negotiation until it had a stronger position. Most importantly, Indian officials perceived China’s attitude towards the territorial disputes as a litmus test for the relationship, and increasingly raised this issue in bilateral meetings after the turn of the century and demanded some progress.<sup>1075</sup> In its attempts to improve relations with India and demonstrate that it was not a threat, China not only renewed efforts to negotiate at a higher-level, in an important

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<sup>1073</sup> See Ye Hailin, “Zhongguo yu Nanya Guanxi de Fazhan yu Sikao,” p. 182.

<sup>1074</sup> For background on the territorial dispute and these negotiations, see Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); Gondker Narayana Rao, *The India-China Border: A Reappraisal* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1968); Garver, *Protracted Contest*, pp. 79-109; and Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*, Ch. 3.

<sup>1075</sup> See Dixit, *Indian Foreign Policy and Its Neighbors*.

change in policy, but it also recognized Sikkim as a part of India. Chinese experts explicitly noted that progress on the territorial disputes would reduce mistrust and help improve bilateral relations.<sup>1076</sup> Even though China's relative power was increasing and its military modernization was outpacing India, China did not try to use its improved position to seize these disputed territories or make more assertive claims, but China became more accommodating even as it became more powerful.

In the disputed areas, China and India exchanged maps on the middle sector in November 2000, but this was the least controversial or disputed area. After India's repeated demands for progress on the territorial issue, China became more willing to engage with India on these issues and agreed to support new higher-level efforts to address this problem. Early in the new century, Chinese officials responded to Indian demands for more progress on negotiations by trying to demonstrate a new commitment to progress.

During Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to China in 2003, both sides agreed to appoint special representatives at a higher-level and stressed the importance of political considerations in achieving progress on this issue.<sup>1077</sup> According to one Indian expert, "In his talks, Vajpayee won a commitment from the Chinese for a serious and purposeful negotiation on the boundary question."<sup>1078</sup> After India's repeated demands for more than a symbolic agreement, the Chinese agreed that the new negotiations would take place with the perspective of the health of overall relations in mind. In the view of Chinese experts, the meaning of "political considerations" was that if there was no real progress, this would severely damage bilateral relations. And if China was

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<sup>1076</sup> See Sun Shihai, "Dui ZhongYin Jianli Huxin Guanxi de jidian Sikao" [Some Points of Reflection on Establishing Mutual Trust in Sino-Indian Relations], *Nanya Yanjiu* [South Asian Studies], No. 2 (2003), pp. 3-7.

<sup>1077</sup> See Horimoto, "India-China Relations: Bonhomie with Ambivalence," p. 169.

<sup>1078</sup> See C. Raja Mohan, "The Evolution of Sino-Indian Relations: Implications for the United States," in Alyssa Ayres and C. Raja Mohan, eds., *Power Realignment in Asia: China, India, and the United States* (New Delhi: Sage, 2009), p. 278.

serious about wanting to maintain a peaceful and stable relationship, and really wanted a partnership, it would need to make progress on the territorial issue.

Negotiations on the territorial issue achieved additional progress in April 2005 during Premier Wen's visit to India. Both sides reached an "Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question." China's agreement to move a step forward toward "settlement" of these disputes was an attempt to meet India's demands and maintain the forward momentum and progress on the territorial disputes. As I will discuss below, China also officially recognized Indian sovereignty over Sikkim as part of these negotiations. Moreover, as part of the guiding principles, China accepted the principle of safeguarding interests of settled populations, which seemed to be a concession to India and its position in Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>1079</sup>

On the eve of President Hu's November 2006 visit to India, Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Yuxi made a statement that the state of Arunachal Pradesh belonged to China. This led many in India to claim that China was making new territorial claims or backtracking on previous agreements, which were both factually untrue.<sup>1080</sup> Although this was a long-held Chinese position, making such a public statement seemed a significant move backwards from China's recent emphasis on cooperation and high-level dialogue on this issue. There is some evidence that Ambassador Sun had overstepped his instructions; not only was he not instructed to make such a statement, but officials in Beijing were unhappy that he had damaged the political atmosphere before President Hu's visit.<sup>1081</sup> Even if episodes such as this are not representative of the Chinese government's approach to the territorial issue, they are often widely-reported in India and lead many to question

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<sup>1079</sup> See John W. Garver and Fei-Ling Wang, "China's Anti-encirclement Struggle," *Asian Security*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2010), p. 242.

<sup>1080</sup> See Brahma Chellaney, "Autocratic China Becomes Arrogant," *Times of India*, November 15, 2006.

<sup>1081</sup> See "WikiLeaks: Chinese Envoy Exceeded Arunachal Brief," NDTV, May 29, 2011. Sources familiar with China's India policy confirmed that Ambassador Sun was acting without direction and that officials in Beijing criticized him for not expressing the focus on cooperation and good-neighborliness that China had hoped for. Author's interviews, Beijing, Spring 2011.

the seriousness of China's commitment to resolve the territorial issue and maintain cooperative relations. Progress in resolving these disputes has also slowed in recent years, but China's commitment to higher-level discussions and recognition of the political importance of this issue was an attempt to reassure India.

From 2003 on, China made a series of gradual concessions and agreements that eventually resulted in recognition of India's sovereignty over Sikkim, an area in the Himalayas that India annexed in 1975. China not only refused to recognize Indian sovereignty, but also characterized it as an "illegal annexation." Although China also received a stronger recognition of China's sovereignty over Tibet, China's recognition of Sikkim was a substantial concession and an important signal of China's willingness to cooperate on issues of great importance for India.

During Prime Minister Vajpayee's 2003 visit to China, both sides issued a memo that re-opened Nathula pass, which allowed cross-border trade involving Sikkim and Tibet. This was an extension of de facto recognition of Indian sovereignty over Sikkim.<sup>1082</sup> As part of Premier Wen's 2005 visit to India, China officially recognized Indian sovereignty over Sikkim. The joint statement issued at the end of his visit referred to the "Sikkim State of the Republic of India."<sup>1083</sup> Moreover, China published a map that acknowledged Indian sovereignty over Sikkim. These positions were repeated during President Hu's November 2006 visit and Singh's January 2008 visit. Although India would have been more pleased with a complete settlement of the territorial disputes, China's renewed focus and high-level attention placed on resolving territorial disputes, as well as its recognition of Indian sovereignty over Sikkim, are meant to show that China is committed to addressing problems that are important to India, even as China's power increases.

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<sup>1082</sup> See Li Li, p. 163; and C. Raja Mohan, "The Evolution of Sino-Indian Relations: Implications for the United States," p. 277.

<sup>1083</sup> See John Lancaster, "India, China Hoping to 'Reshape the World Order' Together," *Washington Post*, April 12, 2005; "Settlement of China-India Boundary Question in Context of Long-Term Interests, Overall Bilateral Relationship: Joint Statement," *People's Daily*, April 12, 2005; and Li Li, p. 165.

## Self-Restraint and Flexibility in Response to Improved U.S.-India Defense Relations and the Nuclear Agreement

Following on the early developments in U.S.-India relations at the end of the Clinton administration and beginning of the Bush administration, the United States and India substantially upgraded their relations in 2004-6. In a series of high-level leadership visits during this period, both sides agreed to a framework to advance defense relations, a civilian nuclear cooperation framework, and enhanced American political support for the rise of India. The Chinese government and Chinese experts followed these developments very closely.<sup>1084</sup> Also some Chinese experts worried that this represented a new containment of China, the official response was restrained. Rather than openly criticizing these developments, and the nuclear deal in particular, the Chinese government remained relatively restrained and focused on improving relations with India to make it less interested in joining any anti-China coalition.

There were concerns that China would strongly criticize the nuclear deal, try to obstruct the approval process, and respond by increased proliferation to Pakistan. Most of these fears did not come to fruition. Although Chinese experts expressed worries and concerns in private about the new U.S.-Indian partnership and how it would complicate China's international environment, there was relatively little open criticism from officials or experts.<sup>1085</sup> The strongest criticism of the nuclear agreement was how it was another example of American double standards and how it would further undermine the non-proliferation regime.<sup>1086</sup> Rather than making U.S.-Indian cooperation a point of tension in Sino-Indian relations, President Hu did not raise any objection to the nuclear agreement

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<sup>1084</sup> See Zhao Qinghai, "MeiYin He Hezuo jiqi Yingxiang" [U.S.-India Nuclear Cooperation and its Influence], *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* [International Studies], No. 4 (2006), pp. 24-28; and Zhang Guihong, "MeiYin Zhanlve Huoban Guanxi yu Zhongguo: Yingxiang he Duice" [U.S.-India Strategic Partnership and China: Influence and Response], *Dangdai Yatai* [Contemporary Asia-Pacific], No. 5 (2005), pp. 28-34.

<sup>1085</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005, Spring 2006.

<sup>1086</sup> For example, see Shen Dingli, "U.S. 'Contribution' to Nuclear proliferation," *Dongfang Zaobao*, June 20, 2006.

during his October 2006 visit to India and even raised the possibility of bilateral nuclear cooperation.

According to one scholar, “China did not obstruct the agreement. Rather, Beijing diplomatically maintained that it would carefully study the India-specific IAEA safeguards agreement before rendering its decision.”<sup>1087</sup> Most nuclear and India experts indicated that China would be unlikely to oppose the nuclear deal or stand in its way.<sup>1088</sup> China did not interfere with or oppose this nuclear deal until the fall of 2008, when it joined with others in opposing it in the Nuclear Supplier’s Group. Although China abandoned this restraint when it believed that several other countries opposed the deal, its initial response was to restraint itself and not cause any trouble for its relations with India or the United States.

Worries about potential Chinese overreaction to this new cooperation leading to new proliferation were also not realized. Many feared that China would take this opportunity to push for a similar nuclear agreement and “exception” with Pakistan that would include large-scale proliferation. Even when Pakistani leaders pushed for such an arrangement, China did not launch such an initiative or take such actions. In 2008, it agreed to supply Pakistan with new nuclear reactors, but China’s response for the first few years after the U.S.-Indian agreement was restraint.

There is considerable evidence that Chinese experts recognized the limitations of U.S.-India cooperation, and understand that whereas strong criticism and overreaction could drive them closer together, self-restraint and continued efforts to deepen cooperation would help improve China’s international environment. Experts on South Asia emphasized that even though some were worried that this new cooperation was aimed at China, “the cooperation between Washington and New Delhi also covers many other fields, including anti-terrorism, energy security, non-proliferation,

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<sup>1087</sup> See Shalendra D. Sharma, *China and India in the Age of Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 197.

<sup>1088</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer 2006.

etc.”<sup>1089</sup> Cheng Ruisheng, the former Chinese Ambassador to India argues that it makes sense to fear a potential anti-China coalition, but China should remain calm in the face of these improvements in U.S.-India relations. This is because, as one of the section titles suggests, the “Possibility of a U.S.-India Alliance against China is not Great.” Ambassador Cheng argues further that despite rhetoric of “natural allies,” “there are limitations to U.S.-Indian cooperation on international issues.”<sup>1090</sup> These limitations include India’s interest in sovereignty, independence, and autonomy, differences in Indian and American views on world order, and other remaining difficulties such as proliferation, Pakistan, and Iran.<sup>1091</sup> According to another expert, “China does not need to be excessively worried about the U.S.-India “natural partnership.”<sup>1092</sup> Recognition in China that improved U.S.-Indian cooperation is well short of an anti-China coalition helped China understand that it could face these developments with calm and restraint.

One of the important drivers for China’s restrained and calm response to improved U.S.-Indian relations was a growing recognition that China’s strategy and behavior was an important factor that could shape the development of U.S.-Indian relations. According to Ambassador Cheng, “China’s response to India-U.S. cooperation is an important factor [in the future development of that cooperation]. If China responded in a tit for tat manner (zhenfengxiangdui), like the great powers usually did during the Cold War, it would probably make the situation even worse.”<sup>1093</sup> Several Chinese experts highlighted that a strong response or “struggling” would undermine recent

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<sup>1089</sup> See Ye Hailin, “China and South Asian Relations in a New Perspective,” p. 226.

<sup>1090</sup> See Cheng Ruisheng, “Guanyu ZhongYinMei Sanbian Guanxi de yixie Sikao” [Reflections on China-India-U.S. Relations], in Ma Zhengang, chief ed., *Gaige Kaifang 30nian Zhongguo Guoji Huanjing he duiwai Guanxi de Yanbian yu Zhanwang: 2008nian Guoji Xingshi Yantaohui Lunwenji* [China’s International Environment during 30 Years of Reform and Opening and the Evolution and Prospects and External Relations: Collection of Essays from Conference on the International Situation in 2008], (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 301-305.

<sup>1091</sup> For other balanced assessments of U.S.-India relations, see Zhang Guihong, “MeiYin Zhanlve Huoban: Jinzhan, Wenti, he Qianjing [U.S.-India Strategic Partnership: Progress, Issues, and Prospects], *Nanya Yanjiu Jikan* [South Asian Studies Quarterly], No. 4 (2004); and Hu Zhiyong, “Lengzhanhou ‘ZhongYinMei’ Sanjiao Guanxi de Xingcheng jiqi Yingxiang” [The Formation of Post-Cold War ‘China-India-America’ Triangular Relations and its Influence], *Shehui Kexue* [Social Sciences], No. 7 (2005).

<sup>1092</sup> See Ye Hailin, “Zhongguo yu Nanya Guanxi de Fazhan yu Sikao,” p. 183.

<sup>1093</sup> See Cheng Ruisheng, “Guanyu ZhongYinMei Sanbian Guanxi de yixie Sikao,” p. 305.

improvements in Sino-Indian relations, and make India much more likely to further strengthen its relations with the United States. In the words of one government think tank scholar, “if China responded strongly, the most likely result would be to push U.S.-India relations in a more anti-China direction.”<sup>1094</sup> Whereas if China responded in a calm manner and focused on cooperation, this would help build more trust in Sino-Indian relations. Adopting a positive-sum view of U.S.-China-India relations, Lan Jianxue even suggests that India’s improved relations with others such as the United States can be a positive development for Sino-Indian relations. As cooperation with others makes India feel more confident and secure, “India’s confidence that China and India can achieve mutually beneficial cooperation and friendly exchanges will also gradually increase.”<sup>1095</sup>

#### Supporting India’s Enhanced Global and Regional Status:

During the Cold War, China’s attempts to contain India in South Asia and prevent it from playing a larger role in Asia, became a source of resentment and mistrust. After the end of the Cold War, several Indian experts believed that China continued to keep India weak. According to an Indian colonel, writing in 1999, “China’s foreign and defence policies are quite obviously designed to marginalize India in the long term and reduce India to the status of a sub-regional power.”<sup>1096</sup> As the Indian economy improved in the 1990s, the Indian government aimed to play a greater role commensurate with its increased power. According to one expert, one of the major issues in Indian foreign policy is its “progressing to a greater role in Asian and world diplomacy.”<sup>1097</sup> As increasing regional and global influence has become a more important part of Indian foreign policy, any Chinese efforts to constrain or limit India’s ability to play a larger role and increase its influence

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<sup>1094</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer 2006.

<sup>1095</sup> See Lan Jianxue, “Zhongguo duiYindu Guanxi de Zhanlue Dingwei,” p. 243.

<sup>1096</sup> See Colonel Gurmeet Kanwal, “China’s Long March to World Power Status: Strategic Challenges for India,” *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (February 1999), pp. 1713-28.

<sup>1097</sup> See John H. Gill, “India: Regional Concerns, Global Ambitions,” in Ellings, Friedberg, and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2003-4: Fragility and Crisis*, p. 181.



would very likely damage Sino-Indian relations and lead India to see China as a threat. Writing after the turn of the century, Ashley Tellis argued that Chinese behavior has shown that it is keeping India contained in South Asia through its actions.<sup>1098</sup> In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, rather than continuing its policy of marginalizing India, China has acknowledged, accepted, and even encouraged India's enhanced status and its important role as an Asian and global power. In supporting India's growing status and role, China aims to remove past sources of mistrust and replace it with a stronger foundation for a stable partnership.

In both rhetoric and behavior, China has shifted dramatically in its recognition of India as an increasingly important power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Starting with the visits early in the decade by Li Peng and Zhu Rongji, Chinese leaders have emphasized that they welcome India to “play a greater role in international and regional affairs.”<sup>1099</sup> When Indian Army Chief General Viji visited China in December 2004, Vice President Zeng Qinghong said that “China supports an even bigger role for India in international and regional cooperation issues.”<sup>1100</sup>

Endorsements of India's regional and global role and increasingly influence have been repeated in the joint declarations issued during leader summits. The 2005 Joint Statement issued during Premier Wen's visit to India included numerous acknowledgements of the growing importance of India. According to the text, “the two sides agreed that China-India relations have now acquired a global and strategic character.” It recognizes that India “is having an increasingly important influence in the international arena” and expresses the hope that “jointly addressing global challenges and threats” can become one of the foundations of bilateral relations. In a clear and direct manner, the text declares that “China attaches great importance to the status of India in

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<sup>1098</sup> See Ashley J. Tellis, “China and India in Asia,” in Frankel and Harding, eds., *The India-China Relationship*, p. 138:

<sup>1099</sup> See Zhang Minqiu, p. 54.

<sup>1100</sup> See Amardeep Athwal, *China-India Relations: Contemporary Dynamics* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 111.

international affairs.” The joint statement also repeatedly uses the phrase “Asia,” rather than “South Asia,” and declares that India and China have common interests in Asia and should collaborate and cooperate in the broader region.<sup>1101</sup>

In the joint statement offered during President Hu’s 2006 visit, there is also an emphasis on the importance of the global nature of the bilateral relationship. According to the joint statement, “With the growing participation and role of the two countries in all key issues in today’s globalizing world, the Sino-Indian partnership is vital for international efforts to deal with global challenges and threats.”<sup>1102</sup> According to the January 2008 “Shared Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” “Both governments affirm that “the two sides believe that their bilateral relationship in this century will be of significant regional and global influence.”<sup>1103</sup> These repeated statements show that rather than trying to limit India’s role to South Asia, China had changed its approach and recognized China as an important Asian and global power.

Rather than continuing to perceive and characterize India as a weak South Asian power, China began to recognize and acknowledge its enhanced importance and status. During Sino-Indian exchanges, Chinese leaders characterized China and India as the world’s largest, most powerful, and most important developing countries. In addition to these official statements, analysis and research by Chinese experts show that after the turn of the century, India was increasingly characterized as a rising power, with a rising economy and increasing international influence. In 2001-2003, several well-known books and articles were published on the rise of India and Chinese newspapers devoted much greater attention to India.<sup>1104</sup> Chinese experts also talked about the “multiple rises” (duochong

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<sup>1101</sup> See 2005 Joint Statement

<sup>1102</sup> See 2006 Joint Statement.

<sup>1103</sup> Jan 2008 statement

<sup>1104</sup> See “Yindu Zhengzai Jueqi” [India is Rising], *Nanya Yanjiu* [South Asian Studies], No. 2 (2001), pp. 40-46; Ma Jiali, chief ed., *Guanzhu Yindu: Jueqizhong de Daguo* [Following India: A Rising Great Power], (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 2002); and Wang Dehua and Wu Yang, chief eds., *Longyu Xiang: 21Shiji ZhongYin Jueqi Bijiao* [Dragon and Elephant: Comparison of China’s and India’s Rise], (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 2003).

jueqi) or “simultaneous rise” (tongshi jueqi) of China and India.<sup>1105</sup> Highlighting the increased status of India and its growing importance for China, Ma Jiali proposes viewing India as a “four-in-one power”: a great power, peripheral country, developing country, and a country with important role on the multilateral stage.<sup>1106</sup> The Chinese media paid much more attention to visits to China by Indian leaders and visits to India by Chinese leaders, often devoting several articles in newspapers to India before, during, and after these visits. This was not only the result of Chinese government attempts to signal to India that it values the relationship, but also represented an increased popular interest in India, which provided more evidence that China saw India as an important rising power.<sup>1107</sup>

India desperately wants to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, and China has gradually moved towards an endorsement. China had been very reluctant to support any reform of the permanent five members of the Security Council. During State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan’s October 2004: visit to India, he said that Beijing supported “a bigger role for India in the international community, including in the UNSC.”<sup>1108</sup> In the 2005 joint statement, China declared that “it understands and supports India’s aspirations to play an active role in the UN and international affairs.” This ambiguous wording, though a gradual change towards support for India, fell short of India’s hopes.<sup>1109</sup> According to some reports, however, India has already received written commitments from Beijing that it will support New Delhi’s bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council.<sup>1110</sup> After President Hu Jintao’s 2006 visit to India, although there were no new

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<sup>1105</sup> See Hu Xin, “‘Duochong Jueqi’ Shiyexia de Zhongguo Jueqi” [China’s Rise from the View of “Multiple Rises”], *Taipeiyang Xuebao* [Pacific Journal], No. 6 (2005), pp. 12-21; Lan, p. 231.

<sup>1106</sup> See Ma Jiali, “ZhongYin Guanxi de Fazhan Qianjing” [Development Prospects for Sino-Indian Relations], *Heping yu Fazhan* [Peace and Development], No. 2 (2007).

<sup>1107</sup> See Ma Jiali, “Wajiepaiyi de Zhongguo zhixing yu ZhongYin Guanxi” [Vajpayee’s Trip to China and Sino-Indian Relations], *Heping yu Fazhan* [Peace and Development], No. 3 (2003), pp. 16-20; and Wang Hongwei, “Wen Zongli FangYin yu ZhongYin Guanxi de Xin Fazhan” [Premier Wen’s Visit to India and new Developments in Sino-Indian Relations], *Nanya Yanjiu* [South Asian Studies], No. 1 (2005), pp. 3-6.

<sup>1108</sup> See Satu Limaye, “2004: A Year of Living Actively,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (January 2005).

<sup>1109</sup> See John Lancaster, “India, China Hoping to ‘Reshape the World Order’ Together,” *Washington Post*, April 12, 2005.

<sup>1110</sup> See Athwal, *China-India Relations*, p. 109; and Fang Tien-sze, “China Focuses on Improving Relations in South Asia,” *Taipei Times*, April 27, 2005.

commitments made, some in India were convinced that China would not be an obstacle to reform of the Security Council.<sup>1111</sup> Chinese leaders and experts have also repeatedly emphasized to their Indian counterparts that China's opposition to the 2005 plan for Security Council reform was mostly aimed at Japan.<sup>1112</sup> In the 2008 joint statement, China agreed to add the phrase "including in the Security Council," the first time China used this formulation.<sup>1113</sup> Although this commitment still falls short of what India wants, China has dramatically shifted its position from strong opposition to India's role in the United Nations to greater support.

China has recently expressed a desire to work with a rising India not only to address global issues, but also to allow India to play a greater role in East Asia. In perceptions, rhetoric, and behavior, China is no longer trying to contain China in South Asia. According to Lan Jianxue, "China's lens in observing Sino-Indian relations has qualitatively changed, and has developed from 'Sino-Indian relations in the framework of South Asia' into 'Sino-Indian relations on the world stage.'"<sup>1114</sup> According to another Chinese expert, "At global level, for China, Indian rising-up is welcomed."<sup>1115</sup> China supports India's increased power and influence at the global level because it can work together with a rising India to more effectively resist American unilateralism and hegemonism. At the global level, a rising India is a positive force for promoting a multipolar world. In addition, given the broad similarities in their visions for global order, China also hopes to cooperate with India in addressing global issues. In recent years, not only has China welcomed India's rise, but in some ways it has also promoted India's increased influence and helped to elevate its status. Even though India remains well behind China economically and militarily, allowing India to be grouped together, whether it is through "Chindia" or the BRICs, increases India's status.

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<sup>1111</sup> Garver and Wang, "China's Anti-encirclement Struggle," p. 242.

<sup>1112</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005, Summer 2006.

<sup>1113</sup> See Horimoto, "India-China Relations: Bonhomie with Ambivalence," p. 176.

<sup>1114</sup> See Lan Jianxue, "Zhongguo duiYindu Guanxi de Zhanlue Dingwei," p. 238.

<sup>1115</sup> See Ye Hailin, "China and South Asian Relations in a New Perspective," p. 231.

Moreover, China has actively supported further increases in India's power and influence at international meetings through advocating increased voice for developing countries such as India and a reformed international order that is more representative and reflective of international order.<sup>1116</sup> China has not only noted the importance of India in bilateral meetings and international meetings, but it has even started to include references to India's importance in joint communiqués with Russia.<sup>1117</sup> In rhetoric and behavior, China has increasingly welcomed India's rising power at the global level and shown that it hopes to treat India as "a global partner to build an 'Asian Century.'"<sup>1118</sup>

In East Asia and the region, where Sino-Indian relations have been more competitive, China has expressed a greater willingness to support India playing a greater role in the region. There are clearly more signs of competition and potential areas of tension at the regional level, where there is a competition for influence in which China wants to play a greater role in South Asia and India wants to play a greater role in East Asia. Ye Hailin expresses the limits of China's support for India in the region, but also shows a new acceptance of India's greater role. He writes: "China will not support India's intention of dominating South Asia, but must recognize that India enjoys interests and influence in the region commensurate with its power."<sup>1119</sup> Although probably not the preferred outcome from Beijing's perspective, China has ultimately acquiesced to Indian participation in regional institutions, such as its observer status in the SCO and inclusion in the East Asian Summit. ASEAN plus China, Japan, and South Korea remains the preferred framework for East Asian regionalism, but Beijing is gradually recognizing that with India's greater role in East Asia, it is

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<sup>1116</sup> See Glosny, "China and the BRICs: A Real (but Limited) Partnership in a Unipolar World;" and Zhao Gancheng, "Fazhanzhong Daguó Xingqǐ yú Guójì Tìxì" [The Rise of Developing Great Powers and the International System], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 11 (2007), pp. 35-9.

<sup>1117</sup> See Deepa M. Ollapally, "The Evolution of India's Relations with Russia: Tried, Tested, and Searching for Balance," p. 242.

<sup>1118</sup> See Ye Hailin, "China and South Asian Relations in a New Perspective," p. 220.

<sup>1119</sup> See Ye Hailin, "Zhongguo yu Nanya Guanxi de Fazhan yu Sikao," p. 183

becoming increasingly difficult to exclude India from new architectures for East Asia.<sup>1120</sup> According to one scholar, “China has increasingly shown greater openness to Indian participation in regional organizations in which Beijing may have harbored hopes of exerting influence.”<sup>1121</sup> As India viewed Chinese attempts to contain India within the subcontinent with great suspicion, Chinese efforts to support India as an important global and regional power are meant to signal an acceptance of a rising India and desire to develop a cooperative relationship.

***India’s Balancing Response to the Rise of China: Moderate Increases in Severity of Balancing and Deepening Cooperation with China***

Early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as China’s economic rise and military modernization continued, India undertook a series of moves to increase the severity of the balancing response against China to moderate levels. These moves included changes in its own military forces, as well as deepening political and military relations with other countries, most prominently the United States. Although these were not aimed at China and little of the cooperation envisioned was anti-China, China’s rise and the changing balance of power was one factor pushing this cooperation. However, this increased cooperation with other countries faced many obstacles and limitations to how far these relationships would improve in general. More importantly for this project, there was strong opposition in India whenever the possibility of cooperating on China-related issues or taking any positions against China. Not only did this limited balancing not include a willingness by the Indian government to support anti-China initiatives, but during this period, India developed a stronger and

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<sup>1120</sup> For one assessment of Chinese discussions of expanding ASEAN plus Three to include India, and the implications for China, see Zhao Gancheng, “Yindu ‘Dongxiang’ Zhengce de Fazhan ji Yiyi” [The Development and Significance of India’s “Look East” Strategy], *Dangdai Yatai* [Contemporary Asia Pacific], No. 8 (2007), pp. 10-16, 84; and Garver, “Evolution of India’s China Policy,” p. 102.

<sup>1121</sup> See Deepa M. Ollapally, “The Evolution of India’s Relations with Russia: Tried, Tested, and Searching for Balance,” p. 241.

deeper economic, political, and military relationship with China than it ever had before. Even though China was becoming more powerful, India dramatically improved its relationship with China and repeatedly launched and participated in activities that were aimed at cooperation and were moves towards less severe balancing.

Although India's military budget has increased annually for the last twenty years, it is difficult to characterize that as a response to China. Firstly, it is mostly the product of India's growing economy, which has also grown dramatically since the early 1990s. Throughout the Cold War, India's economic stagnation had led to deterioration in the state of the Indian military. To a large extent, the increase in military expenditure has been a combination of need, after years of neglect, and opportunity, as a rising economy provided the needed expenditures.<sup>1122</sup> However, it is factually accurate that as China has risen, India's military budget has also increased.

Looking beyond the aggregate data about India's defense budget, there have been choices in India's military modernization in the last twenty years that are a response to the rise of China. One of the major areas that show a reaction to China is the modernization of India's navy. It is certainly true that as India has become more integrated with the global economy, sea lanes have become more important and require a robust navy for protection. Status is also an important potential driver for some of this military modernization, especially as India seems to have internalized the idea that great powers have great navies. In addition, a more powerful navy is important for dealing with non-traditional threats such as piracy, and India's participation in the Gulf of Aden is a great example of this. However, India has been purchasing and developing very advanced submarines and surface ships in the last decade that seem more directed at the navies of other regional powers. As one expert who has analyzed India's military modernization argues, "nonconventional threats alone, however, do not explain India's naval muscle flexing. The capability of most new arms

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<sup>1122</sup> See Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming without Aiming: India's Military Modernization* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2010).

systems go far beyond chasing pirates and poachers.” Holslag cites the acquisition and development of advanced submarines as a particularly good example that shows that “India does not trust the maritime ambitions of other countries.”<sup>1123</sup>

There have also been some subtle changes in force deployments that are aimed at China and suggest more severe internal balancing. If India and China end up fighting over the disputed areas, the mountainous terrain and long distances will make fighting any conflict a substantial logistics challenge. In recent years, India has made some moves to improve its logistics and combat support capabilities near these disputed areas. For example, India has developed road and rail routes near these disputed territories, but there are multiple drivers for this. One reason for these moves is to improve interconnectivity with smaller neighbors in the region, which have often felt neglected and dominated by India. Moreover, building new routes also presents the possibility of improving India’s economic prospects, especially as it will enable Indian businesses and products to enter into markets that were previously closed. However, these routes have also been built to enable troops and army equipment to travel towards these disputed areas very quickly. The multiple drivers for this development makes it difficult to attribute this solely to China, but the military applications are clearly important as a way to potentially respond to potential Chinese attacks or coercion.<sup>1124</sup> In a move that is more clearly directed at China, India has recently deployed two infantry mountain divisions and an artillery brigade deployed in Arunachal Pradesh, one of the areas disputed by China and India.

In the last decade, although the Indian military remains predominantly focused on Pakistan, Indian military planners have devoted more attention to China.<sup>1125</sup> According to one Indian military

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<sup>1123</sup> See Jonathan Holslag, *China and India: Prospects for Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 132.

<sup>1124</sup> See C. Raja Mohan, “The Evolution of Sino-Indian Relations: Implications for the United States,” p. 281.

<sup>1125</sup> See John H. Gill, “India and Pakistan: A Shift in the Military Calculus?” in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2005-06: Military Modernization in an Era of Uncertainty* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005), pp. 237-68.



officer, “Pakistan is the most pressing threat India faces today, but the military is increasingly talking about and thinking about China.”<sup>1126</sup> Although it is still very early in this process, one Indian scholar argues that discussions are beginning within India of the need to prepare for a two-front war, against Pakistan and India.<sup>1127</sup> Planning is not the best indicator of threat perception or balancing because professional militaries plan against and even train against a wide range of threats. However, this does suggest that there is a slow evolution occurring within the Indian military in which China is becoming more important and more prominent.

India’s new cooperation with the United States, as well as other Asian powers, represents a move in the direction of more severe balancing, although it is still moderate and limited. Some scholars cite these recent developments as clear evidence that India is balancing against China. According to two experts on Indian foreign policy, “Given Washington and New Delhi’s shared concerns, the Bush administration is seeking a robust strategic relationship with India in order to balance against China.”<sup>1128</sup> According to another, India is “pursuing a clear balance of power or hedging strategy vis-a-vis China by strengthening their security ties with the United States [and other Asian countries].”<sup>1129</sup> Although I argue below that these claims overstate the degree to which these moves are targeted at China, exaggerate India’s willingness to participate in any anti-China moves, and ignore the limitations of these relationships, and overlook the improvements in India’s relationship with China.

Following on President Clinton’s breakthrough trip to India and emphasis on the importance of India early in the Bush administration, improvements in U.S.-India defense

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<sup>1126</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Summer 2006.

<sup>1127</sup> See Harsh V. Pant, “India Comes to Terms with a Rising China,” in Ashley J. Tellis, Travis Tanner, and Jessica Keough, eds., *Strategic Asia 2011-12: Asia Responds to Its Rising Powers: China and India* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2011), p. 117.

<sup>1128</sup> See Sumit Ganguly and Dinshaw Mistry, “The Case for the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement,” *World Policy Journal* (Summer 2006), p. 12:

<sup>1129</sup> See J. Mohan Malik, “India’s Response to China’s Rise,” in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato, eds., *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 179.

cooperation has been one of the major foreign policy successes of the Bush administration. In 2004 President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee signed the Next Steps for Strategic Partnership. This not only laid out some of the steps that would need to be taken to truly transform the relationship into one of strategic significance, but also included a phased effort to ease restrictions to U.S. technology in several areas. In June 2005, the defense secretaries of the two countries also reached a major defense agreement, that included a broad vision for the future of the military relationship over the next decade, as well as a series of more actionable steps that needed to be taken. High level visits such as Prime Minister Singh's visit to America in June 2005 and President Bush's visit to India in March 2006 helped improve the political relations between both countries and also led to new commitments in the military realm. Probably the most important and well-known agreement was the civilian nuclear cooperation agreement, under which the United States agreed to provide civilian nuclear assistance and recognition as a nuclear power, as long as India took a series of steps to comply with non-proliferation concerns. Although few of these agreements or the joint communiqués produced from these meetings explicitly invoked worries about China or characterized these as a response to the rise of China, but this did represent increased military cooperation by two powerful democracies that were well aware of the ongoing power shifts in the region.<sup>1130</sup>

As part of this enhanced military cooperation, joint exercises expanded dramatically. In January 2002, Defense Minister Fernandez visited the United States and worked together with Secretary Rumsfeld to enhance military cooperation and military exercises. Some of these exercises

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<sup>1130</sup> For more on these developments, see Robert M. Hathaway, "The US-India Courtship: From Clinton to Bush," in Sumit Ganguly, ed., *India as an Emerging Power* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 6-31; Henry Sokolski, ed., *Gauging U.S.-Indian Strategic Cooperation* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007); and Sumit Ganguly, Brian Shoup, and Andrew Scobell, eds., *US-Indian Strategic Cooperation into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: More than Words* (London: Routledge, 2006); and David M. Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance? Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Ch. 7.

included training for peace-keeping operations, airlift and high-altitude fighting.<sup>1131</sup> One of the most high-profile and important military exercises involving the U.S. and India is the Malabar exercises. Though these originally dated from the 1990s, after September 11<sup>th</sup>, there has been a much greater focus on these exercises as they now occur annually. Moreover, these exercises have included a greater number of naval assets and some of the most modern ships and submarines from the United States and India. Although some of these exercises are focused on anti-piracy, counterterrorism and search and rescue, they have also included operations such as anti-submarine warfare training, which has much greater implications for contingencies involving China.

Although India's relations with the United States have attracted the most attention, India has tried to improve its political and defense relations with many other countries in the region. The Malabar exercise has often involved navies from Japan, Australia, Singapore, and other Asian countries. India has also participated in military exercises involving these countries outside of Malabar. Although many of these exercises have been focused on non-traditional security issues and not focused on China, one could argue that the rise of China is in part pushing these countries to develop a foundation for future cooperation against China should it be necessary.

Discomfort with Chinese power and influence in regional institutions has pushed India to draw closer to other countries and other countries to draw India further into East Asia. After China became an observer in SAARC, fearing that China would become more dominant in the organization, India enlisted Australia, Myanmar, the EU, Iran, Japan, South Korea, and the United States as other potential SAARC observers to dilute China's influence.<sup>1132</sup> In response to similar concerns about China, other East Asian powers pushed for the inclusion of India (as well as Australia and New Zealand) in the East Asia Summit, in the hopes of diluting Chinese influence and

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<sup>1131</sup> See Satu Limaye, "Delhi's Two-Front Diplomacy," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 5, No 4 (January 2004).

<sup>1132</sup> See Swaran Singh, "Paradigm Shift in India-China Relations: From Bilateralism to Multilateralism," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 2011), p. 163.

control. Taken together, these developments show that India has become more willing to deepen cooperation with the United States and other neighbors in the region.

Although some see India's new cooperation with others as a balancing reaction to China, the content of much of this cooperation shows that very little of it is about China. For example, the four areas of cooperation as part of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership include reduced restrictions to technology in dual-use areas, civilian nuclear, civilian space cooperation, and ballistic missile defense. It is difficult to make a strong argument that any of these areas are directed at or are a response to China. U.S.-India defense cooperation has unquestionably deepened in recent years, but this has mostly been in the area of non-traditional security. According to one expert, the areas of cooperation so far have mostly included things such as "securing sea-lanes of control, engaging in counterpiracy and counterterrorism activities, search and rescue, humanitarian disaster relief and peace operations."<sup>1133</sup> After 9/11, the U.S. and India have made significant advances in cooperation in counterterrorism and law enforcement.<sup>1134</sup> Two experts who earlier argued that the rise of China were forcing the U.S. and India to balance cite patrols in the Indian Ocean and the response to the tsunami as examples where cooperation has been most effective, examples that have nothing to do with China.<sup>1135</sup> In an influential 2006 report on the future of U.S.-India relations, Ashley Tellis listed several agenda items for near term cooperation, including membership in United Nations Security Council, Proliferation Security Initiative, defense cooperation, space partnership, and cybersecurity cooperation.<sup>1136</sup> Although some of these issue areas involve China, this is clearly not an agenda that reflects the threat from China bringing countries together to respond to it.

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<sup>1133</sup> See C. Christine Fair, "India and the US: Embracing a New Paradigm," in Harsh V. Pant, ed., *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 150.

<sup>1134</sup> See C. Christine Fair, "India and the US: Embracing a New Paradigm," p. 144.

<sup>1135</sup> See Dinshaw Mistry and Sumit Ganguly, "The US-India Nuclear Pact: A Good Deal," *Current History* (November 2006), pp. 375-78.

<sup>1136</sup> See Ashley J. Tellis, "India as a New Global Power: An Action Agenda for the United States," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Carnegie Endowment Report (July 2005), p. 34.

When American and Indian officials discuss the range of issues on which they have shared interests, managing the rise of China is on the list of issues, but it is a very long list of issues, and the real cooperation so far has been on issues that are not aimed at China. In an interesting interview, U.S. Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill lays out this broad and deep agenda for potential cooperation. His list of potential areas of partnership and cooperation include anti-terrorism, preventing the spread of WMD, dealing with rise of China, ensuring reliable supply of energy, and maintaining global economic growth.<sup>1137</sup> Although China is on the list, there are many other important issues that the U.S. and India are dealing with and that are bringing them together. Moreover, Tellis suggests that the strategic dialogue will focus on global issues, and some issues in South Asia, but he does not mention East Asia as an important area of discussion.<sup>1138</sup>

China is one of the drivers for this cooperation, and if China becomes more threatening in the future, this cooperation may lay a strong foundation for anti-China cooperation in the future. However, India's unwillingness to talk about China as part of these defense consultations and dialogues weakens the argument that the threat of China is provoking this cooperation. According to one expert: "Partly because neither country wants to be seen as part of an anti-China alliance or to feed Chinese concerns about "encirclement," official contacts between India and the United States have not devoted much time to in-depth discussion of China."<sup>1139</sup> The same expert argues elsewhere that U.S.-India defense talks include little discussion of China.<sup>1140</sup> My own interviews with American defense officials suggest that although China is often the "elephant in the room," India is reluctant to "talk substantively about China or engage in any discussions or activities that could

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<sup>1137</sup> "The India Imperative: A Conversation with Robert D. Blackwill," *National Interest* (Summer 2005), p. 12.

<sup>1138</sup> See Tellis, p. 16.

<sup>1139</sup> See Teresita C. Schaffer, *India and the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reinventing Partnership* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2009), p. 139.

<sup>1140</sup> See Teresita C. Schaffer, "Partnering with India: Regional Power, Global Hopes," in Ashley J. Tellis, Mercy Kuo and Andrew Marble, eds., *Strategic Asia 2008-09: Challenges and Choices* (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asia Research, 2008).

possibly be perceived as anti-China.”<sup>1141</sup> Reflecting this reluctance to engage on China, one scholar argues that if the United States decides to hard balance, “many Indian elites clearly do not wish to play the role of a ‘US pawn’ in the American game of great power balancing.”<sup>1142</sup>

Although common interests have driven India and the United States closer together in the past decade, significant differences remain on a range of important issues that will limit bilateral cooperation. U.S. support for Pakistan as part of the war on terror has greatly frustrated India. In 2004 the U.S. designated it a “major non-NATO ally” and in 2005 the U.S. decided to sell F-16s. American support for Pakistan, but seeming unwillingness to support India’s battle with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir has deepened frustration in India. At the same time, India’s cooperation with Iran and unwillingness to embrace free trade has frustrated Washington.<sup>1143</sup> According to one expert, “A short list of issues where Washington and New Delhi will find it difficult to collaborate would include Pakistan, China, Iran, Iraq, the World Trade Organization, and the future of the global nonproliferation regime.”<sup>1144</sup>

There has also been significant opposition within India towards the civilian nuclear cooperation agreement, what many analysts have considered to be the cornerstone of the new bilateral relationship. Leftist parties have criticized the move away from nuclear disarmament and worry that it is a renunciation of non-alignment. But more mainstream parties and officials, including Vajpayee, have voiced opposition. They worry that the agreement severely limits India’s options and freedom of action in terms of its future nuclear forces. Many of these opponents believe the agreement has required significant concessions from India and very little from the American side. In the face of domestic opposition in India, Prime Minister Singh slowed the

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<sup>1141</sup> Author’s interviews, Washington, D.C., Fall 2009.

<sup>1142</sup> See Amardeep Athwal, *China-India Relations: Contemporary Dynamics* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 125.

<sup>1143</sup> See Sumit Ganguly, Brian Shoup, and Andrew Scobell, eds., *US-Indian Strategic Cooperation into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: More than Words* (London: Routledge, 2006); and C. Christine Fair, “India and the US: Embracing a New Paradigm,” Harsh V. Pant, ed., *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 131-62.

<sup>1144</sup> See Robert M. Hathaway, “The US-India Courtship: From Clinton to Bush,” p. 29.

negotiation because it was too contentious. There have been opponents on the U.S. side as well.<sup>1145</sup> Rather than suggesting that the China threat has driven these countries close together, this opposition suggests that China may be playing a role, but it is still a limited one and the result has been limited cooperation, and some frustration with that.

Although mistrust towards China still exists in India, and many worry how China will behave in the future, the past decade has also seen an unprecedented improvement in Sino-Indian relations. Chinese expert Ma Jiali characterizes this as a transition from “cold peace” into “hot cooperation.”<sup>1146</sup>

Mohan Malik, who is generally hawkish on China, argues that “the Indian government’s current approach signals a shift from confrontation to cooperation.”<sup>1147</sup> According to another expert, since the late 1990s, Sino-Indian relations have turned into a relationship of “bonhomie with ambivalence.”<sup>1148</sup> Another scholar argues that “the puzzling thing [for realist expectations of balancing] is that serious cooperative trends or mitigating factors are also beginning to emerge in the Sino-Indian relationship.”<sup>1149</sup>

Even as China’s power has increased, India and China have deepened their cooperation, exchanged high-level visits, and established new mechanisms for cooperation. Visits by leaders in both countries showed a return to a more normal relationship and a commitment to improving relations. When Premier Zhu visited India in 2002, this was the first visit by a Chinese premier since 1991. Similarly, when Prime Minister Vajpayee visited China in 2003, he was the first prime minister to do so in a decade. Hu Jintao’s 2006 visit to India marked the first visit by a president since 1996. According to one scholar, the April 2005 Wen Jiabao visit, November 2006 Hu Jintao

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<sup>1145</sup> See Lisa Curtis, “The Costs of a Failed US-India Civil Nuclear Deal,” Heritage Foundation, WebMemo, November 2, 2007.

<sup>1146</sup> See Ma Jiali, “ZhongYin Guanxi de Fazhan Qianjing.”

<sup>1147</sup> Mohan Malik, ““Eyeing the Dragon: India’s China Debate.”

<sup>1148</sup> See Horimoto, “India-China Relations: Bonhomie with Ambivalence,” p. 162:

<sup>1149</sup> See Amardeep Athwal, *China-India Relations*, p. 4-5.

visit and January 2008 visit by Prime Minister Singh “mark an unprecedented level of interaction and dialogue between the leadership of China and India and signal a qualitative transformation in Sino-Indian relations.”<sup>1150</sup>

These were not only symbolic visits by leaders, but with each new visit, bilateral relations reached new heights and both sides made new commitments to deepen friendship and cooperation. During Premier Wen’s 2005 visit, both sides agreed to elevate relation to the level of a “strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity.” In 2006, when President Hu visited, both leaders reached an agreement on ten strategies to deepen the strategic and cooperative partnership.<sup>1151</sup> During Prime Minister Singh’s 2008 visit both leaders reaffirmed their common interests and common views in signing a “Shared Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” In his analysis of the recent improvement in bilateral relations, Assistant Foreign Minister Hu Zhengyue refers to the visits by Wen, Hu, and Singh as the “three milestones.”<sup>1152</sup> As part of these high-level exchanges, several new working-level dialogues and mechanisms were established to foster cooperation on finance, counterterrorism, energy, and other practical areas. 2006 was also designated as “Sino-Indian Friendship Year” as both sides focused efforts on building trust at both the governmental and popular level.<sup>1153</sup>

In the last decade, Sino-Indian defense exchanges and military cooperation have also come a long way, even as China’s power has increased. The first security dialogue was launched in March

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<sup>1150</sup> See Sharma, *China and India in the Age of Globalization*, p. 164.

<sup>1151</sup> See Dipanker Banerjee, “China and South Asia in the New Era,” in Zhang Yunling, ed., *Making New Partnerships: A Rising China and Its Neighbors*, p. 210-213. These ten points are: Ensuring Comprehensive Development of Bilateral Relations, Strengthening Institutional Linkages and Dialogue Mechanisms, Consolidating Commercial and Economic Exchanges, Expanding All-Round Mutually Beneficial Cooperation, Instilling Mutual Trust and Confidence through Defense Cooperation, Seeking Early Settlement of Outstanding Issues, Promoting Trans-border Connectivity and Cooperation, Boosting Cooperation in Science and Technology, Revitalising Cultural Ties and Nurturing People-to-People Exchanges, and Expanding Cooperation on Regional and International Stage.

<sup>1152</sup> See Hu Zhengyue, “A Shared Vision,” *Beijing Review*, October 2, 2008.

<sup>1153</sup> See Ma Jiali, “ZhongYin Guanxi de Fazhan Qianjing,”



2000 and several subsequent rounds have been held.<sup>1154</sup> After Defense Minister Fernandes visited China in April 2003 and made clear he did not see China as a threat, both sides agreed to establish a new dialogue on counterterrorism. This visit also paved the way for an expansion of military exchanges. In March 2004, the Chinese Defense Minister General Cao Gangchuan, spent five days in India. This was followed by a visit from the Indian Army Chief of Staff in late 2004, the first visit from someone in that position in ten years. In 2005, PLA Chief of the General Staff Liang Guanglie visited India; the last visit by a Chief of the General Staff was General Fu's visit in 1998 that occurred right before India's nuclear tests. A PLA Navy squadron also visited India in 2001 for the first time since 1993.<sup>1155</sup>

Sino-Indian military relations have not simply returned to their state from the 1990s, but the visits, exchanges, activities, and agreements have reached new levels and continued to expand. For example, in 2006, the defense ministries of both countries signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Defense which called for expanded exchanges across a range of issues. In 2007, as called for under the MOU, India and China also held the first round of an upgraded defense dialogue. Since 2003, India and China have also participated in joint military exercises, involving both navies and armies. They have also observed each other's exercises and significantly expanded their joint planning and joint training in battling terrorism.<sup>1156</sup> Although significant mistrust of China still exists, India's willing to enhance military exchanges with a rising China both exhibits behavior that that is very cooperative and also undermines the argument that India's exercises with other regional powers show that it is hard balancing against China, especially as many of these exercises are similar, though on a somewhat smaller scale with China.

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<sup>1154</sup> Garver and Wang, "China's Anti-encirclement Struggle," p. 241.

<sup>1155</sup> Garver and Wang, "China's Anti-encirclement Struggle," p. 241-3.

<sup>1156</sup> For more details, see Banerjee, "China and South Asia in the New Era," p.198; and Harsh V. Pant, "Indian Foreign Policy and China," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (October-December 2006), p. 770; and Pant, "India Comes to Terms with a Rising China."

India's support for China's positions on a range of global issues shows that there is significant cooperation in the relationship. Both sides take the same position on opposing U.S. hegemony and unilateralism, as well as issues such as climate change, free trade, food security, the proper response to financial crisis, and the need to make the international order more representative and more favorable to developing countries. Even an expert like Harsh Pant who usually emphasizes the competitive and conflictual nature of bilateral relations, recognizes that at there is a significant "global convergence" between India and China. Moreover, on many of these issues, not only are China and India cooperating, but they are taking positions in opposition to the United States and the West. This complicated picture of India joining with China on some issues to push back against the United States shows the limits of the U.S.-India "natural alliance," especially as an anti-China alliance.

Lastly, India's repeated support for China's position that Tibet is a part of China shows that on an important issue that could pressure the CCP regime, India has decided not to use its considerable leverage to challenge China. Not only has India not challenged China over Tibet, but in 2008, according to two experts, "the Indian government took great pains to ensure that Tibetan protestors did not cause any embarrassment to Beijing during the passage of the Olympic Torch through New Delhi."<sup>1157</sup> In the spring of 2008, as protests broke out in Tibet, India restricted Tibetan protests in India.<sup>1158</sup> Although it is true that if India supported Tibetan protestors, China could change its position on Sikkim or other territorial issues, if India wanted to cause problems for China, this would have been a perfect opportunity to do so.

### *Explaining India's Limited Balancing Against China*

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<sup>1157</sup> See Malone and Mukherjee. "India and China: Conflict and Cooperation," p. 146.

<sup>1158</sup> See Lisa Curtis, "U.S.-India Relations: The China Factor," Heritage Foundation, Backgrounder No. 2209, November 25, 2008, p. 2; and Frankel and Harding, *The India-China Relationship*, p. 13.

As China's material power has increased, India has made some moves to modernize its military to respond to China and has improved its relations with external partners such as the United States, in ways that have a China component. Although the balancing response by India has become relatively more severe over time, these moves have been very gradual and have not been directly targeted at China. Moreover, at the same time as these balancing behaviors have occurred, India has also deepened its cooperative relationship with China. Overall, the convergence test does not show strong support for my theory of reassurance because India has taken some balancing actions, but the gradual and limited nature of these responses occurring at the same time as a rising China implemented reassurance suggests that reassurance may have played a role both in keeping the balancing response limited and in promoting bilateral cooperation.

In terms of processing tracing, there is evidence that Indian officials and experts have recognized and favorably evaluated some aspects of China's reassurance. China's adoption of a more balanced policy on Kargil, and its move away from unconditional support for Pakistan on territorial disputes has been noted by Indians. According to Shirk, "A senior Indian official observed that during the Kargil conflict in 1999, China's public statements were almost as evenhanded as the Group of Eight's."<sup>1159</sup> Interviews with Indian officials in the Indian Embassy in Beijing reveal an official recognition that China has at least moved in the "right direction" on this issue, from India's perspective. Even relatively hawkish Indian experts admit that China had taken "a more evenhanded approach to Kashmir."<sup>1160</sup> One Indian scholar is very explicit about connecting China's policies on Kashmir to changes in India's response to China. According to Singh, "A complete transformation in China's Kashmir policy over the years has lent new

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<sup>1159</sup> See Shirk, "One-Sided Rivalry," p. 93

<sup>1160</sup> See Mohan Malik, "China Unveils 'The Kashmir Card,'" *China Brief*, (2010).

confidence to India's ties with both Islamabad and Beijing."<sup>1161</sup> China's use of its increased power and leverage in ways that benefit India are favorably evaluated, serve to reduce worries about China, and help form the foundation for deeper cooperation.

Although some have emphasized the degree to which China's approach on a range of issues that India cares about have shifted in a more pro-India direction, others emphasize that Chinese activities are still problematic for India. The most prominent example is China's continued cooperation with and support for Pakistan. In 2002, when asked if China was playing a more positive and balanced role towards Pakistan, Prime Minister Vajpayee responded: "There has been no basic change in China's policy. China continues to help Pakistan acquire weapons and equipment."<sup>1162</sup> Indian officials in Beijing agreed that China's move to focus on cooperation with India after the turn of the century was a welcome development, and important for healthy bilateral relations, but they "strongly opposed" China's continued political, economic, and military support for Pakistan.<sup>1163</sup> An important question going forward is what India's expectations are in terms of China's grand strategy and its approach to Pakistan. If the only effective reassurance that would assuage Indian fears is to completely abandon Pakistan or to make huge compromises on the territorial issue, then it will be far more challenging for China to successfully reassure India.

Indian officials and experts have also noted that China's greater willingness to negotiate on territorial issues has made it much easier to cooperate with China on a range of other issues. In 2005, Indian Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee observed that "By institutionalizing the Sino-Indian dialogue at a political level, with regular exchanges between designated interlocuters, the territorial and boundary differences between our two countries are being addressed purposefully."<sup>1164</sup> Indian officials have also noticed a shift in how China perceived India's power status and appreciated that China was treating it more like a great power. After a visit to China, Amb. Lalit

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<sup>1161</sup> See Swaran Singh, ed., *China-Pakistan Strategic Cooperation: Indian Perspectives* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2007), p. 24; and Swaran Singh, "The Kargil Conflict: Why and How of China's Neutrality," *Strategic Analysis* (October 1999), pp. 1083-94.

<sup>1162</sup> See Lally Weymouth, "Vajpayee: Keep Your Promise," *Washington Post*, June 23, 2002.

<sup>1163</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Spring 2006.

<sup>1164</sup> See Athwal, *China-India Relations: Contemporary Dynamics*, p. 113.

Mansingh observed that “India was being elevated from a mere regional power to a very important regional power though not yet a global power.”<sup>1165</sup>

Most assessments of Indian threat perception suggest that Indian officials and Indian experts do not yet perceive China to be a threat, though there are many issues of concern on which China could become a threat. According to one assessment from 2004, “Indian mainstream perspective on China has been friendly but wary.”<sup>1166</sup> However as the decade has progressed and China has continued to implement reassurance, other experts argue that China is being seen as less of a threat over time. Writing in 2008, an Indian scholar argues that the view of China as a benign neighbor “appears to be on the rise in recent years.”<sup>1167</sup> Another expert, based on interviews in India concludes that “Indian officials and opinion leaders in the past were quite wary of advancing relations with a rising China, but on the whole they recently seemed more confident and ready to pursue cooperative relations along common ground, while remaining cognizant of remaining serious differences.”<sup>1168</sup>

There are some analysts who both perceive China as a legitimate threat and argue that India does as well. These experts usually recommend a more hostile and hard-line approach towards China that would include larger military build-ups and cooperation with the United States and others in the region that is more clearly directed at China. However, these views do not seem to be supported by Indian officials, as they have not adopted these policies. One scholar argues that “Realists nowadays find only a limited interest among government officials, except for the defense officials.”<sup>1169</sup> Harsh Pant, and others, are critical of the Indian government for not taking the China threat more seriously and not meeting the threat with a strong and assertive policy. He calls on

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<sup>1165</sup> See Jabin T. Jacob, “India-China: Track II Dialogue in Beijing and Shanghai,” IPCS, December 19, 2006.

<sup>1166</sup> Hoffman, Frnakel. P. 63

<sup>1167</sup> See Swaran Singh, “India–China Relations: Perception, Problems, Potential,” *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 15 (January-June 2008), p. 84.

<sup>1168</sup> See Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Policy*, p. 105.

<sup>1169</sup> See Holslag, p. 116.

Indian officials to view the world as it is rather than as they would like it to be and warns that “India cannot and should not wear rose-tinted glasses on Sino-Indian relations just because things seem to be going smoothly at present.”<sup>1170</sup> Although these analysts perceive China as a threat to Indian interests, their frustration with Indian official policy as being too weak shows that Indian officials do not perceive China to be as threatening as they do and therefore have not acted by standing up to China.

Not only has China’s restraint and reassurance played a role in India’s limited balancing response and willingness to cooperate more deeply with China, there is strong evidence that India would move to hard balance against China only if China flagrantly challenges Indian interests. Interviews with Indian officials revealed a range of actions that China could take on key Indian interests that might force India to rethink its approach of cooperation and limited balancing, but it was clear that China had not taken any of these steps.<sup>1171</sup> Other analysts of the U.S.-India relationship agree that without a clear threat from China, strong cooperation against China would be unlikely. According to one assessment, “Absent extraordinary provocation from Beijing, new Delhi will have no interest in allying with Washington in any active strategy to contain or oppose China.”<sup>1172</sup> The introduction of one of the best studies on U.S.-India relations agrees with this. The authors argue that “in the absence of an appreciably more compelling mutual security threat—such as the emergence of a zealously fundamentalist Islamic regime in Pakistan or a heightened posture of regional aggression on the part of China—India and the United States will continue to nurture and deepen their entente, but will not take steps to form a conventional alliance.”<sup>1173</sup> China’s reassurance

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<sup>1170</sup> See Pant, “Indian Foreign Policy and China, p. 776; and Harsh V. Pant, “India’ China Policy: Devoid of a Strategic Framework,” *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (July-December 2005), pp. 210-7; and Brahma Chellaney, *Asian Juggernaut: The Rise of China, India, and Japan* (New York: Harper, 2010).

<sup>1171</sup> Author’s interviews, Beijing, Fall 2005, Spring 2006.

<sup>1172</sup> See Derek J. Mitchell and Chietigj Bajpae, “China and India,” CSIS, available at [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090212\\_08china\\_india.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090212_08china_india.pdf).

<sup>1173</sup> See Ganguly, Shoup, and Scobell, p. 12-3.

and restraint in not taking provocative actions have prevented others from concluding that China is a threat that needs to be strongly balanced against.

### **China's Reassurance Towards Japan**

#### *Early-to-Mid-90s and Japan's Balancing Reaction*

Although this is a simplification, Sino-Japanese relations from the June 4<sup>th</sup> Tiananmen Massacre in 1989 until mid-1994 were quite cordial and even warm. In response to the Tiananmen Massacre, Japan suspended yen loans to China, but the Japanese government seemed hesitant about doing so, and was the first major government to lift any sanction when it decided to restore loans in November 1990. In the early 1990s, Japan increased FDI to China and bilateral trade began to rise as well. The event most indicative of this new warmth was Emperor Akihito's 1992 visit to Beijing to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sino-Japanese normalization. He was warmly received and his expression of "profound personal sorrow" for events in the past seemed to be well-received. China did not criticize or complain very much when Japan passed a law in 1992 allowing the SDF to participate in peace-keeping operations (PKO) and sent ground forces overseas for the first time since the Pacific War. Moreover, Clinton's heavy hand in dealing with China on human rights issues and in dealing with Japan on trade issues seemed to push Japan and China closer together.

However, in 1994 frictions began to appear and the relationship deteriorated for the rest of the 1990s. In 1994, Japan invited high-ranking Taiwanese officials to come to Taiwan and Japanese Cabinet members started saying controversial things such as denying the Nanjing Massacre and denying that Japan had any aggressive intentions in the Pacific War. China conducted multiple nuclear tests in 1995, launched the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1995-6, and the crisis over the Senkaku islands in 1996 helped to quickly transform a friendly relationship into one of open hostility. Throughout the late 1990s, China attacked Japan over its reinforced commitment to the U.S.-Japan

alliance and its participation in ballistic missile defense. From China's standpoint, it would have preferred to maintain a cooperative relationship with Japan, but when Japan moved to support the separatist threat from Taiwan, China had to defend its interests.<sup>1174</sup>

After China's provocative behavior in defense of its interests, Japan perceived China as a greater threat and responded by making China more prominent in military and strategic planning and strengthening the alliance with the United States. China's nuclear tests, followed by its launching of missiles near the Taiwan Strait compelled Japan to be much more interested in cooperating with the United States on missile defense. By the mid-to-late 1990s, China's aggressive behavior had pushed Japan to see China as much more of a threat, move towards adopting a more realist outlook, and take actions to respond to potential threats. China's reassurance was seen as provocative and aggressive and provoked the beginnings of a balancing coalition, though one that was still somewhat limited.<sup>1175</sup>

#### *Late 1990s-Mid-2000s: Limited Attempts at Reassurance, Visits to Yasukuni, Competition and Balancing*

If the emperor's 1992 visit was most indicative of the warmth of the relations in the early 1990s, Jiang Zemin's November 1998 visit to Beijing captured the deterioration of the relationship by the late 1990s. During this summit, Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi refused to apologize and refused to agree with the U.S. position of not supporting Taiwanese independence, "one China, one Taiwan," or two Chinas (commonly called the three no's), and sent Jiang home embarrassed and frustrated.

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<sup>1174</sup> See Ming Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic, and Transformation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); and Liu Jianguo, "Xin 'RiMei Fangwei Hezuo Zhizhen' Heyi lingren Youlu" [Why the New U.S.-Japan Joint Defense Cooperation Guidelines Arouse Concern], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations] (November 1997), pp. 7-12.

<sup>1175</sup> For excellent analysis of these balancing moves and the role of Chinese aggressiveness in provoking them, see Michael J. Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave, 2003); and Benjamin Self, *The Dragon's Shadow: The Rise of China and Japan's new nationalism* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2006).



Recognizing the importance of stable relations with Japan for Chinese economic growth, and the counterproductive nature of Jiang's visit and repeatedly playing the history card, China tried to move beyond history in the late 1990s and emphasize forward looking cooperation. Around the turn of the century, this cooperative approach was bearing some fruit as both sides signed an early notification agreement for activities in each other's EEZs. This would help prevent crises from escalating and could also become an important confidence building measure for the political and military relationship.

This new cooperation, however, was severely tested by the new Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's decision to visit the Yasukuni shrine in 2001, and then repeat the visit annually. China strongly opposed these visits, as the shrine had the spirits of 14 Class-A war criminals entombed within it, and the prime minister's visit showed that Japan was not sufficiently apologetic for its wartime atrocities. On the other hand, China did not want to have a tense relationship with one of its most important neighbors. With the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations occurring in 2002 and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship occurring in 2003, Chinese officials had hoped to push relations in a more positive direction. Moreover, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao did not have the family connection to the Pacific War, and therefore were less focused on the history card.

In a new and important development that was consistent with an atmosphere of trying to cooperate with Japan, academics have begun to debate whether or not to adopt "new thinking in relations with Japan" (*duiRi Guanxi Xin Siwei*). Ma Licheng's article was an emotional plea to end the harsh and cruel anti-Japanese nationalism in China that he saw displayed after the Zhao Wei incident and the Jiang Wen incident. Zhao Wei, a famous actress, wore a dress that looked like a Japanese military flag. In Chinese articles and internet chat rooms, Zhao was attacked as a traitor and people wrote that she should be raped. At one of her concerts, one man pushed her down and

poured urine on her. In the summer of 2002, Jiang Wen, a famous actor, went to the Yasukuni shrine to research a role he was going to play. He was similarly widely attacked as being morally corrupt and called a traitor. Ma Licheng pleads with China to realize that it has already been sixty years since the atrocities in the Pacific War occurred, and hopes people can overcome narrow-mindedness and look ahead to the future where good relations with Japan are in China's interest.<sup>1176</sup>

Shi Yinhong's call for improving relations with Japan is based on grand strategy, and China's need to concentrate on dealing with the most important threats, while trying to discard with less important threats. According to his logic, U.S. hegemony and Taiwanese separatism are the greatest threats to China. China can't hope to deal with a hostile Japan at the same time, so it must improve relations with Japan, so that China can be better positioned to deal with the primary threats. His recommendations include: reduce focus on history question, develop economic ties with the EU and Japan at the expense of the U.S., drop exaggerated attacks on Japanese militarism, treat Japan as a great power, and don't put special conditions on Japan becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Shi argues that it is in China's national and strategic interest to improve relations with Japan.<sup>1177</sup>

From the Chinese government's perspective, its attempt to establish an atmosphere of peace and cooperation was one-sided. Rather than reciprocating and returning China's peaceful and cooperative gestures with compromise, the Japanese government continued to demand more concessions from China, and Koizumi made things much worse by visiting the Yasukuni shrine. A constant refrain from government officials and experts in 2003 was concern that Japan was not

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<sup>1176</sup> See Ma Licheng, "DuiRi Guanxi Xin Siwei: ZhongRi Minjian Zhiyou" [New Thinking in Relations with Japan], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], (November/December 2002), pp. 41-47.

<sup>1177</sup> See Shi Yinhong, "ZhongRi Jiejing yu 'Waijiao Geming'" [Sino-Japanese Rapprochement and 'Diplomatic Revolution'], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management], (March/April 2003), pp. 71-75. See also Shi Yinhong, "Lishi Wenti yu DaZhanlue Quanheng" [The History Issue and Grand Strategic Considerations], *KangRi Zhanzheng Yanjiu* [Studies on the War of Resistance Against Japan], no. 3 (2003), pp. 191-195.

willing to be a cooperative partner for China.<sup>1178</sup> China's high hopes for setting the relationship on a more cooperative track did not seem to bear fruit. For example, after September 11<sup>th</sup>, China did not criticize or strongly oppose Japan's active contribution to military operations in the war on terror without too much criticism or uproar. But from Beijing's perspective, there was little recognition or credit given to China's efforts to pursue cooperation, and even less reciprocation from Japan.

Moreover, Japan's lack of reciprocity and Koizumi's continued visits to Yasukuni put the Chinese leadership under domestic pressure and made it more difficult to continue to compromise and implement a strategy of reassurance. The critical responses to the proposed "new thinking in relations with Japan" from the Chinese people and Chinese academics, and little evidence to suggest that there is anyone in the government who favors such a policy, suggest that the time is not yet ripe to move towards improving relations with Japan and trying to maintain a consistent, friendly "good neighbor" relationship. After the "new thinking" was proposed and worked its way into the mainstream media in China, internet chat groups castigated its proponents. Ma Licheng was called a traitor on many occasions, and many suggested he was selling out China for the interests of the Japanese. Feng Zhaokui of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences suggests that in part this is because people had a mistaken first impression of what the "new thinking" entailed. According to Feng, many people believed that the "new thinking" meant that China should never again raise the history issue for discussion, when in fact it did not go this far in its proposals. Moreover, events in 2003 and 2004 made it particularly difficult for China to become more accommodating to Japan. These events included a poison gas leak in the northeastern Chinese city of Qiqihar (the August 3, 2003 incident) caused by chemical weapons left by the Japanese from World War II, a sex orgy in Zhuhai involving Japanese businessmen and Chinese prostitutes that occurred on the anniversary of the Mukden Incident which marked the beginning of Japanese aggressions into China in 1931, a

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<sup>1178</sup> Author's interviews, Beijing, Fall 2003.

performance by Japanese students in Xi'an that Chinese felt was insulting, and recent clashes over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea.<sup>1179</sup> In such an atmosphere, not to mention Koizumi's continued visits to Yasukuni shrine, the masses violently rejected and criticized any unilateral moves towards improving relations with Japan.

Although less vulgar in their responses, many academics also criticized the "new thinking." In direct response to Ma Licheng, one author wrote that although China does have some radicals, Japan has many more radicals, and unlike in China, the radicals in Japan have influence on Japanese policy. He further writes that Ma has confused cause and effect, and that as historical facts clearly tell us, on every occasion it is the Japanese who are harsh and cruel.<sup>1180</sup> Another scholar asks how China could possibly consider putting the history issue aside when even as it is constantly brought up, some Japanese still deny the Nanjing Massacre, argue that Japan went to war to liberate Asia from Westerners, and official visits to Yasukuni are increasing.<sup>1181</sup> In response to Shi Yinhong, one scholar argues that the U.S. would obstruct any attempt to improve relations with Japan if it had such an anti-American justification. Furthermore, he suggests that Shi Yinhong's suggested changes in policy would represent a unilateral caving in to Japanese interests. China has been very lenient towards Japan in the past, but there has never been any reciprocation from Japan.<sup>1182</sup> Another scholar writes that if Japanese government officials continue to distort and deny historical facts, one can't say that the apology issue has been resolved, and therefore it is impossible to move towards the "new thinking."<sup>1183</sup> There do not seem to have been any public comments by government officials

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<sup>1179</sup> See Feng Zhaokui, "DuiRI Guanxi de Jiannan qiu Su" [In Search of the Difficulties in Relations with Japan], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], (May 2004), pp. 26-31.

<sup>1180</sup> See Bai Jingfan, "Luoji Hunluan de Xin Siwei" [The Confused Logic of the New Thinking], *KangRi Zhanzheng Yanjiu* [Studies on the War of Resistance Against Japan], no. 3 (2003), pp. 198-202.

<sup>1181</sup> See Zhang Bofeng, "ZhongRi Guanxi buneng Huiyi 'Lishi Wenti'" [Sino-Japanese Relations Can't Avoid "the History Issue"], *Ibid.*, pp. 207-211.

<sup>1182</sup> See Lin Zhibo, "DuiRI Guanxi Xin Siwei' Zhiyi: yu Shi Yinhong Jiaoshou Shangque" [Challenging "the New Thinking in Relations with Japan": A Discussion with Professor Shi Yinhong], pp. 215-219.

<sup>1183</sup> See Zhang Lianhong, "ZhongRi Zhijian de Lishi Wenti: 'Xin Siweilun' Zhiyi" [The History Issue Between China and Japan: Challenging 'the Theory of New Thinking']], pp. 230-234.

on the “new thinking,” either positive or negative. However, in response to Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni, the government has continued to criticize him and cancelled bilateral summits. The cold response from the masses and academics, together with the lack of public engagement with this debate at the government level, suggest that given the public opposition and Japanese intransigence, further efforts at reassurance became more difficult by 2004-5.

After the turn of the century, both sides took actions that helped lead to the deterioration of bilateral relations. Japanese actions that have contributed to a decline in relations have included Koizumi’s annual visits to the Yasukuni shrine and the 2001 controversy over Japan whitewashing its history books. Although Chinese leaders emphasized that they were focusing on cooperation and compromise in its approach to Japan, there were several actions that suggested to Japan a more aggressive or questionable intention. Some of these actions have included its intrusion into the Japanese consulate in Shenyang to seize North Korean refugees in 2002 and its increase of “research vessels” entering Japan’s EEZ and exploring waters near disputed territories in the East China Sea. Events in late 2004 illustrate how bad Sino-Japanese relations have become. The sighting of a Chinese *Han*-class nuclear attack submarine that had violated Japan’s territorial waters near Okinawa angered the Japanese government and its people. Moreover, as Koizumi continued to visit the shrine and there was no improvement in bilateral relations, China lost its patience with trying to cooperate with Japan and either cancelled official meetings, or used them to criticize Japan over the history issue.

By 2004-5, relations had deteriorated to such an extent, and Chinese behavior was seen as so threatening, that Japan began to take balancing actions that were increasingly severe. The Japanese government declared that it would end all ODA to China. Although the stated reasons related to China reaching a state of development that it no longer requires such assistance, the timing of the decision as well as other analysts have suggested there is a link between the submarine incursion and

the decision to end aid. Prime Minister Koizumi and President Hu's meeting on the sidelines of the APEC summit in Santiago is a perfect illustration of the current state of Sino-Japanese relations. Given that the Chinese have cancelled most high-level bilateral visits in recent years in response to Koizumi's annual visit to the shrine, many analysts hoped the leaders would use this rare opportunity to try to move beyond some of these problems and look to improving relations in the future in what is a very important relationship for both sides. Instead, President Hu used most of the meeting to lecture Koizumi on how Japan had not yet properly addressed the history question and on how his visits to the shrine hurt the feelings of all Chinese people. Little if any progress was made and when the content of the meeting was made public, both sides were furious at the other.<sup>1184</sup>

In addition to an overall downturn in relations marked by contentious and limited official exchanges and anti-Japan protests in China, Japan moved in 2005 to take several steps to balance China. There was a clear shift in foreign policy and defense strategy documents around 2005 when Japan began to describe China in more hostile terms and even used the phrase "threat" in several publications. As part of Japan's internal reviews of its military missions, there was a greater perceived need and a greater willingness to talk about and plan for contingencies that involved China. Japan also developed a robust Japanese Coast Guard capability that could respond to intrusions and aggressive claims by China in the East China Sea. Japan also moved to further strengthen the alliance with the United States and for the first time since Sino-Japanese diplomatic recognition, Japan and the United States referred openly to Taiwan in a joint statement. In the February 2005 2 + 2, maintaining peace and peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question was listed as a common objective for the alliance. This was a move to strengthen the alliance in a way that challenged China. Lastly, Japan was very active in lobbying the European Union not to lift the arms embargo on China and cited ongoing PLA modernization and aggressive behavior as showing a

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<sup>1184</sup> For an example of some of the coverage see Ching Cheong, "Sino-Japanese Ties Hit New Low at APEC Summit," *Straits Times*, November 30, 2004.

need to prevent China from obtaining the latest weapons. Although Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni should not be seen as anti-China or balancing against China, as relations took a turn for the worse and China took more provocative actions, this provoked a stronger balancing response from Japan.<sup>1185</sup>

*China Moves to Reassure Koizumi's Successor, Improved Relations, and Less Severe Balancing*

In late 2005 or early 2006, the Chinese leadership concluded that it made the most sense to abandon any hope of cooperation with a Koizumi-led Japan and began to think about how to reach out to his successor. After an already difficult 2005 in Sino-Japanese relations, in which there difficulties emerged in virtually every area of potential tension, Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni shrine on October 17 forced the leadership to decide to look beyond Koizumi, even though he was in power for another year.

Recognizing the importance of stable relations with Japan for China's own modernization, Chinese diplomats devoted great effort to think of ways to end the vicious cycle (e'xing xunhuan) that had come to define political relations. The government reportedly asked think tank experts and scholars to analyze this issue and make proposals and suggestions for steps that China could take and signals that China could send to Japan to signal its desire to repair bilateral relations once Koizumi had left office. Many of the ideas that China's most influential Japan experts and foreign policy experts had come up were published in a special symposium entitled "Sino-Japanese Relations: Status Quo and Prospect," which appeared in the April 2006 edition of CICIR's journal

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<sup>1185</sup> For more on this see, Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarisation* (London: Routledge, 2009); Mike M. Mochizuki, "China-Japan Relations: Downward Spiral or a New Equilibrium?" in Shambaugh, ed. *Power Shift*, pp. 135-50; Denny Roy, "Stirring Samurai, Disapproving Dragon: Japan's Growing Security Activity and Sino-Japan Relations," in Yoichiro Sato and Satu Limaye, eds., *Japan in a Dynamic Asia: Coping with the New Security Challenges* (Lanham, MD.: Lexington Books, 2006), pp. 69-88; and Evan S. Medeiros et al., *Pacific Currents: The Responses of U.S. Allies and Security Partners in East Asia to China's Rise* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2008), Ch. 3.

*Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*.<sup>1186</sup> One of the major issues that emerged as part of this debate was whether Koizumi was representative of broader Japanese opinion, or if he had taken extreme positions on Yasukuni. Virtually all of these articles put responsibility on Japan, both for the downturn in relations and for needing to respond favorably to any positive gestures or signals sent by China.

In the hopes of putting relations on a more normal and stable track, both sides made compromises and new commitments. One of the most important signals of reassurance was for China to allow Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, to visit China without first promising not to visit Yasukuni shrine. Earlier, the Chinese government had publicly stated that such a promise or commitment was a precondition for allowing such a visit. Even though doing so was very costly in terms of domestic politics, as it made China look weak on the history issue with Japan, the Chinese government allowed Prime Minister Abe to visit China while maintaining an ambiguous stance in regards to Yasukuni. During this period, another example of reassurance was China's concessions on the 2008 agreement on joint exploration in the East China Sea. China granted privileges to Japan that it had earlier ruled out.

In the 2006-8 period, China's reassurance was reciprocated by cooperation from Japan. As a result, even though China had become much more powerful, relations improved dramatically and Japan adopted a much less confrontational approach to China that involved much less balancing. After Prime Minister Abe's visit in 2006, leaders from both sides visited each other, signing agreements and making commitments with each visit. By 2008, Japan and China had agreed to redefine the relationship as one of "mutually beneficial strategic relations." And Japan was

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<sup>1186</sup> See Liu Jiangyong, "ZhongRi Guanxi "Zhengleng Jingwen" de Zhengjie yu Chulu" [The Cruz and Way Out of "Cold Politics, Warm Economics" in Sino-Japanese Relations], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 4 (2006), pp. 28-30; Shi Yinhong, "Jiexi ZhongRi Guanxi ji Zhongguo duiRi Zhanlue" [Analyzing Sino-Japanese Relations and China's Strategy towards Japan], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 4 (2006), pp. 39-41; Yang Yi, "Ruhe Zouchu ZhongRi Guanxi 'Kunju'" [How to Escape the "Predicament" of Sino-Japanese Relations], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 4 (2006), pp. 41-3; Jin Xide, "ZhongRi Guanxi Xianzhuang yu Zhanwang" [The Status Quo and Prospects for Sino-Japanese Relations], *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations], No. 4 (2006), pp. 36-38.



interesting in taking steps not only to further develop economic and political relations, but military exchanges as well. As a result of these efforts to improve relations, high level military exchanges occurred, as did ship visits and joint exercises. By 2008, Japan and China were moving to implement this vision of “mutually beneficial strategic relations,” and Japan was balancing much less severely and was more focused on deepening cooperation.<sup>1187</sup>

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<sup>1187</sup> For an excellent review of these developments, see Jin Xide, “Cina-Japan Relations: How to Manage a Complex Relationship?” in Zhang Yunling, ed., *Making New Partnership*, pp. 19-53.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### *Restatement of Argument and Findings*

This dissertation has tried to explain variation in the severity of the balancing response by major powers when facing a rising power. I have introduced a broad theory of how the grand strategy that the rising power implements affects the severity of this balancing response. I have argued that grand strategies of reassurance can mitigate and reduce the severity of the balancing response. My theory of reassurance has attempted to be comprehensive, and includes the tools of reassurance and the causal mechanisms through which reassurance can minimize the severity of the balancing response. The two causal mechanisms through which these reassurance efforts can mitigate balancing are: 1) reduced estimates that rising power is a threat; and 2) reaping the benefits from a rising power. Through these two mechanisms, a rising power's reassurance can shape the decision calculus of potential balancers and push them to balance less severely. Rising powers that implement grand strategies of coercion, on the other hand, are perceived as especially threatening and generate a hyper-balancing response which often occurs relatively early in the rising power's rise.

This dissertation has also included a preliminary empirical test of these theoretical arguments. This project has examined two broad sets of cases, Bismarckian Germany and post-Cold War China, to analyze how the grand strategies of these rising powers has affected the balancing response by other countries. In each of these broad cases of rising powers, I have examined the effect of grand strategy on the balancing responses of several great powers. For the rise of Bismarckian Germany, I analyze the responses of the major powers of Europe—Britain, France, Russia and Austria. For the rise of China, I analyze the responses of the United States, as well as the major powers of Asia—Russia, India, and Japan.

For Bismarckian Germany, its reassurance strategy was successful in preventing balancing in the early 1870s, but its overzealous response to threats to regime stability in the mid-1870s provoked a moderate balancing response that drew Britain back to the continent and pushed France, Russia, and Britain to jointly check Germany. In response to this, Bismarck learned that a rising Germany was constrained and that he needed to bend over backwards to implement a more comprehensive reassurance strategy that involved active efforts to ensure regional peace and stability and to show that a rising Germany would be a force for peace. In the rest of the 1870s and 1880s, there was very little balancing against Germany and most of the coalitions that were formed either involved Germany and/or were formed against another great power.

For rising China, its initial efforts at reassurance in the early-to-mid-1990s proved unsuccessful in most cases. During this period, the reassurance efforts were very limited and were overwhelmed by the aggressive defense of what China saw as key interests in Taiwan and the South China Sea. These aggressive defensive responses backfired as the United States, Japan, and others in the region saw China as a threat, and balanced against it by responding with force, tightening alliances, and increasingly directing these alliances against China. By the late 1990s, China had also learned that a deteriorating security environment was not in its interest, so it took more active efforts to reassure the United States, Japan, and India. During the years of the Bush administration, active reassurance and cooperation with China on the war on terror, North Korea, and signals that it had accepted the U.S. role in the region led to a less severe balancing response by the United States. Even though China was more powerful during this period, China's reassurance led to a less severe American balancing response. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, China also moved to take more active steps to reassure India, which led to greater economic, political, and military cooperation, but China's increased power also led to some limited balancing moves to increase cooperation with regional powers. By the late 1990s, China recognized that its approach to Japan was

counterproductive and tried to improve relations, make concessions, and foster a more cooperative relationship. Given the historical animosity between the two countries, Japan was reluctant to reciprocate many of these gestures, and when Koizumi came into power, his annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine made stable relations virtually impossible. However, even in the face of Koizumi's early visits, China tried to be restrained and patient in response, but over time, China became more aggressive towards Japan and this led to a balancing response from Japan around 2005, which not only included new statements of how threatening China was but also improvements in the alliance aimed at China. After Koizumi left power however, China tried to recapture the spirit of cooperation and its concessions and reassurance helped improve relations with Koizumi's successors, which led to a less severe balancing response, even though China grew more powerful. In its approach to Russia, China's reassurance helped deepen cooperation throughout the 1990s, and in the 2000s, it took more active efforts to reassure Russia and show how it would benefit from the rise of China.

### **Contributions to Scholarship**

This dissertation has both drawn from and tried to develop several literatures within international relations. First, I will point out the contributions to the field of international relations and international relations theory. Second, I will highlight the contributions to Chinese foreign policy and the international relations of East Asia.

### *Contributions to International Relations*

First, this thesis has proposed one of the most comprehensive theories of reassurance and tested it empirically on multiple case studies. Though far from conclusive, this initial empirical test shows that a rising power's reassurance can mitigate and minimize the balancing response by other

powers. This finding that rising powers can successfully employ reassurance is particularly surprising because conditions of shifting power are the most demanding set of cases and the set of cases in which reassurance would be least likely to work.

During the Cold War, scholars and policy advocates suggested a more cooperative approach to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, arguing that hard-line policies were only leading to deeper mutual hostility. This literature occasionally suggested potential tools of reassurance that could be implemented, but it did not make clear the causal logic for how reassurance would work to escape the cycle of hatred and hostility, or prevent future relationships from entering such a cycle.<sup>1188</sup> More recently, research involving formal methods has demonstrated that reassurance is logically possible.<sup>1189</sup> This thesis has drawn on this formal work to propose a more comprehensive theory of reassurance—showing the tools of reassurance and the mechanisms through which these tools can affect the behavior of others. Although others have suggested that the relatively peaceful end of the Cold War may be an example of successful reassurance, this thesis has tested my theory of reassurance on Europe in the pre-WWI period and Asia in the post-Cold War period. It examined how leaders in Germany and China implemented reassurance and how successful it was in preventing balancing.

Second, this dissertation has proposed and illustrated a new potential explanation, the grand strategy of a rising power, to account for variation in the balancing response by other great powers. Balancing is one of the most fundamental concepts in international relations theory, and offering a new explanation for variation in its occurrence is a significant contribution. Moreover, my concept of a spectrum approach to the severity of the balancing response has also attempted to propose an improved conceptualization of balancing. Rather than arguing about “whether or not” a state

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<sup>1188</sup> See Osgood, *An Alternative to War or Surrender*, and Etzioni, *The Hard Way to Peace*.

<sup>1189</sup> See Kydd, “Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation;” Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Politics*; and Powell, *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*.

balanced, and arguing about whether or not soft balancing “counts,” this spectrum approach allows scholars to focus more on behavioral responses rather than categories. Moreover, the spectrum approach allows one to increase the number of observations and track changes in directionality in a more or less severe direction.

Third, this dissertation has shown that grand strategy can be important as an independent variable. Although there is a well-developed literature on grand strategy, most scholars are concerned with explaining the origins of a country’s grand strategy, and usually focus on grand strategy as a dependent variable. Although this has become a burgeoning field of study in international relations, no scholar has tried to argue or show how grand strategy can have an effect or matter in international relations. By demonstrating the important causal role for grand strategy, and the important role for grand strategy as an independent variable, this study has reinforced the importance of the existing research on grand strategy, while also demonstrating its importance for the field of international relations.

Fourth, this dissertation has introduced new factors that may shape a country’s threat perception, thus helping to provide a more comprehensive understanding of threat perception. Most of the literature on threat perception argues that when a state perceives or does not perceive a threat, it will act in a certain way, but this literature has been less clear in showing what drives threat perceptions. Some have argued that ideology and regime type may be important factors, but this has been an understudied aspect of related theories. This thesis suggests that a rising power’s grand strategy and foreign policy are important factors that help determine and shape the decision calculus and threat perceptions of other states. Whereas Walt’s balance of threat theory explains how states respond once they perceive a threat, my theory highlights potential factors that may make states more or less likely to perceive a rising power as a threat.

Fifth, this dissertation has highlighted the important role of the rising power in international relations. Although rising powers are often the most important actors and main “trouble makers” in international relations, most of the existing literature has focused on the effect of their increase in power on others, or on how others can try to manage their rise, with little focus on the rising power itself. This thesis has shown that scholars should take the rising power more seriously and give it more agency than the existing literature currently does.

Sixth, this thesis has also pointed to the possibility of a “managed” power transition or a peaceful power transition. E.H. Carr observed that “peaceful change” was the most difficult issue in international relations, and certainly one of the most consequential.<sup>1190</sup> Although the evidence in the thesis does not show an example of such a managed or peaceful power transition, it suggests that if a rising power continues to implement a grand strategy of reassurance, such a peaceful power transition may indeed be possible.

Last, this is one of the first projects to analyze the rise of China in a real comparative context, including thorough research on China and non-China cases. China scholars often highlight how China’s experience, background, and situation are different, or occasionally make a short reference to similarities with other countries. As China has become more powerful and more important, international relations scholars have increasingly tried to draw on their historical analysis of non-China cases to highlight the implications for the rise of China, but have not looked into the China comparison in any great detail. Avery Goldstein is probably the exception here, as he complements his thorough analysis of contemporary China’s grand strategy with a lengthy section of a chapter that analyzes Bismarck’s grand strategy.<sup>1191</sup> Goldstein was the first to highlight the potential utility of a comparison between contemporary China and Bismarckian Germany. As one of the first comparative case projects to include deep study of China cases and non-China cases, my

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<sup>1190</sup> See Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919-1939*, Ch. 13.

<sup>1191</sup> See Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*.

thesis further develops the initial analysis by Goldstein, and not only sketches out the grand strategies of these countries, but also tries to analytically demonstrate the causal relationship between these grand strategies and the balancing response by other powers.

*Contributions to Chinese Foreign Policy and International Relations of East Asia*

First, this thesis has made extensive use of Chinese-language books and articles and Chinese-language interviews. It builds on and extends the seminal work on China's grand strategy by Avery Goldstein. Although many scholars other than Goldstein have analyzed China's grand strategy, the vast majority of this work has relied on English-language sources, which has been a severe limitation. My use of Chinese-language materials on grand strategy has not only generated new data and brought new sources to light, but it has also strengthened many of Goldstein's findings, while offering somewhat different interpretations in other areas. Although the focus of this thesis has been to show the analytical link between China's strategy and the balancing responses of other powers, it has also made thorough use of Chinese-language sources to better understand China's approach to its relations with the United States, Russia, India, and Japan.

Second, this project has tried to analyze and explain how the major powers of East Asia are responding to the rise of China in a rigorous and comparative manner. As China has become more powerful, a voluminous literature has appeared on how regions or countries are adjusting to and responding to a rising China.<sup>1192</sup> This thesis has relied very heavily on much of this research by country experts, and supplemented it with interviews with government officials and experts in that country of study. However, much of this literature has not been very rigorous and has not employed analytical concepts such as balancing, or has done so in an imprecise manner. This

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<sup>1192</sup> See Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato, eds., *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond* (London: Routledge, 2008); and Tang Shiping, Li Mingjiang, and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Living with China: Regional States and China through Crises and Turning Points* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).



project has tried to use a clear and transparent spectrum of balancing and evaluated the response of these countries over time based on these criteria.

Third, this thesis has tried to analytically integrate research on China's grand strategy and how others are responding to the rise of China, two areas of study that have usually remained distinct in the field of the international relations of East Asia. It has become common practice to have one article or chapter that examines how China is trying to manage its relations with a country, usually written by a China expert, and then a different article or chapter on how that country is responding to the rise of China, usually written by an expert in that country. In this project, I have tried to connect these two strands of the existing literature, while also further developing each strand.

This project has integrated these two lines of research to argue that China's approach is having a direct impact on how these countries are reacting to China's rise.

### ***Areas for Further Research***

This thesis is one of first studies to propose a theory of reassurance and examine it empirically. Although this initial examination has demonstrated that reassurance can be effective, this research program is still not developed enough to draw any strong conclusions. However, the initial positive findings of "reassurance in action" suggest that further research is needed. Below I lay out several issues that need to be addressed and analyzed as scholars try to advance the reassurance research program.

#### *More Empirical Tests*

As discussed earlier, much of the research on reassurance has been more policy advocacy than empirically-supported, and the newest research has been more focused on demonstrating that

reassurance can work through formal models. Andrew Kydd supports his game theoretic analysis with an illustration of how Gorbachev's concessions in the late 1980s were an example of successful reassurance that led to the peaceful end of the Cold War.<sup>1193</sup> But few researchers have cited other historical cases and there has been even less in-depth empirical analysis of cases of reassurance. Although Gorbachev and end of the Cold War is an excellent case, others have argued that it was an especially easy case for reassurance because the Soviet Union was becoming weaker over time. The casework in this thesis examines the more difficult set of cases of rising powers, in which increases in material power are expected to make others less likely to believe in reassurance and less likely to reciprocate in cooperating. Within the broad research program of reassurance, there is a need for further research of both easy and hard cases, but scholars should be careful to distinguish these different types of cases. More cases will not only improve our understanding of how reassurance works, but also allow us to say with greater accuracy how often it works and make more generalizable claims.

As this thesis has focused on applying reassurance to the hard cases of rising powers, future areas for research could include in-depth analysis of other rising powers implementing reassurance. Although there are numerous examples, three cases come to mind as potentially valuable and have generated enough data to make such an analysis possible.

The first potential case is reassurance by Germany after its post-Cold War unification. Much as was the case in the historical analysis in this thesis, European powers at the end of the Cold War were fearful that a unified Germany might be too powerful, upset the balance of power in Europe, and become a threat to their interests and regional stability. German reassurance in the post-Cold War world seems to be a story of German leaders self-binding and demonstrating benign intentions by integrating itself more deeply in multilateral European institutions. By the mid-1990s, the fears

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<sup>1193</sup> See Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust*, ch. 8; and Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust*, Ch. 6.

and worries that European leaders expressed about a unified Germany seemed to have dissipated. The role of reassurance seems to have played a key role. This case, especially how these attempts at reassurance affected the decision calculus of other European powers, is worthy of deeper analysis.

The second potential case is the role of reassurance in the rise of the United States. The peaceful power transition between Great Britain and the United States is usually explained based on geography, regime type, and the German threat.<sup>1194</sup> These factors made the United States less threatening to Great Britain, who focused its attention on the more proximate and threatening rising power. Although these factors all played a role in explaining why Great Britain did not focus more of its energies on preventing the rise of the United States or checking the United States, the role of American reassurance efforts towards Great Britain and the other European powers is worthy of more analytical examination.

Third, the case of Hitler's Germany and reassurance is also worthy of examination. Although many may understandably question how launching World War II would count as reassurance, it may be valuable to examine how Hitler used reassurance to increase German military power without provoking a balancing response by the European powers. International relations scholars have characterized the European lack of response until late in the 1930s as buckpassing or underbalancing and blamed the European powers; but it may be useful to examine the role of Hitler's promises and behavior in preventing a strong balancing response.<sup>1195</sup>

#### *Conditions under Which Reassurance is Likely to be Successful*

Although the empirical evidence in this dissertation has shown some support for the notion that reassurance can be successful, evidence also shows that reassurance is not always successful.

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<sup>1194</sup> For other work on this case, see Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace*; and Rock, *Why Peace Breaks Out: Great Power Rapprochement in Historical Perspective*.

<sup>1195</sup> See Christensen and Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity."

There were examples where the rising power implemented reassurance and it either did not have much of an effect or even proved counterproductive. Further research on the conditions under which reassurance is more or less likely to be effective in preventing a balancing response is needed. More empirical case studies are needed both to generate more potential conditions and evaluate potential conditions that I have uncovered in this study.

One of the methodological benefits of studying multiple cases of reassurance attempts is that it helps generate a list of conditions under which it may work more or less effectively. Although the empirical work in this thesis does not allow one to draw strong conclusions, from the historical analysis, the following appear to be conditions that make reassurance more likely to function successfully. Until further research helps explore these conditions, it is probably best to think of these as *efficiency* conditions, which suggest that reassurance works better when these conditions are in place. Potential efficiency conditions include:

- Multipolarity as enabler
- Lots of other aggressive actors in the system
- Other power is not revisionist
- Other powers' demands on RP are not too extreme
- Initial level of mistrust about RP not too high
- Other powers should have short time horizons
- Other powers do not view the world as an offensive realist would
- RP can credibly demonstrate that further expansion could do more harm than good to RP
- RP's legitimacy is relatively secure
- Conciliatory measures are repeated and explained
- No pre-existing conflicts of interest with any other power

*Why Do States Implement Reassurance? (Or How Often? Or Under What Conditions?)*

This thesis has focused on the causal link between grand strategies and balancing responses, or tried to analyze the effect of reassurance strategies. But as the initial empirical work in this thesis suggests that reassurance can be beneficial for rising powers, at some level it makes sense to ask, “why don’t all rising powers implement reassurance if it works so well?” Or to flip the question around, further research should try to focus on what kinds of states or what kinds of leaders implement reassurance. The empirical evidence in Bismarckian Germany and post-Cold War China suggests that these leaders seemed particularly aware of the potential threats their power may pose to others and seemed to recognize that others would be fearful of its growing power and it may need to take action to address their worries. I tentatively suggest that these two cases seemed to be cases of “spiral aware” powers. However, this is by no means a necessary condition for implementing reassurance and there are several other potential reasons a state may implement reassurance. And related to this question of what kinds of states adopt reassurance, how common is this? Have I uncovered the exceptional cases of rising powers implementing reassurance and every other rising power implements reassurance? Further research on reassurance should probably not only focus on the analytical relationship between reassurance and the reaction of others, but should also pay attention to understanding the origins of reassurance strategies.

*Improve Integration with Explanations that Focus on Pathologies of Potential Balancers*

As I argued earlier, much of the literature on balancing failures focuses on problems within the potential balancer, such as collective action problems, lack of consensus in how to respond, or lack of consensus in assessing the threat. Focusing on potential balancers has forced scholars to overlook the potential role of the rising power in “creating” or contributing to these pathologies

within other countries. However, these explanations may be more complementary than competitive, and more work needs to be done to integrate and assess the relative causal weight of these factors. For example, when potential balancers do not perceive the rising power to be threatening enough to balance against, the ultimate reason may be something within those countries, or it may be the reassurance efforts by the rising power that shape these perceptions, or it may be some combination. More research and analytical emphasis on how the rising power or potential aggressor can cause balancing failures will improve our overall understanding of balancing failures.

#### *Interaction Between the Response by Others and the Rising Power's Grand Strategy*

One of the more interesting dynamics from the process tracing of these cases is not only how the rising power's grand strategy at time0 affected the balancing response by others at time t1, but also how the balancing response at time t1 affected the rising power's grand strategy at time t2. The evolution of the rising power's grand strategy is clearly not endogenous to the balancing response, either in theory or in reality. In some cases, a moderate balancing response produced even greater reassurance and in others it led to more coercive responses. Relatedly, cooperative responses could lead to continued reassurance, or as some worry, cooperative responses could push the rising power to take advantage and become more assertive and coercive. This interaction is worthy of more study. When does a balancing response end up "teaching" the rising power that it needs to be more cooperative and bend over backwards to reassure? And when does such a balancing response confirm the worst fears in the rising power that it faces a hostile environment. For those who are interested in how to best push the rising power in the direction of continuing to implement reassurance, these issues of feedback and interaction are particularly worthy of study and further research.

## ***Policy Implications***

The rise of China, how its rise reshapes the world, and how other powers respond to its rise is likely to be the most important issue in great power politics for the next century. This question of how China's rise will affect the world is the key policy question that has produced much of the theorizing and thinking in this dissertation. As a result, there are definitely policy implications that flow from the project. However, this project has not only analyzed China's rise and Asia's response in the post-Cold War, but has also examined the rise of Germany in the pre-World War I period. This comparative perspective, examining rising powers across time and space, has led to stronger conclusions about how rising powers can shape and effect the way other great powers respond to them. Although not representing the universe of cases of rising powers or great power responses, policy implications that are derived from more cases are likely to be stronger than those derived from a single observation. This project has tried to adopt a broader scope in the cases that it examines, but also aims to produce conclusions and uncover policy implications that will be applicable to future rising powers such as India, Brazil, Indonesia and future rising powers in future centuries. Therefore, rather than framing the policy recommendations in terms of the specific policy implications for the rise of China, I frame them in a broader way so that they are applicable to China, and are also potentially applicable and useful in understanding the rise of other powers and how other great powers are likely to respond to them as they become more powerful.

### *Do Not Expect Balancing to Occur Automatically or Efficiently as the Rising Power's Material Power Increases*

Although balance of power theory remains one of the most widely-accepted theories in international relations, the evidence in this thesis suggests that policymakers may be disappointed if they base their approaches to rising powers on the premise that this is an "iron law," and that as the rising power becomes more powerful, all major powers will naturally balance against it. Contrary to

the broad expectation that as the rising power becomes more powerful, balancing efforts should grow more intense, evidence from this thesis shows that even as Germany grew more powerful in the 1880s and China grew more powerful in the first decade of this century, the balancing responses by some countries grew less intense. The evidence in this thesis does not necessarily suggest that a rising power will be able to conquer the world or conquer all of the major powers in its region without provoking a more intense balancing response, but rising powers becoming more powerful and producing less severe balancing should give pause to basing a country's policy on the efficiency of balancing mechanisms. In the end, if other countries fought back against a Chinese invasion and ultimately prevented the conquest of Japan and Southeast Asia, this may prove to be successful balancing according to some scholars (though others would challenge this characterization), but it would not necessarily be the efficient and automatic balancing response that some scholars posit and some policymakers seem to accept. This project shows that a rising power that implements an effective grand strategy of reassurance may mitigate or even prevent the balancing response, which suggests that policymakers should not necessarily be overly confident that balancing will form automatically as the rising power increases its power.

*It may be Risky for Major Powers to Rely on Other Regional Powers to Balance Against the Rising Power*

In a world where balancing predominates and occurs relatively efficiently, most major powers can be relatively relaxed about the risk posed by a rising power, because its increased power should compel others to respond by checking it. This is especially true for powers that are further away from the rising power, meaning that the distant or offshore power can be relaxed and confident that regional powers will respond by balancing against the rising power. To be more specific, in a world where balancing predominates, Great Britain could be relaxed in the face of a rising Germany knowing that the continental great powers could balance against it, and the United



States can be relaxed in the face of a rising China and confident that the major powers of Asia will balance against it.

However, the evidence from this dissertation shows that because balancing is not as automatic as its adherents suggest, reliance on regional powers to balance against the rising power can be risky. Some experts, based on supreme confidence in the balance of power, argue that the United States can withdraw from East Asia and be confident that the regional powers will check China and maintain a balance of power. This policy prescription may gain even more supporters as the United States enters a more resource-constrained environment. Although there is logic to this suggestion, the evidence in this thesis suggests that withdrawing from East Asia and placing hope on regional states to balance is more risky than its adherents recognize. This thesis has shown that a rising power, such as China, that implements a grand strategy of reassurance may be able to undermine these balancing dynamics and potentially increase its power to a point that it may be able to overpower the regional powers and overturn the regional balance of power. It may or may not be able to achieve enough power to dominate the region without provoking a balancing response, but a clever rising power may be able to increase its power to such a point that it finds itself tempted to try to seize regional hegemony and therefore launches a war of aggression against other regional powers. Through implementing reassurance, the rising power may be able to capitalize on existing collective action problems or incentives to buckpass, which will allow it to gain more and more power without being checked by other regional states. Although the offshore balancer, the United States in this case, may return to the region to check Chinese aggression and maintain the balance of power, this costly series of actions could be avoided if the offshore power recognized that the balance of power is not automatic and therefore stayed in the region to bolster deterrence and ensure that the balance of power functions properly and efficiently.

*If One Power Wants to Form a Coalition to Balance Against or Contain the Rising Power, its Ability to Gain Supporters Will Depend on the Rising Power's Grand Strategy and Behavior*

In contemporary policy debates about East Asia, one of the most common questions is whether the other states in East Asia would choose to support the United States or would instead side with China. A more complete answer to this question depends on what the state was asked to do (and what it actually means to “choose” one over the other) and the circumstances under which it had to make this choice. However, if the United States government concluded it was necessary to adopt a much more hard-line response towards China and tried to organize an anti-China balancing coalition, this thesis suggests that America’s ability to gain supporters for this endeavor would be strongly dependent on China’s behavior. The thesis shows that even as China increases its power, if its reassurance is able to demonstrate that China is willing to make concessions, show that it is less likely to be a threat, and prove that its increased power will also help the interests of others, then other powers are not going to be eager to join in an anti-China coalition that may lead to an unnecessarily conflictual relationship with China and risk the gains of cooperation. Although it is probably not correct to characterize the proposed “quad” of cooperation between the United States, Japan, Australia, and India as an anti-China coalition, China’s reassurance helped make others less interested in joining. Virtually all of these countries were not in favor of discussing China issues in this context, or joining up for anything that even seemed to be anti-China, because China was not yet threatening enough to require such a response and because prematurely balancing against China would produce unnecessary hostility.

The general implication is that if the rising power implements a grand strategy of reassurance and maintains cooperative relations with potential balancers, it will be more difficult to convince these potential balancers to join in a coalition against the rising power. The evidence also shows that when the rising power takes actions that are perceived as threatening, such as Germany during the

1875 War in Sigh Crisis and China during the mid-1990s, other powers are much more likely to join in opposition to such moves and to take stronger actions to balance against the rising power. However, the evidence suggests that power alone is not likely to be enough to make it easier to gain supporters for a coalition against the rising power. Moreover, trying to push the other powers to join a coalition against the rising power before it has behaved in an aggressive manner may not only be unsuccessful, but may also be counterproductive because it may unnecessarily damage relations with these countries and convince them that the real threat to regional stability is not the rising power, but the bully that is prematurely and unnecessarily trying to check the rising power. Applied to contemporary East Asia, if the United States pushes countries in East Asia to join an anti-China coalition before they perceive it to be necessary, these countries are unlikely to support the United States in such steps, and may perceive the United States to be a bigger threat to regional stability-- which will likely damage America's relations with these powers and weaken support for its presence in East Asia. Pushing to balance against China too early, while China is still adopting a reassurance strategy, may end up destroying America's relations with the region and make it even easier for China to dominate the region.

*Even if a Rising Power Attempts to Implement Reassurance, if its Actions are Perceived as Threatening and Aggressive, This can Still Provoke an Early and Intense Balancing Response*

The evidence in this thesis shows that when rising powers attempt to implement grand strategies of reassurance, sometimes they are successful in mitigating the balancing response, sometimes they are not, and sometimes their behavior is counterproductive and ends up provoking an early balancing response. I have highlighted the need for more research based on more cases to determine the conditions under which reassurance works best and the types of behaviors that work best, but the key lesson from the thesis is that when a rising power attempts reassurance, it does not

always work to forestall the balancing balance. In fact, early in the rise of Germany and China, both countries attempted to reassure others, but these reassurance efforts were both relatively limited and more than overpowered by other stronger behavior that both powers took in defense of their own interests.

Both Germany and China were responding to challenges to their own interests and regime stability and such responses were not only necessary, but also did not contradict its overall messages of peace and reassurance. However, in both cases, other powers perceived this “necessary defense on interests” as needlessly provocative, and worried that such behavior sent messages that the rising power may be more threatening as it became more powerful, and therefore, such aggressive behavior required a strong balancing reaction. To the rising power, its responses to these domestic interests were no one else’s business and were not really international relations, and they were surprised at the strong reaction by other powers.

The overall lesson or implication is that even if a rising power is trying to implement a grand strategy of reassurance, if some of its behavior is perceived as aggressive, this aggressive behavior may overwhelm the peaceful aspects of the rising power’s message, and may provoke a strong balancing response. When facing a rising power, other powers are worried about what it might do with its increased power, and therefore usually pay close attention to its behavior and look for consistency between peaceful rhetoric and its behavior. For a rising power, managing its international environment and preventing a balancing reaction is a difficult challenge, and even if the vast majority of its behavior is reassuring, states are likely to be hyper-vigilant in response to any signs of potential threat or deviation from the peaceful image. As a result, behavior that is inconsistent with the overall message of reassurance, even if it is exception, can often be perceived as provocative and lead to a greater worry that the rising power is a threat and end up provoking a strong response, even against a relatively weak rising power.

For China, despite its constant repetition of its overall vision of “peaceful development,” behavior that seems inconsistent with this can lead to perceptions of the rising power as a potential threat. The most difficult challenge for rising powers, as the evidence in this thesis has shown, is that a weak and fragile regime’s strong defense against what it perceives as domestic challenges, can still lead to perceptions by other countries that the rising power may be aggressive and therefore needs to be checked. I would suggest that this is an accurate description of the dynamics of 2009-10 in which China has been perceived as more “assertive.” From China’s standpoint, during this period, it continued to reassure through its “peaceful development” doctrine, but needed to respond vigilantly to challenges on Taiwan and in the seas off its coast. Given the greater worry that increasing power creates in the minds of others, a rising power needs to be consistent in its reassurance, otherwise some behavior that is seen as provocative can lead to a strong balancing response, even if the rising power is trying to reassure.

#### *Rising Powers Do Not Necessarily React Vigilantly to Negative Developments in its International Environment*

Although rising powers prefer an international environment in which other powers are not worried about it and taking actions to check it, the evidence in this thesis suggests that there is some variation in how rising powers respond when some of the negative developments occur. In Wilhelmine Germany, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Britain and France came together to form an *entente cordiale* and then expanded it to include Russia, Wilhelm II took these moves as evidence of European hostility towards Germany and responded with more provocative diplomatic behavior and naval building, thereby fueling the action-reaction cycle that led to hostility and war in Europe.

For Bismarckian Germany and post-Cold War China, however, rather than perceiving the moderate balancing responses of the mid-1870s and mid-1990s as evidence of hostility, they instead recognized that if they wanted to maintain a favorable international environment, this type of

behavior was not acceptable to other powers. Moreover, leaders in both Germany and China recognized that they needed to be more active in signaling that its rise would not threaten others and needed to be more active in cooperating with other powers.

For Bismarckian Germany, the united response and proto-balancing coalition involving Russia, Britain, and France that formed during the 1875 War in Sigh Crisis, led to deeper analysis by Bismarck and other German diplomats on what actions were needed to show that Germany was cooperative and not a threat, and also led to a more complete reassurance strategy dating from the late 1870s. In the case of China, there were numerous examples where negative developments in its international environment led it to conclude that it needed to be more cooperative and try harder to reassure other powers that it was not a threat. The first example was the strong reaction by the United States, Japan, and other East Asian states to Chinese provocations in the mid-1990s. Rather than responding to these anti-China moves by increasing hostility, China recognized that its reassurance was not working effectively, and over time moved to adopt a more comprehensive and cooperative approach towards Southeast Asia, and then the United States and Japan. The same broad dynamic occurred in China's approach to India. After India detonated a nuclear weapon and improved its relations with the United States at the end of the Clinton administration and early in the Bush administration, rather than concluding that these negative developments were signs of hostility that needed to be responded to in kind, these changes in China's international environment drove China to reach out to India even more actively and launch a broad and sustained reassurance campaign towards India. Moreover, self-restraint by China in the face of many other negative developments showed that these did not necessarily produce hostile responses, and also proved to be an important signal of China's reassurance.

*Although Other Powers Should Remain On Guard Against Unnecessary Spirals of Hostility, Moderate and Strong Balancing Responses are Not Only Sometimes Effective at Deterring Future Aggression, but can Also Push the Rising Power to Adopt a More Cooperative Approach and More Complete Reassurance*

In recent discussions of how to respond to the rise China, some government officials and scholars emphasize the need to avoid self-fulfilling prophecies. As Nye most famously declared, if we treat China like an enemy, then it will become one.<sup>1196</sup> The implication, consistent with the spiral model and security dilemma, is that this result may prove tragic because China may not have been an enemy or a revisionist power from the start, but hard-line behavior from the United States and East Asian set in motion dynamics that “created” a revisionist and aggressive China. Those who emphasize the risk of self-fulfilling prophecies sometimes advocate treating China with “kid gloves,” even when China is behaving aggressively, because a hard-line response towards China may push the relationship down a competitive path towards hostility and war.

Such concerns are valid and there is evidence from this dissertation to shows that hard-line responses can result in hostility, but contrary to the expectations of many, there is also evidence that strong responses to a misbehaving rising power can set in motion more cooperative dynamics. When a rising power’s material capabilities are increasing or when it is behaving in a more provocative manner, some experts argue that a strong response will effectively deter a rising power from using force or escalating crises. This is correct, but the evidence from this dissertation suggests further potential benefits from a hard-line response to provocations from a rising power. This dissertation shows that strong responses by others in the face of an aggressive rising power can sometimes push the rising power to become more cooperative. As explained above, the strong responses to Bismarckian Germany in the mid-1870s and China in the mid-1990s led to a much more cooperative approach to its relations with the rest of the world. Although strong responses

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<sup>1196</sup> See Joseph Nye, “Beware of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies,” *Taipei Times*, March 21, 2005.

against rising powers certainly run the risk of provoking spirals of hostility, these same responses can not only prove effective in deterring crisis escalation, but can also push the rising power to adjust its overall grand strategy to be more cooperative.



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