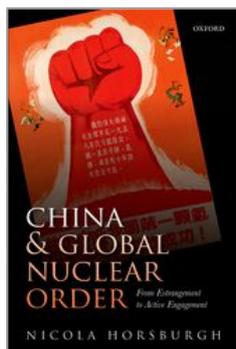


Conclusion

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China and Global Nuclear Order: From Estrangement to Active Engagement

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Print publication date: 2015

Print ISBN-13: 9780198706113

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: May 2015

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198706113.001.0001

Conclusion

From Outsider to Valued Member: Chinese Contributions to Nuclear Ordering

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DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198706113.003.0007

Abstract and Keywords

The conclusion brings together the main arguments of the book, and provides a definition of global nuclear order based on four core elements—nuclear deterrence, arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament—as well as a comprehensive assessment of Chinese contributions to global nuclear ordering since 1949. Important contributions are identified across five distinctive phases for China: pre-detonation (1949–64); post-detonation (1964–76); reform and opening-up (1976–89); the post-Cold War period (1990–9); and the 2000s. An overall finding is that China initially navigated nuclear politics as a vocal outsider but has since become a valued insider. In understanding this transition, economic/technology, security, and image related variables prove insightful. The conclusion

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then goes one step further to link the changes that have taken place in China's nuclear behaviour and its position in global nuclear order to its wider relationship with global order, and in particular China's international behaviour as a rising power in the 2000s.

Keywords: global order, rising power, Chinese foreign policy, global nuclear history, nuclearization, socialist proliferation

Whether as an isolated revolutionary state or as a latecomer to nuclear politics, China has been far more important in shaping global nuclear order than is often appreciated. Chinese contributions can be found in all four core elements of nuclear order, which I have identified in this book as nuclear deterrence, arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament. Throughout, China has presented serious challenges to mainstream nuclear thinking, while also displaying remarkable consistency in its nuclear policy.

Chinese contributions have been particularly significant during the creation and consolidation of global nuclear order. Even before a nuclear order existed, Maoist China, despite stark, and in many ways self-imposed, international isolation, had an inadvertent hand in the creation of nuclear order. It did so by contributing to superpower thinking about how best to build an order, as well as offering its own ideas based on what I termed 'socialist proliferation'. Later, as China opened to the world, it joined nuclear institutions like the NPT in 1992, in the process becoming a fully-fledged member of global nuclear order. This positive shift in China's engagement with global nuclear politics is well documented. Less widely understood, however, is that Beijing has continued to challenge mainstream thinking around MAD, remaining steadfast to ideas developed in the 1980s related to minimalism and retaliation. As I have pointed out throughout this work, an important take-away is the high level of consistency in Chinese nuclear thinking, both at the level of ideas but also in the promotion, since the 1960s, of a more representative nuclear order. In the past, China sought to realize this goal by breaking a perceived superpower monopoly from the outside, through socialist proliferation. In the 1980s, the tune changed but the message remained (p.148) the same: China would

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promote representativeness from within, as a member of global nuclear order. China's current engagement, as a resurgent rising power and at a time when nuclear order is perceived by many to be broken, is less clear. While Beijing remains committed to nuclear institutions and a minimal nuclear strategy, it is also wary of deeper commitments, in particular multilateral arms control arrangements that might unfairly constrain its capabilities relative to other nuclear weapons states.

In making sense of empirical findings, this book illustrates the usefulness of the concept of nuclear order, which enables us to frame global nuclear politics and state behaviour in the nuclear context. One reason for this is that it goes beyond the popular, but too narrow, prism of the non-proliferation regime. Nuclear order is also particularly valuable in the Chinese case because so much analysis tends to focus on specific and contemporary aspects of China's nuclear behaviour, such as its non-proliferation record or the uncertain direction of its military modernization. It is hardly surprising therefore that there is little academic analysis in English on China's place in global nuclear history, nor of China's interpretation of that history. As defined in earlier chapters, the concept of nuclear order, with its four core elements, offers a more historical and holistic basis for analysis. In understanding China's engagement with the creation, consolidation, and maintenance of nuclear order, the focus in this book has thus been on Chinese attitudes and actions vis-à-vis the four core elements of nuclear order as they have emerged over time: nuclear deterrence, arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament.

In defining nuclear order, my analysis has shown the continuing relevance of the international society approach. Due to its emphasis on norms and institutions, it offers deep insights into how nuclear arms are governed and how actors behave across the four core elements of nuclear order. As I have argued, the interaction of these elements over time defines the direction and stability of nuclear order, in particular the extent to which the status quo is upheld or a more transformative agenda is pursued. Of these four elements, nuclear deterrence is king because it is intrinsically woven into the history of nuclear order as well as the global

order. Indeed, despite discussion in the 2000s of a nuclear weapons free world, nuclear deterrence remains a cornerstone of national security policies in nuclear armed states.

In this concluding chapter, I will draw together the principal ways in which China has contributed to nuclear ordering since 1949, outline what has driven Chinese nuclear behaviour, and then consider some of the implications of this behaviour in light of China's rise in the broader global order. (p.149)

Chinese Contributions to Global Nuclear Ordering

By way of summary, it is useful to restate the main empirical findings of the book. The analysis has focused on five periods: China's pre-detonation era (1949–64); the post-detonation phase (1964–76); reform and opening up (1976–89); the post-Cold War period of the 1990s; and the 2000s.

In early pre-detonation period, Maoist China indirectly contributed to superpower thinking regarding how best to manage nuclear weapons. In particular, Mao's decision to develop nuclear weapons in 1955 and to continue unaided in this quest following the Sino-Soviet split in 1960 represented an indirect form of engagement by influencing the superpowers to push ahead with their own ideas for nuclear order, based around non-proliferation. In the early 1960s, China rejected the superpower model, which it labelled a nuclear monopoly, and instead offered an alternative model, which I termed socialist proliferation. If realized, socialist proliferation would have represented a direct form of engagement with the process of creating nuclear order by promoting proliferation to 'peace loving and socialist countries' contra the superpower model. Instead, by 1964 China contributed indirectly to wider thinking about how to construct nuclear order by highlighting discriminatory aspects of the superpower model and offering an alternative model that was more inclusive and appealing to non-nuclear states.

In the post-detonation phase, the perceived challenges that China's nuclear test posed for proliferation—especially that it might have a domino effect in the region—provided added urgency and pressure for the superpower model to emerge as

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the basis of nuclear order. In the end, China's test did not result in the nuclearization of the region. However, China's test had additional implications: Beijing validated nuclear order by seeking legitimacy as a nuclear weapons state, and it questioned the order, highlighting the discrimination within it. Lastly, it led to recognition, especially in the US, that China, now a nuclear armed state, could not be isolated as before and would have to be incorporated into nuclear order. However, towards the end of this period China began to retreat from global nuclear politics, affected by the uncertain strategic environment of the time, notably the 1969 Sino-Soviet border war during which China's nuclear facilities were threatened with attack, and the nascent stage of its nuclear weapons development. More generally, China's nuclear behaviour became contradictory. While Beijing openly abandoned socialist proliferation it also provided covert assistance to Pakistan and North Korea, though this had little impact on nuclear order at that time since not much was known about these activities. Essentially, by the mid-1970s China's focus was elsewhere: on technological development so as to secure the credibility of its nuclear deterrent. (p.150)

In the era of reform and opening up, China emerged from its self-imposed retreat to engage with global nuclear politics in two main ways. First, China rejected nuclear deterrence in declaratory policy and developed its first nuclear strategy based not on assured destruction but on 'uncertain retaliation'. Second, China began to engage in institutions of nuclear order, in this regard joining the CD in 1980 and the IAEA in 1984. Crucially, Beijing saw the CD in a different light to past nuclear institutions, such as the NPT, considering the former a more equitable organization based on its unique operational procedures such as the consensus principle. In addition, in the 1980s China indirectly influenced superpower discussions related to INF and the SDI proposed by President Reagan in 1983. In the midst of these discussions, China sought to identify itself as a middle-sized nuclear power, different from the superpowers but comparable to the UK and France. Ultimately, this period marked a turning point for China, where a new-found confidence in and engagement with institutional aspects of nuclear order underscored, however

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subtly, a desire for a future nuclear order that would be more representative of its members.

In the 1990s, with the passing of the Cold War, a number of positive developments led to the consolidation of nuclear order, such as the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 and the emergence of the CTBT in 1996. However, these developments cast China's suspected proliferation activities with countries like Pakistan and Iran in a harsh and negative light. China was also wary of a growing asymmetry in its military capabilities relative to the US. To compensate, China adopted a two-track strategy. First, Beijing sought to bolster the credibility of its nuclear deterrent by modernizing its nuclear arsenal and improving its nuclear strategy. The emphasis on retaliation in strategy remained in place despite doubts in the West over China's commitment to NFU in the mid-1990s, and whether strategy should transition to a more assured form of retaliation or shift more radically to a warfighting posture. Second, China deepened its engagement with institutional aspects of nuclear order, joining the NPT in 1992 and the CTBT in 1996. China's decision to sign the NPT elevated the importance and universality of both the treaty and the non-proliferation norm. Likewise, by signing the CTBT, despite the high costs to the future size and scope of its nuclear arsenal, Beijing displayed a clear commitment to non-proliferation. Crucially, membership of these important institutions enabled China to become, finally, a full-fledged member of global nuclear order. However, in the late 1990s changes in the external security environment, in particular nuclear tests in South Asia in 1998 and shifts in US nuclear weapons policy, threatened to undermine China's nuclear deterrent. More generally, the future of nuclear order was cast into doubt, and there was a sense in China that the very order it had integrated into seemed to be in the process of unravelling. (p.151)

In the 2000s, global nuclear order has faced a number of challenges: from actual and suspected proliferation crises involving North Korea and Iran, through institutional deadlock at the CD, to shifts in US nuclear posture. Of these, shifts in US nuclear thinking, in particular related to missile defence and counter-proliferation, threaten to undermine China's small

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nuclear arsenal as well as Beijing's vision of a representative nuclear order. Despite this, China has remained committed to retaliation in its nuclear strategy, and has continued to participate in multilateral institutions, for instance as host of the Six Party Talks. However, in other areas China has adopted a more cautious attitude, with less stabilizing results for nuclear order, for instance delaying ratification of the CTBT, which it signed in 1996. China has also refrained from joining the PSI and the promotion of tough sanctions to combat nuclear activities in Iran and North Korea, considering these destabilizing to nuclear order. In recent years, the Obama administration has sought to repair nuclear order. China supports these efforts but remains unconvinced of US commitment, pointing to the 2008 US-India civilian nuclear deal, which to some extent has legitimized India as a nuclear state, an outcome not desired by China.

The overview above demonstrates that China's position in nuclear order has evolved over time from one of vocal outsider to active engagement. A number of China's nuclear policies have been reactive and defensive, but some have also been constructive in their contribution to nuclear order. Crucially, Beijing has had an impact on all four elements of nuclear order: nuclear deterrence, arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament. Taken together, China's most significant forms of engagement include: first, the decision, made in 1955, to become a nuclear weapons state and then test an atomic device in 1964; second, the idea of socialist proliferation promoted in the early to mid-1960s; third, internal discussions in the 1980s that led to an enduring emphasis on retaliation in strategy and limited military modernization; and fourth, China's participation in key institutions of nuclear order, such as the CD (1980), NPT (1992), and CTBT (1996).

The first two forms of engagement—nuclearization and socialist proliferation—contributed indirectly to wider thinking about how best to construct a global nuclear order by countering a perceived nuclear monopoly, with Beijing casting the NPT and PTBT as 'scams' intended by the superpowers to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and freeze the nuclear status quo. In promoting the proliferation of nuclear weapons to 'peace-loving and socialist countries', Maoist China

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appealed more directly to non-nuclear weapons states and highlighted the discrimination behind the superpowers' ideas. As CCP Chairman Mao stated to a visiting Indonesian delegation on 30 September 1965: 'the two great powers of the world want to monopolize the bomb. We (p.152) do not listen to them and build it all the same'.¹ Paradoxically, China's test, amid fears in the US that it would spark a cascade of proliferation, inadvertently provided momentum for the superpower model to emerge as the basis for eventual nuclear order.

For its part, since the 1980s China's focus on retaliation in its nuclear weapons strategy has contributed to nuclear deterrence by offering an alternative way of thinking to MAD, demonstrating that a nuclear weapons state can have credible nuclear deterrence at low numbers, with modest nuclear force modernization, and under a condition of NFU. This restraint in strategy has also to an extent reinforced disarmament by de-emphasizing the deterrent value of nuclear weapons and offering a small step towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons, a goal openly promoted by US President Obama since 2009.²

However, of the four core elements that constitute global nuclear order, it is non-proliferation which emerges as the most important with regards to China's role. Initially, Maoist China's nuclearization and promotion of socialist proliferation inadvertently contributed to the prioritization of non-proliferation in superpower thinking regarding nuclear order. Later, from the 1980s onwards, China's participation in key nuclear institutions—like the CD, NPT, and CTBT—elevated the universality of these treaties as well as the non-proliferation norm. More importantly, membership of these institutions enabled China to become a fully-fledged member of global nuclear order. China could now directly engage, to a far greater degree than ever before, in global nuclear politics. Other aspects of China's nuclear behaviour have also engaged, albeit in a more destabilizing way, with the non-proliferation pillar of global nuclear order, from suspected proliferation practices with a number of countries, including Pakistan—notably the ring magnets incident in 1995—to Beijing's

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decision not to enforce tough sanctions on Iran and North Korea.

Beyond non-proliferation, China's alignment with Soviet positions on test bans and nuclear weapons free zones in the 1950s, as well as calls for a world conference on disarmament in 1963 and 1964, underlined Beijing's support in principle for the idea of nuclear disarmament. However, in terms of arms control, China has historically played a less stabilizing role. In the 1950s and 1960s, Maoist China was a long-standing critic of treaties like the NPT and PTBT. Later, in the 1980s, China indirectly influenced superpower discussions over the INF and deliberately adopted the title 'middle-sized (p.153) nuclear power', in part so as to free itself from involvement in multilateral arms control and disarmament processes. Then, in 1996, China signed the CTBT, a costly treaty that acts as an arms control measure from the Chinese perspective. However, Beijing has so far failed to ratify this treaty, and in the early to mid-2000s, China has at times blocked progress on an FMCT at the CD.

In tracing the evolution of China's engagement with global nuclear ordering it becomes clear that some types of nuclear behaviour, whether intentionally or otherwise, strengthen nuclear order, while others weaken that order. Furthermore, a state can simultaneously adopt positive and negative forms of engagement, and the implications for nuclear order might vary in different historical eras. This accounts for China engaging in both highly stabilizing and destabilizing forms of nuclear behaviour: joining important nuclear institutions while at the same time engaging in suspected proliferation activities. Chinese actions also have unintended consequences for nuclear order. A good example is Beijing's decision to develop nuclear weapons and temporarily promote selective proliferation in the early 1960s. Both actions had the inadvertent effect of accelerating the superpower model—to which Beijing was opposed—as the basis for nuclear order. Overall, since 1949 a number of Chinese policies and actions have shaped global nuclear politics. Initially, Chinese engagement was inadvertent, reactive, and defensive in nature. Then, from the late 1980s and into the 2000s, China's engagement has become more proactive and constructive

following an intense period of integration with nuclear institutions. This integration, as well as China's rise in the 2000s, has increased its capacity to shape nuclear order, enabling China to become an active participant in global nuclear politics today.

Understanding Chinese Engagement

Across the five periods examined, preoccupations with economic development, image, and security emerge as key variables in understanding the evolution of China's engagement with global nuclear order. These variables, which are interconnected, account for Chinese action and inaction as well as contradictory behaviour on nuclear issues since 1949.

Economic and technological imperatives are evident in China's early nuclear weapons development and later its military modernization process in the 1990s and 2000s. In the 1950s and 1960s, serious efforts were made by senior Chinese figures such as Nie Rongzhen to justify the nuclear weapons programme according to domestic economic development goals. In addition, China was driven by a fear of lagging behind and getting beaten (*luohou jiu yao aida* 落后就要挨打) at the hands of foreign powers.³ Later, in the reform era, under the Four Modernizations, the prioritization of the economy over defence fed into internal debates, resulting in a limited approach to military modernization and an emphasis on retaliation in strategy—approaches that endure today. Finally, it was not until the 1980s, following the completion of ICBMs and SLBMs, that China, for the first time, satisfied the basic requirements of nuclear deterrence. Consequently, the starting point for China's military modernization in the 1990s was extremely low relative to other nuclear armed states.

Economic imperatives also carry analytical weight in understanding China's growing participation in nuclear institutions since the 1980s. In part, China joined the NPT and signed numerous bilateral civilian nuclear cooperation agreements, such as the 1985 NCA with the US, for reasons of economic benefit. Through these agreements, China benefited from significant financial aid and greater access to markets and technology. Today, however, economic considerations

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constrain China's actions regarding the Iranian and North Korean nuclear crises. On Iran, Beijing considers tough sanctions damaging to commercial and energy investments deemed critical to China's national development. On North Korea, for most of the 2000s Beijing feared stronger sanctions would lead to the economic and political collapse of the North Korean regime, with damaging economic and security results for China.

Image, particularly as it relates to status and prestige, represents the second enduring variable in Chinese nuclear calculations since 1949. Facing growing international isolation during the 1950s and 1960s at forums such as the UN, and even more so following the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, China saw nuclear weapons as crucial in improving its status domestically, regionally, and internationally. Indeed, in 1956, Mao Zedong famously stated, 'if we are not to be bullied in the present-day world, we cannot do without the bomb'.⁴ Then, in a speech to PLA officers in 1965, Chen Yi, China's Foreign Minister, declared: 'if you can get the twin [atomic and hydrogen] bombs out quicker, then your foreign minister—me—can stiffen his back'.⁵ The role nuclear weapons played in affording China greater international status was also made clear by Deng Xiaoping in 1988, stating that 'if China had not developed the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb . . . China would not have been called an influential country or able to enjoy the international status that it does nowadays. The atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb demonstrate a nation's (p.155) capability and are also a symbol of the flourishing and prosperity of a nation and its country'.⁶

Later, China's decision to join institutions like the CD, NPT, and CTBT, as well as the decision to host the Six Party Talks in 2003, served to improve its international image and reassure its neighbours of its intentions. Concerns over image were linked in part to protests and pressure from the US, Japan, and a number of developing states over China's nuclear tests and suspected proliferation activities in the 1980s and 1990s. In regards to the CTBT, protests from NAM member countries acted as a wake-up call for Beijing. Never before had developing countries openly denounced China's nuclear tests to such a degree. The impact of this pressure should not be

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underestimated, since the CTBT was considered by Beijing a costly treaty in terms of security, seriously limiting the future scope of China's nuclear deterrent.

Security considerations have also informed China's nuclear behaviour since 1949.⁷ Indeed, of the three variables highlighted here, it is security that explains in large part China's first two forms of engagement: nuclearization and socialist proliferation. In the 1950s and 1960s, China faced a number of nuclear threats from both the US and USSR, and these served to reinforce China's desire for a nuclear deterrent. For its part, socialist proliferation was intended to counter a perceived nuclear monopoly and bolster the credibility of an overall 'socialist deterrent'. Then, during the reform period, China's experience in the 1969 Sino-Soviet border war—and the potential threat of nuclear war—highlighted to the Chinese an urgent need for a credible second strike force capability. In addition, China's decision to base nuclear strategy on retaliation reflects an appreciation that a more aggressive strategy, such as warfighting, would be unnecessarily provocative and likely to spark an arms race with the US.

In the 2000s, security concerns explain both Chinese action and inaction in global nuclear politics. For example, security concerns explain China's inaction over the FMCT and CTBT ratification, since these are likely to constrain the future scope and size of China's nuclear arsenal. In addition, China's decision to host the Six Party Talks can be understood initially in terms of fears of US military strikes against North Korea in 2003 when Pyongyang withdrew from the NPT; the continuing rationale that North Korea's nuclear and missile activities provide for US theatre missile defence plans in Northeast Asia; (p.156) and in the longer term, the potential loss of a security buffer if the North Korean regime failed and a US-allied South Korea moved to take over the whole country. Chinese fears of North Korean collapse and a humanitarian crisis on its border, magnified by the death in 2011 of Kim Jong-il, have made Beijing reluctant to take a tough stand on sanctions against North Korea. However, recent provocative actions by Pyongyang, such as the missile test in December

2012 and a nuclear test in February 2013, have slightly hardened Beijing's position.⁸

In sum, what these variables suggest is that China's nuclear behaviour, with the brief exception of socialist proliferation, has rarely been transformative, dramatically changing the substance and direction of global nuclear politics. Instead, China's nuclear actions and policies have been driven by other rationales that reflect both domestic and external concerns, some more important than others at different times. Security and image concerns represent the main drivers behind Beijing's decision to develop nuclear weapons and then temporarily promote socialist proliferation. In the 1980s, economic factors were pivotal in understanding Chinese restraint in nuclear strategy and force modernization. Later, in the 1990s, considerations of image and economic development loomed large, driving China's participation in nuclear institutions. Economic and security considerations reign at present, accounting for China's inaction over the CTBT and FMCT, and its cautious approach, until recently, to the Iranian and North Korean nuclear crises.

Rising China and Global Order

A major argument of this book is that China's engagement in global nuclear politics reflects wider patterns in its international behaviour since 1949. Closely linked to the variables highlighted above, Medeiros notes three enduring diplomatic priorities driving China's international behaviour: sovereignty and territorial integrity, economic development, and international respect and status.⁹

Initially, as a new state and member of the socialist bloc, the PRC opted for a policy of 'leaning to one side', thus explaining in part China's decision in the 1950s to side with Soviet positions on arms controls and test bans. In addition, between 1953 and 1954 China introduced the 'Five principles of peaceful coexistence'—mutual respect for sovereignty and territory, (p.157) non-aggression, non-interference, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence—into its negotiations with India. These principles, considered by Beijing as guiding norms for international behaviour, inform

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Chinese foreign policy even today.¹⁰ Then, in the 1960s, following the Sino-Soviet split, China chose a path of self-reliance, opposed to both the US and USSR. During this period of extreme international isolation, China sought to cultivate links with the developing world, highlighting the importance of decolonization and revolution contra imperialist forces in the world. In the process, China portrayed itself as a developing state and potential leader of the third world, with Premier Zhou Enlai embarking on a number of visits to Africa from 1963 to 1965. It is in this context of self-reliance and the promotion of China as a developing state that Beijing accelerated its nuclear weapons programme, and soon after joining the nuclear club sought to differentiate itself from the superpowers. Indeed, when it tested a nuclear device on 16 October 1964, Beijing justified the test as a victory for the developing world. As Liu Shaoqi stated on 30 October 1964, 'all oppressed nations and peoples and all peace-loving countries and people have felt elated over the successful explosion of China's first atom bomb, as they hold the view that they, too, have nuclear weapons'.¹¹

Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, China's retreat from global nuclear politics occurred amid transition in foreign policy, notably the normalization of relations with the US, and a policy of 'lean on the other side' cooperating with the US to contain the Soviet Union. During this period, Deng Xiaoping elaborated a guiding principle for Chinese foreign policy: *tao guang yang hui you suo zuo wei* (韬光养晦有所作为)—a rough translation of this term is 'hide our abilities and bide time, but get things done'.¹² One effect of this principle was a lower profile for China in global nuclear politics during the 1970s and 1980s. While China would continue to distinguish itself as different to other nuclear weapons states like the US or USSR—as was the case during the INF negotiations—in general China began to tone down its rhetoric on superpower arms control, and withdrew from global nuclear politics to focus on developing its nuclear deterrent.

After the Cold War, China's growing participation in nuclear institutions reflected a turn to multilateralism in foreign policy¹³ as well as efforts to (p.158) establish itself as a

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responsible major power (*fuzeren de daguo* 负责任的大国).¹⁴ Jiang Zemin framed such efforts as part of a wider strategy to rebuild China's international image post-Tiananmen, and combat widespread fear developing in the West of China's rise. This fear, embodied by the 'China threat theory' of the 1990s,¹⁵ was based on the assumption that a rising China would likely prove disruptive for global order and end US hegemony.¹⁶ In addressing these fears, China also promoted the New Security Concept, based on the principles of mutual trust, benefit, equality, and cooperation.¹⁷ Around the same time, China promoted the idea of 'developing China as a comprehensive power' (*fazhan zonghe guoli* 发展综合国力) and 'building a new international order', the latter first promoted by Deng Xiaoping in 1988.¹⁸ Both these ideas were based on a world view popular at that time in China, namely an expected transition in global order from unipolarity to multipolarity. As a consequence, Chinese academics began to advocate cooperation with rather than balancing against the US.¹⁹ Thus, throughout the 1990s institutional integration, coupled with cooperation and accommodation with great powers, became the defining features of Chinese international behaviour.²⁰ More concretely, China joined a number of institutions beyond nuclear order, for instance the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in 1980 and the United Nations Committee on Human Rights in 1982, as well as help create regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 1996 and ASEAN+3 in 1997.

By the early to mid-2000s, according to Medeiros and Fravel, Beijing had adopted a 'less confrontational, more sophisticated, more confident, and at times, more constructive approach towards regional and global affairs'.²¹ (p.159) China continued to assure others that its ascendancy in world affairs would be benign, first with the concept of a 'peaceful rise' (*Zhongguo heping jueqi* 中国和平崛起) introduced in 2003 (and changed in 2004 to 'peaceful development' as the term 'rise' was deemed to have a negative connotation), then with the notion of a 'harmonious world' (*hexie shijie* 和谐世界) officially outlined by Hu Jintao in 2005.²² These concepts complemented the long-standing Confucian idea of 'harmony

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with differences' (*he er bu tong* 和而不同) as well as a growing recognition within China that global order was not transitioning towards multipolarity but instead consisted of 'one superpower, many great powers' (*yichao duoqiang* 一超多强).²³ Then, in September 2005, US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick decided it was time to call upon China to be a 'responsible stakeholder' in international affairs.²⁴ China seemed to take heed, including in the nuclear field, assuming leadership of the Six Party Talks and exerting unprecedented pressure on North Korea between 2006 and 2007. Elsewhere, China modified its policy on Sudan, going against a strongly held position of non-interference in internal state affairs.²⁵

Linked to the concept of a harmonious world, in 2007 Hu Jintao spoke of the need 'to make the international order fairer and more equitable'.²⁶ This move signalled China's acceptance of global order as well as an acknowledgement that it had become an 'active participant' (*jiji canyuzhe* 积极参与者) integrated into the global order.²⁷ More broadly, the pursuit of an equitable order rather than a 'new international order' fitted with what Schweller and Pu call a 'negotiated order' where a rising China seeks to accommodate and contest US hegemony, but not directly challenge it.²⁸ Academic debates in China at that time pointed to a growing awareness that the US was not in decline as the world's hegemonic power.²⁹ Deng Yong offered a slightly different picture of global order where 'the superpower is more super, and the many great powers are less great'.³⁰ China has consequently had to 'learn to live with the hegemon', doing so by working from within the current (p.160) global order.³¹ In light of this, Wang Jisi, Dean of Beijing University's School of International Studies, stated in the mid-2000s that it would be foolish for China to 'directly challenge the international order and the institutions favoured by the Western world'.³²

However, in the late 2000s exactly what a rising China means by an equitable international order, and whether Beijing actively intends to work towards such an order, remains unclear. This lack of clarity is perhaps unsurprising. China has not yet decided what role it should play in global affairs. Indeed, China maintains multiple—and sometimes conflicting

—identities: that of a developing country, faced with significant domestic challenges and a secondary position in the global hierarchy; and of a rising great power, a label that Beijing has found more difficult to embrace. Beijing's balancing of these identities has important implications for perceived responsibilities for global order in both a nuclear and non-nuclear context—leading noted scholar David Shambaugh to recently label China a 'partial power'.³³ On the one hand, as a developing power, China calls for a more equitable order and resists calls for global leadership. In this vein, in 2010 State Councillor Dai Bingguo stressed that China 'is a developing country in every sense of the term . . . even if China becomes stronger, it will remain a member of the developing world'.³⁴ This identity plays out in various forums, including the BRICs group for emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), for which China sees only a limited role as a platform from which to champion a more inclusive order, and appeal to common interests as a developing power. On the other hand, as Foreign Minister Wang Yi's speech in 2013 highlights, while 'basic national conditions as a developing country' are likely to determine China's international behaviour, with the world's second largest economy China is also aware of its growing influence over global order.³⁵ It is with reference to this latter identity as an emerging great power that the US calls for greater bilateral cooperation with China to tackle challenges related to nuclear proliferation, climate change, and the economic recession.³⁶

(p.161)

With the exception of the economy, China seems to have initially resisted assuming a leadership role on global governance issues.³⁷ For instance, in 2009 China was quick to reject the G-2 proposal made by former US Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski.³⁸ Shortly afterwards, Premier Wen Jiabao stated: 'some say that world affairs will be managed solely by China and the United States. I think that view is baseless and wrong . . . it is impossible for a couple of countries or a group of big powers to resolve all global issues.'³⁹ However, there are some signs that under President Xi Jinping China might be 'doing more things' in the future.⁴⁰ For example, on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

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China seems to have increased its involvement, extending its missions to include combat roles and now providing more peacekeepers than all other members of the P-5 in the United Nations Security Council.⁴¹

As for nuclear order, although the declared pursuit of an equitable order mirrors China's preference for a more representative nuclear order, throughout most of the 2000s China's engagement has been cautious, abstaining on sanctions and at times blocking the FMCT. More recently, however, in 2013 Chinese efforts regarding North Korea and Iran suggest a more cooperative turn. On the latter, China considered itself to be a vital member of the P-5 negotiations in sealing the Geneva interim deal over the Iranian nuclear programme in November 2013.⁴² On the former, Beijing has adopted a stronger line, for instance publicly issuing a comprehensive list of prohibited export items to North Korea in September 2013, and freezing several North Korean bank accounts in major Chinese banks following a third nuclear test conducted by Pyongyang in February 2013.⁴³

Elsewhere, however, China's behaviour at a regional level has been unusually combative, involving clashes with the USS *Impeccable* in 2009, increased tension over the South China Sea, and maritime disputes with Japan, including China's announcement in November 2013 of an Air Defense (p.162) Identification Zone in the East China Sea. Some, such as Swaine, take this behaviour as evidence of a growing assertiveness in Chinese foreign policy.⁴⁴ However, others, like Christensen, argue the opposite, but with equally negative conclusions: that it represents a step backwards, away from the assertiveness of positive engagement in the 1980s and 1990s to behaviour that is reactive and nationalistic.⁴⁵ For Christensen, this shift in behaviour is based on overconfidence on the international stage as a result of China's relatively strong position in the global financial recession and insecurity at home.⁴⁶ From the Chinese perspective, however, there is a growing sense that its regional security environment has become more threatening since 2011, with the Obama administration's so-called 'pivot' or 'rebalancing' towards the Asia-Pacific. Many within China, and especially the PLA,

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perceive the pivot as an attempt by the United States to contain China.⁴⁷

All in all, China's engagement with global nuclear order closely reflects its identification as a developing and rising power, as well as its evolving position and behaviour in the global order since 1949. This roughly translates into a rejection of global order under Mao Zedong, engagement in the Deng Xiaoping era of reform and opening up, to a mixture of caution and assertiveness in the 1990s and 2000s in combating, somewhat unsuccessfully, the 'China threat theory' and regional fears of its rise. In the nuclear context, Beijing's championing of a more multilateral and representative nuclear order reflects a wider agenda that it has promoted as a developing state. Later, as a rising power, China's engagement with institutional aspects of nuclear order underpins official concepts such as a peaceful rise, in an attempt to portray itself as non-threatening to its neighbours. Similarly, Beijing's decision to continue with restraint in its nuclear weapons strategy serves to assuage fears of China's rise and project the image of a responsible state. Overall, as China's engagement with global order has evolved so too has its power as a rising state, increasing not only its ability to promote, but also frustrate, global nuclear order.

For the past two decades, the study of contemporary China has been predominantly forward-looking, focused on the implications of its rise for (p.163) international affairs. But a look back to China's place in global nuclear history reveals that it had a bigger hand in shaping global nuclear politics than previously thought.⁴⁸ This complicates the traditional and somewhat linear narrative on China in the nuclear field: as reckless and ignorant of nuclear matters during the Mao period; irresponsible in the 1980s and 1990s when suspected of proliferating nuclear technology to countries like Pakistan; and more recently, a reluctant student of norms such as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. According to this view, since opening up to the world China has been catching-up with mainstream nuclear ideas and integrating itself into nuclear order.

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However, while China has joined key institutions like the NPT and CTBT, what is often overlooked in Western analysis is the degree to which China had alternative and innovative ideas on nuclear issues. Many of these ideas can be traced back as early as the Mao period: from the paper tiger thesis disparaging the significance of nuclear weapons and the promotion of socialist proliferation to counter a perceived nuclear monopoly, to internal debates in the 1980s that led to an emphasis on retaliation in strategy and minimalism in development at a time when other nuclear weapons states were actively building vast nuclear arsenals.

Moreover, the trajectory of China's engagement has not been straightforward or linear. China initially challenged superpower ideas and offered its own model for nuclear order during the Maoist era; it then abandoned this model and retreated from global nuclear politics. In the 1980s, China outlined its preference for a more representative nuclear order, an idea it has continued to champion, even today. China also began to engage in institutions of global nuclear order, significantly increasing these commitments in the 1990s. This engagement, together with its status as a rising power, meant that China would directly influence global nuclear politics to a far greater degree than ever before, such that today it is considered by many as a pivotal actor in the restoration of nuclear order. The irony here is that while China inadvertently facilitated the emergence of a model for global nuclear order to which it was originally opposed, it is now considered pivotal to the restoration of that order. Whether China fully steps up to the role remains to (p.164) be seen. Its engagement in the 2000s has been tentative at best. This lack of action reflects not a deliberate agenda to paralyse global nuclear order but the perceived high costs of such action for its economy and security. In addition, with the exception of socialist proliferation, China does not have a record of transformative forms of engagement with global nuclear politics. Indeed, despite challenges to its nuclear deterrent in the 1990s and 2000s, particularly shifts in US nuclear posture and India's testing of nuclear weapons, Beijing has demonstrated remarkable restraint: continuing to rely on retaliation in strategy, NFU, and limited modernization. Thus, as China

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begins a new era under Xi Jinping, dramatic change in the pattern of its engagement with global nuclear politics is unlikely.

Notes:

(1) Chinese MFA, 'Memo of Conversation between Chairman Mao Zedong and Chairman Liu Shaoqi and the Indonesia Delegation (on Issues of Nuclear Weapons, Anti-Imperialist Countries, and the Emerging Power Conference)', 30 September 1965, No. 105-01917-02, Chinese MFA, p. 6.

(2) Barack Obama, Remarks by US President in Prague, 5 April 2009.

(3) Zhang Jing, 'In Quest of Mushroom Clouds: Perspectives from the Chinese Side', CSSEO Working Paper No. 148, December 2009, p. 18.

(4) From Mao Zedong, 'On Ten Great Relations', 25 April 1956, in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977).

(5) Liu Shufa, ed., *Chronology of Chen Yi*, Vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1995), p. 465.

(6) Deng Xiaoping, 'China Must Take a Place in the High Technology Field', speech given on 24 October 1988, reprinted in *Selected Writings of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), p. 279.

(7) However, nuclear weapons were never meant to solve security issues, such as over Taiwan. As PLA Marshal Ye Jianying stated in November 1964: 'nuclear weapons cannot settle conflicts with the imperialists . . . our nuclear detonation has not eased the situation along our periphery or made the world more peaceful or tranquil', in *Selected Writings of Ye Jianying on Military Affairs* (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1997), p. 613.

(8) Duchâtel and Schell, 'China's Policy on North Korea'.

(9) Medeiros, *China's International Behavior*, p. 13. An earlier, and more extended, argument is made in Marc Lanteigne,

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China and International Institutions (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 15-28.

(10) In 1982, the Five Principles were written into the PRC constitution. *Xinhua*, 'Former Vice-Premier Calls for New Dimensions to Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence', 14 June 2004.

(11) Quoted in Young (b), 'Chinese Views on the Spread of Nuclear Weapons', pp. 31-2.

(12) Zhu Feng, 'Finding a Balance Between Hiding Our Abilities and Biding Our Time and Achieving', *Contemporary International Relations*, No. 8, 20 September 2008, pp. 27-8.

(13) Liu Huaqiu, 'China Will Always Pursue a Peaceful Foreign Policy of Independence and Self-Determination', speech by Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Liu, in *Qiushi*, No. 23, 1 December 1997, pp. 2-9. See also Wu Guoguang and Helen Lansdowne, eds., *China Turns to Multilateralism, Foreign Policy and Regional Security* (London: Routledge, 2008).

(14) Xia Liping, 'China: A Responsible Great Power', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 10, No. 26, 2001, pp. 17-25; and Rosemary Foot, 'Chinese Power and the Idea of a Responsible State', *The China Journal*, No. 45, January 2001, pp. 1-19.

(15) For assessments of the China threat theory see: Johnston, 'China's International Relations', pp. 65-100; and Barry Buzan and Rosemary Foot, *Does China Matter? A Reassessment: Essays in Memory of Gerald Segal* (London: Routledge, 2004).

(16) A leading voice in this regard was John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2003), pp. 392-402.

(17) This is a term that became popular in the mid to late 1990s and was officially presented by the Chinese Foreign Minister as part of a 'Position Paper on the New Security Concept' to the ASEAN Regional Forum meeting on 31 July 2002. For more, see <<http://www.china-un.org/eng/xw/t27742.htm>> [accessed 20 January 2012].

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- (18) *Xinhua*, 'China Eager to Establish a New International Order', 28 February 1991. For more, see Wang Gungwu and Zheng Yongnian, eds., *China and the New International Order* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 149–68.
- (19) Yan Xuetong, 'The Challenges and Tasks Our Country's Diplomacy Faces', *World Economics and Politics*, 1993.
- (20) Foot, 'Chinese Strategies in a US-Hegemonic Global Order', pp. 77–94; and Michael Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy, eds., *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999), pp. 20–1.
- (21) Evan Medeiros and Taylor Fravel, 'China's New Diplomacy', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003, pp. 22–35.
- (22) *China Daily*, 'Hu Calls for a Harmonious World at Summit', 16 September 2005.
- (23) Zhou Jianming, 'Properly Understand the International Structure of "One Superpower, Many Great Powers"', *Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, 1998, pp. 34–7.
- (24) Zoellick, 'Whither China'.
- (25) Christensen, 'The Advantages of an Assertive China', pp. 56–9.
- (26) Quoted in Medeiros, *China's International Behavior*, p. 49.
- (27) Shen Guofang, 'Ideas and Practice in China's New Diplomacy', *World Knowledge*, Vol. 12, 2007, p. 42.
- (28) Randall L. Schweller and Pu Xiaoyu, 'After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of US Decline', *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 1, Summer 2011, p. 66.
- (29) Zhang Tuosheng, 'Defining China's Role on the World Stage', *China Daily*, 22 December 2006; and Bonnie Glaser

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and Lyle Morris, 'Chinese Perceptions of US Decline and Power', *China Brief*, 9 July 2009.

(30) Deng Yong, 'Hegemon on the Offensive: Chinese Perspectives on U.S. Global Strategy', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 116, No. 3, 2001, p. 346.

(31) Jia Qingguo, 'Learning to Live with the Hegemon: Evolution of China's Policy toward the U.S. Since the End of the Cold War', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 14, No. 44, 2005, pp. 395-408.

(32) Wang Jisi, 'China's Search for Stability with America', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5, September/October 2005, p. 44.

(33) David Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

(34) Dai Bingguo, 'Adhere to the Path of Peaceful Development' *Xinhua*, 6 December 2010. On China and the BRICs, see Michael A. Glosney, 'China and the BRICs: A Real (But Limited) Partnership in a Unipolar World', *Polity*, Vol. 42, No. 1, January 2010, p. 113.

(35) Wang Yi, 'Exploring the Path of Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics', 27 June 2013; and People's Republic of China, Information Office of the State Council, *China's Peaceful Development*, September 2011.

(36) This is well laid out in Foot and Walter, *China, the United States, and Global Order*, pp. 15-21.

(37) Hu Jintao, 'Shift Growth Model to Sustain Economic Development', remarks at the 19th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, Hawaii, 13 November 2011.

(38) Francois Godement, 'No Rush Into Marriage, China's Response to the G2', European Council on Foreign Relations, *China Analysis*, No. 22, June 2009.

(39) *Xinhua*, 'G2 "Not a Sino-US Pact to Rule the World"', 5 May 2009; and *Xinhua*, 'Wen Rejects Allegation of China, US Monopolizing World Affairs', 21 May 2009.

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(40) I thank Rosemary Foot for her comments on this section.

(41) Miwa Hirono and Marc Lanteigne, 'Introduction: China and UN Peacekeeping', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 18, No. 3, June 2011, pp. 243–56; Courtney J. Richardson, 'A Responsible Power? China and the UN Peacekeeping Regime', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 18, No. 3, June 2011, pp. 286–97; and Shogo Suzuki, 'Seeking "Legitimate" Great Power Status in Post-Cold War International Society: China's and Japan's Participation in UNPKO', *International Relations*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2008, pp. 45–63.

(42) Wan, 'China Plays a Key Broker Role in Iran Nuclear Deal'.

(43) On these efforts, see Rabinovitch and Mundy, 'China Reduces Banking Lifeline to N Korea'; and Perlez, 'China Bans Items for Export to North Korea'.

(44) Michael D. Swaine, 'Perceptions of an Assertive China', *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 32, Spring 2010.

(45) Christensen, 'The Advantages of an Assertive China', p. 59.

(46) Alastair I. Johnston also rejects the idea of an 'assertive turn', see 'How New and Assertive is China's New Assertiveness?' *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4, Spring 2013, pp. 7–48.

(47) Remarks by the President in State of the Union Address, Washington, DC, 24 January 2012; and *BBC News*, 'Barack Obama Says Asia-Pacific Is "Top US Priority"', 17 November 2011.

(48) In conducting research for the book, a number of gaps in the China-nuclear weapons literature have become apparent. One relates to the *paper tiger* thesis, a concept much dismissed in Western literature. Another relates to why the nuclear revolution—so defining in the United States—did not occur in quite the same way in China. For instance, the end of the Second World War in the Pacific is not attributed to the atomic bombings of Japan but to the Soviet invasion of

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Manchuria. This alternative reading is important because an argument often used in support of nuclear deterrence is the defining role nuclear weapons played in the Second World War. Re-examining this argument in light of China's perception of events would contribute to a wider effort underway in the nuclear field to delegitimize nuclear deterrence. See Ken Berry, Patricia Lewis, Benoît Pélopidas, Nikolai Sokov, and Ward Wilson, *Delegitimizing Nuclear Weapons, Examining the Validity of Nuclear Deterrence* (Monterey: Center for Nonproliferation Studies, 2010).



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