

At the Crossroads of Post-Communist Modernisation

Russia and China in
Comparative Perspective

Edited by Christer Pursiainen



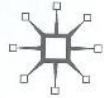
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consensus by the authors, the breadth of theoretical and empirical themes involved in this kind of a study makes it impossible to agree on each and every issue and interpretation. We have therefore chosen to follow the traditional form of an edited compilation, showing clearly under each chapter, and sometimes in the footnotes, who is responsible for which chapter and section. Still, this book can be regarded as a whole, and it is much more coherent than many edited volumes.

While the book draws a long-term and general picture of its theme, some of the issues deal with contemporary daily politics. It should therefore be mentioned that the individual chapters were mostly completed in the summer of 2011 and the whole manuscript assembled in September 2011. However, some figures and developments relate to the December 2011 State Duma elections in Russia and were updated after that event in the respective chapter.

An offshoot of the project was the XI Aleksanteri Conference, which was held in Helsinki in November 2011 on the very same theme as this book. The high-level keynote speakers, over one hundred papers, and the overall enthusiasm of the participants proved that our comparative Russia–China theme is perhaps more than a question for a specific moment, but rather part of an emerging research programme dealing with the results of post-communism and other societal and political transformation processes. Questions such as ‘is the transition over?’, ‘are the hybrid regimes here to stay?’ and ‘what is this so-called new authoritarianism?’ seem to be challenging enough to justify further investigation and new theoretical openings.

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1

Introduction

Christer Pursiainen

In the two decades that have followed the 1989–1991 collapse of communism in the former Soviet bloc and the June 1989 crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the former communist states have traversed diverse paths away from communist rule. Some former Soviet satellite states in Eastern and Central Europe – amongst them Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia, and the three Baltic states previously part of the Soviet Union – have made relatively successful transitions to consolidated democracies and market economies. A small number of former Soviet republics, such as Ukraine and Georgia, continue to struggle in their transformation process and face uncertain futures. The former Soviet republics in Central Asia and Belarus have degenerated into autocratic regimes that have successfully preserved the power of the previous ruling elites despite adopting ostensibly democratic, but heavily manipulated, electoral institutions.

Two countries, Russia and China, being great powers in their own right, provide a particularly interesting comparison in the context of post-communist societal and political change. This book will take a closer look at these two countries' transformations in three interconnected dimensions: socioeconomic development, political system change, and international relations.

Anomaly or alternative?

This book is a comparative case study of the modernisation paths and strategies of Russia and China. However, first it is useful to put the theme into the context of the more general debate about whether a new global ideological competition is taking shape in the aftermath of post-communist transition. Is it so that instead of the communism

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153. The Institute of Sociology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences publishes an annual survey of elites trained at the Central Party School in its 中国社会形势预测与分析 series, Beijing: Shehui kexue chubanshe.
154. See Dali Yang, *op. cit.*; Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party*.
155. Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition*.
156. The Institute of Sociology, CASS, 中国社会形势预测与分析, Beijing: Shehui kexue chubanshe, various years.
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158. Kenneth Keng, 'China's Unbalanced Economic Growth', *Journal of Contemporary China* vol. 15, no. 46 (2006), pp. 183–214.
159. For instance, the rapid expansion of higher education has created the problem of unemployed college graduates, posing a serious threat to social stability and the party's ability to co-opt social elites. See Limin Bai, 'Graduate Unemployment: Dilemmas and Challenges in China's Move to Mass Higher Education', *The China Quarterly*, 185 (2006), pp. 128–144.

5 Sovereignty or Interdependency?

Sergei Medvedev and Linda Jakobson

After more than two decades of reform, China and Russia have developed new hybrid forms of national capitalism and authoritarianism. Besides the domestic socioeconomic and political challenges, both countries have international ambitions. To be sure, China and Russia share a common denominator in the realm of foreign policy: to manage and, if possible, decrease the impact of US influence upon international affairs. But, putting this commonality aside, the two countries have different goals and conditions, and have adopted different foreign policy strategies to deal with the post-Cold War world order. Russia, seeing its current international standing in decline and being reduced to a mere energy supplier to the world market, is seeking to replay the end of the Cold War and to revive its great power ambitions. China has moved away from its former heavy reliance on bilateral relationships to working within numerous multilateral frameworks. Though this development has been welcomed in the international community, China's more assertive behaviour in the maritime sphere has raised concerns about the implications for regional stability of China's growing power. At the same time, China has not given up on its insistence on respect for sovereignty, nor has China's leadership officially been swayed from the argument that, as a developing country, it must focus on raising the living standards of its own people before taking on more international responsibility.

Starting from this general picture, we ask what are the similarities and differences between these countries in the fields of foreign policy and international relations? To structure this discussion, this chapter scrutinises the approaches of the two countries to the international order (status quo or revisionism), the basis for foreign policy decision-making (ideology or pragmatism), the use of instruments of power (hard versus

soft power) and the preferred basis of international relations doctrine (sovereignty or interdependency).

Russia

The evolution of Russia's foreign policy over the past 20 years has been a roller coaster ride. The country has pretended to play such different roles on the world stage: as an ally of the West and its political opponent, as a regional leader, and as a weak, yet ambitious geopolitical giant. Russia's task was particularly difficult because the country had to adapt itself to the changing international situation, while experiencing painful domestic transformation. Under conditions of high uncertainty, Russia could not produce a long-term political strategy; it focused on current problems and opportunities rather than on more fundamental questions about its foreign policy identity, its place and its mission in the world in the twenty-first century. As a result, today Russia is widely acknowledged as an important international actor, but at the same time it is seen by others as a political 'black box', tending to produce somewhat unexpected political outcomes.

Such perplexity arises because of the existence of different foreign and domestic factors, which influence the processes of decision-making in Russia. The list includes the necessity to comply with international obligations, aspirations to be competitive on the world market, ambitions to become one of the 'poles' of the emerging international system, as well as the commitment to preserve state sovereignty, a vested interest in strengthening the political regime, and the activity of lobbyists promoting interests of different domestic groups. The foreign policy of today's Russia is a perfect example of Putnam's 'two-level games',¹ an elaborate interplay between foreign and domestic policy. In this situation, a decision is reached only after protracted deliberation, often carried out behind the public stage.

Russia's position in the international arena is primarily defined by two sets of resources: first, the institutional and military legacy of the USSR, and second, the energy resources, which nourish economic wealth and are used as political leverage in the policy of so-called energy nationalism. However, the significance of the Soviet legacy is clearly decreasing, while the energy lever is highly susceptible to price volatility in world markets. Russia was considerably weakened in the 1990s, when these two factors coincided, and restored its geopolitical position in the 2000s, when high oil prices allowed the implementation of a more ambitious agenda. Russia has alleviated most of the negative

geopolitical consequences of the difficult period of transition in the 1990s, and has claimed that other actors should take Russia's foreign policy interests into account. Overall, Russia has pursued a multi-vector foreign policy and has not shied away from conflicts whenever they arose, especially in relations with Western countries.

Over the last 20 years, the country's rapprochement with the West failed at least twice – in the mid-1990s, and again in the mid-2000s – and it returned to its historical role of a 'powerful periphery'. Russia remained highly sensitive to outside critiques of its domestic and foreign policies and continued to portray NATO as a hostile organisation. Russia's foreign policy credo was expressed by (then) President Vladimir Putin in his speech at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy in 2007, when he proclaimed that "Russia is a country with a history that spans more than a thousand years and has practically always used the privilege to carry out an independent foreign policy."²

Against this historical background, a number of political and economic developments caused Russia's disappointment with its Western partners. First, Russia's reforms, carried out in accordance with the 'Washington consensus', as discussed in some detail in the preceding chapters, created much more painful consequences than expected, which frustrated Russian society and elites. Second, having lost its geopolitical weight after the breakup of the USSR, Russia had hoped that the West would support it during this difficult period. Instead, the West used the period of Russia's weakness to incorporate the countries of the former Soviet bloc into its zone of influence, eliciting anger and envy in Russia and contributing to the deterioration of the country's relations with the West. Third, the evolving international system in the 2000s was somewhat favourable for the implementation of opportunistic policies. Economic and political failures in the West, from Wall Street to Iraq, the loss of legitimacy of international institutions and regimes, and the rise of non-Western actors all convinced Russia of the idea that the international system was becoming multi-polar, just as the (then) foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov had predicted more than a decade previously.

In fact, Russia was not alone in its desire to raise its international status. Other emerging nations also became more ambitious and self-confident, challenging the balance of power in the international arena: in the mid-2000s the concept of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China),³ invented by the analysts of Goldman Sachs, received a great deal of media attention, and also political traction. The leaders of state and ministers of finance of those four countries met several

times between 2008 and 2010, with the aim of establishing an informal club in order to support each other's economic and political aspirations. Their actions are not profoundly anti-Western, but they clearly like emphasising their distinctive political identity.

The economic developments of the past decade have further contributed to a higher profile for those four countries. First, the economic boom of the early 2000s has stimulated the dependence of the West on those emerging economies, namely dependence upon Russia's oil and gas, cheap consumer goods from China, and the skilled workforce of India. Second, during the financial crisis of 2008-09 most developing countries have shown better performance than the European countries and the US. China, Brazil, and India maintained their economic growth at the level of 5-10 per cent, raising hopes for the long-term sustainability of their development.⁴ Russia lagged behind them, and was indeed struck quite hard by the crisis, but it still continues to be seen as an attractive investment opportunity by others.

By virtue of its history and geographical location, Russia finds itself at the junction of liberal 'Westernisation' and 'non-Western globalisation'. As was discussed in the preceding chapters in more detail, Russia is also at the heart of the debate about 'authoritarian capitalism' as a means of development, a form of market capitalism without political liberalisation. This term has been used by Azar Gat, Robert Kagan, Sergei Karaganov and other authors,⁵ with Kagan proclaiming that

the return to the international competition of ambitious nations has been accompanied by a return to global ideological competition. More precisely, the two-centuries-old struggle between political liberalism and autocracy has re-emerged as a [...] defining characteristic of the present era.⁶

Obviously Russia, which in the 2000s drifted towards authoritarianism, while receiving high revenues from oil and gas exports, is often mentioned as a country primarily involved in this renewed ideological competition.

Russia was indeed one of the most vocal actors among the 'authoritarian capitalism' countries. Disappointed with the West's passivity in the early 2000s, when it failed to respond to Russia's overtures and proposal for an alliance, Russia subsequently never shied away from openly disagreeing with the West on a number of issues, including the 'colour revolutions' in the post-Soviet countries, NATO expansion, and the deployment of elements of the US anti-ballistic missile

system (ABM) in Eastern Europe. The high point of disagreement with the West came in August 2008, with the Russian-Georgian war. In response to Georgia's attack on South Ossetia, a breakaway region in the northern part of Georgia, Russia attacked Georgia, bombing the city of Gori and military targets on the territory of the country.⁷ The meaning of this war went far beyond the Russian-Georgian conflict. In fact, Georgia was one of the most anti-Russian countries in the camp of 'new democracies' in the post-Soviet space and had been backed by the US in previous years. Thus, by attacking Georgia in response to its actions in South Ossetia, Russia sent a clear message to the West that further NATO expansion was unacceptable and Russia's concerns with the foreign policies of Western countries were serious.

However, the global financial meltdown and the changes of leadership in Russia and the US in 2008 have lowered the level of tension in the international arena. Countries were forced to focus on domestic problems rather than on international controversies; under these conditions they found limited cooperation to be in everybody's interest and more beneficial than damage limitation or conflict rhetoric. In autumn 2008 Russia's new president, Dmitry Medvedev, proposed the development of a new European Security Treaty in order to prevent any possible future military conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic area, and this proposal is still on the cards⁸. Although Russia's foreign partners seem unwilling to conclude such a treaty, regarding NATO and the OSCE as sufficient instruments for the provision of Euro-Atlantic security, they have not entirely rejected Russia's proposal, and the dialogue on this issue continues. Another attempt at improving the international political climate was a 'reset' in the US-Russia relations, as declared by the new Obama administration in 2009. Both sides tried to concentrate on pragmatic cooperation and to avoid addressing antagonisms, which allowed them to agree terms on the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which was signed in April 2010.

Russia is an important player, yet it is still an evolving participant in the international arena. After the collapse of the USSR it lost a substantial part of its foreign policy resources and foreign policy identity. An 'inventory' of Russia's foreign policy has been going on for the past two decades, during the course of which the country has sought to define its own identity and its relations with the outside world; this self-seeking is still far from complete. Indeed, Russia today remains as far as ever from a clear-cut domestic and international identity. The nation is currently at the centre of cleavages between *Liberalism* and *Realism* in international relations, between its *institutional affiliations*

and aspirations, on the one hand, and its instincts of sovereignty, on the other. Finally, Russia also finds itself at the point of global bifurcation between *liberal Westernisation* and various *non-Western variants of modernisation*, 'alternative modernities'. This makes Russian foreign policy an object of political contestation, and further complicates the task of implementing a coherent foreign policy. Therefore, in order to analyse Russia's foreign policy of recent years we should pose the same questions, and posit the same alternatives, that Russia's ruling elite faced during this period. Indeed, this political alternative can be treated as analytical dichotomies, binary oppositions as presented in the introduction to this chapter. Let us discuss each of them in more depth.

Defensive revisionism

One of the main geopolitical consequences of the demise of the USSR was the end of the bipolar international system. The status quo, based on a combination of institutional and political factors, was broken, and since that time actors have been trying to find new foundations for a stable international order. Initially, at the end of the twentieth century, it was presupposed that such a balance could be reached by filling old institutional forms, inherited from the Cold War, with new liberal content. Instead of being reformed, the old post-World War II institutions were reoriented towards 'civilising' and integrating post-communist societies: Russia took a seat of the USSR at the United Nations Security Council; NATO prepared for Eastern enlargement; the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank gained more international weight during the period of large-scale post-socialist economic reforms. In a brief 'unipolar moment' it seemed that Russia and other post-communist countries would quickly complete the tasks of transition and join the developed countries of the West, following which a new liberal status quo in the international system would be reached, the 'End of History'.

In fact, in the 1990s, Russia, then considered a nation 'in transition', followed the emerging 'New World Order',⁹ first enthusiastically, and later reluctantly (see the debates on the first wave of NATO enlargement),¹⁰ accepting all its basic postulates: democracy, liberalism, international institutions, and the normative dominance of the West. Another wave of Russia's rapprochement with the West came in the early 2000s, when Russia, led by the pragmatic Vladimir Putin, sought to follow the quickly evolving US-led international order – ultimately acquiescing to NATO's war in Kosovo in 1999, the US War on Terror in 2001 (involving the invasion of Afghanistan, and later Iraq), the abrogation of the ABM

Treaty by the US in 2001, and ultimately NATO enlargement to the Baltic countries in 2004.

However, the period of a 'cooperative Putin' turned out to be short-lived, and since 2003–04 different processes both inside and outside of Russia have pushed the country to start challenging the fragile international consensus: Russia's political regime began its authoritarian drift; the legitimacy of the US as the world leader was weakened after the invasion of Iraq in 2003; and the EU was facing a crisis of integration, caused by the consequences of enlargement and the failure of the first attempt to adopt the European Constitution in 2005. The conflict level within international relations started to rise, and Moscow gradually changed its stance – from a pragmatic alliance with the West to increasingly anti-Western (but also pragmatic) activism aimed at using the uncertainty in international relations to Russia's advantage. The cover page of the *Economist* on 11 December 2004 featured a picture of Vladimir Putin dressed as a boxer and the cover story was titled "The Challenger"; it concluded that "It is time to see Mr. Putin as a challenger, not a friend."¹¹

After several years of continued economic growth and international turbulence, in the mid-2000s Russian foreign policy found a new quality and became revisionist. The irony of the situation was that it was not revisionism *per se*, but rather a struggle for the preservation of Russia's current international position and status quo, which in contrast to Russia's geopolitical weakness of the 1990s was perceived as revisionism. In fact, opposing the US attempts to deploy the ABM elements in the Czech Republic and Poland and rebuffing the plans for NATO's enlargement into Ukraine and Georgia, were an attempt to return to the *status quo ante*, and a nostalgia for the days of the Cold War when Russia had a right of veto over strategic decisions on the European continent.

As put by Dmitri Trenin in 2008:

Moscow is trying to replay the end of the Cold War. This is not to say that the Kremlin seeks to revive the Soviet Union, establish garrisons on the Elbe and the Vistula or re-enter Afghanistan. Moscow seeks an equal footing with its partners East and West and recognition as a power center in the region that stretches from the European Union to China's borders and from the North Pole to the Middle East.¹²

Opinions about the new Russian foreign policy stance were split. Some critics stated that Russia's advances to countries such as Venezuela, Iran, and the Palestinian Authority became yet another

manifestation of Russia's perennial anti-systemic tradition, formed by "the Bolsheviks-outlaws,' who were ready to form blocks with other offended states in order to resist the world leaders of their époque".¹³ Meanwhile, others supported these steps as a welcome counterbalance to Western expansionism.

Indeed, in the 2000s Russia has become a revisionist state, but it was revisionism of a special kind: a nostalgic and defensive revisionism of a depressed and defensive geopolitical giant. Memories of the role that the USSR played in the world, and the remaining military and political resources, continue to support Russia's foreign-policy inertia. Though Moscow sometimes may not articulate its interests and prove its competence, it is clear that it has sufficient status to participate in global governance.

Russia's self-assurance during the past decade was mainly supported by the growth of the energy factor in international relations, and the rise of 'energy nationalism' on the world stage. The hike in oil and gas prices in the 2000s permitted Russia's elite to cope with the most critical social problems within the country and to make itself noticed in the international arena. Moscow was quite liberal in the use of its energy weapon against its neighbours – Ukraine, Belarus, and Georgia.

In particular, it should be mentioned that Russia's revisionism has a defensive nature. With these actions Russia tried to stop the process of the expansion of the sphere of Western dominance, whilst being unable to suggest any real alternative projects.

To be true, Moscow's foreign policy moves were sometimes far from diplomatic. As put by Dmitri Trenin:

The problem is, Moscow's assertive tactics can be misperceived as a strategy of confrontation. In the past, the Soviet Union lost much when what the Kremlin saw as defensive action, from the Berlin blockade to the invasion of Afghanistan, was perceived as aggression by the West and provoked a response that worsened the Soviet Union's international standing. The weak point of Russian foreign policy has traditionally been an inability to explain itself clearly to America and Europe.¹⁴

A similar situation was almost literally replayed in the 2000s. Indeed, the situation was rather paradoxical: Russia, constantly stressing its adherence to the preservation of the international status quo and to the principles of international law, pursued revisionist policy (or, better put, was imagined as a revisionist country in Western opinion); whilst the

USA, which tried to change the world order to its own liking by using the policy of power, appeared as a status quo country in the international arena. This confusion has further added to Russia's frustration, and to the misunderstandings between Russia and the West.

Pragmatism as an ideology

Soviet foreign policy was ideological at its core. The declaration of commitment to communist ideas classed other states as being either 'foes' or 'friends' of the USSR, making Moscow spend resources on either confrontation or on assistance. In the final analysis, it was this ideological component of the Soviet foreign policy that destroyed the country, leading to excessive spending on the support of cohesion within the socialist block, but producing no real allies in the world.

However, a certain pragmatism also existed in Soviet foreign policy. The ideological confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States caused the arms race between the two. When the level of armaments produced, and the capacity for mutual overkill, became extremely high, the opponents realised the necessity of negotiations. Shifting relations into a pragmatic field, and searching for technical solutions which were in the interests of both sides became ways to weaken the ideological hostility. Not surprisingly, political scientists remembered this at the end of the 2000s, when Russian-American relations reached their lowest point in the post-Cold War period.¹⁵

In the logic of the ideological 'zero-sum game', the discrediting of the communist ideology played into the hands of the liberals. As a result, the end of the twentieth century was marked by the triumph of liberal ideology. The Wilsonian liberal discourse claimed to be an uncontested foundation of the 'New World Order', with clear geopolitical and military implications. These were clearly demonstrated during NATO's military operation in Yugoslavia in 1999: "Kosovo was the first war in history that is said to be fought in pursuit of principle, not interest."¹⁶ In an attempt to stop ethnic purges in Kosovo, NATO began bombing Yugoslavia and finally toppled the Milosevic regime.¹⁷

By contrast with the 'ideological' approach of the West, Russia's foreign policy during the last 20 years has been rather pragmatic. The country faced serious domestic problems and, as put by Sergei Karaganov, 'retreated in panic' from the international arena.¹⁸ 'Damage limitation' was the name of the game for Russia, especially with respect to NATO and EU enlargement, and increasing US unilateralism. Perhaps the only occurrence of the 'ideological' approach in Russian foreign policy happened in the same Kosovo episode in March and April 1999,

when NATO's actions provoked massive resentment in Russian society and among the political elite. With regard to the question of Kosovo, Russia has always been committed to a certain vision of the country's mission to support the 'Orthodox brethren' in Serbia, and to oppose action by the United States and NATO in defiance of international law.

Apart from the Kosovo story, throughout the 2000s Russia sought to pursue a pragmatic political course. At the beginning of the decade the country's political elite, driven by Vladimir Putin's trademark 'pragmatism', found it beneficial to align itself with the West. The Russian President was one of the first foreign leaders to speak directly to President Bush after the 9/11 attacks on Washington and New York. In that phone call, he expressed his condolences to the president and the American people and his unequivocal support for whatever response the American president might decide to undertake. As Michel McFaul observed, "He then followed this rhetorical support with concrete policies."¹⁹ Russia actively cooperated with NATO in Afghanistan and still supports this operation. Vladimir Putin also reacted moderately to the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in 2001 and to NATO enlargement in 2004, which, back then, seemed to indicate a pragmatic pro-Western shift in Russia's foreign policy. As noted by Dov Lynch:

The global war on terrorism has represented an opportunity for Moscow to ally itself with the Euro-Atlantic community around a common, and thankfully vague, threat. Russian differences with the West have not gone away; simply, Putin has decided that they are best resolved with Russia comfortably inside the tent rather than with one foot jammed in the doorway.²⁰

The period of pragmatic alliance with the West turned out to be short-lived. Soon, Russia stated that it was not going to make any more foreign-policy concessions, treating harshly those neighbours from the 'near abroad' that pursued anti-Russian policies, and was stated that it was considering the possibility of asymmetric response to the threats to its own security. The 'Munich speech' of Vladimir Putin laid down the main principles of Russia's new course, and such events as the gas conflicts with Ukraine in 2005–06, withdrawal from the CFE Treaty in 2007, and the war in Georgia in 2008 became the most important landmarks of a new, assertive, kind of pragmatism.

The reason for the Russian–Ukrainian gas disputes was exactly the de-ideologisation of the relations between the two countries after the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine. Earlier, during the presidency of Leonid

Kuchma, Russia had heavily subsidised the gas prices for Ukraine as its supposed ally. As a result of the 2004 'Orange Revolution', Ukraine became more Western-oriented, so a pragmatic conversion to the world market prices on gas was used as a means to punish Ukraine, and to remind it of the power of its eastern neighbour. Russia's withdrawal from the CFE Treaty was also carried out under the slogan "Nothing personal, only business": Russia had to respond to the fact that the majority of its Western counterparts have not ratified the adapted CFE Treaty, while continuing to follow their obligations in accordance with its provisions.²¹

As Timofei Bordachev and Fyodor Lukyanov observed of Russia's new pragmatism:

Moscow tried moving as far as possible in all fields accessible for expansion. It adopted a new common practice of dropping the dogmatic veneration of all principles it had formerly accepted... In recent years Russian foreign policy has become hyperactive rather than successful in the strict sense.²²

Demanding equal treatment, Russia tried to emulate the mode of action of the West: harsh responses to criticism, the use of force where it considered it necessary, decision-making that was dubious from the point of view of international law, and teasing its opponents with military exercises close to their borders (for example, joint military trainings with Venezuela in the Caribbean sea).

Thus Russian foreign-policy pragmatism had two basic tasks: first, the promotion of advantageous conditions for cooperation with the West and other geopolitical centres and, second, guaranteeing the well-being and security of the ruling Russian elite and political regime. In the short-term, Moscow managed to cope with both tasks, but this was mainly due to high oil prices, which compensated for the lack of strategic vision in Russia's foreign policy. Also, because of conflicts with the West, Russia started to pay more attention to other directions for its foreign policy and found new ways of interaction with China, India, and Latin American countries.

The times of 'grand narratives' in Russian foreign policy are probably gone, and Russia is not likely to promote a certain ideology under conditions of limited resources and the necessity of solving many domestic problems.²³ Becoming more self-confident, Russia, according to Alexey Arbatov, chose a down-to-earth 'macho' position, denying any idealism and becoming rudely pragmatic.²⁴ However, Russia's

pragmatism was opportunistic and reactive, which dramatically undermined its effectiveness. Paradoxically, an ideological factor cannot be excluded: indeed, its pragmatism has become its ideology. As observed by Viatcheslav Morozov, the very emphasis on autonomy, control, and sovereignty which the Russian diplomacy is trying to present as a pragmatic shift and a move away from foreign policy driven by ideology becomes desperately ideological in the Marxian sense of the word.²⁵

Shortage of soft power

The distinction between soft power and hard power, drawn by Joseph S. Nye Jr., is a rather new concept, emphasising the fact that in the modern world, the soft power of intangible resources, such as culture and political ideals, is often more effective than the hard power of weapons. As described by the author of the concept himself:

Soft power comes from three main sources: One is the culture of a country – in the case of America, that ranges from Harvard to Hollywood. Second, political values can be very attractive for other countries, from democracy to freedom of speech to opportunity. And the third one is the legitimacy of a country's foreign policy – meaning that if your foreign policy is considered to be legitimate by other nations, you are more persuasive.²⁶

Despite being virtually non-operationalised, this concept drew substantial attention for its highlighting of the factors of communication and image. Soft power may play a compensatory role in foreign policy, or may be a kind of 'safety net', minimising the damage of foreign-policy mistakes.

Traditionally, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union have mostly relied on hard power, supporting its imperative of territorial expansion with military resources. In order to keep control over the vast territory of the country, Russia's elites had to centralise power and control the peripheral territories. In this context, the famous quip from Joseph Stalin about the Pope – "how many divisions does he have?" – may be seen as a Russian foreign policy credo. During Soviet times the country's military expenditure accounted for 15 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP), and although it had decreased 15 times by the end of the 1990s, the amount of stored armaments, including nuclear weapons, remained high, which allowed Russia to maintain its position as one of the great military powers in times of severe economic depression. During the 2000s, the percentage of defence spending in Russia's

Table 5.1 Military expenditure of Russia

	Year	Value	Value
In constant (2008) US \$ m.	1988	339,100	15.8
	1989	314,400	14.2
	1990	266,000	12.3
	1991
	1992	66,000	5.5
	1993	58,300	5.3
	1994	56,800	5.9
	1995	33,700	4.4
	1996	29,700	4.1
	1997	33,000	4.5
	1998	21,000	3.3
	1999	21,800	3.4
	2000	29,700	3.7
	2001	33,000	4.1
	2002	36,600	4.4
	2003	39,000	4.3
2004	40,600	3.8	
2005	44,200	3.7	
2006	48,400	3.6	
2007	52,500	3.5	
2008	58,300	3.5	

Source: The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>.

Notes: Medvedev is responsible for the parts concerning Russia, whereas Jakobson is responsible for the China-related parts. Medvedev's assistant researcher in the part focusing on Russia has been Igor Tomashov. Jakobson's research assistant in the parts about China has been Ming Tang.

GDP has shrunk even further despite greater military expenditure in absolute figures, enabled by high revenues from the trade of gas and oil. Table 5.1 shows these figures.

The most prominent demonstration of Russia's military might was during the Russian–Georgian war in August 2008, but Russia also has undertaken some other demonstrative actions, including a visit by Russia's fleet and two Tupolev-160 strategic bombers to Venezuela in the autumn of 2008. The TU-160s landed in Venezuela as part of military manoeuvres on 10 September 2008,²⁷ soon after the war in Georgia, which was seen in Russia as having been provoked by increasing US interference in the post-Soviet space. The visit of Russian warships to Venezuela for joint exercises two months later caused even greater

resonance as "the first deployment of this kind in the Caribbean since the Cold war".²⁸ Russia also tried to deter US ambitions in Eastern Europe, opposing plans to install some elements of the US BMD system in the Czech Republic and Poland and threatening to deploy its Iskander in the Kaliningrad region near Poland as a response.

Still, Russia also possesses great potential for soft power, inherent in its history and culture. In the course of its history Russia has integrated numerous nationalities into a single nation, which would have been impossible by the use of force alone. The attractiveness of the Soviet model should also not be discarded. In fact, its attractiveness was quite prominent, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, when the USSR seemed to be an alternative to the West, which had been weakened by the Great Depression and discredited by the fascist regimes in Germany and Italy. The Soviet model continued to spread after the end of World War II and then after the dissolution of colonial empires in the 1960s, defining the foreign policy priorities and identities of the new independent countries. Since the collapse of the USSR, the memory of the role it played in the twentieth century, offering an alternative path to modernity, also contributes to Russia's soft power.

Nowadays, Russia has had to reinvent itself in the international arena. It lost a substantial portion of its soft power in the 1990s, when it was a recipient of economic aid and political and cultural norms. In the 2000s it was searching for a balanced international strategy, trying to convert its economic growth and strengthen its geopolitical position into soft power. The home-grown concept of 'sovereign democracy', together with the Western discourse on authoritarian capitalism, formed a conceptual basis for Russia's 'non-democratic' soft power and gave Robert Kagan a reason to speak about the 'league of dictators' united by common views on the methods of governance.²⁹ In further attempts to build up its soft power, Russia has invested heavily in projects such as hosting the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg in 2006, the organisation of the Eurovision song contest in Moscow in 2009, and preparations for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, regarding these as good opportunities for promoting an image of Russia as an actively developing and open country.

However, in comparison with the soft power of Western countries, Russia's ability to win hearts and minds abroad is limited. A chain of 'colour revolutions' in the post-Soviet countries was perceived as a geopolitical defeat for Russia, whose neighbours opted for deeper integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. In fact, the events in

Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan dealt a serious blow to the Russian political elite, which responded by tightening the political regime at home and by becoming more arrogant on the world stage, as signified by a number of Russia's foreign policy acts: the transfer to market prices in energy relations with Ukraine was interpreted as a 'hard' economic measure, caused by the worsening of political relations; 'the informational response' to the Estonian authorities' removal of the monument to Soviet soldiers in Tallinn resulted a cyber attack on several Estonian websites;³⁰ and the (in)famous Munich speech of Vladimir Putin aggravated relations between Russia and the West, prompting negative reactions across the globe.

Despite Russia's search for a cohesive international strategy, the main problem with its contemporary foreign policy is the lack of balance: Russian hard power is excessively harsh and its soft power is profoundly weak. As a result, there is little wonder that during recent years Moscow has lost virtually all public relations battles in the international scene. As observed by Sergei Karaganov:

Things have reached the point of absurdity as Moscow is now stigmatized for expansionism and the policy of pressure when it subsidizes the economies of neighboring countries by selling them energy resources at reduced prices, and then again when it decides to switch to market prices.³¹

Having poignantly perceived criticism from other countries, Russia generally understood that it should counteract on the public level and in the informational sphere in a manner that would correspond to the status of the great power. But, at the same time, Moscow's actual reaction often led to a rise in tension in relations and strengthened negative international attitudes about Russia.

Soft power is in short supply in Russia these days. To begin with, this concept does not sit well with the Kremlin *Weltanschauung*. For Moscow, the idea that other states may cooperate not only on the basis of pragmatic interests, but also on the basis of principles and positive mutual perceptions, seemed quite new and non-compatible with the Realist perception of the world still dominant in Russia's foreign policy quarters. Moreover, Russia's reaction to the concept of soft power was cautious, because it often happened to be a victim of the identity policies of other states. The re-orientation of other countries towards the West, and the search for their own identity, has often happened at the price of demonising Russia. For Estonian, Latvian and Ukrainian elites and

societies, Russia has become a constituting Other, and the passionate denial of their Soviet past a means of constructing their contemporary identity.

The concept of soft power stresses the importance for foreign policy of political values and cultural norms which are widespread across several societies. At the same time, soft power cannot be effective without a clear understanding of the reasons for its use and of the image that the country concerned intends to project in the international arena: American soft power supports the global leadership of the US; China's soft power aims at 'damage limitation', seeking to offset the possible negative interpretations of rapid Chinese growth and geopolitical weight by implementing the principles of 'harmonious development'; soft power for small European states supports their recognition as fully-licensed members of the West. Following these arguments, one is left wondering, what are the aims of Russia's soft power? This question remains open while the country is at odds with its foreign-policy identity.

One of the key problems here lies in the fact that Russia, a country with ambitions of being at least a regional leader, lacks an effective social and economic model which may be attractive for other countries. The high popularity of leaders inside the country turns out to be inconvertible into positive attitudes towards them abroad. The same applies to the home-grown concept of 'sovereign democracy', which was invented in the mid-2000s in order to send the West a message not to meddle in Russia's domestic affairs, and it has no export potential. This, in turn, leads to a disturbing dissonance between the growing desire of Russia to participate in global governance and the suspicious attitude in Russia towards the very idea of global governance. As pointed out by Igor Zevelev: "Moscow sometimes looks at its affiliation [with Western clubs] only from the angle of its own status and ability to gain concessions, not from the angle of growing responsibility or search for compromises."³²

Interdependency of sovereign actors

Looking at the changes in the international system following the end of the Cold War, the 1990s and the 2000s, as different as they may have appeared, were two stages of the same transformation. Indeed, the trend of increasing interdependency between different actors and the trend of re-sovereignisation of states exist side by side. The liberal triumphalism of the 1990s was offset by the rise of international terrorism and 'authoritarian capitalism' in the 2000s; the US aspirations for global domination were counterbalanced by the increased activity of other

centres of global power, including Russia, China and the EU; periods of economic growth in the 1990s and 2000s ended with a sudden global financial meltdown at the end of each decade, in 1998 and 2008–09 respectively. Symptomatically, in the wake of the economic crisis of 2008–09, governments across the globe resorted to well-tested protectionism, nationalisation, and increased intervention by the national Central Banks, thus undermining the trend of increasing globalisation and interdependency.

Strengthening its geopolitical influence in the 2000s, Russia insisted on the principle of sovereignty as a critically important element of the international order. This meant the implementation of a revisionist political course in the international arena and the declaration of the unacceptability of foreign interference in domestic affairs. In restoring Russia's 'stateness', the reference point for Russia's leadership was the Soviet Union. As pointed out by Viatcheslav Morozov: "Putin's project as a whole and sovereign democracy as one of its constitutive elements are deeply rooted in the image of the Soviet past as the golden age in the history of Russian statehood."³³ The USSR provided Russia not only with a myth, constituting its identity, but also with resources for concrete actions, for instance, military might and key positions in international organisations.

During the 2000s the Russian leadership and experts used the mantra of sovereignty to provide an ideological basis for Russia's revisionist policies. The situation was ambiguous: on the one side, the West did not have effective mechanisms for returning Russia to the democratic path of development, and on the other side, the level of interdependency was sufficient enough to prevent actors from engaging in open conflict. Yet, despite the vicissitudes of global transformation, the interdependency of major actors remains high: a large-scale disruption of relations is, in any case, impossible, which has been apparent on many occasions, such as the war in Kosovo in 1999 and the war in Ossetia in 2008. Russia cannot engage in diplomatic conflict with the EU, because Europe is its biggest trade partner; the EU is dependent on Russia as its main energy supplier; the US cannot afford to ignore Russia because its cooperation is necessary for solving key problems of US foreign policy, from arms control to Iran; China does not want to sharpen the contradictions with the West on human rights, because it could impede its economic growth; the US is vitally dependent on China in trade and finance, and so on.

In this sense, interdependency, binding together all key actors, has a structural character and leads not to liberal triumphalism, but rather to

pragmatic de-ideologised cooperation. They are tied together as political, economic and social units, forming a complex matrix of the global world – but at the same time the system of international relations is eroding. As noted by Timofei Bordachev and Fyodor Lukyanov:

The international system collides the ‘billiard balls’ of the interests of major world powers more and more forcefully. The proliferation of anarchy is not a new historical phenomenon at all, but unlike previous historical eras, the erosion of clear international rules, which is taking place right in front of our eyes, is happening against the background of objectively broadening economic interdependence. In the first years of the new century, there were increasingly frequent signs that the international system was entering a ‘zone of turbulence’.³⁴

One of the biggest political problems of today’s international affairs is that *speaking* about structural interdependency has become commonplace but, on the contrary, *promoting* interdependency as mutual respect for the interests of the different actors is not a popular strategy. This general trend was initiated by the United States after the events of 9/11, and since then the principles of interdependency were further undermined by such different phenomena as US unilateralism, Russia’s ‘sovereign democracy’, the ‘Beijing consensus’,³⁵ and the rejection of the first draft of the EU constitution by several European states. Interdependency as a principle of foreign policy has come to be perceived as evidence of weakness. The states, seeking to be competitive, perceive interdependency as an instrument of, and not as a final goal of, their foreign policy.

Russia’s use of interdependency as an instrument of foreign policy has been particularly evident in the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Appealing to the Soviet past and regarding itself as a centre of integration, Russia tried to promote the CIS as an alternative to integration with the West. Besides the CIS, cooperation also existed in other formats, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), created in its current form in 2002, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), and the Union State between Russia and Belarus, these latter two both being established in 1996. In July 2010 Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan deepened their integration by establishing a new Customs Union.

Russia also admits the importance of interdependency in broader international relations: an interdependency of sovereign actors, as implied in the concept of multi-polarity. Disappointed with the West,

Russia began to develop ties with such rising giants as China and India, as well as regional and anti-Western powers such as Iran and Venezuela. And although Russia’s support was hardly critically important for them, it was a notable signal that it was the right time to challenge an international order dominated by leaders from America and Europe. As a result, at the end of the decade the G8 was supplemented by the G20, which proved its usefulness during times of economic crisis.

Russian society perceived the changes in the official position rather favourably, and the percentage of those supporting Russia’s cooperation with India and China has grown by 10 per cent during the 2000s,³⁶ while the percentage of Russians who consider themselves to be European has simultaneously declined.³⁷ US–Russia relations were undoubtedly at the centre of these changes, which developed in a way reminiscent of a roller coaster: the image of the US in Russia improved in light of the large-scale terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001, deteriorated substantially in the middle of the decade, and improved again after the ‘reset’ in US–Russia relations by the new Obama administration. The deterioration was severe: in September 2008 around 70 per cent of Russians regarded the US as a hostile country with a bad image.³⁸

China

Foreign policy in China is also shaped by domestic political considerations as well as by developments in the international environment. The foreign and domestic strands are “interwoven into a single web and neither strand can be removed without doing fundamental harm to our understanding of the whole”.³⁹ By reversing the Maoist course of perpetual revolution, Deng Xiaoping ushered China into a new age in the late 1970s. Deng’s ‘Economics in Command’ replaced Mao Zedong’s ‘Politics in Command’ as the driving force of China’s reform.⁴⁰ His insistence that China concentrate all its efforts on modernisation laid the foundation for China’s domestic transformation and opening to the outside world. In 1982 Deng expressed China’s overriding desire to maintain ‘a peaceful international environment’ which would allow the implementation of policies to “develop the country and shake off backwardness”.⁴¹ At the same time, China’s foreign policy development was profoundly influenced by the demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent emergence of the United States as the world’s sole superpower, as well as a process of economic globalisation. Still today, the leaders of China’s Communist Party (CCP) suffer from existential anxiety, which in part stems from the collapse of the Communist Party

in the Soviet Union. To quote Yuan Peng, Chinese leaders see themselves facing “unrelenting political pressure from the West”.⁴²

Historic experiences and tradition also inform foreign policy thinking, hence the need to pay “attention to both the enduring and the transient” when assessing China’s foreign policy.⁴³ In China’s case, historic undercurrents flow from the 4000 years of China’s civilisation and the Chinese elite’s traditional notion of China as the Middle Kingdom, the dominant and central power to which other kingdoms and states owed tribute as politically and culturally inferior satellites. Another historical undercurrent is the humiliation that the Chinese suffered at the hands of the Japanese and Westerners during the ‘century of shame’ from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. This culture of national humiliation is kept alive today by a steady flow of new books, films, plays, museum exhibitions, and even theme parks, sponsored by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), while the government’s public education seeks to remind the populace of the CCP’s achievements in restoring China’s national dignity. This emphasis by the CCP on the century of shame is a “very deliberate celebration of national insecurity”, as William Callahan so vividly phrases it.⁴⁴ In the words of Jing Men, China has a dual identity: a strange combination of self-superiority and self-inferiority.⁴⁵ This dichotomy is still evident despite China’s increased power and standing in the international arena.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence constitute a historical undercurrent as well, forming the framework of Chinese foreign policy for more than five decades. These principles are mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. These were first embodied in an agreement signed by China and India in 1954⁴⁶ and served as the basic tenets of the Non-aligned Movement. Despite the drastic changes that followed Mao Zedong’s death, the Five Principles were incorporated in the CCP constitution in 1982. China continues to regard these principles as the basis for relations with all nations regardless of their social systems or ideology.⁴⁷

The defining goal of China’s foreign policy since the country adopted its reform and opening policy in the late 1970s has been to avoid conflict in order to facilitate the concentration of the nation’s resources on building up comprehensive national power. Ensuring a peaceful environment along its borders has allowed the Chinese Communist Party to focus on modernisation and economic development, its foremost objectives, which are imperative for regime survival. A recurring theme

in nearly all assessments of China’s rise by Chinese analysts is that the remarkable success story of the past three decades is anchored in a peaceful and stable international environment: China needs peace to focus on the severe political, economic, and social challenges at home.⁴⁸ Continued economic growth and rising living standards constitute a paramount national interest and the basis for CCP legitimacy.

In Chinese official foreign policy doctrine too, peace and development are key themes. To quote a July 2009 study report by Chu Shulong, “the practice and goal of its diplomacy is to create and maintain a peaceful environment in the domestic economic construction, while ‘maintaining world peace and promoting co-development’ internationally”.⁴⁹ Economic development encompasses technological and social development. Over the last three decades China’s leaders have reiterated that China pursues an independent foreign policy of peace. ‘Independent’ means that China develops its strategy according to its own understanding and judgement of the international environment and according to the interests of the Chinese people, “free from adhering to or allying with any other country”. (One cannot avoid the parallel with Thomas Jefferson’s Inaugural Address in 1801: “Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations – entangling alliances with none.”)⁵⁰ Peace refers to China’s pursuit of a foreign policy based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Chu points out that under the current circumstances, this formulation may be too simplistic. He expands upon this by stating:

China is implementing a strategy that seeks a peaceful environment and peaceful modernisation [...] China’s biggest interest today is its domestic economic development and modernisation. All the foreign policies China has implemented since it opened up to the world have been to serve this means. Therefore, to create and maintain a ‘peaceful environment’ is the essence and goal of China’s current foreign policy.⁵¹

Pragmatism over ideology

Deng Xiaoping’s trademark was pragmatism, as the two aphorisms of his era attest: ‘seek truth from facts’ and ‘practice is the sole criterion of truth’. The populist saying attributed to Deng – “it does not matter if it is a white cat or a black cat, as long as it catches mice” – reflects the very essence of his approach to policy-making.⁵² Deng condemned the ideological fervour of the Mao era and deemed it more important

for Chinese leaders to raise living standards and build comprehensive national strength that could be measured in terms of gross domestic product, levels of technology, and military capabilities rather than the ideological correctness of the population's thoughts.⁵³ Thus China embarked on an intense pursuit of the four modernisations, articulated by Zhou Enlai in 1975, to raise China's capabilities in agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defence. In a move that proved pivotal for China's extraordinary economic take-off because it brought both overseas Chinese investments and Western know-how into the country, Deng welcomed the help of all Chinese compatriots in building the motherland. By distancing himself from Mao's view that "sitting on the fence will not do" and that all Chinese "must lean either to the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism", Deng opened China's doors to ethnic Chinese around the world regardless of ideological persuasion. Deng proved, in fact, that there was a "third road" which Mao had dismissed.⁵⁴ He never relented in his view that the CCP must maintain absolute power and that China's ultimate goal was socialism, but he accepted flexible and pragmatic approaches in order to utilise every possible means to further China's modernisation drive.

In the international arena China ceased to support communist insurgencies and revolutionary movements abroad. It pursued ties with incumbent governments which were based on economic cooperation and were indifferent to ideology. Today, China perceives its economic and security interests as being best served by engagement and cooperation – both through bilateral relations with individual states and through multilateral processes including the active promotion of formal regional institutions.⁵⁵ There are numerous other examples of Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic approach in the realm of foreign policy.⁵⁶ Beijing not only established diplomatic relations with the United States and Japan in 1978, paving the way for China to reap the benefits of increased trade, technology transfer, and educational exchanges, and later to be in a position to take full advantage of globalisation. Deng also persistently sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union and, following the Soviet collapse, with Russia, despite their glaring contradictions in ideology. His efforts laid the groundwork for the settlement of border disputes in the 1990s and establishment of the strategic Sino-Russian partnership in 1996. Beijing even normalised relations with the Republic of Korea in 1992, the country against which it fought in the Korean War alongside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Yet, ideology has not become obsolete in China's strategic policy formulation. China's official ideology is still Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, though the ideology's name and content have been revised to suit the CCP's needs.⁵⁷ Benjamin Schwartz's observation, made 40 years ago, holds true today, that "even as the ideology itself is disintegrating residual elements of ideology continue to shape the world image of communist ruling groups".⁵⁸ These elements are most apparent when China holds high – or at least rhetorically upholds – solidarity with the developing world in international affairs. The Maoist view of international politics as a worldwide struggle between imperialism and progressive forces surfaces at a minimum to justify China's actions in impoverished nations. China continues to insist it is a developing nation despite the dramatic increase in its economic, political, and military power. But if 'ideological versus pragmatic' is a criterion used to evaluate China's intent to uphold, remake or reshape the world order, it will be pragmatic considerations – not ideological ones – which will prompt China to act, if it chooses to act at all.

Towards "constructive interference"

In 1984 Harry Harding wrote that "while China has undergone cycles of alignment and isolation, reflecting its ambivalence toward interaction with the West, the centre of gravity of its modern politics is a commitment toward strategic independence and economic self-reliance".⁵⁹ Today, China is anything but economically self-reliant, but it is still as committed as it was 15 years ago to ensuring its independence of action. The contradiction between China's staunch view of the need to respect sovereignty and its immense reliance on an increasingly interdependent world is one of Beijing's fundamental foreign policy challenges. For China, sovereignty is sacrosanct. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China the CCP has emphasised that it will never allow a repeat of the Chinese 'century of shame', a time when China was weak and was humiliated by Western powers and Japan. At the same time, China's phenomenal economic rise has benefited from, and been largely dependent on, globalisation. Subsequently Beijing's ascent has been marked by China's rapid integration into the present world order as well as its effective utilisation of world markets, foreign investment, and foreign technology.

Beijing has moved from relying heavily on bilateral relationships to working within numerous multilateral frameworks. China's accession to the WTO in 2001 was a watershed event. "On a secular basis", writes Arthur Kroeber, "China depends profoundly on the existence of a liberal

international economic order with free flows of goods and capital, and on the continuous innovations in hard and soft technologies generated by the advanced open economies, principally the US.⁶⁰

Since the 1990s, step by step, China has been compelled to modify its views on sovereignty in order to support the core national interest of economic development. Admittedly, Chinese leaders reject any description of it as a postmodern state: in Robert Cooper's terminology, it remains very much a 'modern state', concerned with sovereignty issues and non-interference by one country in another's internal affairs.⁶¹ Furthermore, Beijing is adamant that it will not make any concessions over external sovereignty in dealing with Taiwan. For this reason, China did not voice support for Russia's military offensive against Georgia in August 2008 despite the Sino-Russian strategic partnership, and even went so far as to ensure that Moscow did not receive support from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Furthermore, Beijing has not recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. But Beijing's actual behaviour over the past few decades, like that of most other countries, reveals a pragmatic approach to sovereignty when it is in China's best interests. By joining international organisations, ratifying international treaties, and making concessions to global economic forces, it has substantially adjusted its interpretation of sovereignty. By joining the WTO China has given up some of its economic sovereignty, and it has signed international treaties on human rights, acknowledging – even if not complying with – the notion of universal human rights across territorial boundaries. In Track II settings Chinese scholars readily acknowledge that the changing interpretations of sovereignty have had profound implications within international politics. China has started to accommodate some, if not all, postmodern trends.

Since the 1950's China has officially adhered to the principle of "non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries", one of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. It is this principle of non-interference that Chinese officials from the top down refer to when justifying China's close ties with governments shunned by Western countries because of grave human rights abuses or when brushing off Western criticism of China's practice of granting development aid with no demands on accountability or transparency. However, there are numerous examples of China accepting a role that *de facto* entails interfering in the affairs of other countries, from China's active participation in recent years in UN peacekeeping operations to Beijing's hosting of the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program. As of August 2011, China was a participant in 14 peacekeeping operations in 12 countries.⁶² In December 2008,

China dispatched two destroyers and one supply ship to participate in the United Nations sanctioned anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, the first time in modern history that China has sent naval forces to participate in combat operations beyond its territorial waters in an international mission. As of mid-2011 China had dispatched a total of nine convoys and a hospital ship to the Gulf of Aden.⁶³ Furthermore, beginning in early 2007, Chinese leaders and diplomats started to take a more active role in international efforts to persuade the Sudanese government to stop the violence in Darfur. When President Hu Jintao met Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir in February 2007 he indicated China's desire to help stabilise Sudan by announcing China's support for a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur.⁶⁴ In March 2011 China abstained, but did not use its veto to prevent the United Nations Security Council from passing a resolution approving "all measures necessary" to protect Libyan civilians against Muammar Gaddafi's forces.⁶⁵

China's interpretation of the principle of non-interference is bound to erode further as China's fast-growing economy – and the need for energy, resources, and markets – forces Beijing to engage more deeply with supplier and customer countries. The slaying and kidnapping of Chinese oil workers in Ethiopia and Nigeria in 2007 and in Sudan in 2008, as well as the 2011 evacuation operation of 30,000 Chinese from Libya, involving a People's Liberation Army (PLA) navy frigate, were reminders that China will have to deal with a growing number of non-traditional threats in countries in which it has commercial interests. In private conversation Chinese foreign policy specialists acknowledge that non-interference is no longer practical, tenable, or in line with Chinese national interests.⁶⁶

Deciding how to free China of its 'non-interference trap' and formulate a more activist – yet not overly aggressive – core principle is a major challenge for Chinese foreign policy-makers today.⁶⁷ Since 2006 there have been an increasing number of careful formulations in academic journals by Chinese researchers which lay the groundwork for the acceptance of a flexible approach to the non-interference principle.⁶⁸ Wang Jisi writes:

From a diplomatic point of view, non-interference in domestic affairs will still be an important principle. We should, however, note that the stability of other countries has become more and more related to our rights and interests in those countries, including the security of our overseas organisations and civilians. Therefore, China will

contribute to the construction of a harmonious society of other countries through diversified means of cooperation, consultation, aid, communication and so on.⁶⁹

Commenting on the principle of non-interference at the 2007 China-EU Roundtable in Beijing, one Chinese participant observed that "in Chinese foreign policy practice, when there is a conflict between national interest and principle, national interest will prevail".⁷⁰ A senior foreign policy specialist who consults the country's leading policy-makers went a step further in January 2008 by stating in private conversation that China is moving toward a policy of "constructive interference".⁷¹ Analysis by a growing number of non-Chinese researchers supports this line of thinking.⁷²

Chinese soft power – more than trade and investments

China's hard power is considerable. Over the past 20 years China has allocated vast resources to significantly upgrade its military capabilities. The People's Liberation Army has not only acquired new weapons systems, but has also professionalised its personnel and increased its capabilities in logistics, mobility, training, communications, intelligence, and other fields. Yet, with the exception of cyber warfare and intercontinental ballistic missiles, China's military has not yet acquired power projection capabilities which would make it a global military power. Rather, it is an increasingly robust regional power.⁷³ China has concentrated its efforts to ensure that it can defend its core national security interests – territorial integrity and sovereignty – even in the event of conflict with the United States over Taiwan.

China has also invested enormous sums and made strenuous efforts to increase its soft power in the last 20 years. An important diplomatic imperative of China is to assure its neighbours and the rest of the world that its rise will be peaceful and will not cause harm to others. By emphasising equality and multilateralism as the guiding principles of international relations and engaging actively in both regional security mechanisms and international bodies, China strives to alleviate the jitters its neighbours and others might have about its increased military capacity. During the first decade of the twenty-first century increasing flows of trade, investment, tourism, and students between China and its neighbours led some analysts to conclude that China was gaining not only economic clout but also gaining political friends in the region.⁷⁴ However, in 2009, 2010 and 2011 China's more assertive behaviour in the South China Sea and East China Sea evoked apprehension and

consternation among many Asian elites. In several countries across the region China's maritime actions drove a wedge between business and security communities who hold widely differing views of China's true intentions and their implications. Businessmen speak of the enormous benefits and opportunities that follow from deepening economic engagement with China. Strategic planners voice concerns that a more powerful China will use its military capabilities to enforce its will upon others.

Soft power is sometimes used in conjunction with China when describing the influence (either real or perceived) that China has in other countries because of the investments and business deals made by Chinese companies. However, the economic clout that China wields is not synonymous with soft power. Soft power as defined by Joseph Nye, who injected the term into mainstream debates on international relations, is "the ability to attract others by the legitimacy of one's policies and the values that underlie them".⁷⁵ Power is the ability to get others to do what you want. One can rely on coercion (the 'sticks' of hard power), payments ('carrots'), and/or attraction (soft power). According to Nye, the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture, its political values, and its foreign policies.⁷⁶ Around the world people are indeed increasingly attracted by Chinese culture. As for China's foreign policy, many incumbent leaders very much welcome China's adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country (whilst many opposition leaders do not). During the George W. Bush presidency in particular, China's official non-meddling approach was positively perceived across continents, in contrast to US foreign policy. But the verdict is still out with regard to the attractiveness of China's political values, because the political system lacks accountability and an independent juridical system, and as result it has bred rampant corruption and acute inequality.

Regardless of whether China's economic sway in Africa, South America, and other Asian countries reflects Beijing's soft power as defined by Nye or simply the skilful use of carrots (payments) in the realm of business, China is getting others to do what it wants: agreeing to Chinese companies' offers to extract resources. Moreover, the immense success of China's economic development over the past three decades is certainly a source of attraction in many countries, and could be a growing source of Chinese soft power. Though China insists it does not want to export its model of development and states that each country should choose its own path, the feat of lifting hundreds of millions of Chinese out of poverty in three decades is seen as an exemplar by many.⁷⁷ The

degree to which China is genuinely drawing nations into its orbit is still an open question, but there is no doubt that China is becoming more self-confident. In an essay contemplating the importance of the successful Olympics for China, a prominent Communist Party official writes: the "United States' economic problems show the bankruptcy of Western-style democracy, while China's Olympic Games triumph shows the growing 'superiority' of its Communist Party rule".⁷⁸

Moreover, as stated above, China is making huge efforts to increase its soft power in the genuine sense of the term. China's officials "have worked hard since the 1990s to build its reputation as a good global citizen and regional neighbor" in an attempt to dispel anxieties among China's neighbours.⁷⁹ China has also invested heavily in new Confucius Institutes,⁸⁰ media outlets, and cultural events abroad. At the end of 2010 China had established 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms in 96 countries. In contrast, before March 2006, there were only 54 Confucius Institutes overseas.⁸¹ China is also attracting tens of thousands of overseas students, some of whom the Chinese government provides funding for. As David Shambaugh notes, by training future generations of intellectuals, technicians, and political elites, China is ensuring that many of them will be sensitised to Chinese viewpoints and interests and will have an understanding of Chinese language, culture, history, society, and politics, thus potentially increasing the power of attraction.⁸²

A subtle re-shaper

Chinese foreign policy is in a state of flux, a natural consequence of its growing economic, political, and military power. Like their counterparts the world over, Chinese policy-makers are trying to adjust their policies to the changing international environment. In addition, leaders in China must take into account the demands of both the fast-growing economy and China's rapidly transforming society. China needs resources and new export markets in order to sustain economic growth. This imperative is the driving force behind much of China's growing activities worldwide. Chinese society, in turn, is becoming multi-faceted. A growing number of actors seek to influence foreign policy decision-makers. These actors operate both within the traditional confines of the Communist Party, Government, and People's Liberation Army, as well on the margins – for example, provincial leaders, directors of large companies, prominent researchers, intellectuals and media representatives, as well as segments of the online community of netizens. Consequently, a certain degree of pluralism is creeping into

foreign policy decision-making. Nearly all foreign policy actors, regardless of whether they belong to the official establishment or operate on the margins, often interpret China's national interests based on their own, sometimes narrowly-defined, perspectives and preferences.⁸³

The direction in which China's foreign policy is evolving is the focus of intense debate both within China and among foreign observers. In particular, since the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008, a pivotal question has been whether China is moving away from Deng's prescription that China should keep a low profile in the international arena in order to fully concentrate the nation's efforts on modernisation. This *taoguang yanghui* policy – hiding one's capabilities and biding one's time – was articulated by Deng in the early 1990s and remains the guiding principle of China's foreign policy. However, China's remarkable economic rise is viewed by many Chinese elites as giving Beijing's leaders the prerogative to stand up to the West and Japan more staunchly. There is a growing consensus among both netizens who follow international politics and other foreign policy actors that China should be more active on the international stage and defend its interests more assertively. This stance reflects both genuine (and understandable) pride among the Chinese over the country's remarkable achievements, as well as the government's continued public education emphasising China's 'century of shame'. There are many Chinese who, on the one hand, criticise their government for restricting civil liberties in China and, on the other hand, condemn Western governments' criticism of China's human rights situation, seeing it as an attempt by outsiders to continue to humiliate China. As Zhao Suisheng notes, nationalism is a means for the government to legitimise its rule, but it is also a means for the Chinese people to judge the leadership's performance.⁸⁴ On Chinese blogs which focus on international affairs, China's policy responses are routinely bemoaned as weak and China's leaders are admonished not to bow to pressure from industrialised nations. China's officials are aware that dissatisfaction with foreign policy can rapidly transform into citizens questioning the leadership's ability to govern. Hence, in times of crisis, especially when the United States or Japan is involved, the nationalist undercurrent running through society is viewed by Chinese observers as having a constraining effect on China's leaders' actions.⁸⁵

On numerous occasions during 2009, 2010 and 2011 China pursued what it views as its interests and worldview with disregard for the views and sensitivities of Western nations or its Northeast Asian neighbours South Korea and Japan. For example: China opposed binding targets even for developed nations at the Copenhagen climate summit;

Chinese authorities executed a European citizen for the first time in 50 years; China refused to give in to Google's demand to stop censoring its search engine; Chinese authorities sentenced political activist Liu Xiaobo to 10 years in prison; Beijing refused to criticise Pyongyang despite an international investigation concluding that a South Korean navy vessel *Choenan* was struck by a North Korean torpedo, and again refrained from voicing disapproval when North Korea shelled civilians on Yeonpyeong island; China temporarily suspended exports of rare earths to Japan after Tokyo detained a Chinese fishing boat captain, and so on. Increasingly, Chinese foreign policy experts and officials stress that the West needs to show respect for China's national interests if they expect China to respect the national interests of Western countries. Moreover, this is becoming a prerequisite for securing China's cooperation in solving global problems.

The *quid pro quo* stance that Chinese officials appear to have striven towards since 2009 poses a tremendous challenge for Western governments because China's cooperation is essential on just about every pressing global issue, from enforcing non-proliferation and anti-terrorism measures to reducing drug trafficking and greenhouse gas emissions. Not surprisingly, officials and observers in capitals around the globe are posing questions: is it China's intention to dictate the terms of international engagement and thereby reshape the present world order? If China's economy continues to grow and its political and military power increases, what kind of pressure will China be willing to exert to back its demands that its interests be considered?

But what precisely are China's national interests, or 'core interests' as the Chinese prefer to call them? The top leadership has not articulated a grand strategy. There is no Chinese public document which would comprehensively expound the country's strategic goals and the ways to achieve them. In fact, apart from Taiwan, which China views as an integral part of its territory, there is no single foreign policy issue which China has identified as a core interest.⁸⁶ In December 2010 Dai Bingguo, the state councillor in charge of external relations, defined China's core interests as follows: first, China's political stability, namely the stability of the CCP leadership and of the socialist system; second, sovereign security and territorial integrity, and national unification; and third, China's sustainable economic and social development.⁸⁷ According to Wang Jisi, "a unique feature of Chinese leaders' understanding of their country's history is their persistent sensitivity to domestic disorder caused by foreign threats".⁸⁸ The wording of China's foreign policy objectives are often lacking in specificity. Following the outbreak of the

global financial crisis Hu announced that China's diplomacy should "safeguard the interests of sovereignty, security, and development".⁸⁹ As China's global reach has expanded, so has the range of issues debated as potential core interests by various foreign policy actors in China.

The jury is still out on whether the more assertive stance China displayed in international affairs during 2009, 2010 and 2011 is a signal of its intention to radically change the world order. How China will use its power in 10 or 15 years time is an open question. To a large extent, Beijing pursues policies that are consistent with international norms and the interests of the US and the EU.⁹⁰ As long as the United States or others do not make any movement – perceived or real – toward recognition of a *de jure* independent Taiwan, China does not openly challenge the predominance of the United States as the world's sole superpower in the existing international order.⁹¹ On the contrary, the goal of China's evolving security diplomacy over the past three decades has been to avoid severe conflict with the United States (or any other major power) in order to ensure a peaceful environment for modernisation. Rather, Beijing does its best to thwart US influence whenever possible. During the Bush presidency China skilfully utilised Washington's preoccupation with Iraq and the war on terror and filled the space vacated by the US by expanding and solidifying relations with its Asian neighbours and countries further afield. However, Beijing stays clear of outright antagonism of Washington and even tacitly acknowledges that the US military presence has contributed to peace in the Asia-Pacific region.

Chinese foreign policy officials are aware that to be credible as a rising power – especially one that advocates achieving a "harmonious world"⁹² as its foreign policy objective – China cannot be viewed as turning a blind eye to international crises. In explaining China's goal of a "harmonious world", Hu Jintao has said that "China will try to build a stable, friendly and harmonious world of democracy, rule of law, justice and fairness, sincerity, order and harmonious coexistence between man and nature".⁹³ The term 'responsible stakeholder', put forward by former US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in 2005 in a speech about China's international behaviour, has not been endorsed by Chinese officials and researchers. Zoellick said: "It is time to take our policy beyond opening doors to China's membership into the international system. We need to urge China to become a responsible stakeholder in that system."⁹⁴ Chinese observers reject Zoellick's underlying insinuation that China is not presently a responsible stakeholder, and furthermore Chinese observers question the right of the US to define the meaning of 'responsible'. To quote Chu Shulong's 2009

report, Zoellick's words were interpreted to mean "if China wants to be a responsible stakeholder, its behaviour patterns, values and even its political systems must all learn from the west and America, a complete transformation is prerequisite".⁹⁵

Yet, in reality, China does want to be seen by outsiders as both responsible and also as a rising power that has a keen interest in and intention to safeguard the wellbeing of the international order. China does indeed care about its international image, and acknowledges that interdependency is not only a reality but also an imperative for China's core national interest: economic development. The distinction here is that China wants to define 'responsible' and reserves the right to decide how to safeguard the world's wellbeing.

Since early 2007 China's credibility has been a recurring theme in internal discussions involving officials, foreign policy advisors, and scholars.⁹⁶ Chinese scholars have written about China's image problem in domestic journals, calling on China to "improve its credibility in the international community through enhancing the transparency of its governmental and commercial activities."⁹⁷ Ge Zhiguo of Hebei Normal University writes about the "poor behaviour" of Chinese companies in Africa and "their lack of social responsibility", which have not only created obstacles to the "go out" strategy of the enterprises, but "have also hindered the great efforts made by the Chinese government to maintain China-Africa relations".⁹⁸ Zhu Feng of Beijing University is quoted by the *Financial Times* as saying that Chinese state-owned companies are "hijacking China's diplomacy".⁹⁹

China will continue to promote a more inclusive approach to international relations. However, that does not mean that it is willing to abide by majority decisions if these go against China's own national interests. China will also continue to call for the establishment of a new architecture of global security on the basis of equality, mutual respect, mutual trust, and benefit. It will also, as Bates Gill notes, continue to "softly balance against the United States at a regional and global level to shape the security environment more on Chinese terms".¹⁰⁰ Hence, China is not a status quo power, but neither is it one that wants to entirely remake the world order. Beijing seeks, in a subtle way, to reshape the world to accommodate its national interests.

Conclusions

This chapter has discussed the foreign policies of Russia and China during the past 20 to 30 years. While the picture is not clear and the future remains

open-ended in the realm of these countries' foreign policy approaches, some general tendencies are clearly identifiable. Starting with Russia, one should note that despite the scope and pace of the changes that took place at the end of the twentieth century, Russia is not an entirely 'new' actor in international relations. Underestimating the factor of historical inertia, and the burden of the political, economic, and social legacy of the USSR has been the biggest mistake of those who thought that Russia's transition would be relatively painless. The process of democratic transformation began to malfunction as early as the mid-1990s, and in the 2000s the very concept of transition was called into question. In fact, it turned out that Russia experienced not so much a 'transition', but rather a redistribution of power and property, and the whole process should be addressed as a complex game of elite privatisation, leading to the establishment of a semi-authoritarian bureaucratic regime.

The vision of Russia becoming a 'normal' country was based on the premise that following the collapse of the USSR and the round of painful economic reforms the country has lost resources for expansionism and for the maintenance of its high international status. It seemed that the five-hundred-year "Russian moment in world history"¹⁰¹ had ended with the voluntary refusal of the political elite to follow the traditional expansionist paradigm of foreign policy.¹⁰² Nowadays one has to admit that this thinking was somewhat idealistic and premature. During 'Putin's (first) decade' of the 2000s, Russia tightened its political regime and, emboldened by the 'oil doping', it has returned to its traditional role of the 'powerful periphery' of Eurasia and of one of the main political opponents and constituent Others of the West. Russia has proclaimed its revisionist aspirations, and has demanded a change of the post-Cold War status quo. Seeking pragmatic benefits from the international situation, it did not hesitate to use the instruments of 'hard power', and it promoted its sovereignty, both domestically and internationally. Russia was constantly present in the international arena, declaring its foreign-policy ambitions and a sovereign opinion on different international issues.

One cannot fail to notice a contradictory, ad hoc nature to Russian foreign policy-making. Pragmatism does not sit well with Russia's defensive, nostalgic revisionism and the antagonistic approach of the Russian elite. Sovereignty these days can no longer be defended or projected by means of hard power alone, and yet Moscow has failed to manage its soft power mechanisms. One can say that Russian foreign policy of the past decade, from Kosovo–1999 to Georgia–2008, has been a foreign policy *by default*, rather than *by design*. Indeed, except for an obvious necessity

to sell its oil and gas, at the end of the 2000s Russia still did not have any clear international goals. This is a disturbing and dangerous state of affairs, as Russia's reactive and revisionist foreign policy is finding itself in a strategic deadlock. The lack of a positive agenda in Russia's current foreign policy resembles the state of affairs in Soviet foreign policy 30 years ago, in the early 1980s. This was described by Hannes Adomeit as:

incapable of or unwilling to embark on fundamental change, the leaders in Moscow adopted the attitude of 'insulted giant.' [...] Faced with this hostile posture and possibly dangerous policies, China and the West moved closer to each other. [...] Moscow still had sufficient power to obstruct and threaten, but no longer actively and constructively to shape world affairs.¹⁰³

Still, Russia is not a main source of threats to the current world order or an obstacle to stabilisation of the international system. Although it sometimes disagrees with the decisions and actions of other countries, in general Russia is bound to the international system strongly enough to be interested in its gradual evolution rather than its radical transformation. This changing attitude is reflected in Russia's official foreign policy documents. For example, while the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation¹⁰⁴ is based on an assumption that the international system is becoming multi-polar and that Russia should implement a balanced and multi-vector (that is, independent) policy, then a new document from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, leaked in May 2010, focuses on greater cooperation with Western countries for the purposes of the modernisation of Russia.¹⁰⁵

Contemporary Russia is looking for more realistic, not only Realist, foreign policy, and for pragmatic cooperation with other countries instead of 'pragmatic' conflicts with them. Looking ahead, in the forthcoming years a sharp change in this foreign policy behaviour seems to be virtually impossible. It is quite probable that Russia will continue its peripheral balancing act between the existing and the emerging geopolitical centres, and will seek to position itself as one of poles of a multi-polar world, especially following the 2008–09 crisis. The contours of the new world are yet to take shape, but it is increasingly likely that through forces as dissimilar as Russia's idiosyncratic ambition and China's rise, this will be a post-Western world.

Turning to China, in a mere two decades China's international role has dramatically expanded; its influence is now evident in every

conceivable sphere around the globe. The international activities of Chinese diplomats, officials representing numerous CCP and government agencies, military personnel, businessmen, scientists, and researchers all reflect China's new global activism.¹⁰⁶ Chinese foreign policy-makers are scrambling to accommodate the needs of this diverse group of Chinese actors abroad, many of whom prioritise China's national interests differently. Simultaneously, as a result of the growing number of serious transnational problems and increasing global interconnectedness, China's foreign policy officials are under pressure from other countries to take the demands of the outside world into consideration. Because of the sheer size of its territory, population, economy and armed forces, coupled with its power in the international arena as a permanent veto-wielding member of the United Nations Security Council, China's role is significant on just about every challenging international issue.

Integration into the international order has been essential for the phenomenal economic growth that China has experienced over the past three decades, spurring modernisation faster than either the Chinese or the outside world anticipated. For the last 30 years China's modernisation has greatly depended upon – and continues to depend upon – the existence of a liberal international economic order with free flows of goods and capital. However, the global financial crisis and the resulting economic downturn in developed nations has caused anxiety in Beijing. As a result, Chinese experts and officials have started to contemplate ways to reform some, but not all, of the premises of the present economic order.

Both hard and soft power remain vital, but in the information age soft power has become more compelling than ever before.¹⁰⁷ China recognises this and allocates enormous resources in the diplomatic, cultural, and economic domains to promote an image of a country intent on multilateral problem-solving based on mutual respect and equality. Shaun Breslin notes that a key source of Chinese power is the assumption by others that it either already has – or will soon have – this power and influence, whether in the form of soft or hard power. So, Breslin argues, "alongside the reality of what China has done to date, fears – often well founded – of what China might do and become in the future might play some role in creating the very power that is feared".¹⁰⁸

China last engaged in warfare in 1979, against Vietnam. For the past 30 years Beijing has not only rhetorically, but also in its actions, demonstrated a wish to rely on means other than the use of force to resolve disputes – except when it comes to insisting on its resolve to deter any

move (by force if necessary) toward recognition of *de jure* Taiwanese independence. The unresolved status of Taiwan's political future is clearly the central and only foreseeable issue which could impel Beijing to fall back on hard power.

When addressing the question which this chapter set out to shed light upon – whether China wants to uphold, remake or reshape the present world order – one can conclude that China seeks to incrementally reshape the world order to accommodate its growing economic, political, and military power. China did not participate in designing the “rules of the game”, a prerequisite laid out by power transition theorists A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler for status quo states.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, China has indeed benefited enormously from the “rules of the game” – another prerequisite in Organski's and Kugler's definition. But China is now in a position to seek adjustment of some of those rules in order to allow it to pursue its national interests more fully. While China's ultimate nature and intentions are ambiguous, it may well be that the sheer scale of its emergence will cause it to become “a strategic competitor to the United States by virtue of the structural imperatives that confront a rising world power determined to secure its ever-expanding interests, irrespective of its leaders' ambitions to pursue a ‘peaceful rise’”.¹¹⁰ Moreover, China will not give up on its insistence on respect for sovereignty. Practical considerations will be the driving force in this incremental process, by which China will attempt to modify the rules that guide international interaction, and will use both its soft power and economic clout to do so. Nor will China's leadership officially swerve away from the argument that, as a developing country, China must focus on raising the living standards of its own people and hence must choose its own development path.

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