MUTUAL TRUST THROUGH SHARED VALUES AS THE FOUNDATION FOR IMPROVED U.S.-SINO RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China to understand why mistrust exist between the two and how U.S. foreign policy makers can use soft power to gain the trust of current and future Chinese leaders so that cooperation on common security and economic interests in East Asia, and not defection, defines the U.S.-Sino relationship. Resolving North Korean aggression is one example of a common security and economic interest that requires cooperation through trust between the U.S. and China that, if achieved, could help lay the foundation for cooperation on a range of bilateral and transnational issues.

Using secondary sources to support the research, chapter 1 discusses the relationship between the U.S. and China, and details the threat North Korea poses to each country. Chapter 1 concludes by providing the definition for trust in international relations and reviewing collaboration theories to categorize the nature of the U.S.-Sino relationship, which will underscore the need for trust. Chapters 2 and 3 analyze the domestic interests, values and other contributing factors to American and Chinese foreign policy making, respectively. This will show that while their domestic policy interests are similar, the foreign policies enacted by each country to actualize their domestic policy goals contribute to uncertainties about the intentions of the other.
Chapter 4 looks at how the U.S. can use soft power as an effective tool for communication and creating the space necessary to build trust among current and future Chinese leaders. Finally, chapter 5 summarizes the findings and makes recommendations for U.S. foreign policy makers on improving U.S.-Sino relations.
...the thing that I learned as a diplomat is that human relations ultimately make a huge difference. No matter what message you are about to deliver somewhere, whether it is holding out a hand of friendship, or making clear that you disapprove of something, is the fact that the person sitting across the table is a human being, so the goal is to always establish common ground.

-Madeleine Albright
U.S. Secretary of State, 1997-2001

In life, you can (do) either one of two opposite things: You can build bridges or walls. Walls separate and divide. Bridges get people closer.

-Pope Francis
Catholic Church
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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the United States of America (U.S.) and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is one between a sole global superpower and an ambitiously rising nation, with mistrust complicating full cooperation on security and economic interests, including their inability to resolve the threat to regional stability posed by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK/North Korea). Supported by research from books, journal articles, domestic and international news articles, government data and other secondary sources, this thesis looks at trust as a key component of cooperation in international relations and how it can be formed between the U.S. and the PRC so that cooperation and not rivalry on shared interests define their relationship.

For U.S. foreign policy makers who are serious about building constructive relationships with their Chinese counterparts, they must endeavor to gain knowledge on the Chinese foreign policy making process in order to better understand the values associated with Chinese policies, the intended outcomes of these policies, the influential voices in the policy making process and any policy shifts that would signal cooperation or defection. Juxtaposed with U.S. foreign policy making, American foreign policy makers can use this knowledge to find commonalities between U.S. and Chinese values and interests that could form a pathway toward trust and cooperation.

The results show that American foreign policy in East Asia is geared toward maintaining its status as a superpower by entering into bilateral and multilateral relationships that bolster and protect its economic interests. American policies also aim to preserve regional stability through strengthened security alliances. Alternatively, PRC
foreign policies are motivated by Chinese nationalism, which rejects U.S. unilateral
dominancy in East Asia and aims to rebuild its status as a great power nation. Both
countries value wealth, power and influence.

Largely problematic in their relationship is the negative perception of U.S.
intentions that has been long-held by Chinese Communist Party leaders. As a result, U.S.
policies that increase America’s presence and influence in East Asia are typically viewed
with skepticism and disapproval by Chinese leaders. This is exemplified by American
trade and security agreements with various East Asian countries, many of whom are in
disputes with China and fear its rise. The perception of America held by China’s current
and future leaders is what American foreign policy makers must work to alter and is thus
the focus of this paper.

This thesis concludes by looking at how America can use soft power gained from
high culture, which is directly controlled by the government through Department of State
initiatives such as educational and cultural exchanges, joint military exercises, adherence
to values in domestic policies, focused foreign policies and multilateral institutions to
achieve mutual trust and improved U.S.-Sino relations.
CHAPTER 1
THE CASE FOR TRUST AND COOPERATION

Strong cooperative partnerships are important for countries that strive for
dominancy in a single region or for superpower status and influence. As seen with the
U.S. and its allies, partnerships can be between countries that have common values and
beliefs, and are generally supportive of the other’s policies. Similarly, partnerships can
form between ally countries that share concerns about transnational issues but do not
always agree on their solutions, such as climate change and ratifying the Kyoto Protocol.
Additionally, partnerships can form between two or more countries striving for regional
dominancy but must still work together because of their security and economic
interdependence, where the actions of one would influence the decisions of the other – as
with the U.S. and China.

In each of these partnerships, cooperation on a range of issues such as commerce,
international labor and human rights standards, security agreements, global health
initiatives, poverty reduction, international terrorism or nuclear non-proliferation require
some degree of trust. In order to cooperate and develop mutually acceptable policies to
address these types of transnational issues, trust is necessary between countries (Hoffman

The U.S. and China have been skeptical of each other since the founding of the
PRC in 1949, due to the competing ideals of Western democracy and Eastern
communism. During the mid-20th Century, America and other Western countries were
engaged in a campaign to prevent the spread of communism throughout Europe and Asia.
While the fate of government rule in China was uncertain prior to 1949, after the establishment of the PRC, Chinese leadership sought out new relationships with other developing countries by advocating the superiority of communism, thereby fueling Western fears of communism taking root beyond Soviet Union and Chinese borders. Consequently, the U.S. maintained its opposition to communism and China rejected Western spheres of influence in the region, which led to each country harboring concerns about the intentions of the other. Over time, little effort was made to improve this relationship and, as a result, Chinese fears of U.S. motives to contain China along with U.S. concerns about the rise of China have created an environment of mistrust between Washington, DC and Beijing.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China to see how mistrust can be overcome so they can work together on shared security and economic interests in Asia. Failure to achieve trust will lead to a permanent state of rivalry, which could lead to missed opportunities for cooperation on resolving transnational issues, such as the threat to stability on the Korean Peninsula and throughout Northeast Asia posed by the DPRK, or the extreme scenario of military conflict between these two nuclear countries. Adopting policies to end North Korean threats to regional stability is but one issue between the U.S. and China that could serve as an indicator for cooperation potential because each country has domestic concerns that are sensitive to stability on the Korean Peninsula, and any solution to this mutual interest requires both U.S and Chinese approval, which can only be achieved through trust.
North Korea has a long history of threatening peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and throughout the region. Recent provocations that have contributed to North Korea’s poor relations with the U.S. and its regional neighbors, including China (Chance and Kim 2013), include its aggressive pursuit of a nuclear weapons program (Feffer 1999). To date, North Korea has tested nuclear weapons in 2006, 2009 and 2013 (Sen 2013). According to a Voice of America article entitled “North Korea Fires Missile Over Japan,” the DPRK launched a missile over Japan into the Pacific Ocean in 2009 (North Korea Fires Missile Over Japan 2009), violating Japan’s sovereign airspace. In 2010, North Korea fired on the South Korean navy vessel, the Cheonan, killing 46 South Korean sailors. Later that same year, North Korea fired artillery shells on the South Korean Yeonpyeong Island killing four people (Zhu 2012, 12).

The DPRK has also tested numerous short-range missiles into the Sea of Japan, despite United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions prohibiting such actions. In May 2013, the DPRK military fired six short-range missiles in what it wrote off as “intense military exercises” meant to increase its defense capabilities (Kim 2013). North Korea’s proliferation of missiles and nuclear weapons technology to the Middle East (Bogdanov 2012) is a concern for all signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly in regards to civilians living in those states who could become victims of nuclear terrorism (Bajoria and Xu, Six Party Talks on North Korea 2013).

While North Korea’s military provocations are condemnable, like its neighbors and the U.S., North Korea holds protecting its security and sovereignty as top priorities. North Korea has largely justified its nuclear weapons program and military posturing by
citing failed negotiations with the U.S. and U.S. policies it views as threatening. The DPRK cited the Clinton Administration’s failure to lift economic sanctions and deliver fuel and civilian reactors in a timely manner as a breach of the 1994 Agreed Framework and cause for restarting its nuclear program in the mid-1990s (Feffer 1999). In a 2001 statement at the 56th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Permanent Representative of the DPRK to the United Nations Ambassador Li Hyong Chol referred to the on-going presence of the U.S. military in the region as hostile and a cause for continuing its weapons program for defensive purposes (Chol 2001). The DPRK leadership later accused the George W. Bush Administration of implementing hostile policies toward the DPRK that required them to build up defenses.

In 2005, the North Korean Foreign Minister said in a statement, "We...have manufactured nukes for self-defense to cope with the Bush administration's evermore undisguised policy to isolate and stifle the (North)” (Cerles 2005). In 2010, a North Korean official quoted in Aljazeera called increased sanctions by the Obama Administration “a clear expression of intensified hostility” (North Korea Denounces US Sanctions 2010). Responding to criticism over six missile tests in May 2013, the North Korean Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea said, "Our military is conducting these exercises in order to cope with the mounting war measures from the U.S. and South Korea, which is the legitimate right of any sovereign country” (Kim 2013).

Despite North Korea’s view of U.S. policy in Northeast Asia, the region’s major players, namely the U.S. and China, cannot afford to stall on building the trust and
cooperation necessary to end the DPRK’s military posturing. North Korea’s insistence on continuing to exercise its military muscle could lead to miscalculations and conflict between any combinations of regional states, an outcome any rational leader should work to avoid. Should the U.S. and China achieve a mutual security policy toward North Korea through a partnership built on trust, cooperation on other regional and international initiatives could be possible.

International relations theory defines trust as a country’s willingness to cooperate versus defect, and to put into the hands of another actor the authority to make decisions on its behalf with the expectation that their intentions are good and will cause no harm (Hoffman 2002, 377-78; Larson 1997, 706; Kydd 2005, 6). Countries, however, would only opt for such a risk when their interests are taken into consideration in a manner that would create commonalities that ensure cooperation. Russell Hardin says trust “with respect to some action” is given because it “takes me into account in some relevant way” and therefore “my trust in you is typically encapsulated in your interest in fulfilling my trust” (Hardin 1998, 12). Trust, then, implies that countries with shared interests will cooperate in good faith, expecting that no future harm will result from any vulnerability that may arise from cooperation.

A look at U.S. and Chinese interests in Northeast Asia reveals that stability in the region and preventing North Korea from proliferating nuclear weapons are shared security and economic goals. The United States’ interest in maintaining stability on the Korean Peninsula is to prevent a military conflict between its ally and partner in the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, the Republic of Korea (South Korea/ROK), and the
nuclear-armed North Korean state (Oh 2008). Likewise, China and North Korea’s security agreement, the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance Between the People’s Republic of China and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (PRC-DPRK Treaty 1961), underscores the need to maintain stability on the peninsula so the possibility for miscalculations that could lead to a direct or indirect conflict between the U.S. and PRC as seen during the Korean War are minimized.

America’s ability to prevent instability on the peninsula due to military conflict would also protect its economic interests in the region as militarized conflicts disrupt trade between countries at war as well as between non-warring countries with trade ties to warring countries (Glick and Taylor 2005, 11). Based on 2011 and 2012 estimates from the Central Intelligence Agency’s World Factbook, China is America’s number one imports partner, representing 19 percent of total imports, and its number three exports market, representing 7.2 percent. Japan, representing 6.4 and 4.5 percent of America’s imports and exports, respectively, is America’s fourth largest trading partner in each category. While not a top five trading partner for the U.S., South Korea derives 8.5 percent of its imports from the U.S. representing its third largest partner for imports behind China and Japan. According to the October 2013 U.S. Department of Commerce United States Census Bureau report, China, Japan and South Korea are the second, fourth and sixth largest U.S. trading collaborators overall. Instability in this region would have a tangible economic impact on the U.S.

China’s interest in stability on the Korean Peninsula is focused more on preventing North Korea from becoming a failed state (Nanto and Manyin 2010, 6). For
China, North Korea represents a buffer between it and South Korea, where U.S. troops are stationed (Bajoria and Xu 2009), and China fears a failed North Korea unified under the South would expand the U.S. military's presence in the region and on its border (Gates 2011, 4). A unified peninsula under South Korea would also mean America’s economic influence and nuclear umbrella would extend to China’s border (Nanto and Manyin 2010, 8) – an outcome least preferred by China without some degree of trust between it and the U.S. While Chinese concerns about the U.S. military’s influence on the peninsula perhaps derives from its experiences with America’s policy of containing the spread of communism during the Cold War, it is a concern that could be remedied if comprehensive agreements between China, the DPRK, the U.S. and U.S. allies can be reached. Agreements should move the peninsula toward security and stability for all civil society, denuclearization, cessation of provocative military displays and protection of North Korea’s independence. This approach would take into consideration the concerns of both the U.S. and China.

In connection to its border, China is also concerned about the influx of Korean refugees into its territories should a military conflict involving North Korea ensue (Bajoria and Xu 2009). According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, research shows that the impact of large numbers of refugees on host countries can cause societal unrest and strain domestic economies. If refugees are of different ethnicities, any old rivalries can intensify while new ones can develop. Language and cultural barriers can present communication challenges and incidents of theft, murder or other crimes can increase in refugee areas. Refugees also compete for resources such as
food, water, land and medicine, which have shown to raise hostilities and provoke skirmishes in host countries already suffering from limited resources (UNHCR 1997). China’s decade long revitalization project in the “rustbelt” region bordering North Korea, which is touted as a success by leaders in Beijing (Rustbelt Revival 2012), would suffer under an influx of refugees escaping conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

Like the U.S., China also has trade interests that are sensitive to military conflict on the Korean Peninsula. According to the CIA World Factbook, China’s top export partners include the U.S., with 17.2 percent, Hong Kong, with 15.8 percent, Japan, with 7.4 percent and South Korea representing 4.3 percent. Its top import partners are Japan, South Korea and the U.S. representing 9.8, 9.2 and 7.1 percent, respectively. Conflict could also disrupt Chinese imports and exports with countries in other regions of the world that would be less inclined to continue trade in some goods or services due to wartime uncertainties or international pressure to sanction warring countries. For example, China’s top four and five import partners are Germany and Australia (CIA World Factbook) and China exports to many countries in the European Union, on the Arabian Peninsula and countries on its periphery in South and Southeast Asia. Many of these countries are Western leaning and support Western-led efforts to isolate countries that threaten economic stability. Any full-scale military conflict on the Korean Peninsula would have significant impacts on China’s trade and, depending on its handling of the crisis, its global influence.

Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is also a shared interest for China and the U.S. Two successive North Korean regimes have demonstrated through three nuclear
weapon tests that international bans on testing nuclear weapons or United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions condemning their tests are uninfluential in its decision making process. This, coupled with the DPRK’s aggressive behavior toward South Korea and Japan, and its rhetoric toward the U.S. and short-range missile tests despite international condemnation, creates the image of an irrational regime capable of using a nuclear weapon in an attack. De-escalation of tensions is crucial in this world of mistrust and hair-trigger alerts, where miscalculations could lead to preemptive strikes and the start of a regional war between nuclear powers.

North Korea’s nuclear weapons program also threatens China and America’s military influence in the region as it raises the specter of a nuclear arms race among countries directly threatened by the North. South Korea and Japan could decide America’s nuclear umbrella is insufficient for their security needs and that acquiring weapons capable of deterring North Korean aggression is in their best security interest. In addition, China suspects Taiwan could be inspired to acquire a nuclear weapon for its own security (Nanto and Manyin 2010, 8). Given the interrelated histories of these countries, the proliferation of nuclear weapons would only create more uncertainty and instability in the region as these countries would remain on high alert in the absence of shared trust.

The U.S. and China should also work toward denuclearization to prevent North Korea from continuing its proliferation of missiles and nuclear weapons to other authoritarian states such as Syria or Iran, where they could fall into the hands of stateless international terrorists. Forecast International estimates that from 1987-2009, nearly
1,200 short-range missiles were sold from Pyongyang to Iran, Syria and Pakistan (Bogdanov 2012). A former Iranian diplomat who defected in 2010 claimed that from 2002 to 2007, North Korean nuclear technicians were frequent travelers to Iran, and that Iran’s Revolutionary Guards had a goal of obtaining a nuclear weapon with help from North Korea (Keaten 2010). In 2007, U.S. government officials sought cooperation from China to help stop a shipment of North Korean ballistic missile parts that was headed to Iran (Haddick 2010). Evidence also suggests that since the start of 2011, North Korea has increased its transfer of nuclear technology to Iran by selling Tehran’s Ministry of Defense a “highly specialized computer program” is necessary for the construction of reactors and development of nuclear warheads (Kruger 2011).

While sources claim North Korean-Iranian nuclear and missile technology cooperation, Zachary Keck with *The Diplomat* argues that such claims do not take into consideration any competing interests or that North Korea’s nuclear facilities enrich plutonium while Iran’s centrifuges enrich uranium, which makes nuclear cooperation unlikely (Keck 2014). Despite his assessment, the spread of any nuclear weapons technology, materials or weapons to regions where loose materials could easily fall into international terrorists’ control raises security and energy concerns for the U.S. and China. Preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear state is a top U.S. foreign policy priority because of the resultant shift in the balance of power in the Middle East. The U.S. maintains its defense relationship with Israel, its main ally in the Middle East, and capabilities for Iran to support nuclear terrorism throughout the region via its support of
terrorist organizations and rogue regimes is among U.S. concerns. It would require effort by the U.S. to get Chinese leaders to view this goal with the same sense of urgency.

Additionally, U.S. oil imports from the Middle East could see sharp supply reductions and spikes in cost if Iran or international terrorist organizations throughout the region, emboldened by nuclear weapons, challenge or seize major oil fields by military force. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Saudi Arabia is America’s second largest supplier of crude oil behind Canada, having exported between 40.8 million and 46.7 million barrels per month between May 2013 and October 2013. A nuclear-armed Iran could complicate this trade relationship should Iran choose to become aggressive in its rivalry with Saudi Arabia for “dominance in global energy markets” (Milani 2011). Despite Saudi Arabia’s 60 year-long security relationship with the U.S. and its purchases of U.S. military aircraft and air defensive weaponry (U.S. Relations with Saudi Arabia 2013), Iran’s acquisition of a nuclear weapon coupled with its chemical weapons and long-range missiles acquired from North Korea, marginally makes up for what it lacks in comparison to Saudi Arabia’s military capabilities (Cordesman 2010, 66).

Loose nuclear materials in the Middle East could also undermine China’s oil imports from the Middle East. China imports nearly half of its oil from Iraq, making China Iraq’s largest export market since Saddam Hussein was overthrown in 2003 (Arango and Krauss 2013). In January 2014, the Iraqi government lost control of Anbar province to Al Qaeda-linked fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Iraq vowed to fight back (Iraq Government Loses Control of Fallujah 2014). Ten
months later, fighting continues between ISIL, Iraq and the international community, with ISIL gaining considerable grounds and recognition by U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel as a force “unlike anything the world has ever seen” (Gehrke 2014). It is in China’s interest to work with the U.S. to prevent loose nuclear materials from entering this region where violent religious extremists threaten the balance of power and could seize Iraq’s oil fields, thus significantly affecting trade with Iraq.

While the U.S. and China each have common security, economic and energy motivations for ensuring stability in the region and preventing North Korean nuclear proliferation, to view building relationships in terms of cooperation through shared interests puts common interests ahead of trust and implies trust plays no part in cooperation. This thesis rejects this notion and agrees with Hoffman, Larson and Kydd that trust is necessary for cooperation to occur, and a “minimum trust threshold” (Kydd 2005, 38) exists that must be met before countries will cooperate. Trust, then, must accompany shared interests as the means for effective U.S.-China cooperation.

The need for trust between the U.S. and China cannot be understated. As global issues become more complex, no one country will have the capacity to address threats to international security and peace alone. As the world’s top two powers, they are in the best position to combine ideas and resources to work cooperatively on a range of transnational issues, despite any opposing views they may have on these issues. Joint leadership requires countries to put aside differences and find solutions to issues on which they agree cooperation is possible. Joint leadership also requires countries to keep lines of communication open on more contentious issues in the hopes that good faith talks
will lead to agreeable solutions, and cooperation on both sets of issues must include trust. Without trust, communication breaks down, relationships deteriorate, cooperation becomes difficult, and the likelihood for miscalculations and conflicts increase.

Kydd offers two viewpoints for determining if countries are prone to trust one another and cooperate based on how they view their own actions and the responses to their actions from others. They put into perspective the ideological nature of countries when analyzing conflicts. Traditionalists, he says, behave defensively because they view the actions of other countries as aggressive due to expansionist goals (Kydd 2005, 4). Additionally, traditionalists resemble offensive realists, who believe that in anarchy, in which Thomas Hobbes says international relations operate, it is not possible to eliminate mistrust and so security remains a top priority (Kydd 2005, 14). For traditionalists, there is no difference between expansionists and the more cooperative security seekers because both will act in their security interest as an aggressor or defender, and so the possibility for trust and cooperation remains low. Traditionalists, then, argue that any action on their part that may seem aggressive is actually a defensive response to aggression from the other (Kydd 2005, 15).

Revisionists, on the other hand, view their own actions as contributing to the cause of conflict and suggest other states are simply defensive realists reacting to aggression (Kydd 2005, 4). Unlike the offensive realist, defensive realists believe that levels of trust can change between states. The minimum trust threshold can be elevated to a point where cooperation is possible. Security remains a priority but the defensive realist believes that signaling good intentions allows two countries to cooperate. Absent
this assurance, the defensive realist will still respond to outside aggression with aggression (Kydd 2005, 16). The revisionist would argue that its own expansionist or security seeking actions (building up arms, repositioning military equipment, imposing sanctions, trade embargoes or cutting off diplomatic ties) are what cause other states to become aggressive, and that if it signals trust and cooperation, the other country would respond in kind (Kydd 2005, 4, 16).

To further understand trust in international relationships, Kydd introduces international “collaboration games,” such as the Prisoner’s Dilemma, the Assurance Game, the Security Dilemma and the Spiral Game, to provide theories for determining when states will cooperate out of trust or defect out of fear. For the U.S. and China, the nature of their relationship exhibits a security dilemma, which consists of elements from both the Prisoner’s Dilemma and Assurance Games models. The Prisoner’s Dilemma theorizes that a country with a “dominant strategy” will choose to defect, regardless of another country signaling cooperation, because it is in their security interest to do so (Kydd 2005, 6; Stein 1982), similar to the offensive realist. Stein furthers this theory by expanding on expectations of right intentions in the definition offered for trust, saying that a country with a dominant strategy is not concerned with perceptions of its intentions because its dominant strategy only allows it to act in a manner consistent with its security. Dominant strategy countries opt to defect rather than cooperate and are generally untrustworthy (Kydd 2005, 6; Hoffman 2002, 379). Because countries in a Prisoner’s Dilemma are unable to overcome apprehensions of the other, they are unlikely to work together.
The Assurance Game, on the other hand, provides that a country will be more inclined to cooperate if it believes that the other will also (Kydd 2005, 7), which is aligned with defensive realism. While dominant strategy thinking still exists, cooperation is still possible and preferred. It is important to note that holding security as self-interest is important for sovereign nations because they have a responsibility to protect their people and property from avoidable downfalls (Stahn 2007, 99). However, when common interests arise between countries with dominate strategies such as the U.S. and China, where each country will do what is in its own security interest (Kydd 2005, 6), countries should recognize the dangers of defecting and opt for some level of trust so that conflicts are avoided and cooperation is possible. Robert Axelrod contends that, “when conditions are right,” there is a gravitational push for countries to cooperate on common interests and that the benefits from doing so outweigh the alternative (Axelrod 1984, 182).

Combining elements from both the Prisoner’s Dilemma and Assurance Game theories, the Security Dilemma injects uncertainty into the equation. For countries in a security dilemma, the cooperative equilibrium – the point at which countries can cooperate – says that two security seekers will choose to cooperate because they perceive each other to be trustworthy actors. True security seekers, however, will defect if faced with an expansionist state because the expansionist is by nature untrustworthy. Thus, the non-cooperative equilibrium – the point at which countries cannot cooperate – leaves no space for trust and says that two expansionists will choose mutual defection, even if one believes the other is also a security seeker, because they both perceive the other as
untrustworthy (Kydd 2005, 29-34). In the security dilemma, the only possible outcomes are cooperation, because both are security seekers and trust each other, or defection, because of the presence of at least one untrustworthy expansionist. This is the relationship between the U.S. and China.

Should the U.S. and China successfully shift their relationship away from a security dilemma toward a mutually trustworthy, security seeking partnership, it would be important to nurture this new relationship with continued trust building commitments in order to avoid falling into a spiral game relationship where the spiral equilibrium replaces the cooperative and non-cooperative equilibria (Kydd 2005, 59-62). Over time, as security seekers move to protect their interests in strategic regions of the world, they can experience a decline in their longstanding partnerships with other security seekers. This is because, as a security seeker, any action by one security seeker that appears to be aggressive and without consultation with the other security seeker raises doubts about intentions, even if the two trust each other. These actions, which exhibit traits of expansionism, can include military exercises, selling weapons to a state that is not trusted by the other security seeker, entering into military or trade agreements with states on the periphery of another security seeker without their consent, and unfair trade restrictions or manipulations of currency that disadvantage other security seekers’ economies. These actions easily send mixed signals that could be misperceived as hostile (Kydd 2005, 50-51). Even after the U.S. and China gain trust, as exhibited in the spiral game, maintaining trust is just as important as building trust.
In order for countries to arrive at a place where cooperation is possible, policy makers must view their actions from a revisionist point of view. This allows leaders to view their policies objectively and accept responsibility for lags in their relationship with other countries while reserving the right to defect in the presence of real aggression. The Assurance Game is the ideal model for countries as it best describes the nature of rational players – countries would prefer to cooperate but will defect for security purposes. The Spiral Game is useful because it shows that countries can grow cold toward one another as a result of policy decisions and a lack of communication, resulting in mistrust about the goals or intentions of policy changes.

Trust between the U.S. and China will advance each country’s economic and security goals in the region because trust leads to mutually beneficial policies rather than competing policies that place one country at a disadvantage, and thus, fuel mistrust. Getting to a place of cooperation through trust, however, requires managing U.S.-Sino relations through their foreign policies. The next two chapters will look at how the U.S. and China develop their foreign policies, including the roles national interests, values and ideology, and history play in influencing the decisions of American and Chinese foreign policy makers. While the U.S. and China have similar domestic aspirations, including a strong economy and international influence, their motivations for achieving these goals are different and each country’s foreign policies create barriers to trust.

For the U.S. to take a leadership role in building better U.S.-Sino relations through its policies, policy makers must look at how U.S. polices are formed and how these policies are perceived by Chinese leaders based on China’s foreign policy goals.
Grasping China’s foreign policy-making process gives U.S. policy makers useful information when developing policies toward Asia and for responding to Chinese policies in East Asia. This will also help the U.S. best utilize its resources to build trust among the Chinese people and government.
CHAPTER 2
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY MAKING

To understand the dynamics between the U.S. government and China as it pertains to their foreign policies and barriers to trust, it is important to know how each country arrives at its foreign policy decisions. Who decides the foreign policy? What influences foreign policy decision making? What are the foreign policy goals? Is there continuity in foreign policies? To what extent does public opinion contribute to the development of foreign policies? These are the types of questions each side must ask of the other and of themselves when analyzing the political landscape prior to crafting foreign policy strategies so as to avoid adopting policies that would chill relations and deepen mistrust. While the answers to many of these questions are complex, they are necessary to understand in order to achieve the political space for building mutual trust.

American foreign policy decisions are often difficult ones to make and take into consideration input from all levels of civic engagement, including public opinion, special interest groups, and the legislative and executive branches of government. Input can also come from other countries’ governments and their publics who would be directly or indirectly affected by U.S. foreign policies. This interplay of voices help form the direction a particular policy will take, and these voices will include different ideas on the best strategy to choose. While many people contribute to the decision making process, in American foreign policy, the President must ultimately decide on and justify the rationale for any policy chosen and the means by which to achieve the policy’s goal(s).
National interests, ideology and historical experiences are the key drivers of the American foreign policy decision making process (Levi 1970, 1; Vlahos 1991, 62; Perkins 1994, 463-5; Hastedt 2009, 24, 78; Jentleson 2014, 8). From a combination of economic and security concerns, cultural beliefs and values, and past involvements, decision makers use a range of information to create and analyze options for foreign policies. Authors vary on which, if any, out of interests, ideology or familiarities has more importance over the others. It seems consistent, however, that more weight is given to national interests, and that ideology justifies the action taken on behalf of national interests while, history helps form sets of indicators for predicting the outcomes of the chosen policies.

For U.S. policy makers, national interests are the ends for which foreign policy strives. Jentleson says, “U.S. foreign policy must be made in the name of the national interest…” (Jentleson 2014, 8). Hastedt says national interests are “invoked as the primary rationale for virtually all foreign policy undertakings” and that it is done so “with great certainty and conviction – as if there could be no doubt as to the claim that a given policy or line of action is ‘in the national interests’” (Hastedt 2009, 24). Perkins echoes these assertions by quoting German sociologist, philosopher and political economist Max Weber’s words, “interests (material and moral), not ideas, dominate directly the actions of men” (Perkins 1994, 465).

The importance of national interest to the foreign policy making process is evident in statements made by U.S. Presidents, Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of State, Defense and Commerce, and U.S. Senators and Congressmen/women who
reference foreign policies in terms of U.S. national interest. Rarely is a foreign policy said to be in the interest of U.S. ideology, although the cultural values and beliefs held by American foreign policy makers help determine the direction a policy takes. Continuing Max Weber’s quote from above, he states that “the ‘images of the world’ created by these ideas have very often served as switches determining the tracks on which the dynamism of interests keep action going” (Perkins 1994, 465). It can be said, then, that foreign policy is made in the interests of the nation with ideology, cultural beliefs and values serving to justify national interest policies. At many times, defining a policy in terms of national interest based on beliefs or values are one and the same, and both interests and ideology as embodied in foreign policy can have significant impact on trust between the U.S. and China.

U.S. national interests include goals associated with prosperity, power, peace and principles (Jentleson 2014, 8). There is no order of importance and more than one goal is often associated with any one national interest. Prosperity is defined as “national interests defined principally in economic terms” that are geared at achieving “gains for the American economy” through policies that “help provide reliable and low-cost imports, growing markets for American exports, profitable foreign investments, and other international economic opportunities” (Jentleson 2014, 14). Commerce has been a U.S. interest since its founding days in the eighteenth century. According to Perkins, the colonists, like today, believed that they should have the right to enter into trade agreements with an unlimited number of countries. Their belief laid the foundation for the decision to oppose the British Navigation Acts system, which limited trade in British
colonies to trade with Britain and other British imperial colonies (Perkins 1994, 459). This, in effect, established open trade as a value and seeking out trade opportunities a national interest.

Today, the U.S. has 14 bilateral or multilateral free trade agreements (FTA) with 20 countries including the U.S. – Israel FTA, the U.S. – Jordan FTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Dominican Republic – Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), and, more recently, the U.S. – Panama, U.S. – Colombia and U.S. – South Korea FTAs, to name a few. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce’s website (Free Trade Agreements n.d.), each of these agreements were made to advance U.S. economic interests by opening up U.S. exporters to new markets and lowering or eliminating tariffs on U.S. exports to markets overseas. Currently, the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Vietnam are negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, which would reduce tariffs between member countries, open markets for U.S. exports and give the U.S. more influence in Southeast Asia and South Pacific economic affairs. It is worth noting that China is not included in this trade agreement, and this exclusion contributes to Chinese concerns about and mistrust of U.S. intentions in the Asia Pacific region.

A second U.S. national interest is power, which is “the key requirement for the most basic goals of foreign policy: self-defense and the preservation of national independence and territory” and is “essential for deterring aggression and influencing other states on a range of issues” (Jentleson 2014, 9). Jentleson goes on to quote
influential U.S. political scientist Samuel Huntington as saying, “Power enables an actor to shape his environment so as to reflect his interests.” When power is thought of in terms of national interest, the military immediately comes to mind as the institution responsible for exerting U.S. strength, deterrence against aggression or attacks, protecting the homeland, and assisting with advancing U.S. diplomacy through humanitarian aid in times of crises.

Through its military, the U.S. is able to influence political environments to its will. In the aftermath of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government using chemical weapons against Syrian civilians in 2013, it was publicly debated whether or not U.S. President Barack Obama’s threat to use cruise missiles against al-Assad’s chemical weapons stockpile persuaded Russia to intervene. Similarly, U.S. and Russian mutually assured destruction enforced by both countries’ nuclear weapons capabilities is credited for preventing a military confrontation during the Cold War. Chinese opposition to a unified Korean Peninsula under the control of South Korea, where U.S. military bases are located, is another example of how the U.S. military asserts power and influence in other regions. In regard to a U.S. military presence in Asia, Ben Rhodes, Deputy U.S. National Security Adviser for Security Communications says, “The presence of the United States in the Asia Pacific has been a stabilizing force for a long time” (Eilperin 2014).

The U.S. also achieves power through its military by entering into defense agreements with countries, which extends U.S. presence in strategic regions. According to the U.S. Department of State’s website (U.S. Collective Defense Arrangements n.d.), the U.S. has been involved in defense agreements since the 1949 ratification of the North
Atlantic Treaty, which included the U.S., Canada and 26 European countries. The U.S. entered into five defense arrangements between 1951 and 1960 that included Northeast Asian, Southeast Asian and Pacific Rim countries. These arrangements, which excluded China, each committed the U.S. and partners to “recognize that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and each party agrees that it will act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes.” The arrangements included the 1951 agreement between the United States, Australia and New Zealand, the 1951 treaty between the U.S. and the Philippines, the 1953 U.S. and Republic of Korea treaty, the 1954 Southeast Asia Treaty between the U.S., Australia, France, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and the United Kingdom, and the 1960 treaty between the U.S. and Japan.

Today, the U.S. is again building its military relationships with countries in Northeast and South Asia. The U.S. and Australia have recently agreed to open four U.S. bases in Australia, complete with warships, submarines, marines, U.S. aircraft carriers, surveillance aircraft and drones. Similarly, the U.S. plans to open four bases in Singapore that will increase U.S. navy ships and U.S. surveillance capabilities, and help support regional security by strengthening its military partnerships with Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei (Zenn 2012). In April 2014, the U.S. and the Philippines signed a 10-year defense agreement that will also extend America’s military presence in the region. With tension surrounding China’s territorial disputes between Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan growing and fears rising among these leaders that China’s actions will lead to a larger regional conflict where
China has the military advantage (Zenn 2012; Guinto, Talev and Mattingly 2014; Eilperin 2014; Landler 2014), these new security arrangements assure regional leaders that the U.S. is committed to preventing Chinese provoked instability (Eilperin 2014).

Increased U.S. military presence as a symbol of power on China’s periphery, coupled with past military confrontations between the U.S. and China during the Korean and Vietnam wars as well as U.S. military support for Taiwan, can send the wrong signal to China and increase mistrust and miscalculations. Hugh White, a professor of strategic studies at the Australian National University in Canberra, believes any American military buildup in the region will confirm China’s views that the American “pivot” is an attempt to contain its economic rise and regional influence (Guinto, Talev and Mattingly 2014). Echoing these sentiments, Marc Lanteigne says America’s military alliances in the region are “widely regarded as a response to China’s growing military presence in the region” (Lanteigne 2013, 4) and are regarded by China as “a means of checking its own strategic expansion in the region” (Lanteigne 2013, 22). It will be incumbent upon the U.S. to ensure its military presence on China’s periphery does not lead to incorrect signaling and miscalculations that could exacerbate mistrust and spark a conflict. At the same time, the U.S. should seek credible assurances from China that its actions are not that of an aggressive expansionist country, which makes cooperation impossible.

While maintaining strong military readiness is critical for any sovereign nation, especially a world power, there are other options available to the U.S. that can help it attain and exert power beyond its borders. It can realize its power goals through its ability to engage countries economically via trade. Hastedt supports this theory of power
through economic policies in his claim that “American economic power exerts its influence by its ability to attract other countries to the U.S. economic system…” (Hastedt 2009, 354). In this manner, free trade agreements propel U.S. power and prosperity by attracting countries to America’s free trade policies.

An additional way America uses economic power to advance both its prosperity and power goals is by using regional trade agreements to affirm or reshape economic alliances and regional influences. One major multinational economic project underway that demonstrates America’s economic power is the ongoing TPP negotiations, which China opposes. As mentioned earlier, TPP is a free trade agreement between 12 Pacific Ocean countries, sans China, that would ease tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, thereby creating a favorable trade environment for member countries. This is significant not only because TPP would meet America’s prosperity goals, but, coupled with the recent U.S.-South Korea FTA, it would also give the U.S. greater power, influence and cause to maintain regional stability in Asia, much to the chagrin of China who has its own regional influence aspirations and apprehensions about what TPP means for its security and economic future (Davis 2014; Mulgan 2013). While TPP advances U.S. interests, it does not help improve U.S.-Sino relations because Chinese leaders remain wary of its purpose.

In a May 2013 *East Asia Forum* article entitled “Japan, US and the TPP: the view from China” (Mulgan 2013), Aurelia Mulgan at the Canberra Campus of The University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy says that the TPP negotiations are viewed by Chinese leaders as a U.S. attempt to “gain leadership over the
trade system and increase its political influence by setting regional trade rules.” Mulgan goes further in explaining Chinese criticism of TPP as a tool to create an alternative to Chinese manufacturing and exports, which would significantly impact the Chinese economy. Similarly, Paul Bowles at the University of Northern British Columbia argues more directly that Chinese leaders have long believed America’s intentions are to contain its rise, and the inclusion of Japan in the TPP talks only reinforces this thinking because it gives TPP credibility and Japan greater leverage in the region (Bowles 2014). Through the TPP and the U.S.-South Korea FTA, the U.S. is effectively building strategic relationships that will open the American economy to new markets. However, TPP also gives the U.S. additional influence and power on China’s periphery, which is viewed negatively by Chinese leaders and encourages mistrust.

A second project that does not directly involve the U.S. but demonstrates U.S. support for using strategic partnerships to upend regional dependency on aggressive countries is the Shah Deniz pipeline traveling through Southern Caucasus states. The Shah Deniz Stage 1 project completed in 2006 is a natural gas development project that transports gas from the Caspian Sea to the Georgia-Turkey border, avoiding Russian territory. According to operators of British Petroleum (BP) as noted on BP’s website, Shah Deniz Stage 2, which will transport gas from the Georgia-Turkey border to Europe through Italy, is “one of the largest gas developments in the world” and will “help increase energy security in European markets” (BP in Azerbaijan n.d.).

Currently, Russia is Europe’s main supplier of natural gas, providing roughly 25 percent of Europe’s imports, and Europe is Russia’s “most important market for Russian
natural gas exports” (Ratner, et al. 2013, 9). While the Shah Deniz pipeline could serve to diversify Europe’s options for meeting its energy needs, Shah Deniz presents an alternative to European dependency on Russian natural gas imports, which could be used to weaken Russia’s influence in Europe and its domestic economy in light of its 2008 and 2014 conflicts with Georgia and Ukraine, respectively. The American government has been supportive of this project, which underscores the potential for wielding power through economic means.

Peace is the third goal of U.S. national interest and it is achieved through diplomacy and cooperation. The most effective way to achieve peace is to incorporate the theory of “International Institutionalism” into foreign policy, where decision makers recognize “the possibility and the value of reducing the chances of war and of achieving common interests sufficiently for the international system to be one of world order” (Jentleson 2014, 12). Foreign policy makers who view the international system through this lens recognize that conflicts are a natural part of international relations but that peace is attainable, similar to defensive realism thinking and the Assurance Game theory.

It is a widely accepted thought that peace is easily achieved between countries with similar ideas and systems of governance. For example, democracies tend not to engage in military conflicts with each other because of commonly held values. Much to the credit of the U.S., when countries differ in their concepts of world order and disputes arise, they can turn to legal institutions such as the World Trade Organization or the United Nations for guidance on resolving and de-escalating tensions (Hastedt 2009, 67).
Similarly, trade agreements can help countries minimize the possibility of war and achieve peace. Hastedt says, “Just as commerce between individuals binds them together, international trade is assumed to bind states together and reduce the likelihood of war” (Hastedt 2009, 67). In order for trade agreements to be successful tools for minimizing conflicts, they must be mutually beneficial and entered into honestly, with the expectation that each party will uphold their end of the agreement and not seek to disadvantage the other. In the interest of upholding these agreements and preventing shocks to domestic economies, trade partners should avoid actions that could lead toward mistrust and conflict. The trade relationship between the U.S. and China outlined in the previous chapter underscores the economic benefit of the U.S. and China working toward trust, minimizing miscalculations between each other, and building the space for cooperation on peace and security in Northeast Asia.

Jentleson identifies principles as the fourth goal of U.S. national interests and defines them as “the values, ideals, and beliefs that the U.S. has claimed to stand for in the world,” which are “rooted in Democratic Idealism” (Jentleson 2014, 16). These democratic values, ideals and beliefs make up the American identity and help shape the lens through which American foreign policy makers analyze the international environment and develop foreign policies. Although ideology is not often touted as the main reason for a foreign policy (in comparison to a foreign policy being declared in the national interest), the Cold War is perhaps the most referenced example in U.S. history where winning the competition between the ideologies of the west and the east, democracy and totalitarianism, and capitalism and communism guided then-U.S.
diplomatic, economic and military policies. Coincidentally, winning the Cold War was in America’s national interest.

This paper, however, supports ideology not as the goal of U.S. foreign policy, but as the justification for why particular policies are chosen. This understanding of the role ideology plays in foreign policy making is shared by scholars who study the subject. Levi says that ideologies “serve to rationalize selfish interests” (Levi 1970, 30). Similarly, Robert Newman says that “ideology is a set of ideas and beliefs about possible actions, be they for the future or in the past” (Newman 2013, XIV), while Vlahos asserts that “patterns of thoughts and behavior are shaped by culture…” (Vlahos 1991, 62). Perkins extends the idea of values shaping policies to all nations, not just the U.S., by saying that international leaders, too, use values to analyze information (Perkins 1994, 460-61).

Although foreign policies are crafted based on national interests that reflect national ideology, it is sometimes difficult to separate what constitutes a national interest versus a national ideology. Jentleson theorizes that foreign policies should advance prosperity, power, peace and principles. However, prosperity, power and peace are core principles or values Americans hold dear. As seen with U.S. trade agreements, some U.S. foreign policies can simultaneously promote U.S. values and principles while satisfying national interests. While this seems beneficial for the U.S., forming policies in the name of ideology could blind policy makers to external developments that would require changes in the direction in which policies take (Newman 2013, XIV-XV).
Perkins says the U.S. has long believed that it is “destined to transform the world” and that it “demanded that they be respected as a model for the world” (Perkins 1994, 460), suggesting a sense of entitlement in U.S. values associated with maintaining global power, leadership, unrivaled dominancy and influence. While strong confidence in the nation is important, such arrogance could lead the U.S. to adopt traditionalist theory thinking and solely fault China for any disputes that may arise instead of a realist point of view, which allows for the possibility that U.S. policies and not China alone contribute to mistrust, elevated tension and even conflict. Aggrandizing long-held values can also lead to policies that are not well suited for meeting present day realities or that create damaging misperceptions in the eyes of outside observers, such as the TPP, which Chinese leadership view as a U.S.-led containment policy, versus ones that seek to engage large and growing countries to make them responsible and trusted players on the international stage.

China’s attitude toward the U.S. from after the Chinese Civil War between Mao Zedong’s Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chiang Kai-shek’s Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang/KMT) through today, can be attributed to U.S. ideology dictating the nature of U.S. foreign policies in a manner that hindered trust (Newman 2013, 18-31). During the latter years of the Chinese Civil War, which lasted from the late 1920s until 1949, America supported the KMT party because it opposed the spread of Mao’s CCP. Despite evidence the KMT party was losing ground in the battle for China, America continued to support Chiang’s rule over China. However, when defeat of the KMT was eminent, America released the 1949 “China White Paper,” which detailed how the
KMT’s loss was a result of Chiang’s inability to rally Chinese support. Continuing the assault on communism, the white paper also omitted efforts by Mao to open up a space for U.S. – Communist Chinese cooperation, likened Mao’s CCP to communism under the Soviet Union and claimed its leaders had “foresworn their Chinese heritage” (Newman 2013, 31). Newman contends that the Chinese White Paper is the reason for the Chinese defeat of the U.S. Eighth Army during the Korean War of 1950, Chinese support of North Vietnam during the Vietnamese War and continued Chinese aims to expel American influence from Asia.

This is not to suggest that U.S. ideology should not play a role in U.S. foreign policy making. If the U.S. only became involved in issues directly related to its national interests, it would not advocate for the release of political prisoners or for countries to end government crackdowns against vulnerable populations. The U.S. would not provide humanitarian assistance to countries stricken by poverty, hunger and natural disasters or to countries absorbing tens of thousands of displaced persons in refugee camps due to regional violence. The U.S. would have little reason to consider its values and democratic beliefs on matters of fairness, individual rights, assisting others in times of need, or encouraging the development of democratic nations when contemplating foreign policies. These are American values-based actions that serve to bolster quality of life for people around the world and therefore merit consideration. Instead, U.S. foreign policy makers should consider whether policies based on ideology antagonize U.S. relationships with rising countries such as China, maintain the status quo or serve to improve relations, and understand the implication of each outcome.
When considering U.S. ideology and foreign policy making, it is important to note that the subset of values and beliefs that are common to each political party also influence foreign policy decisions. While both democrats and republicans hold some values equally, such as maintaining strong international influence, supporting domestic economic growth and ensuring credible national defense capabilities, the Parties have different beliefs on whether foreign aid and diplomacy or military spending best advance power, prosperity and security interests.

Republican leadership has favored displaying American strength through increased military spending rather than through diplomatic initiatives undertaken by the State Department, such as the work performed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In 2011, House Republicans proposed a bill that would make cuts to food aid, global health, USAID and development in the Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriations bill while President Obama and the Democratic-led Senate sought increases (Figure 2.1). Additionally, Republican Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan proposed a bill that would increase defense spending between 2016 and 2024 in excess of the sequester levels agreed to in the Budget Control Act of 2011 (Kaper 2014). With USAID receiving “just over one percent of the federal budget,” as noted on the agency’s website, drastic cuts to the State Department threaten America’s ability to promote its power and influence through means other than the military. This inverse relationship between foreign aid and diplomacy appropriations and military spending can signal to China that America does not take seriously the need to reduce military tensions and move toward cooperation, stability and trust.
History also influences foreign policy making because it creates policy options based on deductions made from information gained by in depth knowledge of relationships between countries. Studying history allows one to compare “evidence,” such as current and past political statements, which can help policy makers identify signals of cooperation, defection or maintaining the status quo. This history puts into perspective the “magnitude and significance of change” and therefore provides a measure for how to respond (Stearns 1998). Stearns says history also helps sort through “conflicting interpretations” of situations presented in arguments. Having the ability to
look at conflicts objectively can help decision makers arrive at policies that take the other
country into consideration. By looking at historical trends and events, policy makers can
determine which shifts threaten U.S. national security interests and require a defensive
response, which shifts are simply nuisances and require little to no response, and which
shifts are positive and create opportunities for cooperation.

Hastedt also supports history’s role in influencing foreign policy making by
proclaiming that U.S. policy makers have prejudiced ideas on how to respond to certain
international developments because of their collective familiarities with past events. He
says, “The assumptions that policy makers bring to bear on foreign policy problems are
influenced by their long-term experiences,” which “provide policy makers with a data
base against which to evaluate an ongoing pattern of behavior” (Hastedt 2009, 78).
Understanding why countries behave the way they do based on personal long-term
experiences help determine when and what type of action, if any, is needed in response to
international developments. For example, because it has been debated by scholars that
North Korean military provocation is used as a strategy to gain leverage for humanitarian
food aid, a retaliatory military strike could prove to be an overly forceful response.
However, this underscores the need for a coordinated effort between the major states in
the region to address stability on the Korean Peninsula. Another example of reading
history for clues on the actions of others is the U.S. relationship with Iran. Iran has long
been suspected of using negotiations regarding its nuclear weapons program to buy time
to grow its program with less scrutiny from the international community, namely the U.S.
This has led many Members of Congress to reject any sanctions relief because of Iran’s repeated violations of trust.

Historical patterns help U.S. foreign policy makers gain insight into how their foreign policies will be received by recipient countries. Historical knowledge can provide opportunities to assess situations holistically, which enables decision makers to draft policies that are more likely to be accepted by their foreign counterparts. Historical knowledge, while useful for developing policies that would lessen tensions, should not deter the U.S. from analyzing each situation anew so that it does not miss new signals, which can range from a country becoming more aggressive either militarily or economically to a country moving toward cooperation.

U.S. foreign policy making takes its cues from national interests, ideology and historical experiences. National interests, for the world’s sole superpower since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, include maintaining its prosperity, power and working toward peace – all of which are influenced by its values and principles. Foreign policy is also sensitive to the ideologies of those elected and appointed officials who are responsible for deciding U.S. foreign policy, which can both help and harm initiatives to reset U.S. relationships abroad. Historical content is then called upon by policy makers to serve as a reference for responding to international developments. History reminds decision makers of what has and has not worked in the past and offers suggestions for policies to pursue and avoid. The historical relationship between the U.S. and China can aide American policy makers in implementing policies in East Asia that reflect Chinese
concerns and advances U.S. interests while minimizing mistrust and moving toward cooperation on a range of shared interests.

Grasping the method by which U.S. foreign policies are made is important because it provides the rationale behind policy decisions. This can then be analyzed to determine if a U.S. foreign policy represents, by design, offensive realism where policies are aggressive and leave no room for trust and cooperation. Similarly, it can help determine if foreign policies resemble defensive realism where cooperation is possible at a certain degree of trust. Defensive realism must be the message and the leadership America shows in its relationship with China.

In addition to knowing what influences U.S. foreign policy, U.S. policy makers must also understand what factors influence policy making in other countries so that they can develop ideas on how their policies will be received. The next chapter looks at how Chinese foreign policy is decided to better understand the rationale behind its decisions and its relationship with the U.S.
CHAPTER 3

CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY

Just as the U.S. has a formula for its foreign policies, so too does China form its foreign policies with its interests, ideology and history in mind. Unlike U.S. foreign policy whose goal is to maintain U.S. global influence and protect U.S. economic and security interests, China’s foreign policy reflects a country working toward reestablishing its prestige and influence in the world. This is important to note because, while China has experienced unprecedented economic growth over the past 30 years that has positioned it as the world’s second largest economy, China views itself at a lower level of development, so American and Chinese foreign policies are meant to achieve different ends, notwithstanding the concerns for security and economic growth shared by most nations.

Chinese foreign policy has a nationalist agenda that aims to protect China’s sovereign rights and rebuild wealth, power, pride and international status, and is largely influenced by its once great nation status and history with foreign countries (Hao and Hou 2009, S139; Li 2012, 33; Chen 2012, 71; Lanteigne 2013; Bhattacharya 2007, 235-6). For Chinese foreign policy, nationalism is a “mixed feeling of pride for the splendid historical civilization that the country has created and bitterness for the country’s humiliating experience in its modern history” (Hao and Hou 2009, S139). Nationalism is influenced by the goal of obtaining for China great power status by building a strong, wealthy and internationally respected and influential country, and ridding it of the
humiliation it experienced at the hands of Western powers dating back to the First Opium War of 1839 to 1842 (Men 2007, 7; Bhattacharya 2007, 241-2).

When scrutinizing China’s foreign policies, awareness of its historical experiences, both its domestic changes and interactions with foreigners over time, gives U.S. policy makers a wealth of information to use in their analysis. China’s history puts into perspective the reasoning and rationale for its policies that may seem aggressive in nature or threaten the interests of others whether intentionally or not. Stearns says, “To know why something happened,” such as a change in policy direction, “we have to look for factors that took shape earlier” (Stearns 1998). China’s history includes centuries of it being a great civilization with “no equal.” In the sixty years prior to the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, however, China faced foreign conquests and pressures to open its borders to trade that have since been viewed as humiliating for the country. As a result of losing the Opium War, China was forced to accept the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, which was the first unequal treaty that gave 100 years of land, trade and domestic policy concessions to the U.K. and other Western powers with no reciprocal benefits for China, sparking its “century of dishonor” (Wang 2013, 3; Chan 2012, 24).

Dr. Chi Wang, co-chair and founder of the U.S.-China Policy Foundation and adjunct professor of U.S.-China relations at Georgetown University, points to China’s relationship with Japan as a significant factor in China’s perception of the outside world, and a cause of humiliation and feelings of nationalism among its leaders. He says the humiliation began during the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, when Japan “wrested” Korea and Taiwan from the Qing Dynasty followed by Japan gaining
privileges in Manchuria after defeating the Russian Pacific fleet in 1905. At the end of World War I, the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference gave Japan rights to lands in China that were previously held by Germany, which was the motive for the May Fourth Movement when Chinese students protested the decision, thereby furthering ideas of nationalism. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria and in 1937, it expanded its incursions into China, launching the Second Sino-Japanese War (Wang 2013, 6-7). An earlier show of nationalism was the anti-foreigners, anti-Christian missionaries Boxer Rebellion of 1900 led by pro-Chinese factions fed up with the increase of foreign influence and domestic economic decline (Boxer Rebellion 2013).

In 1945, the Allied powers and the Soviet Union signed the Yalta agreements, which sought the Soviet Union’s assistance in defeating Japan at the cost of it maintaining influence in China following the war. This agreement was made without input from China (Wang 2013, 10, 13). During this time, China and the Soviet Union signed their own treaty, the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, which gave lands and ownership of the Changchun Railway back to China. The treaty also gave Outer Mongolia its independence from China, the Soviet Union the only access to investment in Manchuria and Xinjiang, and Soviet citizens who committed crimes in China protection from Chinese prosecution (Chan 2012, 24-5), similar to a concession made to the U.K. in the late 19th Century. This challenge to China’s sovereign rights promoted the idea of humiliation.

By the start of the Second Japanese-Sino War, China had been engulfed in a 10-year civil war between the KMT party of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong’s Chinese
Both sides agreed to a cease fire in order to jointly fight off Japan but resumed fighting after its 1945 defeat. Fighting lasted until 1949 when the CCP won the war, leading to Mao Zedong establishing the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Since that time, China has moved toward great power status by creating an “independent and autonomous space for security and development by challenging the domination of it by major powers” (Chan 2012, 23), which has been achieved by policies geared toward decreasing its dependence on foreigners, developing its domestic economy, and building its presence as a viable leader in international affairs through multilateral cooperation. The ideology influencing these policies was made up of two concepts:  

*li-lun* or doctrine and *si-xiang* or thought (Chai 2012, 89). What follows is a look at the transformative policies of Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents,” Hu Jintao’s “peaceful development” and “harmonious world,” and current President Xi Jinping’s “Chinese Dream” and their roles in Chinese policy making.

The PRC’s first political ideology under Mao Zedong was influenced by Marxism – the belief that the exploiting class should be overthrown by force to establish a proletarian dictatorship – and Leninism – the belief that Marxism can be spread more easily through revolution to nation states where imperialism was weakest (Men 2007, 7). Marxism and Leninism strive for a “world free of aggression and exploitation of capitalism, imperialism, and colonization – a world free of power politics, bloc parties, and hegemonism” (Hao and Hou 2009, S139). This formed the foundation for China’s closed policies under Mao Zedong and China’s attention to its international relationships with other developing countries.
Mao Zedong Thought was a product of the realities Mao faced growing up, including the fight against Japanese and Western imperialism, the loss of Korea and Taiwan, the “slicing of the Chinese melon” through spheres of foreign influence, paid indemnities to foreigners and the battle for control over China against the Western backed KMT (Bhattacharya 2007, 240; Feng 2012, 59). Mao Zedong Thought was a mixture of Chinese nationalism and communism elements that embodied Mao’s belief that communism was an “ideal path for the Chinese to restore prestige” following its experience with imperialism and the belief that the next big war was inevitable (Men 2007, 10).

During this transitional period to establish new order in China, Mao Zedong Thought encompassed three revolutionary ideologies. The first, Yibiandao or leaning to one side, was China’s decision to actualize its nationalist agenda by moving closer to the socialist Soviet Union. The second, Dasao ganjing wuzi gingke or cleaning house, required China to “clean up the room before inviting guests,” meaning that before it could open up new relationships with other countries, it first had to purge “imperialist forces from China.” The last revolutionary ideology was Lingqi luzao or fresh start. Under fresh start, the ruling CCP refused to recognize any relationship that was built under KMT rule (Men 2007, 11).

Mao Zedong greatly extended China’s relationships with developing countries, perhaps giving rise to fear among Western leaders that China was intent on spreading communism throughout the world. Employing its belief that communism was the way to rid oneself of Western capitalist imperialism, China began to focus its policies on
preventing hegemony in second and third world countries by Western countries. By 1955, China spread its communist influence to 21 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and by 1964, it had ties with 49 countries. China supported guerilla movements, national liberation movements and radical governments that challenged capitalism and the international political system. As a sign of its rising power, China was granted United Nations membership in 1971 and was recognized by African and Asian states as a rising power (Men 2007, 11-13). Unlike the Soviet Union model of communism, however, Bhattacharya says China rejected the notion of self-determination and instead believed that it was freeing these countries from oppression by including them in its socialist system (Bhattacharya 2007, 240).

In an attempt to make China totally self-reliant by reforming industry and agriculture, Mao introduced the socialist Great Leap Forward strategy, which resulted in grain and metals quotas owed to the state, leading to harsh working and living conditions, mass poverty and starvation, and the death of millions of Chinese between 1958 and 1960. Mao also set forth the Cultural Revolution, which was a violent movement incited among the youth in 1966 against the leaders whom he felt were moving China away from its revolutionary ideology. By its end in 1976, over 1 million Chinese were killed (Cultural Revolution 2009). Today, Mao Zedong Thought has largely become nonexistent but elements remain, as evidenced in China’s 2011 handbook for its diplomats that contains Mao’s words from 40 years earlier – “Contradictions are inherent in human relations and, therefore, govern politics” (Chai 2012, 92), suggesting strong offensive realism thinking.
Deng Xiaoping came to power following the Cultural Revolution and, having experienced its effects on society along with the Great Leap Forward, reversed China’s self-reliant socialist system as a means of rebuilding its wealth and power (Chai 2012, 95; Feng 2012, 60). Deng Xiaoping sought to reform and open up China’s economy by putting aside Mao’s inward conservative policies and incorporating capitalist elements to spur economic growth. Deng also introduced “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” meaning that China must look at its unique situation when applying reforms and not mimic the policies of other countries that do not share its history or actualities (Men 2007, 15). Deng gave new perspective to Mao Zedong’s ideology, which allowed new ideas to guide Chinese foreign policy thinking, which enabled China to be in the “primary stage of communism” and refocus its priorities on economic modernization. Deng, however, still followed nationalist thinking and believed that opposing Western hegemony through domestic economic development relied on “love for the nation, care for one’s compatriots and a willingness to help preserve China’s cultural identity” (Bhattacharya 2007, 244).

By 1978, China was still rebounding from the policies of the Cultural Revolution. To help in its transformation toward economic stability, Deng opened up learning from other countries on advanced science, technology and management, and sought foreign direct investment to boost the economy. He rejected Mao’s belief that war was inevitable and began building relationships with countries on China’s periphery in order to create an international environment conducive to Chinese interests. He encouraged Chinese
leaders to avoid any foreign policies that would be confrontational and distract China from this goal (Lai and Kang 2012, 116).

Deng also began the process of rebuilding China’s relationship with old Western partners and sought to place China on a path toward great influential status. He stopped referring to the U.S. as an imperialist country and advocated his four guiding principles of independence, equality, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries as a new model for international cooperation. By this, Deng stressed that his ideology only aimed to provide mutual political and moral support to other countries, would ensure that the inter-party relations of China would not conflict with its inter-state affairs, revolutionary policies would not be exported to developing countries as they were under Mao Zedong, and China would not force its will or policies onto other countries nor would it allow other countries to impose their will or policies on China (Men 2007, 16).

As a result of its shift toward economic development, building new relationships and fostering old ones, Deng set China on course to have its international trade increase to third in the world and its gross domestic product quadruple to $1.4 trillion by 2004 (Lanteigne 2013, 40). In addition to setting China on a path toward economic stability, he also reopened schools that were closed during the Cultural Revolution, permitted studying abroad for college, made China self-sufficient in food production and negotiated the return of Hong Kong from the U.K. Despite his successful foreign and domestic policies, Deng’s tenure was not without controversy. In a move that threatened gains made in U.S.-Sino relations after President Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, Deng
supported the use of tanks and guns during the pro-democracy Tiananmen Square protests, during which, hundreds of students were estimated killed (Reformer With an Iron Fist 1999). While this set back U.S.-Sino relations, Deng’s handling of the Tiananmen Square protest demonstrated the lengths Chinese leaders were willing to go in order to protect Chinese nationalism and reject Western influenced ideas of government rule.

Like Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin was influenced by a wave of humiliation and “wounded national pride” as a result of Western attempts to prevent the spread of communism during the Korean War and Cold War, and Western sanctions over the Tiananmen Square incident that reinvigorated anti-Western propaganda (Men 2007, 23). Jiang, like leaders before him, cited the Opium War as the catalyst for humiliation and called for a return to nationalism, saying “patriotism requires us (the Chinese) to love the socialist system and road chosen by all nationalities in China under the leadership of the Communist Party...Patriotism and socialism are unified in essence” (Men 2007, 23).

Like Deng, Jiang understood Chinese national interests meant that China must ensure a peaceful environment favorable to China’s development, where peace targeted the international environment and development was its domestic modernization (Men 2007, 24). His call for nationalism and focus on international policies to actualize domestic goals led to his “Three Represents,” which committed the CCP to always: 1) represent the requirements of the development of China’s advanced productive forces 2) represent the orientation of the development of China’s advanced culture and 3) represent
the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China (Lanteigne 2013, 34; Men 2007, 22; Chai 2012, 96; Bhattacharya 2007, 245).

Jiang Zemin also grew up during the Cultural Revolution and experienced the split between China and the Soviet Union, which influenced his thinking toward “international stability and order” (Lanteigne 2013, 22). Unlike Mao and Deng, Jiang came to power as part of a generation with no military experience, and although he maintained their political beliefs, he introduced China to “new security cooperation strategies” (Feng 2012, 60). Building on Mao Zedong’s Marxist-Leninist policy of opposing hegemonies, Jiang was responsible for challenging the unilateral system built by the U.S. and significantly increasing China’s role in international affairs via increased multilateral relationships, new leadership roles in multilateral organizations, and strengthening economic reforms started under Deng Xiaoping (Lanteigne 2013, 19-20; Chai 2012, 96; Men 2007, 25; Bhattacharya 2007, 249-50; Li 2012, 40).

Building its multilateral relationships was an important strategic move to satisfy China’s nationalist goals of obtaining great power status under Jiang. Post the fall of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War (Bhattacharya 2007, 249), China grew wary of the “new world order” led by the U.S. and urged for a multilateral world with many states making decisions on major global issues (Lanteigne 2013, 11). Jiang desired to create a global alternative to U.S. hegemony that would have China’s voice and ideas serve as a viable option for international order. He believed this would “accelerate the formation of a multipolar world that could challenge U.S. hegemony” (Li 2012, 40-1). This was spurred by a fear of the U.S. using its new position to contain China because of its
communist system, as it had done with the Soviet Union, and vulnerability from being excluded from the decision making table (Bhattacharya 2007, 249). Through newfound diplomatic and structural power, Jiang believed China could shape international organizations to meet the state’s nationalist goals of rebuilding its great power status and ridding China of its past humiliation (Lanteigne 2013, 19).

To appeal to multinational organizations and new relationships, Jiang leaned toward mutual benefits and sought out partnerships for international cooperation based on shared regional and international interests (Lanteigne 2013, 20). As a result, China was able to assume lead roles in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). China’s membership in these organizations, some of which exclude the U.S., has been viewed by observers as either a way for China to increase its influence and challenge U.S. dominance in Asia or a way for China to protect its national interests (Chai 2012, 96-7; Bhattacharya 2007, 251; Lanteigne 2013, 20). For Chinese leaders, this could be one and the same.

Another area that Jiang focused on to rebrand China’s image as a powerful and influential nation was building the Chinese military. A developed military, Jiang believed, would benefit China’s ability to exert itself as a nation as capable of responding to international crises as was the U.S. was in the late 1980s and 1990s during the Gulf War and in Kosovo (Lanteigne 2013, 82-3). While Jiang significantly invested in the modernization of the Chinese military, his vision was for a strong defensive military, not
one viewed as aggressive or threatening, especially toward its Pacific Rim neighbors. China, he says, “Has been wary of taking any actions which might provoke…the development of a pro-Western military alliance being gathered by the United States in order to balance or contain Chinese strategic interests” (Lanteigne 2013, 86).

In 1996, however, Jiang fired missiles into the waters around Taiwan (Edney and He 2012, 86) in a show of opposition to American interference in what China has long viewed as a domestic conflict. Additionally, in the time since Jiang’s leadership, China has acquired military equipment from Russia and manufactured others with offensive capabilities that have raised concerns among its neighbors. This equipment includes anti-satellite technology, stealth jet fighters that can rival America’s F-22, and its first aircraft carrier (Edney and He 2012, 83; Lanteigne 2013, 87). The recent territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas between China and its neighbors strongly suggest China is moving toward a military with both offensive and defensive capabilities, and one that is confident in its ability to pursue its ambitions through stronger military projections.

Hu Jintao, like Jiang, grew up during the Sino-Soviet split, and was motivated by the need to protect China’s status, develop its trade, secure its multilateral partnerships and work toward international stability (Lanteigne 2013, 22). While Hu sought to deepen China’s reforms, he also believed that in order for China to build an international world conducive to its domestic goals, China should return to the ideologies that had guided it since its founding in 1949. At the 4th Plenary Session of the 16th Central Party Committee in 2004, a resolution “strengthening the construction of the party’s governing ability” was passed and said “the party must adhere to Marxism and Leninism, Mao
Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important thought of ‘Three Represents’ as its guiding ideology, while keeping on exploring the new horizon for the development of Marxist theories in its new practice” (Men 2007, 28). This is important because it signaled – whether for good or bad – that China would seek new ways of implementing foreign policies that still reject Western influences and hegemony in Asia while supporting its domestic goals of power, wealth and prestige.

Prior to the 4th Plenary Session, Vice President of the Central Party School Zheng Bijian advocated at the 2003 “Boao Forum for Asia” for the development of good relations with its neighbors, taking global responsibility and easing the anxieties of others amid the China threat rhetoric emanating from the West, (Men 2007, 30; Bhattacharya 2007, 247-8). Out of this emerged Hu’s “Peaceful Development” and “Harmonious World” theories, which were meant to prove China’s rise in international affairs was peaceful and that it supported an international order where the state’s sovereign rights were protected (Bhattacharya 2007, 247-8; Lanteigne 2013, 31; Men 2007,30).

Under Hu’s leadership, however, Western powers and developing Southeast Asian countries became more vocal in their concern about China’s rise and what that meant for regional order and the status quo. Lanteigne and Bhattacharya assert that Hu’s Peaceful Development doctrine recognized this and sought to calm fears by projecting China’s rise as peaceful, not like other countries that rose to great power status by way of force (Bhattacharya 2007, 247-8; Lanteigne 2013, 31). Peaceful Development was also meant to show observers that in its rise to secure its domestic goals of wealth and power,
China would not seek to challenge or alter international norms, although a stated goal of China’s since 1949 has been to challenge the unilateral system established by the U.S.

Hu’s Harmonious World ideology aimed to create international peace and security through respect for “plurality and diversity of cultures, ideologies and political economic systems…” (Chan 2012, 30-31), partnerships based on mutual security versus alliances, fairness in international trade for developing countries and the right to self-determination by respecting countries’ sovereign rights (Lanteigne 2013, 70). The right to self-determination was a pivotal policy for Hu Jintao to attract developing countries and create an alternative to Western ideas on how countries should develop. In talks with then-U.S. President George W. Bush, Hu said, “We should respect the right of all countries to independently choose their own development paths” (Bhattacharya 2007, 256). Bhattacharya contends that this reemergence of Westphalian thinking, where countries do not interfere in the domestic affairs of others, has made China more appealing to Latin American and African countries searching for new global partnerships, which indeed challenges America’s model for development and questions its long-term ability to maintain its international influence.

Like many guiding beliefs held by Chinese leaders, self-determination did not originate with Hu. The idea of self-determination was a belief shared by Mao Zedong as early as the 1950s, and was based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and
peaceful co-existence (Lanteigne 2013, 7). Deng, too, was influenced by the Principles. He said:

Since the success of Chinese revolution relied on the combination of the general principle of Marxism with our actual conditions in China, we should not require other developing countries to follow the Chinese model in their revolutions...We should respect other parties and peoples in the search and solution of their own issues. We resolutely object others to give orders to us, we should neither give orders to others. This is an important principle. (Men 2007, 18)

While the idea of Peaceful Development was meant to convey China’s peaceful intentions and willingness to abide by international laws as it grows its economy and global appeal, Dr. Bates Gill, CEO of the United States Studies Centre at Sydney, Australia, asserts that China has failed at this goal and cites as evidence the 175 percent growth in military spending under Hu that has caused China’s East and South China Sea neighbors, particularly those with whom it has territorial disputes, to question Chinese intentions and move to realign themselves against its rise (Gill 2013) – a fate Deng worked to avoid. Similarly, China’s disputes with its neighbors, where it has used military provocation and aggression to back up its claim to territories in the region, is a glaring contradiction to the tenets of Harmonious World. These aggressive actions do not respect the territorial integrity of China’s neighbors and threaten peaceful co-existence.

Like Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, China’s current president and head of the military, Xi Jinping, is committed to the nationalist goal of returning China to its glory days prior to its century of humiliation. Xi’s “Chinese Dream” is his vision for the “rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (Page 2013), which he says will be accomplished by 2049 – the 100th anniversary of the founding of the PRC
Standing in front of the National Museum near Tiananmen Square, which is dedicated to China’s history since the mid-19th century following the declaration of the “century of humiliation,” Xi said that the “greatest Chinese dream” was the “revival of the Chinese nation.” In a separate statement, Xi said, “We will stick to the road of peaceful development…but we absolutely will not abandon our legitimate rights and interests, and absolutely cannot sacrifice core national interests” (Page 2013). The location of his Chinese Dream speech and his refusal to abandon China’s national interests signals Xi’s intent to continue the work of his predecessors to oppose Western influence and implement foreign policies that will move China toward great power status.

For Xi, great power status is linked to China’s military development and unison between the government and the military, which Xi believes will prevent a similar fall to that experienced by the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War (Roberts 2013). “To achieve the great revival of the Chinese nation,” Xi said, “we must ensure there is unison between a prosperous country and strong military” (Page 2013). Xi has also said, “To achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, we must fully achieve both a rich country and a strong army” (Roberts 2013). The Economist quotes Xi saying a “strong-nation dream of great revival of the Chinese people” was a “strong-army dream” (Xi Jingping's Vision: Chasing the Chinese Dream 2013).

Xi’s fondness for the military stems from his childhood. He was born in 1949, becoming the first Chinese leader born after the revolution of 1949 when the PRC was founded. His closeness to the military was due to his father, who was a revolutionary
and a victim of Mao’s purges (Roberts 2013). After being admitted to the Party and rising through the ranks, he turned to the military as a primary source of information and advice on policies (Page 2013). As the President of the PRC, leader of the Party and leader of the military, Xi is investing much effort in growing the military and transitioning it to become one prepared to engage in “real combat” and capable of “fighting and winning real wars” (Page 2013). China’s current military aggression in the South and East China Seas that have caused concerns among its Pacific Rim neighbors, namely the Philippines, Vietnam and Japan (Roberts 2013; Page 2013), is akin to Jiang Zemin’s focus on building the military’s capacity to “defend borders” and, at the time, “retake Taiwan” (Page 2013), as was seen during the 1996 Taiwan Strait conflict when China fired missiles into the seas around Taiwan in opposition to America’s growing presence.

Roberts and Page suggest China’s growing aggression in the region is largely in opposition to the U.S. “pivot” in Asia and is an attempt to dissuade countries from aligning themselves with the U.S. China’s military actions, however, will only serve to drive its neighbors closer to the U.S. for protection, giving America an opportunity to strengthen its position in the region and counter any rise by China that may be hostile in nature. Whether China’s current military aggression is an attempt to challenge U.S. dominancy in Asia or win disputed territories in the South China Sea, like the military under Jiang, its actions underscore the reality that China is prepared to respond militarily to perceived threats to its sovereignty (Lanteigne 2013, 88; Page 2013; Roberts 2013). In January 2013, Captain James Fanell, deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence and
Information Operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet said, “Make no mistake, the PRC Navy is focused on war at sea and about sinking an opposing fleet” (Page 2013).

Unlike U.S. foreign policy making, which includes voices from two main political parties with differing ideology, Chinese foreign policy is made by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and is headed by members of the Standing Committee of China’s legislative body – the National People’s Congress (NPC) – along with the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group, of which the Chairman of the CCP is a member (Hao and Hou 2009, S138). This underscores the importance of CCP ideologies – Marxism-Leninism under Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Three Represents, Peaceful Development and Harmonious World, and Chinese Dream – in Chinese foreign policy decision making. China’s single party approach to foreign policy making allows China to maintain a focused and long-term view of its goals, which contrasts greatly with America’s two-party system that is often at odds with one another and subject to changing direction every four years with Presidential elections or every two years with Congressional elections. It should be noted that dissension is still possible in one-party systems of government, including the CCP.

While foreign policy making in China is concentrated in the hands of the CCP, more and more voices from outside the government are beginning to influence decision makers, including the business community, non-government organizations, academia, ministries, and other experts in foreign policy and trade issues (Hao and Hou 2009, S140; Lanteigne 2013, 13). Chinese leaders are particularly becoming more attentive to opinions from the Internet, where “extreme views” that could upend the status quo are
shared (Hao and Hou 2009, S140). Additionally, the CCP has begun to include people who have studied or worked abroad and can bring new, international perspectives to foreign policy decision making (Lanteigne 2013, 24), which presents an opportunity for the U.S. to create a new image of itself among China’s future leaders.

Under the nationalist banner, China has enacted policies aimed toward “domestic stability” and constructing “an international order conducive to its national interests” (Bhattacharya 2007, 235), which includes regaining its position as a wealthy and powerful nation. This has been a reoccurring theme for Chinese leaders since Mao Zedong founded the People’s Republic of China in 1949. By reforming its economic policies, building multinational relationships, putting forth doctrines of “peaceful development” and “harmonious world,” and modernizing its military, China has been able to steadily strengthen its economy, increase its influence beyond its borders, present a model for international interaction and development, and move toward a military with greater defensive and offensive capabilities. These measurements of growth lend credence to arguments touting China’s rise, which should be monitored carefully by the U.S. given China’s recent antagonistic military policies that threaten the security of U.S. allies in East Asia, a potential arms race in the region, stability and U.S. access to new markets.

Understanding China’s guiding principles and ideology aide U.S. leaders when interpreting China’s actions on the international stage, particularly in Asia, and when gauging China’s reactions to outside influence in the region. Using this knowledge, American leaders can better pinpoint which of its actions would be well-received or
cause more tension and mistrust among Chinese leadership. If used effectively, this knowledge can also help the U.S. improve its relationship with China and the Chinese people.
CHAPTER 4
BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

The United States of America and the People’s Republic of China, like many nations, use foreign policy to advance their domestic goals. As the world’s greatest power, America’s foreign policies are aimed at maintaining its position as the most powerful nation through strengthened trade relationships, military readiness, security alliances and humanitarian relief. America’s interests – prosperity, power, peace and principles – along with its values and unique interpretation of historical events are what influence U.S. foreign policies. In East and Southeast Asia, these policies have led to new trade talks, defense agreements, military partnerships and military-led humanitarian aid as seen during the 2013 typhoon in the Philippines, the March 2011 earthquake in Japan and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Keck 2013). In South and West Asian countries, the U.S. has demonstrated its preparedness to defend its national security interests militarily. While the U.S. maintains a working relationship with China, the U.S. agenda is what concerns China, and Chinese leaders look to some of the American policies listed above to validate their worries.

The PRC views itself as a developing country, despite its rise to become the world’s second largest economy. Its foreign policies are guided by its long-term goal of becoming a great power nation that can rival American unilateralism, particularly in the Asia Pacific. China’s policies are rooted in the thoughts and theories of four of its past leaders, including Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. With the single minded goal of making China a great power, China has successfully transformed
its economy over a thirty-year period, taken on a prominent position in regional multilateral organizations, modernized its military and increased its global influence. China’s territorial disputes and its modernized military, however, raise concerns among its regional neighbors that war is possible (Stout 2014; Pew Research 2014).

Both the U.S. and China are dominant countries with similar aspirations – power, wealth and influence. They are capable of working with one another, yet each country questions the policies of the other because of their competitive natures, and both countries will use military force if necessary in defense of their national interests. This indicates that their relationship resembles the security dilemma, where countries will either cooperate because they trust one another or defect because of the presence of at least one untrustworthy expansionist. Because the security dilemma leaves only one of two options – cooperate or defect – this chapter looks at how the U.S. can use soft power to improve its relationship with China so that cooperation is the preferred option.

Joseph Nye, the originator of the term soft power, defines soft power between countries as the ability to coopt others to want the same things you want through an “attraction to shared values and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of those values” so that favorable policy changes are made (Nye 2004, 7). Hastedt supports Nye’s concept of soft power as a tool of foreign policy by saying, “. . . soft power or intangible sources of power are fast becoming the primary means of influence on which states must rely to achieve their goals” (Hastedt 2009, 304).

Soft power, however, should not be used just as a tool to promote one-sided values in the hope of getting others to implement policies or ideas that are favorable to a
single country. Soft power should also be used as a tool for effective communication between countries. Nye says public diplomacy is a process of listening as well as talking (Nye 2004, 111). In 1966, Henry Kissinger opined that the state of affairs at the time were such that conflicts no longer arose because of issues, but because of the differing values held by each country, which made solving problems difficult (Kissinger 1966, 503). While Kissinger was reflecting on the Cold War battle between the West and the for hearts and minds, his assessment suggests that in order for countries to work cooperatively on issues, finding commonality in values must be part of the solution.

The same holds true today. In an April 7, 2009 student roundtable speech at the Tophane Cultural Center in Istanbul, Turkey, U.S. President Barack Obama conveyed a similar message on the importance of finding those values that are commonly shared between people so that cooperation is possible. He said:

Simple exchanges can break down walls between us, for when people come together and speak to one another and share a common experience, then their common humanity is revealed. We are reminded that we're joined together by our pursuit of a life that's productive and purposeful, and when that happens mistrust begins to fade and our smaller differences no longer overshadow the things that we share. And that's where progress begins. (Obama 2009)

The means by which attractive values can be shared are through culture, domestic policies, foreign policies and institutions (Nye 2004, 6, 11). Nye says that commonly shared values, consistency in held beliefs and the style in which policies are implemented can determine the success or failure of soft power, which is measured by favorable changes in policies by the target country. He defines culture as a “set of values and practices that create meaning for a society” (Nye 2004, 11), and when these values are shared or understood by other countries, cooperation is more likely. President Dwight
Eisenhower and American diplomat George Kennan understood the value derived from cultural learning and the significance it has on image when they exclaimed the need “to work out not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a bit more about each other” and “cultural contact as a means of combating negative impressions about this country that mark so much of world opinion,” respectively (Nye 2004, 45).

Nye identifies two types of cultural attraction that can be used to target specific groups. The first is high culture. This type of culture appeals to elites and includes literature, art and education. High culture, Nye asserts, makes the U.S. appear “exciting,” “trend-setting,” “powerful,” “rich” and on the “cutting edge of modernity” (Nye 2004, 12). One successful high culture exchange the U.S. engages in is educational exchanges, which allows participants to learn more about cultures from around the world. The U.S. Department of States’ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ website says its exchange program is a way to “create lasting connections” because “you become aware of the inner concerns, hopes, and dreams of a family, a neighborhood or city, a nation, and global community” (Why Participate? n.d.). This supports my belief that soft power should be used for more than just coopting countries to want what you want. Soft power should lead to better understanding of the other country’s values, its structure and its interests so that real connections can be made.

Then-Secretary of State Colin Powell also supported educational exchanges and the consequential lasting relationships between the U.S. and future foreign leaders. He said, “I can think of no more valuable asset to our country than the friendship of future
world leaders who have been educated here” (Nye 2004, 44). Additionally, an international education group says, “The millions of people who have studied in the United States over the years constitute a remarkable reservoir of goodwill for our country” (Nye 2004, 44). Chinese President Xi Jinping participated in an agriculture fact finding trip in 1985 – similar to U.S. Congressional Delegation trips – and 27 years later during a 2012 visit to the U.S., insisted on visiting his host family in Iowa and those in the community he came to know (Johnson 2012). This underscores the importance of learning exchanges and the long-term connections that can ensue.

Lending credence to the link between understanding a country’s values and establishing connections, former Deputy Chief of Mission to Beijing from 2007 to 2012, Daniel Piccutta, recounted the goodwill he generated while making the effort to truly understand the culture and values of the Chinese people. He said:

A high-level Chinese contact once told me, ‘You are like an amphibian, equally comfortable in the sea or the land, in China or the U.S.’… I’d like to think that quality – of trying to see the world through the eyes of your interlocutors, to understand their point of view, to grasp their circumstances and motivations – allows me to communicate better, more clearly, and more effectively. (Dorman 2011, 14)

Becoming the “amphibian” allows diplomats to not only communicate better with their foreign counterparts, but also better analyze situations on the ground and share these findings with key U.S. policy makers.

Similar to high culture educational and cultural exchanges, the U.S. can build trust with China by strengthening its military relationship with China through strategic military exercises focused on common security threats, including the threat to regional stability caused by North Korea’s nuclear program and military posturing. Because
China has general concerns about U.S. intentions in the region and is opposed to a unified Korean Peninsula under an American-backed South Korea, U.S. military exercises with China on a coordinated response to North Korean aggression could soften Chinese concerns about the U.S. military’s presence in the region by assuring that its military would be used to help maintain regional stability, which is in both of their domestic interests. Joint exercises can also minimize the risk of any miscalculations that could lead to a U.S.-China military conflict should the need arise for a coordinated response to North Korean aggression. Additionally, improved military relations between the two countries could deter North Korean leaders from continuing displays of military posturing if they believe China would act in concert with the U.S. against any such acts. Trust through strengthening military relations, therefore, could help resolve the threat posed by North Korean aggression.

Leaders from both countries support improving military-to-military relations. At a June 25, 2014 hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee entitled “The Future of U.S.-China Relations,” U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel testified that the U.S. is “committed to building a sustained and substantive military-to-military relationship that focuses on identifying concrete, practical areas of cooperation and reducing risk” (Russel 2014). According to a 2014 Voice of America online article entitled National Security Adviser Urges More US-China Military Cooperation, U.S. National Security Adviser Susan Rice reiterated that importance of an improved military relationship with China as a high priority for the U.S. She said "The military-to-military ties between the United
States and China have grown and strengthened in recent years and it is an area of cooperation that the United States values" (National Security Adviser Urges More US-China Military Cooperation 2014). In April of 2014, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Chinese Minister of Defense Chang Wanguan committed to “increasing joint military exercises, improving communication in order to avoid accidents and increasing the number of contacts between their military forces” (Rolfes 2014). With both sides realizing the benefits of improved military relations, the U.S. should seize this opportunity to build trust, reduce Chinese apprehensions and put in place a joint plan on addressing North Korea’s hostile activities.

Popular culture also advances U.S. soft power in China. Popular culture is associated with mass entertainment that contains messages about American values, including being “mobile, individualistic, anti-establishment, pluralistic, voluntaristic [sic], populist, and free” (Nye 2004, 47). Popular culture is shared through media outlets such as television, film, news coverage, print, and through music and sports. Sports are a particularly interesting avenue for sharing values. Daniel Stone discusses the benefits of sports diplomacy in a September 2013 National Geographic article entitled “Does Sports Diplomacy Work?” He says sports have the ability to attract people from around the world because they are “a common language that transcend borders and increase dialogue” and “connects people on a personal level through our common interests, values, and passions” (Stone 2013). These can include hard work, perseverance, sportsmanship, compassion, team work, leadership and winning – among others. It was sports diplomacy that helped smooth relations between the U.S. and China in the early
1970s when American and Chinese table tennis players played against each other in China. Today, this event is famously referred to as “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” and is used to illustrate the benefits of sports diplomacy.

Popular culture is also shared through U.S. businesses’ high level of brand recognition, even when the popularity of the U.S. is low (Bev 2012). Following the 2008 financial crisis, confidence in the American financial system dropped. Despite this, nearly three years later, Bev says people around the world still thought the U.S. was the place to “visit, to reside, and to prosper” (Bev 2012). She supports this claim by looking at the rise in the number of foreign tourists in 2011 and the nearly 2.20 million immigrants who applied for permanent residency in the U.S. between 2009 and 2010. The cause of this, she says, is the faith people have in U.S. brands, including GM, Ford, Facebook, Microsoft, Apple and Boeing – among others. Nye agrees with the role companies play in wielding soft power and credits it to the fact that U.S. company brands have more impact in the lives of others than the government (Nye 2004, 114).

Because popular culture often operates outside of the government, messages of American values through music, film, art, sports and the private sector cannot be easily controlled and can therefore work against official government messaging (Nye 2004, 99-100). An example would be statements made by former National Basketball Association player Dennis Rodman during and after his visits to Pyongyang, North Korea that disparaged U.S. leaders. Other examples could include Hollywood films such as Seven Years in Tibet and Kundun, which were sympathetic to the Dalai Lama and Tibet, and actress Sharon Stone’s comments regarding the Sichuan earthquake in China being karma
for the way Chinese officials handled the 2008 Tibetan riots (Ho 2011). Nevertheless, because popular culture is more effective at reaching large audiences, to the extent commonalities in values can be shared through popular culture, efforts should be supported.

Conveying messages of shared values to China’s populace can be complicated for the U.S. due to Chinese domestic policies that promote nationalism. Under Jiang Zemin and Xi Jinping, China has undertaken initiatives to build a strong national identity centered on the goal of attaining great power status through educational campaigns. During the 1990s, Jiang implemented patriotic education for Chinese students, which sought to “boost the nation’s spirit, enhance its cohesion and develop a patriotic unified front to the broadest extent….” (Bhattacharya 2007, 244). Similarly, Xi has worked to rebuild a unified front around China’s supremacy that would help it to become a great power by the middle of the century. Schools have been instructed to conduct Chinese Dream speaking competitions, exemplary “Chinese dreamers” tour workplaces to inspire others to greatness and universities have been called on to conduct Chinese Dream research (Xi Jinping's Vision: Chasing the Chinese Dream 2013). Additionally, China’s strict control over outside influence hinders intellectual freedom (Nye 2004, 89), which poses an additional challenge for the U.S.

The second avenue for America to share attractive values is through its domestic policies. Specifically, it is the values represented by America through its domestic policies that foreign governments observe for consistency. Nye says, “Others watch how Americans implement our values at home as well as abroad” (Nye 2004, 55). This
concept is shared by Richard Bush, who says soft power starts at home and that America should work to reaffirm its domestic values (Bush 2009). For example, the value America places in uplifting the middle class can serve well for generating soft power. Li Chunling, a specialist in middle class studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, asserts that Chinese citizens strive for the American middle class way of life, and Chinese leaders are sensitive to this reality (Xi Jinping's Vision: Chasing the Chinese Dream 2013). One can observe China’s impressive feat of lifting roughly 500 million of its 1.3 billion citizens out of poverty since 1978 as evidence of its mission to employ practices to increase wealth for its citizens (China Overview 2014). American policy makers, then, should advance policies that demonstrate its commitment to a growing middle class, which has come to be the envy of leaders abroad, including in China.

Creating an international model for a healthy middle class, however, points to a domestic issue that can affect the U.S. image abroad. The divisions between America’s political parties, which often cause political gridlock, uncertainty about American stability and diminished attraction abroad, does not project an image of a strong country to single-party countries like China where the central government makes policy decisions with a unified voice. The U.S. Congress’ 2011 battle over raising its debt limit and paying its foreign held debts is an example of differing U.S. political party values competing with the goal of projecting a strong American economy abroad. This contentious fight, which came as international economies were still rebounding from the 2008 global financial crisis that began in America, led foreign governments to question
America’s ability to handle its fiscal affairs and serve as a model of financial stewardship for global economies.

Solving the fissures in the U.S. Congress, however, will not be an easy task as the legislative body has become sensitive to changes among the American public and special interest groups. The partisan nature of the legislative body reflects cultural shifts in the ideological views of the American electorate as it has become more diverse and vocal (Becker 2011). Additionally, different views among the American electorate on the direction in which the country should take (Blankley 2011) has contributed to political gridlock. Congress also tends to act along party lines in the presence of special interest groups. Jonathan Wand, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Stanford University states that special interests groups have moved from supporting candidates they think will win to supporting those candidates who are more aligned with their causes (Wand 2007).

As political figures move away from center politics and toward their respective poles on the ideology spectrum, the disappearance of so called “ad hoc coalitions” within parties has made it more difficult to find consensus on some major political issues (Nivola 2009). Nivola recounts how during the 1960s, northern Democrats and Republican moderates were able to outnumber conservative southern Democrats and “states’-rights Republicans” to move forward civil rights legislation. This show of bipartisan efforts to solve major issues is hard to find in Congress today.

In order for American domestic policies to serve as an effective soft power tool abroad, American policy makers must seek cooperation among themselves through their
own commonly shared values. This will help facilitate communication that can lead to policies that project and legitimize American values. Failure to function as a cooperative body will lead to more contentious debates that will cause other countries to question the viability of the American system.

An American value that has surfaced in a controversial manner both domestically and abroad is respect for privacy. In the aftermath of Edward Snowden leaking U.S. government documents detailing America’s strategies for information gathering, the American public and foreign governments responded by demanding explanations. The *Economist* article, “Soft Power: Making Up,” discusses the erosion of trust between the people and the government, and between America and its allies, namely Germany, France, Brazil and Mexico (Soft Power: Making Up 2013). While it is known in international relations that all countries gather information on their competitors and allies, America’s program proved to be more extensive than others imagined. Angela Merkel, Germany’s Chancellor, was outraged over revelations that her mobile phone had been tapped (Soft Power: Making Up 2013) while Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff canceled a visit to the U.S. after learning of the U.S. spying on her government (Jackson 2013). French President Francois Hollande also strongly condemned U.S. actions (Smale 2013). These types of contradictions do not help America build trust with China when discussing ways to curtail the People’s Liberation Army’s cyber-espionage activities.

Domestic policies toward minority populations must also be strengthened in America, particularly as they pertain to human rights. America has a long history of racial and ethnic inequalities beginning with its “Manifest Destiny” policy, which
dislocated and destroyed entire Native American tribes. This was followed by nearly 250 years of slavery, marginalization of immigrants coming to America during the Industrial Revolution, strict immigration policies against Chinese workers and migrants, and Jim Crow laws against African Americans in the South.

America’s history of poor race relations has not gone unnoticed by the international community. In 2014, the United Nations’ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination published a report expressing concern over racial injustice in America and the use of excessive force by some local law enforcement agencies following the police shooting of an unarmed black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri (Pulliam-Moore 2014). In a moving Atlantic article entitled “The Case for Reparations,” Ta-Nehisi Coates shows that the vestiges of Jim Crow and segregation in America remains today in domestic policies that purposely disadvantage African American communities (Coates 2014). Other examples of marginalized minority groups include women and the fight for equal pay, and the LGBT community and their fight for marriage equality. These are the types of domestic concerns that the U.S. must address before it can claim leadership on human rights issues or place pressure on China to improve its human rights. China is watching the U.S. for consistency in abiding by its own values and will not hesitate to call America out on its shortcomings.

U.S. foreign policy is the third way in which America can extend its soft power. Nye says that because countries accomplish their national interests through foreign policies, and because the goal of soft power is to achieve cooperation through shared values, foreign policies that are “broadly inclusive” versus “narrow and myopic” tend to
be more attractive (Nye 2004, 61). Likewise, policies that reflect shared values also increase the possibility for cooperation. Additionally, style matters. Policies that reflect arrogance, hypocrisy, or that do not take into consideration the concerns of others can harm U.S. efforts to build trust and cooperation among foreign governments.

At the June 25, 2014 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on “The Future of U.S.-China Relations,” Assistant Secretary Daniel Russel described the U.S. policy toward China. In his prepared remarks, Russel testified that the U.S. seeks a relationship “not defined by strategic rivalry, but by fair and healthy competition, by practical cooperation on priority issues, and by constructive management of our differences and disagreements. Where interests overlap, we will seek to expand cooperation with China.” He went on to say that the U.S. rejects Cold War thinking, whereby competition between powers is a zero-sum game, and instead welcomes “the emergence of a stable, peaceful and prosperous China” that will “contribute to the stability and continued development of the region” (Russel 2014). Russel made a point to clarify that the policy of the Obama Administration is not to contain China.

Acknowledging the development of China as a prosperous country with regional power coincides with the values embedded in Chinese national interests. It also demonstrates areas where the U.S. and China can find common ground, as the former seeks to maintain its powerful status in the region and the latter strives for similar recognition. However, actual U.S. policies in East and Southeast Asia have raised concerns among China’s leaders, who fear the U.S. has motives to indeed contain its growth and maintain U.S. unipolar influence in the Asia Pacific region.
The American “pivot” toward Asia is an unwelcomed policy by China. While China does welcome U.S. efforts to bring prosperity to the region, Chinese military experts believe the pivot “might be aimed at China” and would “disturb the ‘Chinese dream’ of national rejuvenation” (Chasing the Chinese Dream 2013). Lanteigne expresses similar thoughts, saying America’s refocus on the Asia-Pacific region, its “pivot” or “rebalancing,” is viewed by China as “a means of checking its own strategic expansion in the region” (Lanteigne 2013, 22). This is the perception the U.S. must change if it intends to maintain a presence in the region that supports its interest and allies while not being viewed by Chinese leaders as a threat to their own domestic and regional interests.

Just as U.S. policy can be a point of contention between the U.S. and China, certain values promoted by the U.S. in its bilateral relationship with China and other “developing” countries can hinder cooperation on some issues. Specifically, U.S. visions for democracy and human rights are not shared by China. Assistant Secretary Russel described the “worsening human rights situation in China” as an area of concern for the U.S. He pointed to crackdowns on commemorations of the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, arrests of journalists and activists, the detention of political prisoners and violence in its autonomous regions as human rights violations that must be addressed. America’s focus on human rights violations around the world, including in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Russia, Nigeria, Colombia and Venezuela makes clear that protecting human rights is a U.S. value that it promotes in its foreign policies. As the self-
proclaimed torchbearer for human rights, America should remain consistent in its defense of human rights for all people, including in the U.S. and China.

China and some other Asian countries, however, take issue with the spread of democracy and human rights because they are values that are Western in nature, and to promote these values beyond Western nation borders amounts to attempts to subvert Asia’s “ancient culture” (Nye 2004, 84). At the 1993 Vienna Declaration of the UN World Conference on Human Rights, China argued against the assimilation of a single view on human rights by all countries. Its position was:

Countries at different development stages or with different historical traditions and cultural backgrounds also have different understandings and practices of human rights. Thus one should not and cannot think the human rights standards and models of certain countries as the only proper ones and demand all other countries to comply with them. (Bhattacharya 2007, 255)

According to the Human Rights Watch’s 2014 World Report on China, the Chinese government still rejects questioning of its human rights record, citing it as a way for others to “destabilize the country.” China also opposes Western attempts to impose democracy on others, which it believes is the harbinger of “spiritual pollution.” In an October 2005 White Paper, China made it clear that it had no intentions of adopting a Western approach to democracy, instead preferring “democracy with Chinese characteristics,” where democracy would be based on “local conditions,” “local characteristics” and “cater to local needs” – similar to its position on capitalism with Chinese characteristics (Bhattacharya 2007, 256).

Any U.S. policy that embodies spreading democratic values or that promotes Western views on human rights will face challenges by China. This is not bad for U.S.
soft power, as promotion of human rights could appeal to those Chinese political activists and dissidents who seek change in China’s domestic policies and governance, as seen with the 2014 September protests in Hong Kong calling for democratic elections that are not influenced by Beijing leadership. American leaders, however, must be sure to protect America’s image against hypocrisy and be consistent in the democratic values they promote.

In the mid-1990s, China underwent a campaign called “Strike Hard.” This campaign aimed to rid the western Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of people the government identified as religious extremists, terrorists and ethnic separatists who threatened the economic stability and security of not only China but of neighboring Central Asian countries through “illegal religious activities” (Han 2010, 253; McNeal 2001, CRS-1-CRS 2). Between the start of Strike Hard in April 1996 and July 1996, an estimated 4,000 students of Islam were sent to prison camps while over 18,000 Uyghur citizens were arrested. Communications between XUAR and the rest of China were cut off and the paramilitary wing of the Xinjiang Production Construction Corps was used as police reinforcement (Dillon 1997, 83). Further crackdowns on the Uyghur people in 1997 left a disputed 198 to 300 people dead (Han 2010, 247). The U.S. initially opposed these human rights violations. However, in the U.S. led “war on terrorism” following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in America, the U.S. began to accept China’s assertion that terrorist groups resided in Muslim Uyghur communities and that Strike Hard was simply its way of combating terrorist forces (Kan 2010, 9).
Other examples of inconsistency in American leadership on human rights issues include America’s failure to intervene in the Apartheid government of South Africa, the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, and its support of Israel’s right to self-defense in the 2014 conflict with Hamas, which left scores of Palestinian civilians dead. While America’s record on protecting human rights wherever violations may occur is not perfect (and it is impossible for the U.S. or any single country to be the police in all four corners of the world), it is important to note that deciding to intervene in a conflict or show support for a country are decisions that are not made easily. Like all foreign policy decisions, they involve a combination of values, national interests and historical context. To the extent that America attempts to exert soft power through the promotion of human rights values, countries such as China are taking note of its record, as well as its domestic record on human rights. It is incumbent upon America to ensure that its stance on human rights is clear and leaves little room for doubt by onlookers.

U.S. policy makers should also be cautious about presenting foreign policies that are arrogant. According to the Economist article “Soft Power: Making Up,” in the wake of the September 11 attacks, the world watched as a legitimate military response began to resemble a recalcitrant America bent on exerting military strength to accomplish its goals and present an image of “unrivalled power” (Soft Power: Making Up 2013). Additionally, the article says that America’s disparaging comments about the United Nations and justifying harsh treatment of prisoners, including torture, indicated to the world that the U.S. no longer believed in the international laws and norms it once advocated. This perception does not bode well for America’s image as a responsible
international state among Chinese leaders who have worked to establish China as a “joiner” of international institutions and a supporter of multilateral organizations as a mechanism for achieving peace and stability (Lanteigne 2013, 8; Chai 2012, 97), which is the fourth source of soft power.

Multinational institutions have helped countries spread values through a “structure of international rules and institutions…” (Nye 2004, 10). Nye says, “Since the currency of soft power is attraction based on shared values and the justness and duty of others to contribute to policies consistent with those shared values, multilateral consultations are more likely to generate soft power than mere unilateral assertion of the values” (Nye 2004, 64). Following the end of World War II, the U.S. was instrumental in forming international organizations centered on shared Western values that promoted peace, security, global financial stability, reduction of poverty and liberalization of trade. These included the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Some organizations like the WTO offer a mechanism by which countries can seek third party mediation to solve relevant disputes, thereby ensuring fair implementation of international laws, rules and norms.

Participation in multinational institutions is not foreign to China. As mentioned earlier, Jiang Zemin was largely responsible for increasing China’s multilateral relationships and seeking leadership positions in multilateral organizations. Through these organizations, Jiang believed that having a seat at the decision making table would give China greater influence in regional and international matters, and would allow it to shape policies to meet its nationalist goals. Today, China still supports multinational
organizations, and has joined the United Nations Security Council, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and the World Trade Organization in addition to its membership in regional organizations. However, China believes international institutions should divide power equally among its members (Chai 2012, 99) and should be based on security communities versus security alliances, which Chinese leaders say can lead to mistrust and conflict (Lanteigne 2013, 95). China’s vision for security communities is based on “shared strategic interests, mutual cooperation and respect for sovereignty, joint development and non-alignment against a third party” (Lanteigne 2013, 96).

While shared strategic interests, mutual cooperation and joint development are areas where the U.S. and China can find common ground, respect for sovereignty and non-alignment against a third party are two values that can prove difficult for the U.S. to adopt. This is because America’s position on the responsibility-to-protect can lead it to intervene in countries where leaders have presumably lost the right to govern due to gross human rights violations. Non-alignment against a third party would also be a shift in U.S. policy as the U.S. has sought out alliances with countries that share similar values or security interests while isolating others.

Similar to Jiang’s opening China to multinational partnerships and organizations, President Obama has sought cooperation through partnerships on a range of issues, which could help dispel America’s image as a country that prefers unilateral action. President Obama’s Administration consulted with Egypt to help end cross border fighting between Israel and Hamas in 2012, Russia and the EU to address the 2013-2014 crises in Syria, and formed a coalition of countries to help address the spread of the Islamic State of Iraq
and the Levant (ISIL) across Iraq and Syria. President Obama has also sought out a coordinated U.S./EU response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. Recognizing U.S. limitations in handling these issues alone, President Obama has consistently worked to build international cooperation on international security threats.

In Asia, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry presented the “Pacific Dream,” which would bring the U.S., China and other countries in the region together to work on transnational issues (Xi Jinping's Vision: Chasing the Chinese Dream 2013). In December 2013, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission, held a hearing entitled “Resolving Crises in East Asia through a New System of Collective Security: the Helsinki Process as a Model.” The purpose of this hearing was to learn from regional experts on the possibility of creating a Helsinki-like institution in East Asia that would work to advance security and economic cooperation between the U.S. and countries in East Asia, including China and the two Koreas. In prepared remarks, National Endowment for Democracy President Carl Gershman said that given the current “security environment” in the region, such a body could help foster cooperation and prevent conflict.

China would be opposed to any institution that does not share power, take into consideration the concerns of others or that attempts to exert Western values over those of Asian countries. President Obama has demonstrated that his administration will work with various governments to accomplish common security goals. Obama’s inclusive foreign policy strategy could be attractive to China as Chinese inclusion would strengthen
its voice at the decision making table. Inclusiveness should be extended to trade agreements like TPP as well.

China recognizes its shared interests with the U.S. and has expressed support for cooperation on international affairs. President Hu Jintao commented that the U.S. and China “shared extensive and important strategic interests in safeguarding world peace and promoting mutual development,” and China’s April 2006 proposal on its relationship with the U.S. stated that “the two sides should maintain close consultation, take up challenges and strengthen communication and coordination on major international and regional issues” (Bhattacharya 2007, 258). As such, America should view China’s signaling cooperation as an opportunity to build trust, reduce tensions and move away from defection as a product of being in a security dilemma.

To take advantage of this opportunity, America can immediately begin reviewing its foreign policies toward Asia and, if necessary, find policies on which it can compromise so that a state of rivalry is avoided. Over the long-term, the U.S. can draw soft power from its high culture. Educational exchanges have proven successful at establishing lasting connections with foreign publics and future leaders, and continue to be attractive to Chinese students. According to the Institute of International Education’s website, Chinese students make up the largest number of international students in the U.S., representing 235,597 during the 2012/2013 academic year – a 28.7 percent increase over the 2011/2012 academic year (Open Doors Data n.d.). Along with educational and cultural exchanges, the U.S. must improve its military relationship through joint exercises and communication, so as to deter North Korean military provocations, and reduce U.S.-
China military tensions and Chinese uncertainties regarding the presence of U.S. military forces in the region. For the U.S., however, a balance must be struck between assuring China of its non-aggressive military intentions and maintaining regional stability for its regional allies against any military aggression, including from China.

U.S. popular culture permeates foreign publics more effectively than the government by spreading shared values through film, movies, music, sports and U.S. company brands. Popular culture, however, operates outside U.S. government control, making oversight of messages and images of American culture difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, because popular culture more easily reaches audiences, it should not be discounted by policy makers as a tool for building a favorable image among China’s public. America’s domestic policies, as well as its foreign policies, must not come across as hypocritical or arrogant, and must convey adherence to the values it advocates for other countries.

America should also look at its ability to build and strengthen partnerships and cooperation with other countries through institutions based on shared values and goals. China has shown itself willing to work through inclusive multilateral organizations as has the U.S. on various security and economic interests. Institutions, then, are attractive for both the U.S. and China as the platform for sharing values, perspectives and policy ideas.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Cooperation between the U.S. and China in East Asia is critical. Both countries are large and powerful with significant economic and security national interests in the region. Both countries have ambitions for regional dominancy, however, maintaining the status quo or isolating the other through rivalry is not a viable option. A zero-sum game, where the advantage of one comes at the disadvantage of the other, would only increase mistrust, decrease the will for cooperation on shared interests and could lead to conflict. To avoid this fate, both countries must begin to mend their relationship through trust building exercises and exchanges that focus on those values and interests they have in common, and then implement policies that reflect these commonalities.

Before this can be achieved, a new narrative on how they perceive themselves and each other must be written. The U.S. views itself as a country destined to “uphold the existing order on behalf of the people not just of the United States but of Asia as well, and they believe China’s revisionist ambitions threaten to disrupt that order and disturb the peace and stability that is so clearly in everyone’s interest to maintain” (White 2012, 128). Seeing China as a threat implies that it is America’s rival and gives little reason for China to work cooperatively on issues in the region. While China could take actions to dispel this belief through policy changes and other concessions, its nationalistic ambitions to shed itself of the humiliation sustained following the Opium Wars and rise to great power status does not allow it to automatically offer concessions without tough coercion, which would validate its worries about U.S. intentions.
China, on the other hand, views its position as “seeking to exercise its newfound power to remedy longstanding injustices in the regional order, and they see American resistance as an attempt to perpetuate these injustices and inhibit China reaching its full potential” (White 2012, 128). Like China who would oppose acquiescing to U.S. demands for change, America’s ideas of exceptionalism would make it difficult for the U.S. to pull out of the region in order to assure it has no intentions of containing China’s rise. Additionally, America’s economic and security commitments to its allies in the region prevent it from withdrawing from East Asia. This does not mean China is correct in its thoughts on American intentions. This means America’s ongoing interests in the region, coupled with China’s ambitions for its own greatness in the region, underscores the importance for both countries to work diligently to build trust so that long-term mutual cooperation defines U.S.-Sino relations.

Like any relationship, whether it is person-to-person, business-to-business, NGO-to-NGO or government-to-government, the key to maintaining a healthy and cooperative bond is through communication. For the U.S. and China to build their relationship, constant communication is required. In international affairs, this is accomplished through public diplomacy, which requires daily communication, strategic communications and development of lasting relationships with key individuals over time (Nye 2004, 108-10). While all three are important, developing lasting relationships best offers the opportunity for the U.S. and China to share their values. As mentioned in the previous chapter, high culture exchanges, specifically educational exchanges, are effective ways for the U.S.
government to interact with foreign publics and make lasting favorable impressions in the minds of future foreign leaders.

Nye also identifies trainings, seminars and conferences as ways of building lasting relationships through shared values (Nye 2004, 109). Similar to the first ever U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit hosted by President Obama in Washington, DC in 2014, the U.S. should consider hosting a U.S.-Asia summit where discussions on trade, security and development would be the focus. Such a summit would give all participating leaders’ concerns considerable recognition and show multilateral cooperation on regional issues. Additionally, a follow-up summit in an Asian country could demonstrate to China America’s willingness for shared leadership in Asia.

Popular culture, too, can shape the views of America in China. Because popular culture falls outside the control of the U.S. government, there is little that U.S. policy makers can do to impact popular culture’s influence on foreign publics. While popular culture derived from U.S. companies, Hollywood, sports and music are all better utilized by private sectors, the U.S. government should reconsider any drastic cuts to funding for the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which broadcasts themes of democracy and freedom through media outlets such as Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia. In 2003, VOA reduced its English-language broadcasts by 25 percent (Nye 2004, 105) while in 2013, VOA spent $0.026 per capita on reaching Chinese audiences, which amounted to one third of its expenditures in Arab countries (Schmitt 2014). Because continued communication is key to building and fostering relationships and trust, U.S. policy makers should bolster their support for soft power tools in Asia such as VOA that can
convey American ideals on a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, cooperation through multilateral organizations, power, prosperity, development and peaceful relationships – values and objectives that are shared by China.

American foreign policies must exemplify American values in order for foreign countries to find it a trustworthy and legitimate power. Its foreign policies should not be egotistical by showing little regard for the concerns of others. The ongoing Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations between the U.S. and 11 other Pacific Ocean countries minus China is one such policy initiative that seemingly ignores Chinese interests. China is a country that favors inclusion and is skeptical of regional agreements or organizations it cannot join (Lanteigne 2013, 8) because exclusion denies it the opportunity to influence policies in a manner that takes it into consideration. Chinese inclusion in TPP could help the U.S. better manage its relationship with China and its discussions on currency manipulation and dumping policies during U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) meetings, which focus on their strategic and economic relationship, and APEC meetings, which focus on economic growth in the Asia Pacific region.

The U.S. should continue to use multilateral organizations, where China is a major voice in regional discussions on economic and security matters, as a tool for gaining China’s trust and cooperation. U.S. President Obama acknowledges multilateral organizations as the vehicle for international cooperation. “American leadership in the twenty-first century,” he said, “is going to involve our capacity to build international institutions, coalitions that can act effectively, and the promotion of norms, rules, laws, ideals and values that create greater prosperity and peace, not just in our own borders, but
outside as well” (Rayman 2014). Committing to high-level dialogue through organizations such as the UN, the WTO, S&ED and APEC can help the U.S. build trust and ameliorate relations with China.

While America has been the dominant influence in East Asia, China’s growing power and want for greater influence underlines why the two countries must begin to look at how they both can exist in the region and simultaneously respect the legitimate rights and interests of the other (White 2012, 134-7). The U.S. and China share similar values and goals in the region and in order to protect these values and goals, the U.S. will need to communicate through their commonalities, be consistent in the messages it sends via its domestic and foreign policies, and ensure that its policies toward China are not antagonistic or exclusive. This will help the U.S. build trust among Chinese current and future leaders so that cooperation and not defection defines the U.S.-Sino relationship.
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