

THE DRAGON AND THE EAGLE: CHINA'S ENCOUNTERS WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE THIRD WORLD

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Abstract. This study examines China's changing Third World policy from the 1940s to the present. The term "Third World" refers to all developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. During the Mao and the Deng eras, China mainly responded to pressures from the United States and the Soviet Union and was not able to deal with Third World nations per se. Since the launching of the War on Terror in 2001, however, American military expansion into Iraq and Afghanistan have completely changed China's diplomatic priorities. Beijing has begun to pursue an active policy of engaging many Third World countries in order to challenge the US-dominated international order. This development reflects the current Chinese government's rhetoric about the peaceful rise of China, which portrays a powerful China as non-threatening to its neighbors, in contrast to the actions of Western imperialist nations in the past.

1. INTRODUCTION

From Darfur to Burma, years of civil war have displaced and killed hundreds of thousands of people. The international community has used the strongest language possible to condemn the bloodshed in these regions and hold the Sudanese and Burmese governments accountable for crimes against civilians. Because China is the largest business partner and military supplier to Sudan and Burma, the West, especially the United States, has pressured Beijing to support the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping forces to Darfur as well as impose sanctions against Burma. Even though Beijing did not act as what the United States called a "responsible international player" with regard to Sudanese and Burmese internal affairs, the world has yet to come to grips with China as a global power in the early twenty-first century (Burns, 2008).

Although China as yet does not possess the power or infrastructure to be a First World state, it does possess the ability, resources and political will to become a leader of the Third World. At the Beijing Summit and the Third Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in November 2006, President Hu Jintao pledged to open up China's market for more than four hundred types of tariff-free import items from the least developed African countries that maintain diplomatic ties with Beijing ("Action Plan," 2006). As with his predecessors, President Hu Jintao views the Third World in both ideological and geopolitical terms. He is pursuing a larger strategy of creating a multi-polar and anti-hegemonic world order, but he is also determined to combine that cause with China's goal of competing with the United States in different parts of the world. Meanwhile, the United States is facing serious military setbacks in the Second Iraqi War and is losing diplomatic battles against North Korea and Iran over their nuclear weapon programs. It has become increasingly difficult for the Bush administration to maintain its global dominance (Lee, Cliadakis, & Cliadakis, 2006).

As Y.-K. Wang (2006) points out, China today is keen on maintaining a stable international environment for its rapid economic growth and not provoking any vigorous responses from the United States towards its diplomatic, economic, social and cultural expansion. Odgaard (2002, 2007) also argues that Beijing is developing closer economic relations with many middle powers and weaker states as a part of a global strategy to counter the United States in Africa, Asia and Latin America. After joining the World Trade Organization in November 2001, China has been very active in making its presence felt in the World Health Organization, the Security Council of the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the six-party nuclear talks. It is

within this new political climate that China continues to enact its pragmatic strategy of using its economic and diplomatic influences to counter US hegemony.

This article examines the evolution of China's Third World policies from the Maoist era to the present. The term "Third World" refers to all developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. During the Cold War, many poorer countries that gained independence from the European colonial powers after the Second World War referred to themselves as neither being aligned with NATO or the USSR, but instead as constituting a non-aligned "Third World." Politically, the Bandung Conference (1955) marked the beginning of the Nonaligned Movement in international politics. China and India played an important role in launching that conference and in changing the relations among Third World states, the United States and the Soviet Union (Van Ness, 1993). This study examines China's strategies in countering American power in different parts of the world as well as the geopolitical implications of China's rise for the Third World in the early twenty-first century.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF CHINA'S THIRD WORLD POLICY

Let us begin with an analysis of the transformation of China from a Soviet ally into a champion of the Third World during the Maoist era (1949-1976) (Neuhauser, 1968). After the Communist Revolution of 1949, the People's Republic of China was faced with diplomatic isolation imposed by the West. Through its strong military presence in South Korea, the United States sought to contain Maoist China in Northeast Asia. The Korean War that began in June 1950 and ended in 1953 was "clearly a war between the United States and China fought on Korean soil" (Johnson, 2000, p. 101). Sino-American rivalries on the Korea Peninsula marked the beginning of the Cold War in Pacific Asia.

The conclusion of a formal alliance between China and the Soviet Union in February 1950 was another seminal event in the Cold War. From 1950 to 1957, China saw itself as a dependent state of the Soviet Union and identified itself with the socialist bloc led by Moscow. In return, the Soviet Union sent large numbers of Russian technicians to assist China's industrialization in the early 1950s. But this cooperation between China and the Soviet Union was short-lived (Goncharev, Lewis, & Xue, 1999). After Stalin's death in 1953 and the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, ideological differences between China and the Soviet Union began to surface and China began to perceive its national interests as separate from those of the Soviet Union. Tensions and rivalries led to the Sino-Soviet split in the mid-1960s and the withdrawal of Soviet aid (Leiberthal, 1997; Teiwes, 1997). Lacking support within the socialist world, China looked elsewhere for diplomatic recognition. In the meantime, Beijing had no seat in the United Nations and the Republic of China (Taiwan) was recognized by the West as the legitimate authority of China. In order to break through China's diplomatic isolation, Mao was determined to build a coalition of radical forces in the Third World against what he viewed as "US imperialism" and "Soviet revisionism." Therefore, China proceeded to create a new political force made up of the newly independent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This strategy was encapsulated by the following slogan during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976): "All people of the world unite, to overthrow American imperialism, to overthrow Soviet revisionism, to overthrow the reactionaries of all nations!" (quoted in Van Ness, 1993, pp. 203-204).

When Mao turned his attention to the Third World, he saw it as having great potential because the old political order and alliances were crumbling and new ones were being formed. As a result, China was able to find many potential allies among Third World nations. By repositioning China as a Third World country, Mao sought to assert Chinese political leadership and achieve a certain degree of global power. In September 1965, Marshall Lin Biao, who commanded the People's Liberation Army and was designated the eventual successor to Mao, said, "The United States and Western Europe are cities of the world, whereas Asia, Africa and Latin America are rural areas of the world" (Lin, 1965, p. 24). In Chinese Communist rhetoric, it was the countryside that

encircled the cities that ensured the success of the Revolution of 1949. In a similar fashion, Africa, Asia and Latin America were portrayed as being capable of forming a united front against the United States and the Soviet Union. When China appealed to the Third World during the 1960s and 1970s, it supported local nationalistic movements. By invoking anti-colonial rhetoric across Africa, Asia and Latin America, Mao presented himself as an international spokesman of the Third World in global politics. Many Third World intellectuals and African American writers also began to portray Mao's China as a model for developing countries and oppressed peoples. For instance, W. B. E. Du Bois subscribed to the anti-American, anti-Soviet and pro-Beijing discourse of the day and sympathized with "colored Beijing" in its struggle against "white" Moscow. During his trip to China in 1959, he was impressed by Mao's support of anti-colonial movements in Africa and the African American struggle in the United States. He turned Mao into an icon and romanticized him as a champion of the victims of racism and colonialism (Chiu, 2008).

Nevertheless, Mao's Third World policy failed to mobilize the developing world against the United States and the Soviet Union. Despite their admiration for Mao's national unification strategies and socialist reforms, few Third World countries followed China's international leadership for such a political action could run the risk of offending the two superpowers. During the Cold War, China was a middle power. It did not possess the military and economic capacity to be a leader in global politics. It also encountered military threats from the United States and the Soviet Union. The American invasion of Vietnam in the mid-1960s threatened China's southwest frontier and led the Chinese to believe that a war might break out with the United States in Southeast Asia (Zhai, 2000). In 1969, border conflicts with the Soviet Union deepened China's sense of insecurity. As a result, Mao's Third World policy failed to create a new coalition of states to counter American and Soviet influences in global politics. China was simply responding to international pressures rather than dealing with Third World nations per se (Van Ness, 1993).

Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms after 1978 marked a radical departure from the revolutionary radicalism of the Maoist era. Beijing announced that China would oppose any foreign intervention into another country's internal affairs, but the overall direction of Chinese foreign policy changed. China adopted a pro-Western foreign policy. For instance, Beijing offered many financial incentives to multinational corporations as well as Overseas Chinese and Western investors for establishing joint business ventures. The government was eager to join global institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization in order to attract foreign investment. Meanwhile, China sent large numbers of students to receive technical training from the West rather than sending them to work in the Third World. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Beijing even became a strong supporter of the US-dominated global order so as to maintain a stable relationship with Washington and to maximize the potential economic benefits for its modernization. In Deng's China, economic reforms took precedence over the Maoist discourse of Third World liberation. Deng died in early 1997 and his successor Jiang Zemin continued the same economic reforms and pro-Western foreign policies. Regarding Third World countries, China still maintained its pragmatic approach of fostering diplomatic relations with certain middle powers such as South Africa, Mexico and Brazil. However, the main purpose of this strategy was not to unify the Third World but to marginalize Taiwan in global politics and prevent Taiwan from joining the World Health Organization, the United Nations and other international bodies (Van Ness, 1993; Yuan, 2005).

A dramatic twist took place after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The War on Terror completely transformed global opinion towards the United States as a superpower. The invasion of Iraq deepened anti-American sentiment around the Islamic world. Worse yet, Washington's complete failure to control Afghanistan and Iraq and to eliminate nuclear weapons programs in North Korea and Iran undermined the image of the United States as the world's sole superpower. Subsequent events have revealed that the military power of the United States is spread thinly around the world. The Bush administration is not capable of fighting several regional wars at once and pursuing its policy of global hegemony (Lee, 2004). Meanwhile, China

has repositioned itself to fill the power vacuum left by the United States. As will be discussed below, it has already succeeded in developing closer relations with nations in Central Asia and Southeast Asia as well as with many oil-producing countries in the Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

3. THE SINO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE IN CENTRAL ASIA

The new political climate since September 11 has ensured that China will play an increasingly active role in Central Asia. It is against this background that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization acquired a new agenda to respond to the American military presence in Afghanistan. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was formerly known as the "Shanghai Five." It was initially founded as a regional alliance in 1996 and consisted of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Uzbekistan was invited to join in June 2001 and the "Shanghai Five" was then officially called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Jia, 2001).

Since 2001, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has become a new regional alliance for multilateral cooperation in political, economic and strategic matters among its members (Vorobiev, 2001). It is through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that China projects itself as a rising power in Eurasia. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has now become a Chinese and Russian led military alliance. In 2002, China and Kyrgyzstan carried out their first joint military exercise ("China, Tajikistan," 2006). In August 2005, China and Russia launched a high-profile military exercise called "Peace Mission 2005" in Vladivostok in Russia's Far East. And some 10,000 troops from the armies, navies and air forces of both countries took part in a military drill in Shandong province along China's northeast coast ("Russia and China," 2005). From August 9 to 17, 2007 all member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization launched a joint anti-terrorism drill known as "Peace Mission 2007" near the Ural Mountain city of Chelyabinsk in Russia. This joint military exercise coincided with President Vladimir Putin's decision to resume regular bombing patrols over the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans ("More Chinese Soldiers," 2007; "Soldiers Mobilized," 2007). Putin's order was a direct response to the relocation of NATO forces closer to Russia's western frontier as NATO has expanded to include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland as well as the former Soviet republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (Isachenkov, 2007). The United States exploited the War on Terror to establish a military presence in Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Middle East. In turn, China and Russia combined to form a new regional defense system to counter Washington's policies (Zhao, 2006). All the joint military exercises carried out under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have had a direct impact on Northeast Asia. China and Russia have formed a united front with North Korea against the US-Japan Security Alliance in the six-nation nuclear talks. Both China and Russia are clearly pursuing an ambitious strategy that combines the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the six-nation nuclear talks to weaken American influence in Northeast Asia. This Sino-Russian partnership is primarily based on shared geopolitical interests between both countries. Therefore, a new Sino-Russian strategic alliance is taking shape which involves Central Asia and North Korea and could include South Korea in a future challenge to the United States (Lukin, 2005).

In addition to being influenced by strategic considerations, Chinese expansion into Central Asia is driven by China's need to reduce its dependence on Middle Eastern oil and to enhance the security of energy supplies for its economic reforms. In recent decades, China has been dependent on the Persian Gulf for supplying over 50 percent of its oil. China is now the second largest oil consumer in the world. In 2006, the International Energy Agency in the United States estimated that the world's oil demand would increase by 47 percent from 2003 to 2030, and China and India would account for 43 percent of that increase in world oil use (Energy Information Administration, 2006, chap. 3).

This raises a number of strategic problems. First, China only began to set up its strategic oil reserves in 2005. The strategic reserves are expected to be completed by 2010 to provide China

with two months' oil supply at the present level of energy consumption. Before 2010, China is still vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices caused by military crises in the Middle East. Second, China does not have a strong navy to protect its oil tankers sailing through the Indian Ocean and the Straits of Malacca. China is still dependent on the United States to protect these important ocean lanes. But China's pursuit of energy security can conflict with American military expansion into the Middle East (Tang, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Ziegler, 2006).

The only feasible strategy in China's energy diplomacy is for China to diversify its energy supply system and to push for a multi-polar power system. In this context, the Central Asian oil fields provide an attractive source of energy for China. Indeed, the newly established oil and natural gas pipelines between China and Central Asia have been referred to as a "Silk Road for oil" (Blank, 2006; Liao, 2006). In 2004, China and Kazakhstan agreed to build an oil pipeline to export oil into the western part of China. In the summer of 2005, the China National Petroleum Corporation, a Chinese state-owned enterprise, took over Petro-Kazakhstan. China now controls the second largest oil company in Kazakhstan through which it can expand into other oil projects in that country and further expand into the Caspian Sea. As Ziegler (2006, p. 12) points out, these cooperative projects allow China to promote a new system of regional economic integration with its neighbors and to build a series of overland oil pipelines from Central Asia and Russia to China. China's rapid expansion into Central Asia has had a significant impact on the local economy in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Province, a Muslim-dominated region along the old Silk Road. In Kashgar, a major city close to the Chinese border with Pakistan, many car-owners and bus drivers have already used natural gas rather than petroleum. There are dozens of natural gas stations inside the city and along the highways. The natural gas is also widely used in many Chinese cities along the border with Russia and Central Asia. Evidently, there is a strong determination on China's part to diversify its energy supply system (Blank, 2006; Liao, 2006).

The economic, social and cultural linkages between China and Central Asia can also be seen in people's everyday lives in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Province. Urumqi, the provincial capital, and Kashgar are always crowded with Russian, Central Asian, Persian, Afghani and Pakistani merchants, tourists, religious pilgrims, students and government officials. Beijing has succeeded in using its Muslim frontier region to reach out to Islamic communities in Eurasia. For instance, the Xinjiang Networking Transmission Limited, which runs the Urumqi People's Broadcasting Station and the Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station and broadcasts in the Mandarin Chinese, Uyghur, Kazak and Mongolian languages, has begun broadcasting programs in English for Pakistan, Afghanistan and all Central Asian states. China is keen to counter the spread of Western ideologies from the Voice of America and the BBC and is presenting itself as a land of opportunity for many young people in the region.¹

Whatever China is doing now in relation to Central Asia is based on a combination of strategic and economic concerns over the security of energy supplies. With these factors in mind, China is bound to expand its connections with Central Asia in the coming years.

4. CHINA'S EXPANSION INTO SOUTHEAST ASIA

In Southeast Asia, China has adopted a very active policy of undermining American economic and diplomatic influences. In 2005, China encouraged the formation of the East Asian Community, a large regional alliance composed of China, Southeast Asia, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. A major economic power excluded from the East Asian Community is Taiwan, but Beijing has offered many tax exemptions for Taiwanese agricultural products to be exported to the Mainland. With China's fast-growing, more open economy, the Chinese government is eager to use influence to create what it claims is a win-win situation for all neighboring countries. Along the lines of the European Economic Union, the East Asian Community is building a regional model of economic integration (Teo, 2005). This development is reminiscent of the intra-Asian trading networks which had dominated the South China Sea and the Indian

Ocean prior to the arrival of Western imperialism (Gordon, 2008; Sugiyama & Grove, 2001; G.-W. Wang, 2003). All countries in Southeast Asia had a long history of associating with the Middle Kingdom because of the economic benefits derived from the Chinese maritime trade. Whether current economic developments will lay the foundation for the emergence of a China-centered economic union in Asia, and whether China's influence will decline when the pace of its economic reforms slows and the Chinese market loses its appeal to neighboring countries, is debatable. But China has nevertheless challenged American influence by its attempt to create a new economic order in maritime Asia.

5. CHINA AND THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS

As the North Korean nuclear crisis evolves, China is playing an active role in the six-nation nuclear talks. China supports North Korea because of the strategic necessity of defending its northeast frontier from US forces in South Korea and Japan. China has succeeded in reducing US hostility towards Pyongyang and marginalizing American influence in Northeast Asia. On October 9, 2006, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test which further undermined the American strategic position in Northeast Asia. The test proved the capacity of North Korea to produce nuclear weapons. The key issue for the United States was no longer how to prevent but how to contain a nuclear North Korea ("Bush Rebukes," 2006). On the following day, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asserted that the United States had no intention of invading or attacking North Korea, but threatened Pyongyang with sanctions if North Korea shared its nuclear knowledge with anyone else. Nevertheless, the Bush administration still insisted on multilateral six-nation nuclear talks in order to avoid direct negotiations with North Korea. And there were signs of disagreement within the Republican Party over whether the Bush administration should negotiate directly with Pyongyang ("Rice Asserts US Plans No Attack," 2006).

On October 14, 2006, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1718, which imposed weapon and financial sanctions on North Korea owing to its nuclear test. The Resolution urged all countries concerned "to intensify their diplomatic efforts, to refrain from any actions that might aggravate tension and to facilitate the early resumption of the Six-Party talks," according to the Joint Statement issued on September 19, 2005 ("Resolution 1718," 2006). The Resolution was worded in such a way as to open the door for the next round of six-nation nuclear talks.

At the same time, China and South Korea decided to continue their economic exchanges with North Korea and did not intend to strictly enforce the Resolution ("Angry China," 2006; "North Korean Fuel," 2006; "Solving the Korean Stalemate," 2006). But when North Korea's UN ambassador, Oak Gil-yon, accused the UN Security Council of being "gangster-like" for passing the Resolution and warned that Pyongyang would consider any further pressure from the United States as a "declaration of war," China began to put pressure on Pyongyang ("US Says It Is up to China," 2006). On October 19, 2006, China sent a delegation led by Tang Jiaxuan, a senior Communist Party official on the State Council, to conduct high-level talks with Kim Jong-Il. The Chinese delegation was to stop North Korea from conducting a second nuclear test. China also tightened cargo inspections at the border city of Dandong and ordered four local banks to freeze money transfers to North Korea. It was rumored that China might cut its low-cost oil supplies in a cross-border pipeline which provide over 80 percent of North Korea's energy ("North Korea Backs Down," 2006). What China did was to keep the North Koreans and Americans at the negotiation table. The Chinese intervention actually prevented the further escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula and provided the United States with a face-saving opportunity to extricate itself from a nuclear crisis. On October 31, 2006, China announced the six-party nuclear talks would be resumed soon after a meeting between envoys from the United States, North Korea and China ("Six-party Talks," 2006). It is worth noting that very little attention was paid to this announcement in the American media.

The immediate reactions from the United States and China to North Korea's nuclear test have significant geopolitical implications. The United States is testing the level of tolerance of China, South Korea, Japan and Russia towards the American position on the use of force against North Korean nuclear facilities. In reality, the United States is trapped in Iraq and Afghanistan and it is not capable of launching a military action against North Korea. As Sanger (2006) points out,

It is hard to remember a moment when the world's sole superpower seemed less positioned to manage a fractured world. It is not only that American hard power is tied up in Baghdad and Kabul; Mr. Bush has acknowledged that soft power (i.e., the ability to lead because you are admired) is suffering too. (p. A4)

Because the United States cannot deal with North Korea from a position of strength, it must turn to China for help. Seen from this perspective, America's power today can be measured by its need to cooperate with China.

The continuation of the six-party nuclear talks in late 2006 and early 2007 led to the North Korean agreement to disable its nuclear facilities. On October 3, 2007, North Korea announced in Beijing that it would disclose all its nuclear programs and facilities in exchange for 950,000 metric tons of fuel oil or its equivalent in economic aid ("North Koreans Agreed," 2007; "North Korea Says," 2007). Then, at the inter-Korean summit meeting in Pyongyang on October 4, 2007, South Korea's president, Roh Moo-Hyun, and the North's leader, Kim Jong-Il, announced that both sides had agreed to work toward signing a formal peace treaty to end the Korean War, which had ceased after an armistice in 1953. This was a significant political concession by the North. The North had long asserted that South Korea would not be involved in any peace negotiations because only North Korea, China, and the United States signed the 1953 armistice ("Korean Summit Results," 2007). Evidently, China has not only mediated between the United States and North Korea throughout the six-party nuclear talks but also facilitated the inter-Korean summit meeting in October 2007.

The Chinese position is to limit the possibilities of violent confrontation in Northeast Asia. Beijing opposes military action against Pyongyang. It wants to handle the nuclear crisis by pressing the United States to negotiate directly with North Korea ("China Says it Opposes Military Acts," 2006). Throughout the six-nation nuclear talks, China has clearly emerged as an equal of the United States (J. Wang, 2005). Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, China has been keen to replace the longstanding Cold War structure with a new international order in Northeast Asia at the expense of the United States. Sino-American relations are being shaped by the North Korean nuclear crisis and the Taiwan Question. In a trade off, China tacitly did not oppose US policies in Iraq and Afghanistan, while it urged the United States to reduce its support for Taiwan's military. Beijing has vowed to attack the island if its democratically elected government declares independence. To gain China's support in the North Korean nuclear crisis, the United States agreed to consider Beijing's requests to postpone its support for Taiwan's military modernization ("Beijing is Cool to Powell's Pleas," 2003). Therefore, China's active involvement in the North Korean nuclear crisis should be understood as a defense against any potential American military threats in Northeast Asia and a response to the Sino-American dispute over Taiwan.

6. CHINA, INDIA AND PAKISTAN IN SOUTH ASIA

China's relations with India are another problematic issue in Chinese foreign policy. The Sino-Indian encounter has witnessed a change from strategic rivalry to economic collaboration. With the exception of the early 1950s, Sino-Indian relations have been characterized by border conflicts, regional rivalries, and strategic, military and economic competition. Sino-Indian border conflicts resulted from the rejection by Beijing of the British-drawn McMahon Line of 1913-1914 separating India and Tibet, the flight of the Dalai Lama to India after the 1959 Tibetan Uprising, as well as the dispute following the 1962 border war in which China seized 38,000 square kilo-

meters (14,670 square miles) of Indian territory in Aksai Chin, and another 5,180 square kilometers (2,000 square miles) of northern Kashmir that Pakistan ceded to Beijing under a 1963 pact (Liu, 1994).

China has been restricting Indian power to the region of South Asia in order to avoid confronting a powerful India south of the Himalayas. Beijing was extremely concerned when India permitted the creation of the Dalai Lama's exiled government in Dharamsala. In response, China decided to contain India by supporting Pakistan in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, continuous Chinese arms transfers to Pakistan indicated the close links that had developed between Beijing and Islamabad (Garver, 2001, 2002).

The Cold War conflict further complicated Sino-Indian relations as shown by the Soviet alliance with India and US support for China from the 1970s. Despite the gradual development of Sino-Indian rapprochement after Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988, China refused to sacrifice its strategic partnership with Pakistan. It is this "two-front threat" (Pakistan to the west and China to the north and northeast) that gave rise to Indian concerns about China's policy towards South Asia. Another security issue affecting Sino-Indian relations is Chinese actions in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. To protect its lines of communication across the Indian and Pacific Oceans, China gradually expanded its naval activities in the region throughout the 1990s. China constructed new ports, maritime communications and overland transport routes in Pakistan and Myanmar, respectively. Underlying China's agenda is the need to strengthen Pakistan in order to maintain the balance of power in South Asia (Garver, 2002).

Indian policymakers view China as an interloper in South Asia, an external power that has challenged India's natural sphere of influence. Through its strategic alliance with Pakistan as well as its growing political and economic relations with weaker South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and the Himalayan kingdoms, Beijing is seen as denying New Delhi's claim to dominance in South Asia. With the end of the Cold War and America's recent military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has come to be a significant factor affecting the balance of power among China, India and Pakistan. Because of the new quadrangular power structure, Indo-Pakistan-China interactions have contributed to tensions between the United States and China over Taiwan and North Korea (Garver, 2001). For their part, Chinese leaders see India as an emerging regional power inclined to expand its military and economic influence in South Asia. As a rising global power, China perceives South Asia as a legitimate area for flexing its diplomatic, economic and military influence in order to counter India and the United States (Liu, 1994). In response to perceived Chinese encirclement, India launched its own counter measures by pursuing security relations with China's neighbors in the Pacific Ocean, especially Vietnam, Japan and Taiwan. This counter-encirclement by New Delhi was a direct response to China's deepening of its security ties with India's neighbors in South Asia. In the entangling relations between China and India, both sides have adopted a series of defensive security measures and they continue to compete with each other in the wider Asian region (Garver, 2002; Malik, 2001).

Despite their different perceptions over security issues like the strong Sino-Pakistan military ties and India's Tibet policy, China and India are determined to cooperate and further expand their ties (Jain, 2003). The high-level discussions over the border conflict between China and India in 2004 marked a new chapter in Sino-Indian relations. President Bush's visit to India in the spring of 2006 and his recognition of the Indian nuclear weapons program can be interpreted as an effort to create a strong alliance between the United States and India on the South Asian subcontinent to counter the rise of China and to gain India's support for a potential war against Iran. But, on the other hand, with China's refusal to impose sanctions on Iran in the UN Security Council and its growing trade with Tehran via India and Pakistan, there seems to be an informal collaboration among China, Iran and India against the growing American military presence in the Asian heartland (Pant, 2006). If this is the case, Beijing will probably concede South Asia to New Delhi as India's sphere of influence in order to maintain stable bilateral relations. In the face of a regional and global balance of power shifting more in China's favor, India will have to come to

terms with the reality of China's emerging dominance in Asia and accept, however reluctantly, the status of being a lesser power (Bhattacharya, 2005).

Their respective economic accomplishments have enabled China and India to set aside mutual suspicions and to collaborate with one another in certain respects. Bilateral trade between these two Asian giants doubled in recent years, rising to around US\$18 billion in 2005. The Confederation of Indian Industries estimates that bilateral trade will increase to US\$30 billion by 2010. Both governments have even opened a trade route at Nathula Pass in early 2006 in order to facilitate cross-border economic exchanges. The cooperation between the two nations was institutionalized in a ten-point strategy to expand bilateral ties and promote civilian nuclear cooperation in a joint declaration issued by Hu Jintao and Manmohan Singh on November 21, 2006 ("India and China Propose 10-point Strategy," 2006).

Furthermore, China and India are partners in an oil venture in Sudan, even though Europe and the United States have expressed concerns over the genocide in the Darfur region of western Sudan. China has outperformed India in gaining access to the rich deposits of iron ore, copper and oil in many African countries, and China's bilateral trade with the continent was nearly US\$40 billion in 2005. By comparison, Indian automakers are selling sport utility vehicles in the African market, promoting hair care products and constructing hotels, with the total amount of bilateral trade reaching about US\$12 billion in 2005 ("India and China Become Friendlier Rivals," 2006). Chinese and Indian expansion into Africa reflects China and India's growing concerns over energy security in the midst of high oil prices, giving rise to a rush for oil, natural gas and other natural resources essential for industrial development.

7. CHINESE EXPANSION INTO AFRICA

Of all the world's regions, the African continent has become the newest frontier for Chinese expansion. The search for additional energy supplies is now the driving force of China's Africa policy. As President Nicolas Sarkozy of France has said, "China is transforming its insatiable quest for raw materials into a strategy of control, especially in Africa" ("Tehran Risks Attack," 2007). According to Holslag (2006), China sees Africa as an important resource supplier and an emerging market for its exports. Therefore, the Chinese government has been pursuing a pragmatic mercantilist policy that combines diplomatic and economic activities since the 1990s. Although Sino-African trade only makes up a small proportion of China's overall foreign trade, its annual rate of growth has averaged around 55 percent between 2001 and 2006, the fastest growing trade between China and any other continent. From 2001 to 2006, more than 10,000 African government officials and technical personnel received training in China ("Old Friends, New Partners," 2006). These returnees served as the agents of China's expansion into Africa.

At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing on November 5, 2006, China signed bilateral trade deals with African countries worth US\$1.9 billion and promised to provide US\$3 billion in preferential loans, US\$2 billion in export credits and US\$5 billion to encourage Chinese investment in Africa. These agreements are part of China's consistent efforts to consolidate its ties with Africa, to bid for oil deals and to seek new markets for its products ("Goodbye Iran, Hello Iraq," 2006).

The examples of Angola and Sudan are illustrative. Angola, as sub-Saharan Africa's second largest oil producer, is central to China's energy diplomacy on the continent. In 2004, bilateral trade accounted for US\$4.9 billion, increasing more than 113 percent from 2003. The state-owned China Petrochemical Corporation is a major investor in Sonangol, the Angolan state oil corporation (Taylor, 2006, p. 947). In May 2006, Angola surpassed Saudi Arabia as China's largest crude oil supplier, providing 15 percent of China's total oil imports. In 2007, Chinese enterprises were the largest foreign investors in Angola. The country has become China's second largest trading partner in Africa ("Angola-China," 2006).

Equally important to Chinese energy diplomacy in Africa is Sudan, where China is now the

largest investor with total stakes worth US\$4 billion. The China National Petroleum Corporation now owns the greatest share (40 percent) of Sudan's largest oil enterprise, the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company. This Sino-Sudanese oil operation built the 930-mile pipeline to the Red Sea and an oil refinery near Khartoum. China has also invested US\$2 billion in the Merowe hydropower dam project. When the dam opens in 2008, the Merowe will meet Sudan's demand for electricity and allow the country to sell excess power to neighboring African nations. Meanwhile, the Sudanese government has been relying on China for military supplies and weapons throughout the civil war. China is filling the power vacuum left by the West in Sudan and gaining control over the country's oil and other natural resources. As China seeks to protect its business interests, it has strongly opposed United Nations' attempts to intervene in the Darfur conflict (Taylor, 2006, p. 949). Hu Jintao's trip to Sudan in February 2007 further confirmed the growing importance of economic and diplomatic relations between the two countries ("Hu's Trip to Sudan," 2007). This development indicates that Africa is becoming a top priority in Chinese foreign policy.

There have also been closer military and diplomatic relations between China and many African countries at the expense of US influence. Chinese military aid and arms sales to Africa are on the rise. In 2001, China sold Sudan twelve F-7 Shenyang fighter jets (the Chinese equivalent of the Russian MiG-12) and Zimbabwe twelve FC-1 multipurpose fighters as well as numerous lighter arms to Angola, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and others (Pham, 2006). Most of the Chinese firms investing in Africa are state-owned enterprises and enjoy strong government support. They are often willing to make less tangible long-term business decisions rather than seek immediate profits.

8. CHINESE INFLUENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

In a fashion similar to Africa, Latin America has gradually become an attractive destination for Chinese investors. Sino-Latin American business and political connections have become a matter of concern to policymakers in the United States (Santoli, 1999). The most controversial issue was the clash of Chinese and American interests over the Panama Canal. In 1999, the Panama government issued an international tender to negotiate a 25-year contract for managing container terminals at the Atlantic and Pacific outlets of the Canal. Panama signed a contract with the Panama Ports Company, a subsidiary of the Hong Kong-based Hutchinson Whampoa Ltd., a Fortune 500 company owned by Li Ka-Shing, the richest tycoon in Asia and the ninth richest man in the world in 2007. It is worth noting that besides Hutchinson Whampoa's track record of handling the bulk of Hong Kong's container traffic, Beijing's support was crucial for the implementation of the contract. Li Ka-Shing is widely known to have strong personal connections with top political leaders in Beijing, and he was said to be willing to use his business influence to advance the strategic and political interests of the Chinese Government (Judicial Watch, Inc., 2002). At that time, the Republicans in the US Congress feared Beijing would come to exercise excessive control over the Canal's security, but they failed to block the signing of the contract ("Securing Panama Canal," 2007).

The rivalry over the control of the Panama Canal reveals a broader pattern of economic, political and strategic competition between Beijing and Washington. As the United States considers Latin America to be its traditional sphere of influence, some government officials in Washington are worried that many Latin American countries will replace the United States with China as their primary patron ("Locking in on Latin America," 2006). From 1993 to 2003, Chinese-Latin American trade increased 600 percent (Dreyer, 2006). In 2004, the total amount of bilateral trade between China and Latin America reached US\$40 billion. This figure overtook Japan's trade with Latin America. China has become a new market for Chilean copper, Argentine and Brazilian soybeans, and the region's ores and gas resources. Geographically speaking, Chinese trade is heavily concentrated in Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Argentina, which comprise 75 percent of

China's total trade in the region. In recent years, China and Brazil have developed joint programs in the space and aviation industries. China has also gained access to the exploration of Bolivia's natural gas reserves as well as the development of oil fields in Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru. For the most part, Chinese investment in Latin America focuses on the construction of infrastructure so that the region can export its goods more efficiently to China ("Latin America Sees China," 2006). In November 2004, China pledged to invest more than US\$19 billion in the Argentine railway system and other construction projects. China is also committed to constructing a trans-national highway from Sao Paulo, Brazil to Lima, Peru so that products from other countries can be easily transported to Peru's harbors along the Pacific coast and from there to be shipped to China (Lafargue, 2006, pp. 81-82). The growth of the trans-Pacific maritime trade has an important impact in re-orientating Latin America towards China.

Apart from increased bilateral trade, there has also been cooperation among the Chinese and various Latin American militaries. China is reported to have been operating two intelligence stations out of Cuba since 1999, monitoring computer data traffic and telephone traffic within the United States. In 2001, China negotiated with Russia for the use of a Soviet-built military base on the outskirts of Havana for gathering intelligence on the United States (Lafargue, 2006, p. 83). China has taken advantage of the vacuum created by Washington's decision to cut military aid to several Latin American states. Many senior Latin American military officers who previously visited the United States for training are now going to China. As a result of this trend, Washington is losing contact with the upcoming generation of Latin American military officers.

9. CONCLUSION

There has been a significant shift in Chinese foreign policy towards the Third World since September 11, 2001. During the Mao and the Deng eras, China mainly responded to pressures from the United States and the Soviet Union, as opposed to dealing with Third World countries per se. But the failure of American military policies in Iraq and Afghanistan has revamped the global political and economic climate and completely changed China's diplomatic priorities. The United States is now facing serious setbacks in the Second Iraqi War and is losing the diplomatic battle against Iran. As Iraq disintegrates into civil war with the United States caught in the middle, it will be extremely difficult for the American military to establish law and order in a land with different types of Islamic communities as well as a large Assyrian and Syrian Orthodox Christian population, together with Chaldean Catholics and Jews (O'Mahony, 2004). Neither will it be possible for the United States to impose an American form of democracy and free market economy in this war-torn country (Schwartz, 2004). Given the proliferation of Iraqi resistance forces and the growth of anti-American sentiment across the Middle East, the withdrawal of the US army is only a matter of time. With the United States troubled by the Second Iraqi War and increasingly isolated around the world, China is exploiting the War on Terror to its political advantage (Paau & Yee, 2005).

Furthermore, the regional and global balance of power is shifting more and more in China's favor. Beijing seeks to create a new system of strategic alliances and to enhance its influence around the world. Since 2001, it has pursued an active policy of engaging many Third World countries in order to challenge the US-dominated international order. This development corresponds with the current Chinese government's rhetoric about the peaceful rise of China, which seeks to assure the world that a powerful China will not occupy territories and seek military bases as Western imperialist nations have done in the past (Cheek, 2006).

Strategically speaking, China's active engagement with nations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa is reminiscent of the classic Maoist strategy of guerrilla warfare, "encircling the city from the countryside," which in this case involves using alliances with Third World states to challenge the United States in global politics. The question for many developing countries now is whether to side with a declining global American empire or to ally with the rising Middle Kingdom.

Evidently, many ruling elites from the Third World are aligning with China for political and economic gains and distancing themselves from the United States. If Chinese economic and military power continues to expand dramatically in the next few decades, this growth will soon propel China towards its strategic goals of achieving dominance in Asia and becoming a global power of the twentieth-first century.

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NOTES

¹ This information is based on my fieldwork observations in Urumqi and Kashgar in July 2006.

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