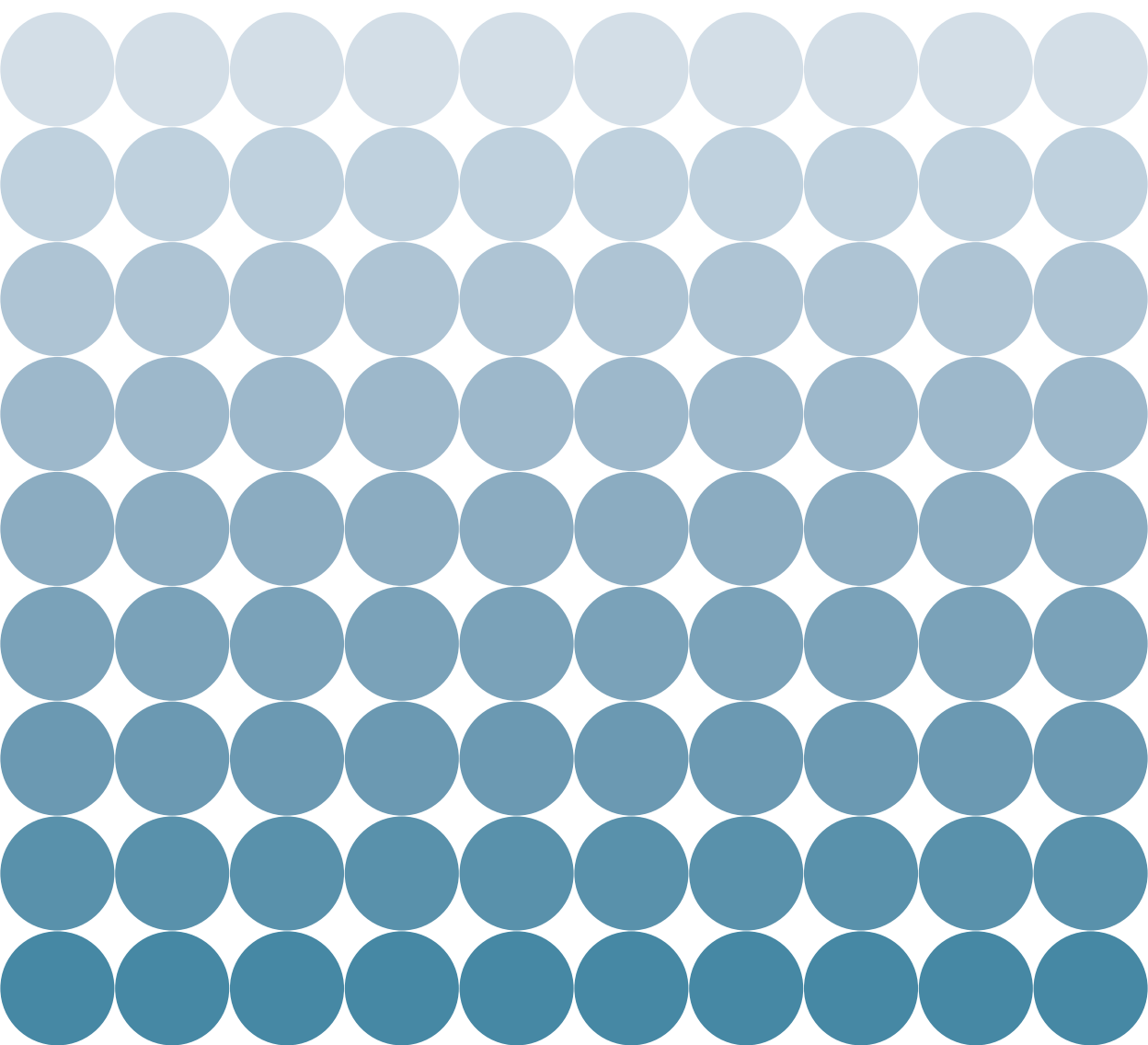


NEW FOREIGN POLICY ACTORS IN CHINA

LINDA JAKOBSON AND DEAN KNOX



STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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LINDA JAKOBSON AND DEAN KNOX



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Preface

One of the most difficult tasks in analyzing foreign and security policy is understanding how it is made—the actors and influences which shape and determine policy outcomes. Such analysis is difficult for any country, but is particularly so with regard to China where many facets of foreign and security policy making remain opaque and closed to outsiders. It is true that China today is more open and pluralistic than ever. But while this opens new opportunities to study and understand Chinese foreign and security policy making, it also raises new analytical challenges. With China's growing importance in world affairs, it is all the more important to tackle these opportunities and challenges and come to a better understanding of the growing and increasingly complex matrix of individuals, institutions, influences and ideas shaping Chinese foreign and security policy making.

This Policy Paper makes a critical and unique contribution to our understanding of these issues by providing new insights into Chinese foreign and security policy formulation. To do so, in addition to researching a range of relevant Chinese- and English-language publications, the authors carried out dozens of face-to-face interviews with Chinese policymakers, military officers, professors, and members of the business, media and blogging communities.

The result is a valuable study which sheds light on the variety of groups within China seeking to influence Chinese foreign policy, their policy preferences and their impact. Importantly, the paper also highlights and explains the role of unofficial and semi-official actors outside the traditional establishment who appear to have an increasing influence on official policies. It concludes by outlining the implications of these findings for China's international partners, and the need to deepen our understanding of new foreign policy actors in China.

I am especially pleased to note that the report is the most ambitious and far-reaching to date to emerge from the SIPRI China and Global Security Programme. Set up in 2009, the programme aims to advance contemporary China studies with a particular emphasis on China's role and impact in global, non-traditional and transnational security. Through its research, publications and other activities, the programme seeks to help policymakers, opinion leaders, scholars, businesses and the general public more fully understand and respond to China's growing global role.

Dr Bates Gill
Director, SIPRI
September 2010

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The authors extend their gratitude to SIPRI colleague Jingchao Peng for his comprehensive research assistance. They are also indebted to two external reviewers—Dr Richard Bush and Dr Hao Yu-fan—and several SIPRI colleagues, Oliver Bräuner, Dr Bates Gill, John Hart, Dr Paul Holtom and Dr May-Britt Stumbaum for their insightful comments on drafts of this paper. A special note of appreciation goes to Joey Fox for her editorial and analytical assistance in the process of preparing the manuscript for publication. Importantly, this study would not have been possible without the generosity of more than 70 specialists in China, the United States and Sweden who shared their time and expertise with the authors. The Unit for Policy Planning and Research at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and especially Special Adviser Kari Möttölä, contributed to the discussion on the study's focus in the initial planning phase of the research project.

As with all SIPRI publications, the research was conducted independently and the views expressed in the Policy Paper are those of the authors.

Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox
Beijing and Stockholm
September 2010

Summary

In contemporary China a cacophony of voices urges decision makers to pursue a variety of foreign policies. The continuing pluralization of Chinese society and China's growing interdependence with the international order have made decision-making processes more complex. These changes, taking place at a time when China's cooperation is increasingly vital to the resolution of key global issues, present a challenge to foreign policy makers. Effective engagement of China in the international arena requires an understanding of the interplay within and between not only the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese Government and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) but also new foreign policy actors on the margins of the traditional power structure. These new actors include resource companies, financial institutions, local governments, research organizations, the media and netizens.

While the CPC's highest body—the opaque Politburo Standing Committee—retains the ultimate decision-making power, the number of official actors vying to influence the top leadership's decisions has expanded considerably. Several CPC organs, government agencies and departments of the PLA all mould foreign policy thinking and behaviour. Within the Chinese Government bureaucracy, for example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is today merely one actor in the realm of foreign policy, and not necessarily the most important one. Many of these official actors have narrow perceptions of China's national interests and even rival motives as a result of their varying domestic portfolios and international outreach activities. The number of official actors ranges widely from issue to issue but can include institutions as varied as the Party's Policy Research Office, the government's National Development and Reform Commission or the PLA's Second Artillery Corps.

To understand the complex foreign policy formation processes, it is critical that foreigners take into consideration the omnidirectional channels of influence at play. Some of the new foreign policy actors try to sway official policy and seek additional leverage by influencing each other and public opinion. Then again, there are actors on the margins who do not necessarily seek an active role in foreign policy but, nevertheless, can at times end up complicating Chinese diplomacy. For example, large enterprises primarily want to pursue commercial interests but inadvertently entangle foreign policy officials into a web of human rights, energy security concerns and political interests by their actions.

The importance of consensus building in decision making—or the need to create at least the perception of consensus—encourages actors both inside and outside the official foreign policy establishment to find ways to influence the views of top leaders. Informal channels based on personal relationships and institutional allegiances are important. Furthermore, a mosaic of other factors affect the mindset of decision makers in China, including ideology, a deep-rooted sense of inferiority, nationalism and foreign education.

Of the new foreign policy actors, netizens are the most dynamic. Nationalist sentiment is widespread and criticism of Chinese leaders for bowing to international demands is incessant on the Internet. While most foreign policy decisions are made with little regard to public opinion, Chinese officials are aware that dissatisfaction can give rise to questioning of the Party's ability to govern. Hence, leaders' actions can be constrained in international crises, particularly when the United States or Japan are involved, or if any issue related to Taiwan or Tibet surfaces as the focus of international attention.

Three broad trends in Chinese foreign policy, each with implications for foreign policy makers, are evident. First, authority over foreign policy has become fractured. Foreigners can no longer solely deal with one decision maker and must take into account multiple agencies that have a stake or say in any given decision. Awareness of rivalries and overlaps in jurisdiction is key to cooperation with Chinese partners. For example, while the extent to which the PLA has been distanced from foreign policy making is debated both inside and outside China, there are both Chinese and foreign experts who consider the PLA a re-emerging player that competes for influence with other actors. PLA officers debating foreign policy in public is a new phenomenon. Moreover, the PLA no longer shies away from antagonizing its neighbours and the USA by displaying its power.

Second, while China's continued global engagement is regarded by all actors as inevitable, there are varying views among both officials and actors on the margins regarding the degree to which China should prioritize internationalization in its development. Some only support deepening internationalization with caveats. Foreigners need to recognize nuances in Chinese perspectives and acknowledge that they are not dealing with a monolithic state or static engagement strategy.

Third, several foreign policy actors advocate that China defends its interests by being more active in defining the rules of interaction in the global order. The view that China should be 'less submissive'—that is, more forcefully pursue its interests internationally—is becoming prevalent among new foreign policy actors in particular. Many Chinese interest groups interpret international pressure on China to contribute more to global public goods as an effort to undermine China's rise. They advocate that China demand concessions on issues such as Taiwan and Tibet in exchange for Chinese cooperation.

These three trends—fractured authority, varying views of the degree to which China should internationalize and the demands that China defend its core interests—are changing the nature of Chinese foreign policy formulation and the way China interacts with the outside world. Only by persistently engaging a broad spectrum of Chinese foreign policy actors, recognizing the variations in their perspectives and concerns, and integrating them into engagement strategies can foreign policy makers succeed in securing China's cooperation.

Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCIEE	China Center for International Economic Exchanges
CDB	China Development Bank
CHINCA	China International Contractors Association
CISA	China Iron and Steel Association
CMC	Central Military Commission
CNNC	China National Nuclear Corporation
CNOOC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPS	Central Party School
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
EU	European Union
Eximbank	Export-Import Bank of China
FALSG	Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group
FPAC	Foreign Policy Advisory Council
IETCC	International economic and technological cooperation corporation
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
LSG	Leading small group
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
PBC	People's Bank of China
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSC	Politburo Standing Committee
SAFE	State Administration of Foreign Exchange
Sinopec	China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation
SOE	State-owned enterprise
TALSG	Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

The diversity of interests and ideas within contemporary Chinese society is reflected in China's policy decisions on a broad range of subjects. Chinese foreign policy is in a state of flux, a natural consequence of China's rapidly changing society and the transforming international environment. Meanwhile, the boundaries of foreign policy have blurred worldwide. Those responsible for China's strategic choices in foreign policy are scrambling to come to terms with the increased activities and goals of a variety of Chinese actors in the international arena.

While the highest body of the Communist Party of China (CPC)—the opaque Politburo Standing Committee (PSC)—retains the ultimate decision-making power, the number of actors vying to influence the top leadership's decisions has expanded considerably. Several other official bodies—CPC organs, government agencies and departments of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)—all mould foreign policy thinking and behaviour. Within the Chinese Government bureaucracy, for example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is today merely one actor in the realm of foreign policy and not necessarily the most important one. Many of these official actors have diverse perceptions of China's national interests and even rival motives as a result of their varying domestic portfolios and international outreach activities.

Furthermore, China's foreign policy is also today shaped to some extent by new actors who are not part of the CPC, the central government or the PLA. Experts from universities, research organizations and military academies, chief executives of oil companies and other enterprises, bank directors, local government officials and leading media representatives operate on the margins, outside the traditional centralized confines of the CPC and government.

Chinese citizens too can be a force affecting foreign policy decisions when they express their views on the Internet, via the media or in protests. However, despite China's ongoing transformation into a more pluralistic society than it was 20 or even 10 years ago, it remains a single-party, authoritarian state. So, although government officials continuously cite public opinion as a factor to consider in foreign policy formulation, they also seek to control public opinion. Alongside the government, public opinion is influenced by several other foreign policy actors. Researchers and senior journalists contribute to the public debate through their publications and commentary, sometimes independently and other times at the request of the CPC, the government or the PLA. This omnidirectional interaction is a recurring theme of this Policy Paper.

One consequence of the pivotal role of consensus building in decision-making processes in China is that interest groups, both within and outside of the official foreign policy establishment, can influence policy by swaying even just one top leader's views. Decision-making processes in China remain obscure, and it is impossible to credibly evaluate the degree of influence that a specific person, agency or factor has on any given PSC decision. What is possible is to assess which interest groups are vying for influence on foreign policy formulation and

to explore the thinking of these groups on the basis of off-the-record conversations and research interviews as well as open source articles and speeches. Identifying who the foreign policy actors are and understanding the direction they would like to see Chinese foreign policy move towards are two important research aims of this Policy Paper.

The need for the international community to gain an understanding of the actors and factors that affect the formulation of Chinese foreign policy has grown in tandem with China's importance and involvement in international affairs. A fundamental premise of Chinese foreign policy is China's insistence that it intends to develop peacefully, but even Chinese scholars concede that 'China also will seek to remove impediments to its rise, in part by invoking existing international rules, and shaping new international rules, to serve its interests'.¹

This Policy Paper seeks to shed light on how the variety of aforementioned interest groups view China's interests. The definition of foreign policy, as it is used in this paper, is 'those actions which, expressed in the form of explicitly stated goals, commitments and/or directives, and pursued by governmental representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are directed towards objectives, conditions and actors—both governmental and non-governmental—which they want to affect and which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy'.²

Categorizing foreign policy actors in China is a challenge because of the non-transparent nature of the state. In addition, the distinction between shaping and implementing foreign policy is sometimes elusive. This paper defines foreign policy actors as those institutions and individuals who (a) have the power to make foreign policy decisions, (b) are formally part of the foreign policy formulation process, or (c) seek to influence foreign policies. Ultimately all entities in China that are involved in or strive to influence the formulation of Chinese foreign policy—CPC organs, government agencies and PLA departments, universities, research organizations, state-owned enterprises, media organizations and citizens—are subordinate to the CPC. The Internet too is controlled by the government, while in turn the government is subordinate to the political authority of the CPC. 'Independent actors', in the manner the term is used in the West, do not exist in China. Hence, the differentiation used in this paper between official entities (in the CPC, the central government and the PLA) and actors 'on the margins' (such as enterprises, financial institutions, local governments, research institutes, media and netizens—frequent users of the Internet).

The analysis presented in this paper draws on 71 research interviews conducted with 19 CPC officials, government representatives and PLA officers; 11 representatives of Chinese financial institutions and state-owned companies; 27 researchers; 4 journalists; 2 active bloggers and 8 foreigners with long China-

¹ Zhang, X., 'China's "peaceful rise", "harmonious" foreign relations, and legal confrontation—and lessons from the Sino-Japanese dispute over the East China Sea', Foreign Policy Research Institute, E-notes, Apr. 2010, <<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201004.zhang.chinariselegalconfrontation.html>>.

² Carlsnaes, W., 'Foreign policy', eds W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B. A. Simmons, *Handbook of International Relations* (Sage Publications: London, 2002), p. 335.

watching experience.³ Unless otherwise indicated, interviews were off-the-record because both Chinese citizens and foreigners based in China are reluctant to speak candidly about foreign policy without a guarantee of anonymity. The research is also based on a close reading of over 100 articles, book chapters and speeches in Chinese- and English-language journals and other published sources.

Chapter 2 of the Policy Paper provides an analysis of China's official and increasingly multifaceted foreign policy decision-making apparatus. It covers organs within the CPC, the government and the PLA which have either retained or gained significance in the determination of China's foreign policy. Chapter 3 describes some of the major factors influencing the mindset of both official Chinese foreign policy actors and new actors 'on the margins', such as the CPC's interpretation of history, political education and foreign influences. Chapter 4 delves in more detail into four categories of new foreign policy actors: business leaders, including those in charge of oil and gas companies; leaders of local government with strong commercial interests; scholars and experts working in research institutions and academia; and lastly, media representatives and netizens. Although actors on the margins are not decision makers, they do affect, either intentionally or inadvertently, foreign policy decision-making processes. Chapter 5 concludes with an assessment of new foreign policy actors in China and possible implications for the international community.

³ Most 1 hour face-to-face research interviews were conducted by Linda Jakobson in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Stockholm and Washington, DC, during the period 15 June 2009–15 June 2010; 7 interviews were conducted by SIPRI intern Jacob Wood in Beijing during the period 15 July–15 Sep. 2009; and 4 by Dean Knox in Beijing and Stockholm in Mar. and June 2010.

2. Official foreign policy actors

The Communist Party of China and the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) have separate decision-making structures although some bodies overlap in function, authority and even personnel. Because the CPC's authority is supreme, some significant official decision makers do not necessarily have a government post. For example, two influential foreign policy officials and members of the CPC Central Committee—Wang Jiarui (head of the Party's International Department) and Wang Huning (head of the Party's Policy Research Office)—do not hold government positions.⁴ Power and influence is determined by Party rank. Wang Jiarui, for example, is higher in Party hierarchy than Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.⁵ Hu Jintao is supreme leader as general secretary of the CPC, chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and president of the PRC. He also chairs the CPC leading small groups (LSGs) that deliberate foreign and security policy.

The Communist Party of China

The Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee

While Chinese society is more multifaceted today than a decade ago and the number of interest groups wishing to influence foreign policy formulation has grown, foreign and security policy decision-making processes remain opaque and highly centralized within the PSC and other key decision-making bodies. The nine-member Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee is the ultimate decision-making body in China.⁶ It is presumed to meet every 7 to 10 days, while the 25-member Politburo, from which the PSC is derived, convenes irregularly.⁷ The PSC's agenda and deliberations are not made public. In most cases, the PSC's task is to give the final approval to a recommendation based on deliberations by relevant agencies. For instance, when the choice to buy nuclear reactors from a French company (Areva) or a US company (Westinghouse) had to be made in 2006, Hu's blessing was needed because 'in the end the choice was a political decision'.⁸

⁴ 'Wang Jiarui 王家瑞', China Vitae, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Wang_Jiarui>; and 'Wang Huning 王沪宁', China Vitae, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Wang_Huning>.

⁵ Chinese professor of international relations, Interview with author, Beijing, 9 Sep. 2009.

⁶ See e.g. Lu, N., *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 2nd edn (Westview Press: Boulder, CO, 2000); Miller, A. L., 'Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo', *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 9 (winter 2004); and Cabestan, J.-P., 'China's foreign- and security-policy decision-making processes under Hu Jintao', *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, vol. 38, no. 3 (2009), pp. 63–97.

⁷ Miller (note 6).

⁸ Westinghouse was awarded the contract on the basis of 3 factors: technical considerations, US irritation over the trade imbalance and the need for healthy Chinese-US ties. Chinese nuclear industry expert involved in evaluation process, Personal communication with author, Xi'an, 24 May 2010; and 'China selects Westinghouse AP1000 nuclear power technology', Westinghouse Electric Company, 16 Dec. 2006, <<http://westinghousenuclear.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=43&item=70>>.

According to research interviews with Chinese researchers and CPC officials, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao are central to foreign policy decision making. Although decisions are reached through consensus building, Hu Jintao heads the PSC and thus any major decision needs his support. At times other PSC members express views on controversial foreign policy issues—such as those related to Japan, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea), Myanmar and the United States—that differ from those of Hu or Wen. North Korea is described as the most divisive of foreign policy issues among China’s senior leaders. For example, after North Korea conducted a nuclear test in 2006, Hu Jintao is said to have been compelled to personally edit the wording of China’s official reaction because no one else wanted to take ultimate responsibility for such a sensitive stance.⁹

While several PSC members have a distinct portfolio, no one member has an exclusive foreign policy portfolio.¹⁰ As a result, both official foreign policy actors and those on the margins of the foreign policy establishment can try to affect the consensus-building process by influencing any given PSC member. Consequently, foreign policy decision making can be ‘unwieldy, messy and inefficient’.¹¹

The Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group and other Central Committee organs

Major policy decisions in China are deliberated in the LSGs, which are comprised of PSC members and other leading CPC officials.¹² The full memberships of the LSGs are not public, but official media occasionally mention leaders in connection with their LSG activities. As with the PSC, the agendas and deliberations of the LSGs are not publicized.¹³

Several but not all of those interviewed by the authors presumed that all but the most critical foreign policy decisions are made in the Foreign Affairs LSG (FALSG)—also known as the National Security LSG—after which the PSC merely gives formal approval. The interviewees pointed out that most PSC members are not well-versed in the details of complex foreign policy issues and must therefore rely on the expertise of foreign policy specialists in the LSGs. Foremost among the FALSG members are State Councillor Dai Bingguo, International Department head Wang Jiarui, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, Minister of Commerce Chen Deming, Minister of Defence Liang Guanglie and Minister of State Security Geng Huichang. In addition to the FALSG, decisions affecting foreign policy are delib-

⁹ Chinese MFA official, Interview with author, Beijing, 11 Sep. 2009. In an unprecedented step, China denounced North Korea’s actions as ‘flagrant’. ‘外交部：朝鲜悍然实施核试验 中国政府坚决反对’ [MFA: DPRK flagrantly conducts nuclear test], Xinhua, 9 Oct. 2006, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2006-10/09/content_5180207.htm>.

¹⁰ The specific tasks and responsibilities of PSC member portfolios are not explicitly stated but can be inferred from their posts and activities.

¹¹ Director of a Chinese research institute who advises the government, Interview with author, Beijing, 22 Oct. 2009.

¹² Non-CPC ministers (Wan Gang (万刚) and Chen Zhu (陈竺)) are not known to be included in any LSG. ‘LSG’ is used as shorthand; the full translation of e.g. FALSG is Central Foreign Affairs Work Leading Group (中央外事工作领导小组).

¹³ The *China Directory* compiles references by authoritative media to personnel in LSGs and other central institutions into a single source. *China Directory* (Radiopress: Kawasaki, 2008).

erated in, among others, the Taiwan Affairs LSG (TALSG) and the Financial and Economic Affairs LSG.

Attached to each LSG is an office that conducts research, proposes policies and coordinates activities.¹⁴ Dai Bingguo, the presumed director of the FALSG office, was named by many interviewees as the most influential foreign policy official outside the PSC and the person who has day-to-day responsibility for foreign policy, in part because of his role in shaping the FALSG's agenda. The Foreign Affairs Office and the Financial and Economic Affairs Office are exclusively under the CPC, whereas the Taiwan Work Office also reports to the State Council.¹⁵ The Taiwan Work Office oversees all Taiwan-related affairs, including the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, the semi-official organization that holds negotiations on behalf of China with its counterpart in Taiwan.

Besides the LSGs, at least three other bodies associated with the CPC Central Committee are important in any assessment of the official foreign policy-related actors that Chinese interest groups strive to influence: the Policy Research Office, the General Office and the International Department.

The Policy Research Office conducts research, provides advice and drafts policy documents ahead of major decisions. The General Office provides administrative and logistical support to the Politburo. Despite the seemingly mundane nature of its mandate, the General Office is significant because it controls flow of information to decision makers and manages their schedules.¹⁶ The respective heads of the Policy Research Office and the General Office, Wang Huning and Ling Jihua, are intimately involved in high-level diplomacy. Both accompanied Hu Jintao on every one of his 29 overseas trips between 2008 and early 2010—which many interviewees pointed out allows them more interaction with the supreme leader than most ministers.¹⁷ Despite holding his current post in the Policy Research Office since 2002, Wang only began travelling with Hu in 2008. Wang, who holds a PhD in law, is a former Fudan University professor of international politics.¹⁸

The International Department, formerly the International Liaison Department, has broadened its initial focus of liaising with communist and socialist parties and now manages the CPC's ties to virtually all foreign political parties and movements, including the Democratic and Republican parties in the USA. In Europe the International Department has for more than two decades invested substantial effort into building relations with a wide spectrum of political par-

¹⁴ For in-depth analysis see Shao, Z. (邵宗海) and Su, H. (蘇厚宇), '具有中國特色的中共決策機制: 中共中央工作領導小組' [Decision-making mechanisms with Chinese characteristics: CPC Central Committee leading small groups] (Webber Publication International: Taipei, 2007).

¹⁵ The composition of the CPC Central Committee's Taiwan Work Office is identical to the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office. The practice, known as 'one organization, two names', is common for CPC and government bodies with similar missions (including the CMC).

¹⁶ Miller, A. L., 'The Central Committee departments under Hu Jintao', *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 27 (winter 2009).

¹⁷ Authors' database covering Hu Jintao's 70 overseas visits between Jan. 2005 and Aug. 2010; and Chinese professor of international relations, interview with author, Beijing, 30 Apr. 2010.

¹⁸ 'Wang Huning 王沪宁' (note 4).

ties.¹⁹ It is also a foreign policy actor because of its instrumental role in formulating China's policy towards North Korea and, to a certain extent, Iran and Myanmar. The long-standing ties between the International Department and the Korean Workers' Party as well as the relationships that Dai Bingguo built with North Korean officials when head of the department (1997–2003) have contributed to the department's special role in China–North Korean relations.²⁰

At least three other CPC departments have limited influence over foreign policy: the Publicity Department, the International Communications Office and the Organization Department. The Publicity Department, formerly known as the Propaganda Department, is tasked with overseeing domestic media and thereby contributes to shaping public perceptions of Chinese foreign policy. It coordinates the Party's message on foreign policy to the media together with the CPC's main newspaper, *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), and Xinhua News Agency.²¹ The International Communications Office (better known by its government title, the State Council Information Office) strives to improve the international community's understanding and perception of China—a foreign policy goal that Hu Jintao has prioritized.²² The Organization Department prepares Politburo decisions on appointments and promotions throughout the political system.²³

The State Council

The State Council, headed by Premier Wen Jiabao, is composed of numerous ministries, administrations and offices.²⁴ It is the highest body in the Chinese Government and represents China in state-to-state relations. Dai Bingguo, in addition to his CPC positions, is also the state councillor handling Chinese foreign policy and so outranks the ministers of foreign affairs and commerce, Yang Jiechi and Chen Deming, within the government system. Dai is far more influential than Yang and Chen in the CPC, where he has served as head of the CPC International Department and Ministry of Foreign Affairs party secretary. Dai has been a full member of the Central Committee since 2002, whereas Yang was only elevated to full membership in 2007 after becoming foreign minister and Chen is only an alternate member.²⁵

¹⁹ Shambaugh, D., 'China's "quiet diplomacy": the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party', *China*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Mar. 2007), pp. 26–54.

²⁰ Chinese ministry official, Interview with author, Beijing, 3 May 2010.

²¹ CPC Central Committee Publicity Department (中共中央宣传部), '主要职能' [Main functions], <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64114/75332/5230610.html>>.

²² Wu, Q. (吴绮敏), '胡锦涛:我国改革发展稳定面临新的机遇和挑战' [Hu Jintao: China's reform and development faces new opportunities and challenges], 人民日报 [People's Daily], 21 July 2009; and State Council Information Office (国务院新闻办公室), '国务院新闻办公室' [State Council Information Office], 13 Mar. 2006, <<http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/xwbjs/200905/t306817.htm>>.

²³ Miller (note 16).

²⁴ The State Council's closest analogue in a Western state is a cabinet government, although in a 1-party state such as China the State Council operates with comparatively less accountability and scant oversight from an elected parliament.

²⁵ Dai Bingguo 戴秉国, China Vitae, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Dai_Bingguo>; Yang Jiechi 杨洁篪, China Vitae, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Yang_Jiechi>; Chen Deming 陈德铭, China Vitae, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Chen_Deming>; and Wang Huning 王沪宁 (note 4).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The role and importance of the MFA as a policymaker has changed over the past decade, according to all of the research interviewees. The overwhelming majority of respondents said the power of the MFA has declined. The reason cited was twofold. First, China's expanding international role and the growing complexity of global issues have resulted in the proliferation of foreign policy decision-making entities. The MFA must often rely on other agencies for expertise while at the same time competing with them for influence. Second, since 1998 the foreign minister's power base within the CPC has continuously declined. One senior academic said that he 'feels sorry for Yang Jiechi' because on state visits or during meetings in China with important foreign delegations 'Yang is fifth or sixth in protocol.'²⁶ On the other hand, several interviewees gave Yang credit for having improved the professional standards and competence within the MFA.

While the senior CPC leadership assumes responsibility for crucial decisions affecting China's relations with major powers or important countries in the region, it has delegated overall control of foreign policy implementation to the MFA. A director of a research institution noted that 'ministries are merely managers. They do not make policy, they implement it'.²⁷ However, with regard to states considered less important, the MFA continues to be a central agency in determining policies in accordance with China's overall foreign policy goals. The MFA is regarded as the prime actor in China's relations with all European Union (EU) member states with the exception of France, Germany and the United Kingdom.²⁸

In international negotiations, the MFA has traditionally been the lead organization even though another ministry may have provided the expertise on the specific issue under discussion. For example, at the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference both the head and deputy head of the Chinese delegation were MFA officials, while PLA officers representing the General Armaments Department and General Staff Department were delegation members (albeit listed as Ministry of National Defence officials).²⁹ In recent years, however, the MFA has sometimes not even nominally held the lead position but has had to accept a secondary role. For example, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), whose responsibilities include domestic policies on climate change, initially headed the Chinese delegation at the 2009 Climate Summit in Copenhagen, and MFA participation was limited to delegation members.³⁰ When Premier Wen Jiabao arrived in Copenhagen and took charge

²⁶ Those ahead of Yang Jiechi in protocol on state visits are Hu Jintao (president), Wen Jiabao (premier), Wang Qishan (State Council vice-premier), Ling Jihua (CPC General Office director), Wang Huning (CPC Policy Research Office director) and Dai Bingguo (a state councillor). Chinese professor of international relations (note 5).

²⁷ Director of Chinese government research institution, Interview with author, Beijing, 19 Apr. 2010.

²⁸ Beijing-based European Union official, Interview with author, Beijing, 30 June 2009; and Beijing-based Swedish diplomat, Interview with author, Beijing, 27 May 2010.

²⁹ Chinese non-proliferation official, Interview with author, Beijing, 26 May 2010.

³⁰ Yuan, Y. and Feng, J., '哥本哈根时刻：中国官员一天睡3个小时' [Moment in Copenhagen: Chinese officials get 3 hours sleep every day], 南方周末 [Southern Weekly], 16 Dec. 2009.

of the delegation for the summit's last days, views within the delegation differed on China's final position. MFA officials were inclined to make compromises to avoid China being deemed an agreement-spoiler, while the NDRC refused to budge on China's initial position against fixed targets for both developed and developing countries. When Wen Jiabao favoured the MFA position in a crucial meeting with key summit participants, such as Brazil, India, South Africa and the USA, he was opposed by the senior NDRC representative on the delegation and therefore no compromise was reached. This led to what in the West is perceived as the 'Copenhagen fiasco'.³¹

Ambassadors

Whether Chinese ambassadors, who fall under the purview of the MFA, are foreign policy actors or merely implementers and coordinators depends on both the individual and the circumstances. In many cases, an ambassador's influence is limited to making recommendations. One former ambassador said that if he made a recommendation at the right time, in the right way and to the right interlocutor his views were translated into policy. He recalled one prime example of failure when he had requested a meeting with Premier Zhu Rongji to propose collaboration in the nuclear energy field between China and the country to which he was posted. Zhu rebuffed the recommendation, saying that energy did not pose a major challenge to China's development.³² The meeting took place in 1999 when Chinese leaders were enthusiastic about the Three Gorges Dam and not pre-occupied with energy security. A mere seven years later, China's five-year development plan called for large-scale growth of nuclear power to meet China's rising energy demands.³³

Song Zhe, who was appointed China's ambassador to the EU in 2008, is considered a 'powerful ambassador' because of his close connections with Wen Jiabao.³⁴ Song served as Wen's 'right hand man' as director general of the General Office of the State Council (2003–2008). Prior to that Song was an MFA official with extensive experience in West European affairs.³⁵ As ambassador to the EU, Song holds vice-ministerial rank, as do China's ambassadors in Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, North Korea, Russia, the UK and the USA. The posts in Brasilia and New Delhi were elevated to this status in 2010, reflecting the growing importance that China attaches to relations with Brazil and India.³⁶

³¹ Chinese official who participated in the Climate Summit in Copenhagen, Interview with author, Beijing, 17 Dec. 2009; and Peiser, B., 'This fiasco will further alienate an angry public', *The Guardian*, 19 Dec. 2009. See also Lieberthal, K. G., 'Climate change and China's global responsibilities', Brookings Institution, 23 Dec. 2009, <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/1222_china_climate_lieberthal.aspx>.

³² Retired Chinese ambassador, Interview with author, Beijing, 21 Sep. 2009.

³³ '推进工业结构优化升级' [Promoting optimization of the industrial structure], 中华人民共和国国民经济和社会发展第十一个五年规划纲要 [People's Republic of China National Economic and Social Development Five-Year Plan], Xinhua, 16 Mar. 2006, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/misc/2006-03/16/content_4309517.htm>.

³⁴ Chinese professor whom the MFA consults, Interview with author, Beijing, 2 Apr. 2010.

³⁵ Chinese Mission to the European Union, '中国驻欧盟使团团长宋哲大使简历' [Resume of Ambassador Song Zhe, head of China's mission to the EU], <<http://www.chinamission.be/chn/sttz/dsjj/>>.

³⁶ Chinese professor of international relations, Personal correspondence with author, 29 July 2010.

The perception among non-MFA officials that diplomats might fall prey to too much foreign influence has undermined the standing of ambassadors ever since China's opening in the late 1970s. Several interviewees, including two ambassadors, admitted as much, saying that serving as a bridge between the host country and China sometimes created the impression that their views could compromise China's interests.³⁷ This notion is even stronger today as China's global engagement drives diplomats deeper into the societies in which they work.

Other government bodies

Within the Chinese Government, the MFA faces competition for influence over foreign policy formulation from the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and several other government bodies that have expanded their international outreach in their respective fields, such as the People's Bank of China (PBC), the NDRC, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of State Security. This has resulted in intense rivalry between the MFA and other official foreign policy actors.

MOFCOM, as a result of its jurisdiction over foreign trade and its close ties to the business community, has emerged as the leading supporter of a controlled renminbi exchange rate in internal debates. While MOFCOM does not have direct control over exchange rates, it is influential in all issues affecting foreign trade.³⁸ China's policy of controlling the currency exchange rate has benefited Chinese exporters, but it is a source of international tension, stemming from accusations by other countries that China is distorting the market and impeding their recoveries from economic recession.³⁹ MOFCOM loosely regulates the overseas activities of Chinese companies through semi-official trade associations, such as the China International Contractors Association (CHINCA), which have the task of passing on suggestions of member enterprises to relevant authorities and participate in policy formation.⁴⁰ MOFCOM also allocates the majority of Chinese foreign aid—a perennial source of contention between it and the MFA—which for the most part consists of infrastructure projects carried out by Chinese companies.⁴¹ Chinese aid is not unconditional. Support by the recipient country for China's 'One China' position ruling out Taiwan's independence is a near-absolute requirement to receive aid.⁴² Thus, aid provision is an important factor in China's ability to limit Taiwan's formal and even informal relationships

³⁷ Retired Chinese ambassador, Interview with author, Beijing, 6 July 2009; and Retired Chinese ambassador (note 32).

³⁸ Chinese professor of economics, Interview with author, Stockholm, 12 June 2010.

³⁹ See e.g. Chan, S., 'Pressure grows in US over China's currency', *New York Times*, 16 Mar. 2010.

⁴⁰ Diao, C., 'Chairman's address', China International Contractors Association (CHINCA), <<http://www.chinca.org/en/aboutus.aspx>>.

⁴¹ Lancaster, C., 'The Chinese aid system', Center for Global Development, 27 June 2007, <<http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/13953/>>.

⁴² In a notable exception, in 2010 China provided a small amount of earthquake aid to Haiti despite Haiti's ties with Taiwan. 'Malawi is latest nation to follow China's lure', *New York Times*, 4 Jan. 2008; and Anna, C. and Huang, A., 'Haiti aid a telling test of China-Taiwan relations', Associated Press, 17 Jan. 2010, <<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2010/01/17/241115/Haiti-aid.htm>>.

around the world. It is also common to link grants or concessional loans to resource deals by major Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs).⁴³

The People's Bank of China's impact on Chinese foreign policy, which stems from its power as the central bank to dictate domestic monetary policy, reflects China's growing importance to foreign economies and international markets. Its authority over renminbi exchange rates and (via the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, SAFE) the majority of China's vast foreign currency reserves placed the PBC in a unique and powerful position when the world was faced with the global financial crisis.⁴⁴ At over \$2.45 trillion in June 2010, China's foreign reserves are the largest in the world.⁴⁵ In 2009 the bank's governor, Zhou Xiaochuan, demonstrated the bank's influence on Chinese foreign policy by publicly calling for a shift towards a super-sovereign reserve currency. This call expressed the PBC's concerns over the dominance of the US dollar and was an indication that China could begin to reduce its purchases of US Treasury bonds.⁴⁶ Unlike MOFCOM, the PBC advocates loosening the long-standing controls on the renminbi exchange rate, which economists believe contribute to the formation of asset bubbles and would expose the PBC to large losses if US Treasury bond yields fall.⁴⁷

The National Development and Reform Commission is a foreign policy actor in areas that touch on Chinese economic development, especially in the energy sector. Its influence is most apparent in its authority over Chinese climate change policy and its role in ensuring Chinese access to critical resources, such as oil and natural gas. The NDRC's National Energy Administration, established in March 2008, reports directly to the State Council on substantive issues.⁴⁸

The Ministry of Finance has a say in the international programmes of other government ministries because of its control over the national budget. It

⁴³ A core element of China's foreign aid is equality and mutual benefit. Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, '周恩来总理对亚非国家的三次出访' [Premier Zhou Enlai's three visits to Asian and African nations], <<http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/gxh/xsb/wjzs/t9010.htm>>; and Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, '中国对非洲政策文件' [Paper on China's policy towards Africa], Jan. 2006, <<http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/gxh/zlb/zcwj/t230612.htm>>.

⁴⁴ People's Bank of China, 'Major responsibilities', <<http://www.pbc.gov.cn/english/renhangjianjie/responsibilities.asp>>; and China Investment Corporation, 'Overview', <http://www.china-inv.cn/cicen/about_cic/aboutcic_overview.html>.

⁴⁵ Chinese State Administration of Foreign Exchange, '中国外汇储备, 2010年' [China's foreign exchange reserves, 2010], <http://www.safe.gov.cn/model_safe/tjsj/tjsj_detail.jsp?ID=110400000000000000,21&id=5>. While SAFE is subordinate to the PBC in some respects, it also reports directly to the State Council. A fraction of China's foreign reserves are controlled by the China Investment Corporation, a sovereign wealth fund created in 2007 with an infusion of \$200 billion.

⁴⁶ Zhou Xiaochuan advocated strengthening the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights but avoided direct mention of the dollar or the USA. Special Drawing Rights are a weighted average of the US dollar, the euro, the Japanese yen and the British pound. Zhou, X. (周小川), '关于改革国际货币体系的思考' [On the reform of the international monetary system], People's Bank of China, 23 Mar. 2009, <<http://www.pbc.gov.cn/detail.asp?col=4200&id=279>>.

⁴⁷ Without relatively high yields on US Treasury bonds, the PBC would suffer losses in issuing the sterilizing bonds that neutralize China's dollar surplus. Chinese professor of economics (note 38); and Bradsher, K., 'China officials wrestle publicly over currency', *New York Times*, 25 Mar. 2010.

⁴⁸ Downs, E. S., 'China's "new" energy administration', *China Business Review*, Nov.-Dec. 2008, pp. 42-45.

is also responsible for tariffs and China's limited contributions to multilateral aid.⁴⁹

The Ministry of State Security was named by several interviewees as an increasingly powerful domestic actor whose sway spills over into the realm of foreign policy. Its position was viewed as strengthened—and its budget increased—by the preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympics as well as by the riots in Tibet in 2008 and Xinjiang in 2009.⁵⁰ The ministry is considered to be a strong advocate of government investment in information technology research to ensure that the state strengthens its intelligence-gathering capacity.⁵¹ Minister of State Security Geng Huichang is a member of both the Foreign Affairs and Taiwan Affairs LSGs and a former president of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (under the Ministry of State Security), one of China's most influential research institutions.⁵²

The People's Liberation Army

The People's Liberation Army has historically been and continues to be a player in Chinese foreign policy making. However, its role has been substantially narrowed by decades of institutional reform, focused on the professionalization of the armed forces and the distancing of military leaders from civilian decision-making processes.⁵³ Military officers retiring from powerful CPC positions in the 1980s and 1990s were replaced with civilians, culminating with the retirement of PLA Navy (PLAN) commander Liu Huaqing from the Politburo Standing Committee in 1997. Since then the PLA has not been represented in the PSC.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the degree to which the PLA exists in a world apart from the political decision-making processes is a question that divides both Chinese and Western experts.⁵⁵

The PLA shares authority with government and commercial entities on decisions pertaining to arms control and non-proliferation—spheres with direct foreign policy implications over which the PLA formerly exercised nearly

⁴⁹ Chinese Ministry of Finance, '中华人民共和国财政部主要职能' [Main functions of the People's Republic of China Ministry of Finance], <<http://www.mof.gov.cn/zhengwuxinxi/benbugaikuang/>>; and Davies, M. et al., *How China Delivers Development Assistance to Africa* (University of Stellenbosch, Centre for Chinese Studies: Stellenbosch, Feb. 2008).

⁵⁰ Mid-level PLA official, Interview with author, Beijing, 19 Sep. 2009; Mid-level PLA official, Interview with author, Beijing, 12 May 2010; Chinese ministry official (note 20); and Chinese professor of politics, Interview with author, Beijing, 24 May 2010.

⁵¹ Senior researcher at Chinese government institute, Interview with author, Beijing, 10 May 2010; and Chinese professor of politics (note 50).

⁵² 'Geng Huichang 耿惠昌', China Vitae, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Geng_Huichang>.

⁵³ Li, N., *Chinese Civil–Military Relations in the Post-Deng Era: Implications for Crisis Management and Naval Modernization*, China Maritime Studies, no. 4 (US Naval War College: Newport, RI, 2010).

⁵⁴ For a complete list of past PSCs see 中国共产党历届中央委员大辞典 1921–2003 [Dictionary of past CPC Central Committee members, 1921–2003] (CPC Party History Press: Beijing, 2004).

⁵⁵ Senior PLA official, Interview with author, Beijing, 5 May 2010; Chinese research institution head, Interview with author, Beijing, 17 Jan. 2010; and Beijing-based US China scholar, Interview with author, Beijing, 5 May 2010. See also Mulvenon, J., 'Rogue warriors? A puzzled look at the Chinese ASAT test', *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 20 (winter 2007).

unquestioned authority.⁵⁶ The PLA still holds sway in these and other defence-related foreign policy issues, particularly with respect to policies related to strategic arms, territorial disputes and national security towards countries such as India, Japan, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia and the USA.⁵⁷ In particular, the PLA is a staunch advocate of a hard line towards Taiwan and perceived US interference in cross-Strait relations.⁵⁸

As the highest CPC body overseeing defence policy and military strategy, the Central Military Commission is responsible for the unified command of the Chinese armed forces. It remains an important channel for PLA influence on foreign policy.⁵⁹ Meetings of the entire CMC, held on average six times per year and lasting for several days, are the most significant institutionalized interaction the PLA has with China's supreme leader (who in recent history has also usually been the CMC chairman). Hu Jintao is presently the only civilian on the 11-member commission.⁶⁰ While the CMC, like the PLA as a whole, has historically been dominated by the ground forces, in 2002 the air force, navy and Second Artillery Corps (China's strategic missile forces) were each given CMC representation.⁶¹ This reflected their elevated status and their role in foreign policy formulation as the PLA branches responsible for new or enhanced military capabilities and strategic programmes, including anti-satellite and ballistic missile defence tests and over-seas naval deployments.⁶²

In addition to the CMC, the PLA can also insert itself into foreign policy decision-making processes via the LSGs, although its effectiveness in these groups is questionable. While the PLA presence in the FALSG and the TALSG is as large as that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the MFA representatives outrank the military in both bodies.⁶³ On the FALSG the military is presumed to be represented by the minister of national defence and a PLA deputy chief of staff, and on the TALSG by a PLA deputy chief of staff.⁶⁴ The extent to which the

⁵⁶ Gill, B., 'Two steps forward, one step back: the dynamics of Chinese nonproliferation and arms control policy-making in an era of reform', ed. D. M. Lampton, *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978–2000* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA, 2001), pp. 257–88.

⁵⁷ Senior PLA official (note 55); and Mid-level PLA official, 12 May 2010 (note 50).

⁵⁸ See e.g. Luo, Y. (罗援), '在台湾问题上我们不能高枕无忧' [We should not rest without worries on Taiwan issue], 中国选举与治理网 [China Election and Governance], 25 Nov. 2009, <<http://www.chinaelections.org/newsinfo.asp?newsid=161914>>.

⁵⁹ On the CMC see Li, N., 'The Central Military Commission and military policy in China', eds J. C. Mulvenon and A. N. D. Yang, *The People's Liberation Army as Organization* (RAND: Santa Monica, CA, 2002), pp. 45–94.

⁶⁰ Officially, both the CPC and the government have their own CMCs, although the memberships are identical. For further discussion of the CMC see Shambaugh, D., *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2002), pp. 110–24.

⁶¹ 'CPC Central Military Commission', China Vitae, <<http://www.chinavitae.com/library/>>.

⁶² China's Jan. 2007 anti-satellite test ran counter to its historical advocacy of an international ban on space weapons. The Dec. 2008 deployment of naval vessels to participate in international anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden initiated a process that has stretched China's interpretation of non-interference, one of its long-standing foreign policy pillars.

⁶³ On the FALSG, while both Dai Bingguo and Liang Guanglie are state councillors, Dai is also secretary general of the FALSG and head of the Foreign Affairs Office.

⁶⁴ The PLA reportedly succeeded in placing a CMC vice-chairman on the TALSG from 2000 to 2008 but then lost its second and more prestigious seat for reasons that remain unclear. Early attempts to upgrade the PLA's TALSG representation are noted in Cheung, T. M., 'The influence of the gun: China's Central Military

minister of national defence fully represents the PLA is questionable, given that the current minister is only a rank-and-file CMC member, unlike past ministers who served as vice-chairmen. In addition, he leads a largely symbolic organization that is tasked with formal interaction with the ministry's foreign counterparts and coordination of defence-related policy with other government entities. The deputy chief of staff would rank below the Politburo members, state councilors and ministers (which make up a substantial portion of the body), complicating his task of defending PLA interests.

Substantial portions of PLA views are transmitted to civilian leaders via internal, non-public channels. The National Defence University and the Academy of Military Science, which are represented on the CMC, submit reports directly to the military leadership. Organizations and individuals in the services and general departments—particularly the staff of research institutions, PLA journalists and other officers—file reports intended for the CMC through their chain of command or publish articles in PLA publications. The CMC General Office's research arm, which collects information for the CMC, can also directly commission reports or make policy suggestions of its own.⁶⁵ An officer can also send a policy memo directly to the civilian leadership—an audacious move that can occasionally lead to a rare face-to-face meeting with top political leaders.⁶⁶ Public advocacy and direct appeal to top leaders are risky tactics, however. If the proposal in question is poorly received by senior officials, the author faces possible rejection and, in some cases, punishment—including denial of permission for public presentations or travel abroad.⁶⁷

Professionalization of the PLA has neither led to a reluctance on the part of military officers to become involved in public foreign policy debates nor resulted in the emergence of a monolithic PLA pressure group on Chinese foreign policy issues.⁶⁸ On the contrary, in recent years the PLA has increasingly tried to influence the public debate about national security issues by publicly disseminating analysis by PLA research institutions as well as allowing officers to write divergent commentaries in prominent newspapers and serve as television commentators. Despite this, PLA servicemen are not allowed to maintain their own Internet blogs.⁶⁹ The PLA has also actively cultivated relationships with civilian researchers by allowing officers to participate in debates at civilian research institutions and inviting civilian researchers to lecture at and take part in PLA workshops.⁷⁰

Commission and its relationship with the military, party, and state decision-making systems', ed. Lampton (note 56), p. 67.

⁶⁵ Li (note 59).

⁶⁶ Senior PLA official (note 55).

⁶⁷ According to a senior PLA official, both military and political leaders disapproved of 'emotional outbursts' in the media by PLA officers in recent years. The official expected such behaviour to be curtailed. Senior PLA official (note 55).

⁶⁸ For a discussion of these predictions see Mulvenon, J. C., *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps: Trends and Implications* (RAND: Santa Monica, CA, 1997), pp. 76–77.

⁶⁹ See '战友，请删除你的博客' [Serviceman, please delete your blog], 解放军报 [PLA Daily], 25 June 2010.

⁷⁰ Senior PLA official (note 55); and Mid-level PLA official, 12 May 2010 (note 50).

In May 2009 Professor Jin Canrong of Renmin University noted the importance of the PLA, or as he called them ‘guys in uniform’, when he listed three types of new foreign policy actors: netizens (*wangmin*), shareholders (*gumin*) and the military (*junmin*).⁷¹ In a follow-up research interview, Jin explained that, although the PLA has always been an actor in foreign policy deliberations in China, he considers them a ‘new’ actor because of the transformation of the PLA in recent years to a more professional military and because of the PLA’s increasing contacts and cooperation with the outside world. The combined effect of professionalism and international contact has somewhat de-emphasized the ideological outlook of the PLA. As a result, Jin envisions the PLA adopting new perceptions of Chinese national interests and viewing itself as the final guarantor of those national interests. He expects the mindset of the military to develop along a dual-track trajectory with regard to national interests: one track that becomes more nationalistic and another that becomes more willing to engage in international cooperation and dialogue.⁷² The PLA’s interactions with foreign militaries has enabled China to emphasize the peaceful nature of its development and also at times to express China’s displeasure with the policies of other countries, notably by cancelling military-to-military contacts with the USA.⁷³

Two PLA officers and a senior researcher who is consulted regularly by government officials disagree with Jin’s description of the PLA as a new foreign policy actor, saying that the PLA still considers itself an integral part of the Communist Party.⁷⁴ Top military leaders are political appointees who must follow the Party line, and the prime mission of the PLA is to protect the Party.⁷⁵ In his internal discussions with policymakers, the senior researcher had advocated that the PLA be transformed into a national army and that its prime mission be to protect the interests of Chinese citizens. However, the two PLA officers said that such a vision would not materialize as long as the CPC was in power.⁷⁶

As China’s integration in the international community has intensified, it has become increasingly imperative for Chinese authorities to swiftly communicate with the outside world in crisis situations. At the same time, as the PLA’s role in foreign policy evolves, concerns have arisen about its willingness to communicate fully with the civilian leadership.⁷⁷ On several occasions over the past decade the PLA has initiated, escalated or delayed tense international situations

⁷¹ Jin, C., Presentation at the launch event of the SIPRI China and Global Security Programme, Stockholm, 8 May 2009.

⁷² Jin, C., Interview with author, Beijing, 7 Sep. 2009.

⁷³ The PLA has engaged in extensive military-to-military diplomacy with, among others, members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. China has repeatedly cut off such relations with the USA in protest at arms sales to Taiwan. See Minnick, W., ‘At Shangri-La dialogue, Gates challenges China to improve military relations’, *Defense News*, 7 June 2010.

⁷⁴ Active duty PLA officer, Interview with author, Langfeng, 18 Sep. 2009; Senior PLA official (note 55); and Senior researcher/government consultant, Interview with author, Beijing, 19 Sep. 2009.

⁷⁵ The first of the PLA’s 4 ‘new historic missions’ assigned by Hu Jintao is to ‘provide critical, powerful backing for the Party’s consolidation of its ruling status’. Hu, J., ‘认清新世纪新阶段我军历史使命’ [Recognizing the PLA’s new historic missions in a new century and era], Speech before the Central Military Commission, 24 Dec. 2004. The transcript of the original speech was not officially published.

⁷⁶ Senior PLA official (note 55); and Active duty PLA officer (note 74), 20 Apr. 2010.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of interactions between the state and the PLA in times of crisis see Li (note 53).

(whether intentionally or not)—for example, in 2001, after a US reconnaissance plane made an emergency landing on Hainan Island, and in 2007, after the PLA shot down a Chinese weather satellite. Among Western analysts a view has emerged that the PLA withheld critical information during the Hainan crisis in an attempt to pressure the political leadership into taking a forceful stance against the USA.⁷⁸ In 2007, after China's first successful test of an anti-satellite weapon, the government made no comment on the interception for nearly two weeks. While Hu Jintao almost certainly knew about the test in advance, several interviewees and Western observers presume that the delayed official announcement was due to a lack of coordination and communication between the PLA and MFA.⁷⁹ Moreover constant international scrutiny of the PLA's actions tends to cast a shadow on the PLA's intentions, meaning that even minor actions by the PLA have foreign policy consequences.

Within the PLA the weight of the PLAN has increased in tandem with growing recognition of the importance of maritime security by the political leadership. The PLAN has in recent years been party to repeated disputes with Japan, South East Asian countries and the USA over maritime sovereignty in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. For example, in 2009 Chinese vessels that were provoking the US survey ship *Impeccable* came close to instigating a collision in China's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). China interprets the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as granting it extensive rights in its EEZ. The USA, on the other hand, recognizes high seas freedom of movement in EEZs.⁸⁰ Such acts have raised tensions between China and the USA.⁸¹ PLAN submarines have also been active outside Chinese waters, illegally entering Japanese territorial waters while submerged in 2004 and repeatedly shadowing US naval ships.⁸² It is unclear whether these cases represent isolated incidents or a deliberate campaign to force the political leadership to take a stand on what the PLA perceives as China's core interests, given how little is known about the Chinese chain of command in military events related to foreign policy.

⁷⁸ Mulvenon, J., 'Civil-military relations and the EP-3 crisis: a content analysis', *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 1 (winter 2002); and Keefe, J. 'A tale of "two very sorries" redux', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 165, no. 11 (21 Mar. 2002), pp. 30-33.

⁷⁹ Senior PLA official (note 55); Swaine, M., 'Assessing the meaning of the Chinese ASAT', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 7 Feb. 2007, <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/?fa=view&id=19006>>; and Gill, B. and Kleiber, M., 'China's space odyssey: what the antisatellite test reveals about decision-making in Beijing', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 3 (May-June 2007).

⁸⁰ According to the US Department of Defense, 'A civilian crew mans the ship, which operates under the auspices of the Military Sealift Command.' Garamone, J., 'Chinese vessels shadow, harass unarmed US survey ship', American Forces Press Service, 9 Mar. 2009, <<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=53401>>; and '剖析南海间谍船事件 "揭美无暇"号真面目' [An analysis of the spy ship incident on South China Sea and the true face of the US 'Impeccable'], 中国评论新闻网 [China Review News], 12 Mar. 2009iv.

⁸¹ Starr, B., 'Chinese boats harassed U.S. ship, officials say', CNN.com, 5 May 2009, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/05/05/china.maritime.harassment/index.html>>; and Macartney, J., 'Chinese and American ships clash again in Yellow Sea', *The Times*, 6 May 2009.

⁸² Curtin, J. S., 'Submarine puts Japan-China ties into a dive', *Asia Times*, 17 Nov. 2004.

3. Factors influencing the mindset of foreign policy actors

There are a number of factors that influence both the mindset of foreign policy actors and the decision-making processes with which they are involved. The most important factors are the need for consensus in decision making, the significance of personal and political relationships, the impact of education (both at home and abroad) and the CPC's interpretation of history.

Consensus-driven decision making

The consensus-driven nature of Chinese decision making requires an enormous amount of discussion and bargaining to reach a compromise acceptable to all parties concerned. Decision-making entities, from the Politburo down to those addressing less important or less sensitive foreign policy issues, strive to achieve consensus or, at least, the illusion of it. A failure to reach consensus often means agreeing to postpone a decision to enable further study of the matter. In writing memos and proposals, officials rely on vague language to facilitate compromise but also to avoid responsibility for a stance that could end up being regarded as contrary to the mainstream view.⁸³ In the words of a ministry official, 'one is taught early on in one's career that "the taller the tree, the more wind it attracts"'.⁸⁴

Even Hu Jintao must seek consensus in the name of collective leadership—despite his supreme position as leader of the CPC, state and military—to maintain CPC unity or, at a minimum, enough harmony among the various CPC factions and other elites to ensure loyalty. As a result, decision-making processes on sensitive issues are lengthy and complicated. Sometimes they end in deadlock.

Such a deadlock appears to have been the case in early 2010 following the sinking of a South Korean naval vessel in March. China's initial reaction was non-committal, saying only that 'all parties should stay calm, exercise restraint and properly handle relevant issues so as to avoid the escalation of the situation'.⁸⁵ Then, in May, China allowed several days to pass without official comment on an international investigation's conclusion that a North Korean torpedo had struck the ship. According to Chinese researchers, China's silence was due to the inability of the top leadership to reach a consensus on how to react.⁸⁶ Within

⁸³ Chinese ministry official, Interview with author, Beijing, 5 May 2010. See also Pye, L. W., 'Authority, self-discipline, and order', *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, 2nd edn (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 85–106.

⁸⁴ Chinese ministry official (note 83). The saying is a well-known Chinese idiom.

⁸⁵ Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu's Regular Press Conference', 20 May 2010, <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t696115.htm>>. See also Glaser, B. S. and Glosserman, B., 'China's Cheonan problem', *PacNet*, no. 31 (18 June 2010).

⁸⁶ Several research interviewees have described North Korea as the most divisive issue in Chinese foreign policy. As in the case of the nuclear test, lower-level officials reportedly push controversial decisions upwards until top leaders are forced to make a choice. Chinese professor of international relations, Inter-

China's civilian leadership, there were those, among others Wang Jiarui (head of the Party's International Department), who supported the military's view that North Korea has legitimate concerns about its security being threatened by the United States and that it is not in China's interests to condemn its ally. Other top civilian leaders were reportedly of the view that China cannot stand by and be seen as tolerating an indiscriminate attack by North Korea on a South Korean vessel.⁸⁷

The weaknesses of consensus-driven policy making are discussed candidly by both Chinese officials and academics. In Hu's words, the system of 'collective leadership with division of responsibilities among individuals' should be improved in order to 'prevent arbitrary decision making by an individual or a minority of people'.⁸⁸ In an article on the website of the primary theory journal of the CPC, one researcher lamented that collective decision making can lead to 'ridiculously wrong' outcomes and groupthink, because 'when most people think the same way, nobody will think too seriously'. The article also points out that 'worship of superiority, sensitivity to blind faith in authority and desire to conform with leaders' are important reasons for failings in collective leadership.⁸⁹

Informal channels and allegiances

Attempts to institutionalize decision-making processes have been ongoing within both the CPC and the government ever since Deng Xiaoping initiated the reform and opening policy in the late 1970s. Despite these efforts, informal channels of influence remain an extremely important avenue for influencing foreign policy decision making. This was underlined in each of the authors' 71 research interviews with the exception of one ministry official.⁹⁰ However, most interlocutors emphasized the importance of utilizing both formal and informal channels. Thus, while the formal, consensus-driven decision-making process at the highest echelons of power requires both time and the willingness to compromise, a political system based on personal relationships demands that one looks after the interests of one's own network. Both of these factors need to be considered by foreign policy actors vying to influence foreign policy formulation.

Weak collaboration between government and Party organizations plagues official decision-making processes at every level. Bureaucratic rivalry is a prob-

view with author, Beijing, 24 Mar. 2010; and Chinese professor of international relations, Interview with author, Stockholm, 9 June 2010.

⁸⁷ Chinese senior researcher specializing in Chinese foreign policy, Personal communication with author, 28 May 2010; Chinese researcher specializing in North East Asia, Personal communication with author, 29 May 2010; and Chinese researcher at PLA think tank, Personal communication with author, 30 May 2010. See also Landler, M., 'U.S. stands with an ally, eager for China to join the line', *New York Times*, 27 May 2010.

⁸⁸ Hu, J., 'Part XII: Comprehensively carrying forward the great new undertaking to build the party in a spirit of reform and innovation', Report at 17th Party Congress, Xinhua, 24 Oct. 2007, <http://news.xinhua.net.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749_11.htm>.

⁸⁹ Tang, L. (唐龙文), '集体决策偏差与个人专权问题探析' [An analysis of the disadvantages of collective decision making and individual hegemony], 求是理论网 [Seeking Truth online], 26 May 2010, <http://www.qstheory.cn/lq/zl/201005/t20100526_31106.htm> (authors' translation).

⁹⁰ Interviews with authors (note 3).

lem in all countries, but in China it is accentuated by the lack of transparency in a predominantly top-down political system in which access to funds and economic benefits, and ultimately power within the system, is fiercely contested. Privilege and power based on relationships (*guanxi*) and patronage have traditionally been and still are endemic in Chinese society.⁹¹ Not only do a person's chances of promotion and increased benefits depend on a labyrinth of personal connections; the ability to influence decisions pertaining to his or her work also requires nurturing these connections.

Scrutiny of an official's family ties, hometown, former classmates and career path reveals much about his or her *guanxi* networks. For example, Zhou Yongkang was mentioned by several research interviewees as the top decision maker whom Chinese oil company leaders lobby.⁹² Zhou, a PSC member since 2007, worked for over 30 years in the oil industry and headed China National Petroleum Corporation before being appointed the minister of land and resources in 1998. Another example of *guanxi* is the personal connection between Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Guangya, former classmates at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).⁹³

Because of the importance of personal networks, allegiance is owed to mentors even after they have moved on to other posts or are no longer in official positions of power. For example, all Politburo documents still go to former CPC General Secretary and President Jiang Zemin, who reportedly still at times marks his comments on foreign policy documents.⁹⁴

Education

Education is a self-evident factor that influences the mindset of decision makers the world over. Among 21st century Chinese leaders, technical competence is giving way to more diverse expertise. Whereas all members of the previous PSC were engineers by training, the current PSC includes for the first time two members with doctorates—one in economics and another in law.⁹⁵ An improve-

⁹¹ Jakobson, L., 'China aims high in science and technology', ed. L. Jakobson, *Innovation with Chinese Characteristics: High-Tech Research in China* (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, 2007), pp. 8, 22. See also Pye, L. W., 'Factions and the politics of *guanxi*: paradoxes in Chinese administrative and political behaviour', *China Journal*, no. 34 (July 1995), pp. 35–53; Jin, A. (金爱慧) and Zhao, L. (赵连章), '论中国传统人际关系对腐败的影响' [On the influence of the traditional interpersonal relationship on the corruption of China], *东北师范大学学报 (哲学社会科学版)* [Journal of Northeast Normal University (philosophy and social sciences edition)], vol. 244, no. 2 (2010), pp. 7–9; and Yu, C. (虞崇胜), '潜规则下的熟人社会' [The hidden rules of social acquaintances], ed. L. Jia (贾立政), *论剑：新视野下的中国大战略* [Debate: a new perspective on Chinese grand strategy] (People's Daily Press: Beijing 2007).

⁹² E.g. Oil industry representative, Interview with author, Beijing, 1 Apr. 2010; Chinese ministry official (note 20); and 'Zhou Yongkang 周永康', *China Vitae*, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Zhou_Yongkang>.

⁹³ 'Yang Jiechi 杨洁篪' (note 25); and 'Wang Guangya 王光亚', *China Vitae*, <http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Wang_Guangya>.

⁹⁴ Chinese senior researcher who advises the government, Interview with author, Beijing, 24 Nov. 2009; and Chinese ministry official (note 20).

⁹⁵ Li Keqiang holds a doctoral degree in economics from Peking University and Xi Jinping holds a doctoral degree in law from Tsinghua University. See '李克强简历' [Biography of Li Keqiang], *Xinhua*, <<http://>

ment in educational level is also apparent among 2007 Central Committee members.⁹⁶ However, no one on the present Central Committee has a degree in international relations except Wang Yi, who heads the combined Taiwan office of the Party and state. Eight other Central Committee members have internationally oriented degrees in fields such as politics, law, business, news and economics.⁹⁷

Of the 203 full members on the Central Committee, 85 per cent (172) have at least an undergraduate education.⁹⁸ A total of 89 members have higher degrees: 73 master's degrees and 16 doctorates. These figures, however, are distorted because they include diplomas from the Central Party School (CPS) and other Party institutions, which have low educational standards. Nearly 20 per cent of all Central Committee members received their highest degrees from Party schools, leading to significant credential inflation. For example, the undergraduate education of the Politburo member responsible for the CPC's Publicity Department, Liu Yunshan, is solely based on short-term or correspondence studies at the Party school.⁹⁹ Credential inflation is particularly severe at the master's level, where over one-third of all master's degrees are granted by Party schools. The Ministry of Education has struggled unsuccessfully for over two decades to separately classify Party institutions from regular universities because of their emphasis on ideology.¹⁰⁰ Thus, while statistics indicate a rise in decision makers' level of education, it is noteworthy that the education of Chinese leaders continues to be dominated by teaching in ideology.

Continued education in CPC schools is 'a critically important organizational device through which the CPC maintains control' of Party members in the government.¹⁰¹ The CPS plays an important role in foreign policy due to its role in annually training hundreds of mid- and high-level officials. It schools ministerial leaders, leaders of sub-national governments, various party secretaries and

news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-02/25/content_289095.htm>; and '习近平简历' [Biography of Xi Jinping], Xinhua, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-02/22/content_286763.htm>.

⁹⁶ While the percentage of Central Committee members with higher education appeared to fall from 99% in the 16th Committee (2002–2007) to 92% in the 17th Committee (2007–12), this was because of a change in the definition of higher education, from a 3-year degree (大专) to a 4-year degree (大学). See '中新社：新世纪·新班子·新特点' [China News Service: new century, new leadership and new characteristics], 人民网 [People's Daily online], 15 Nov. 2002, <<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/8956/9419/20021115/867131.html>>; and '新一届中共中央委员会和中共中央纪律检查委员会诞生记' [The birth of the new CPC Central Committee and CPC Central Discipline Inspection Commission], Xinhua, 21 Oct. 2007, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-10/21/content_6918611_4.htm>.

⁹⁷ Liu Binjie (柳斌杰), Gao Qiang (高强), Guo Gengmao (郭庚茂) and Cai Wu (蔡武) have undergraduate degrees in Western economics, world economics, international politics and international politics, respectively. Hu Chunhua (胡春华) has a master's degree in world economics from the Central Party School. Cao Jianming (曹建明) and Peng Qinghua (彭清华) have master's degrees in international law and international business, respectively. Bo Xilai (薄熙来) has both an undergraduate degree in world history and a master's degree in international news.

⁹⁸ Official reports only provide combined educational data for full and alternate Central Committee members. Alternates are significantly better educated, thus skewing the data. See Xinhua (note 96).

⁹⁹ Xinhua, '刘云山简历' [Liu Yunshan bio], <http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-10/24/content_607117.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ Bo, Z., *China's Elite Politics: Governance and Democratization* (World Scientific: Singapore, 2010), p. 86fn3. For a discussion of corruption, truancy and so-called 'correspondence courses' in the Party school system see Shambaugh, D., *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (University of California Press: Ewing, CA, 2008), pp. 146–47.

¹⁰¹ Shambaugh (note 100), p. 143.

‘young cadres at the central level before promotion to vice ministerial or the equivalent level’.¹⁰² In 2000 the CPC Central Committee ordered the CPS to implement a new curriculum and the school has since taught a diverse range of subjects including market economy and international law. Nevertheless, courses related to such subjects as Marxism–Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and Jiang Zemin’s theoretical contributions are still prevalent.¹⁰³ Hu Jintao has said ‘Party schools should act as an important theoretical academy’ for the CPC.¹⁰⁴

The CPC devotes enormous efforts and resources to steering and moulding the thoughts of both policymakers and the populace. Propaganda and ‘thought work’ (the term used in China for ideological work) are ‘the very life blood of the Party–State’. Maoist era propaganda has given way to ‘the use of reason, persuasion, giving praise as well as pertinent criticism, making comparisons, promoting discussion and making appeals to emotion’.¹⁰⁵ Culture and entertainment continue to be important tools for transmitting political messages.

Political education of the citizenry related to China’s relations with the outside world is paradoxical. On the one hand, Chinese young and old are repeatedly told by CPC officials that mutual trust and respect are key components in the ‘harmonious world’ that China is intent on building. On the other hand, the CPC regularly instructs the citizenry never to forget the legacy of the ‘century of humiliation’, during which China suffered at the hands of Japan and Western powers from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries. School children are versed in the details of Japanese atrocities and Western discriminatory acts during this period. Adults, in turn, are reminded of it by a steady flow of new books, plays, films, documentaries, museum exhibitions and theme parks, many of which receive CPC or government funding. While this culture of humiliation has bred ‘a very deliberate celebration of national insecurity’, the CPC also stresses the pride that the Chinese should feel over the remarkable accomplishments of the past 60 years under CPC rule.¹⁰⁶ This dual identity, which Jing Men describes as a strange combination of self-superiority and self-inferiority, is an undercurrent affecting decision makers in contemporary China.¹⁰⁷ According to Wang Yizhou, ‘sweeping away the humiliation from the old time is one of the primary missions of contemporary Chinese leaders and every Chinese diplomat’.¹⁰⁸ The impact of this undercurrent is evident in public opinion, which swings between denunci-

¹⁰² Shambaugh (note 100), p. 149.

¹⁰³ Central Party School, ‘中央党校概况’ [CPS introduction], 13 Mar. 2008, <<http://www.ccps.gov.cn/dxgk/index.htm>>.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Hu Jintao urges Party schools to play more important roles in country’s development’, Xinhua, 28 Oct. 2008, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/28/content_10262878.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ Brady, A.-M., *Marketing Dictatorship, Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD, 2008) pp. 1, 71.

¹⁰⁶ Callahan, W., ‘National insecurities: humiliation, salvation and Chinese nationalism’, *Alternatives*, no. 29 (2004), p. 199.

¹⁰⁷ Men, J., ‘China’s peaceful rise?’, *Studia Diplomatica*, vol. 56, no. 6 (2003), p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Wang, Y. (王逸舟), ‘中国外交影响因子探析’ [An analysis of China’s foreign policy factors], *世界经济与政治* [World Economics and Politics], vol. 349, no. 9 (2009), p. 11. (authors’ translation).

ation of overbearing, more powerful countries and insistence that China should demand more of the international community.

The influence of the CPC's interpretation of history on China's foreign policy is evident not only with regard to Japan and the West, but also Taiwan's unresolved future status. In addition to having heard from childhood that 'Taiwan is an inalienable part of China', Chinese people have also been taught that the USA grossly interferes in China's internal affairs and obstructs the peaceful reunification of China by, among other things, its arms sales to Taiwan. For example, after US arms sales to Taiwan were announced in January 2010, one academic commented, 'the primary external hindrance for Chinese national unification is the USA . . . if not for US interference, there would be no Taiwan issue'.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, nationalistic sentiment is also mobilized by Chinese officials on select international issues to further the government's interests.¹¹⁰ Nationalism is, however, a dangerous tool because nationalistic groups can also direct their emotions at the government, criticizing it for being too weak and demanding that it stand up to other governments.¹¹¹ (For more on public opinion and nationalism see chapter 4.)

Foreign education and experience

Alongside the CPC's public education and internal Party education for officials, foreign education has started to influence the mindset of decision makers. As a result of Deng Xiaoping's opening policy, nearly 1.4 million Chinese students have gone abroad to study in the past three decades.¹¹² About 390 000 have returned, some of them to influential CPC and government positions. Of the 203 full members of the Central Committee, five are known to have some experience studying abroad and two have PhDs from universities in the West.¹¹³ Among today's foreign policy shapers, Dai Bingguo worked in Moscow and Budapest as a diplomat, but he did not study abroad; Yang Jiechi pursued research studies at Bath University and the LSE; Wang Huning was a visiting fellow at the University of Iowa and University of California at Berkeley; and Wang Yi spent six months as a visiting scholar at Georgetown University.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Niu, J. (牛军), '中美关系影响中国前途' [China-US relations affect China's future], 环球时报 [Global Times], 3 Sep. 2006, (authors' translation).

¹¹⁰ Hao, Y. and Lin, S., *Chinese Foreign Policy Making: Societal Force and Chinese American Policy* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2005), p. 101.

¹¹¹ See e.g. Shang, H. (商汉), '南海成各国对华侦察前沿中国主权主张应增强' [The South Sea has become a front for surveillance of China by many countries; China's claim of sovereignty should be strengthened], 国际先驱导报 [International Herald Leader], 12 Mar. 2009. A number of Chinese online posts directly criticized the Chinese Government's weak standpoint, which they argue has led to the current situation in the South China Sea. See e.g. '南海局势 中国软弱的后果' [The situation in the South China Sea is the result of China's softness], 新浪博客 [Sina Blog], 23 Mar. 2009, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_42706b020100d99j.html>; and '中国在南海问题上不得示弱' [China cannot appear weak in the South China Sea issue], 天涯论坛 [Tianya online forum], 21 Mar. 2009, <<http://www.tianya.cn/publicforum/content/worldlook/1/212583.shtml>>.

¹¹² Chinese Ministry of Education, '出国留学工作简介' [Summary of study abroad work], 11 Nov. 2009, <<http://www.moe.gov.cn/edoas/website18/68/info12168.htm>>.

¹¹³ Authors' database. For an analysis including alternate members see Bo (note 100), pp. 61–66.

¹¹⁴ 'Yang Jiechi 杨洁篪' (note 25); 'Wang Huning: Secretariat member of CPC Central Committee', <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/6288537.html>>; and '王毅任外交部副部长 免傅雯娟建设

Among Chinese economic leaders, a visiting fellowship at or degree from a Western university is now common.¹¹⁵ Moreover, many prominent academics at leading Chinese universities and research institutions have pursued graduate or research studies abroad. In 2009 three-quarters of the presidents of institutions of higher education and academicians at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering as well as nearly two-thirds of doctoral advisors had experience studying overseas.¹¹⁶ Despite the increasing numbers of people seeking overseas study, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not unequivocally endorse a foreign degree. Until the mid-2000s, the MFA did not employ people who had obtained an overseas degree without state sponsorship. Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi advocated abolishing the rule. At Yang's behest, the MFA started to conduct research on re-evaluating this policy in 2005, and it was subsequently overturned. Whether or not Yang's view is a result of his own overseas study experience is not known.¹¹⁷

While foreign experience is generally looked on as broadening a person's outlook, it can also lead to defensiveness about one's own country and a hardening of attitudes towards the outside world.¹¹⁸ Many Chinese international relations scholars with nationalist views, such as Yan Xuotong, were among a wave of returnees with US PhDs in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the first-hand foreign knowledge that even the small number of influential returnees (*haigu*) have is a new facet of the Chinese foreign policy establishment. Coupled with the dramatically growing interaction between foreigners and Chinese citizens from all walks of life, both at home and abroad, foreign-educated Chinese people reflect China's increasing integration with the outside world.

部副部长职务' [Wang Yi appointed MFA vice-minister, assumes Fu Wenjuan's responsibilities], 中央政府门户网站 [The Central People's Government of PRC web portal], 27 Sep. 2007, <http://www.gov.cn/rsrm/2007-09/27/content_763194.htm>.

¹¹⁵ Examples include PBC head Zhou Xiaochuan, State Administration of Taxation director Xiao Jie, SAFE director Yi Gang, and Financial and Economic Affairs Office deputy director Liu He. Li, C., 'Shaping China's foreign policy: the paradoxical role of foreign-educated returnees', *Asia Policy*, no. 10 (July 2010), pp. 65–85.

¹¹⁶ 'Chinese students studying abroad exceed 1.39 million', *People's Daily*, 26 Mar. 2009.

¹¹⁷ Senior Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Interview with the author, 11 May 2010. See also 'Yang Jiechi 杨洁篪' (note 25). Whether overseas experience remains an obstacle during the hiring process is difficult to determine. See '外交部2005年考试录用国家公务员常见问题' [Common questions on 2005 MFA national civil servants recruitment], *Xinhua*, 23 Aug. 2004, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-08/23/content_1863629.htm>; and '外交部招考外交官取消歧视性条件: 不再限定生源' [Ministry of Foreign Affairs abolished biased recruitment requirement: origin of students is no longer limited], 公务员考试网在线 [Civil Service Exam Online], 23 Sep. 2005, <<http://www.gwyks.com/article/7419/>>.

¹¹⁸ Bennett, M. J., 'A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1986), pp. 179–96.

4. Foreign policy actors on the margins

In addition to the official foreign policy actors within the government, Party and PLA, there are a host of other actors on the margins who strive to influence foreign policy decision-making processes. These new actors operate outside the official realm of the foreign policy establishment and include Chinese state-owned enterprises, financial institutions and energy companies, local governments, research institutions, and media and netizens. This chapter explores the role of these emergent foreign policy actors in China.

The business sector

The extensive overseas activities of SOEs have become a consideration in the formulation of China's foreign policy. Although businesses are actors on the margins in the vast majority of foreign policy decisions, most interviewees regarded commercial motives as having a growing impact on policies, in particular towards states where China's relationship is dominated by economic ties. The state relies on commercial engagement to advance broader foreign policy and security agendas. It is also in the state's interest to support the overseas expansion of Chinese companies. This pertains to all major Chinese companies, regardless of whether they are state-owned or private, but SOEs and government-controlled banks are the most relevant in an analysis of actors influencing foreign policy because they dominate strategic industries in China's commercial outreach. While SOEs are, in principle, subordinate to either central or local government, the pressure to maintain profitability can at times provide an incentive for SOEs to define China's interests narrowly in contrast to the more extensive agenda that foreign policy officials must consider.

Large SOEs under the central government tend to have closer ties with Beijing's political elite than their smaller counterparts, particularly in strategic industries such as petroleum, minerals, nuclear power and defence. In certain cases, such as in the formulation of China's energy security policy, SOEs can exert a limited influence on foreign policy because SOE leaders are members of official decision-making bodies.¹¹⁹ These executives are consulted because of their specialized expertise and are, therefore, present when relevant foreign policy issues are deliberated.

The top management of large SOEs and the political leadership have a symbiotic relationship, and it is not always clear who is in the driver's seat when decisions are made.¹²⁰ On the one hand, SOEs are subordinate to political authority because, at least in theory, they must seek government approval for large

¹¹⁹ Bo (note 100), p. 122.

¹²⁰ Jakobson, L., 'Does China have an "energy diplomacy"? Reflections on China's energy security and its international dimensions', ed. A. Marquina, *Energy Security: Visions from Asia and Europe* (Palgrave: Houndmills, 2008), pp. 123–124; and Downs, E., *China*, Brookings Foreign Policy Series—Energy Security Studies (Brookings Institution: Washington, DC, 2006), pp. 21–24.

overseas investments.¹²¹ Executives of SOEs under the central government—such as the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) or Baosteel (China's largest steel company)—are appointed by the CPC Organization Department.¹²² Many SOE leaders hold ministerial or vice-ministerial rank, and some serve as alternate members of the CPC Central Committee.¹²³ Moreover, SOEs benefit enormously from state support for large business deals, particularly in strategic sectors. This support can entail favourable loans or credit guarantees, the backing of top political leaders, or offers of development aid packages to target countries where a deal is under consideration. Chinese aid often includes large infrastructure projects that are financed by Chinese banks and carried out by Chinese companies.¹²⁴ On the other hand, the political leadership is dependent on successful SOEs. National SOEs, for example, are wealthy entities that employ hundreds of thousands of people and provide the government with one-sixth of its total revenue.¹²⁵

Chinese business executives in both the state-owned and private sectors maintain close ties with high-ranking officials in order to operate effectively, as do their counterparts the world over.¹²⁶ However, executives do not seek a role in foreign policy deliberations unless they have a direct stake in the issue. Chinese policymakers often have to prod reluctant business representatives to participate in official working groups that deliberate energy and food security issues.¹²⁷

¹²¹ According to an interviewee who is familiar with Fu Chengyu, the CEO of the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), in 2009 Fu submitted an investment for approval according to formal procedures and was 'annoyed' when it was rejected, convincing him that abiding by the rules is less effective than informal channels. Senior researcher at Chinese government institute, Interview with author, Beijing, 6 May 2010 (authors' translation).

¹²² Qiu, B., Chen, J. and Guo, Y., '中石油主要领导调整 蒋洁敏任总经理、党组书记' [Adjustment of CNPC top leaders; Jiang Jiemin appointed general manager, party secretary], 人民网 [People's Daily online], 21 Nov. 2006, <<http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/41223/5068451.html>>; Baosteel, '党中央国务院对宝钢主要领导调整的决定' [Decision by the Party Central Committee and State Council on Baosteel's top leaders], 16 Jan. 2007, <<http://www.baosteel.com/plc/02news/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=770>>. As of 2008, executives of all ministry-level SOEs were appointed by the Organization Department with the approval of the PSC. Naughton, B., 'SASAC and rising corporate power in China', *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 24 (June 2008).

¹²³ Two of the 3 major oil SOEs, Sinopec and CNPC, hold ministerial rank. Chinese professor of international relations, Interview with author, Beijing, 12 Nov. 2009; and Downs, E., 'Business interest groups in Chinese politics: the case of the oil companies', ed. Li C., *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy* (Brookings Institution: Washington, DC, 2008). The sole exception was Kang Rixin (康日新), the former president of the China National Nuclear Corporation, who served as the only full member of the Central Committee representing an SOE until his expulsion in 2009 for corruption. '核工业集团公司原总经理党组书记康日新被双开' [Former CNNC general manager/party secretary Kang Rixin is doubly fired], Xinhua, 15 Jan. 2010, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2010-01/15/content_12815385.htm>.

¹²⁴ However, foreign aid is handled by MOFCOM with little opportunity for contractors to influence decision making. Representative of contractor SOE, Personal communication with author, Beijing, 21 May 2010.

¹²⁵ Fei, L., 'SOEs' taxes higher than private firms', *Global Times*, 25 Aug. 2010; and 'China's 2009 fiscal revenue expected to surpass \$1 trillion: minister', Xinhua, 10 Jan. 2010, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2010-01/10/content_12784572.htm>.

¹²⁶ CNOOC CEO Fu Chengyu (傅成玉) has access to Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi 'any time he wants'. Senior researcher at Chinese government institute (note 121), (authors' translation).

¹²⁷ Chinese professor of international relations (note 17). SOE executives occasionally participate in broader foreign policy forums as well. '中央外事工作会议在京举行 胡锦涛温家宝作重要讲话' [Central Committee foreign affairs work conference held in Beijing; Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao make important speeches], 人民日报 [People's Daily], 24 Aug. 2006, <<http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/4735415.html>>.

Nevertheless, the participation by senior SOE leaders in the state and party systems affords certain strategic SOEs vital political connections and a measure of input into foreign policy decisions pertaining to their particular business interests.¹²⁸ An example of the symbiotic and complex relationship between large oil companies and the political establishment is the appointment in the past five years of two MFA officials to senior diplomatic posts after having been seconded to CNPC offices in that country.¹²⁹

In cases where influential foreign policy actors support proposals which are aligned with the interests of large SOEs, these corporations have shown themselves capable of seizing the opportunity to support and co-opt beneficial policies. As a case in point, the NDRC's energy security strategy is based on the acquisition of oil and gas resources at the well. This is complemented by the PLA Navy stance that a military presence is needed to safeguard the flow of natural resources.¹³⁰ The policy has been strongly backed by oil companies that benefit from official support including state subsidies for diversifying their sources of supply.¹³¹ Businesses owned by provincial and city governments and private enterprises are less able to directly influence policy, but their activities also affect foreign policy at times by triggering crises, such as when pesticides discovered in Chinese-produced dumplings caused several poisonings in Japan.¹³²

Even when SOEs do not deliberately seek to influence Chinese foreign policy, the scope and magnitude of their international activities inevitably have an impact on China's bilateral relationships. Since the government announced in 1999 its 'going out' (*zou chuqu*) policy promoting Chinese companies' overseas expansion, Chinese companies have invested over \$178 billion abroad.¹³³ Massive

¹²⁸ The CNPC maintains a policy research office and in 2000 co-authored a major policy report with several government agencies. National Petroleum and Chemical Industry Bureau, CNPC and Energy Research Institute of the State Planning Commission, 21世纪中国石油发展战略 [China's oil development strategy in the 21st century] (石油工业出版社 [Petroleum Industry Press]: Beijing, 2000).

¹²⁹ Beijing-based European expert on Chinese businesses, Interviews with author, Beijing and Stockholm, 1 and 12 June 2010.

¹³⁰ The NDRC is reluctant to rely on markets for development-critical resources; the PLAN seeks to justify expansion of its capabilities. The NDRC holds primary responsibility for drafting China's 5-year energy plans, including its energy security strategy. See '第十二章第三节: 加快发展石油天然气' [Chapter 12, section 3: accelerating development of oil and natural gas], '授权发布: 中华人民共和国国民经济和社会发展第十一个五年规划纲要 (全文)' [Authorized announcement: 11th PRC National Economic and Social Development Five-Year Guidelines], Xinhua, 16 Mar. 2006, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/misc/2006-03/16/content_4309517.htm>; and Wu, S. (PLAN commander) and Hu, Y. (PLAN political commissar), '锻造适应我军历史使命要求的强大人民海军' [Forging a powerful PLAN to match the demands of the PLA's historic missions], 求是 [Seeking Truth], no. 17 (2007).

¹³¹ Steel producers and oil companies are among the most powerful of Chinese SOEs and benefit from measures to assure supply. These measures include the 2003 initiation of a strategic oil reserve and government defence of benchmark pricing of iron until that system's collapse in Mar. 2010. Blas, J. and Smith, P., 'Steel prices set to soar after iron ore deal', *Financial Times*, 30 Mar. 2010; and 'China defends iron ore benchmark pricing system', Xinhua, 15 Apr. 2010, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-04/15/c_13253407.htm>.

¹³² Kyodo News, 'China "gyoza" poisonings hushed up', *Japan Times*, 7 Aug. 2008.

¹³³ This figure excludes outward foreign direct investment (FDI) from Macao and Hong Kong but includes an unknown amount of 'round trip' investment transiting through foreign tax havens. Chinese Ministry of Commerce and National Bureau of Statistics, '2008年度中国对外直接投资统计公报' [2008 statistical bulletin of China's outward FDI], p. 4; and Chinese Ministry of Commerce, Outward Investment and International Cooperation Division, '2009年我国对外直接投资业务简况' [China's outward FDI in 2009, sector briefing], 19 Jan. 2010, <<http://fec.mofcom.gov.cn/tjzl/jwtz/601488.shtml>>.

deals such as the China Metallurgical Construction Corporation's 2007 acquisition of the Aynak copper mine in Afghanistan have foreign policy ramifications. The \$3.5 billion purchase, including the commitment to develop power, rail and health infrastructure, has the potential to create closer ties between the two countries, spur economic development in Afghanistan and subsequently contribute to stability in the surrounding area.¹³⁴ In the same vein, a new China–Central Asia natural gas pipeline is strengthening China's role in the region. The pipeline will eventually carry over four-fifths of Turkmenistan's gas production and supply nearly half of Chinese consumption.¹³⁵ The contract represented an intrusion into what Russia perceives as its sphere of influence and broke Russia's control over the flow of Central Asian natural gas, a monopoly which it has strived to maintain.¹³⁶ Hu Jintao's trip in 2008 to Turkmenistan to cement the deal was the first visit by a Chinese head of state to the country in over eight years, yet he returned only a year later for the pipeline's inauguration—reflecting China's emphasis on the bilateral relationship.¹³⁷

Top Chinese political leaders travelling abroad often inspect the local facilities of Chinese enterprises or attend signing ceremonies for various cooperation agreements between Chinese and local companies. China's three major national oil companies—the CNPC, the China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC)—have been successful in attracting high-level attention. Over half of Hu Jintao's foreign visits between January 2005 and July 2010 were to countries in which at least one of the three companies has oil or natural gas interests.¹³⁸ Hu has signed contracts for supply, joint exploration and asset transfer on their behalf in countries such as Australia, Brazil, Gabon, Japan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Viet Nam.¹³⁹ These activities provide the opportunity for top corporate managers to interact with as well as present proposals to political

¹³⁴ Once the mine is complete, the CMC is expected to pay hundreds of millions of dollars to the Afghan government in royalties, a vast sum considering domestic revenues at the time of the deal were only \$715 million. Afghan Ministry of Finance, *1386 National Budget*, <<http://www.budgetmof.gov.af/NationalBudget/Budget/Budget.html>>. See also Yeager, J. R., *The Aynak Copper Tender: Implications for Afghanistan and the West* (Skyline Laboratories and Assayers: Tucson, AZ, 2009); and Davison, S., 'Doing more with less in Afghanistan', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 109, no. 72 (2009), pp. 57–59.

¹³⁵ These ratios are based on 2009 figures. The planned final capacity of the pipeline is 40 billion cubic meters per year, with 30 billion m³/year of the gas being from Turkmenistan and the remainder being from Kazakhstan. In 2008 Turkmenistan produced 36.4 billion m³ and China consumed 88.7 billion m³. BP, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2010* (BP: London, June 2010); and Durdieva, C., 'Hu Jintao's visit to Turkmenistan intensifies Chinese–Turkmen friendship', *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 17 Sep. 2008.

¹³⁶ Milov, V. and Olcott, M. B., 'The great uncertainty: Russian–Central Asian energy relations', Speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 13 June 2007, <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/?fa=eventDetail&id=1013>>.

¹³⁷ 'FM: Hu's central Asian trip to work for regional security', Xinhua, 20 Aug. 2008, <http://news.xinhua.net.com/english/2008-08/20/content_9560273.htm>; CNPC, 'Central Asia–China gas pipeline operational', <http://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/press/Features/Flow_of_natural_gas_from_Central_Asia.htm>; and Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, '中国同土库曼斯坦的关系' [China–Turkmenistan relations], 29 June 2010, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/gxh/cgb/zcgmzysx/yz/1206_32/1206x1/>.

¹³⁸ Authors' database (note 17). Hu's overseas visits include 6 to Russia; 4 to Kazakhstan; 3 to Canada; and 2 each to Japan, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan and Viet Nam. While the trips reflect a variety of interests, oil and natural gas are clearly 1 factor in the selection of countries.

¹³⁹ Authors' database (note 17).

leaders and the foreign policy advisors who accompany them abroad. These include the heads of the MFA, MOFCOM and the NDRC as well as influential CPC departments (e.g. the Policy Research and General offices).¹⁴⁰

Financial institutions

Two major government-controlled financial institutions—the Export–Import Bank of China (Eximbank) and the China Development Bank (CDB)—play key roles in supporting the overseas outreach of Chinese businesses. Eximbank is tasked with expanding Chinese trade, and the CDB seeks to promote Chinese economic and infrastructure development. This alignment of interests leads to considerable overlap in their work.¹⁴¹ Both are major backers of the ‘going out’ policy through loans and, in Eximbank’s case, export credits and guarantees. The overseas activities supported by Eximbank and the CDB lean towards infrastructure projects and resource exploration, a focus that has provided and continues to provide an essential boost to Chinese oil, minerals, contracting and telecommunication companies.¹⁴²

As the primary source for loans to foreign governments and the only financial institution in China allowed to offer concessional loans, Eximbank plays a significant role in allocating Chinese foreign aid.¹⁴³ This role, along with its status as a State Council policy bank, provides it with a direct connection to the policy-formation process in aspects of Chinese foreign policy related to trade and investment.¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the CDB’s expertise in development and its leader’s ministerial rank have in the past led to close interaction with key policy shapers such as the Party’s Policy Research Office.¹⁴⁵ Significantly, the CDB in 2007 launched a \$5 billion China–Africa Development Fund, a for-profit investment fund seeking to enhance China’s commercial ties with the continent.¹⁴⁶ The CDB lost its policy bank status in December 2008, but it continues to maintain its own policy research office and focus on economic development.¹⁴⁷

The two banks’ activities accelerated in 2009 with the financing of enormous oil projects, such as Eximbank’s \$5 billion loan to the Development Bank of

¹⁴⁰ Chinese professor of international relations, Interview with author, Beijing, 7 Sep. 2009; and Beijing-based European expert on Chinese businesses (note 129).

¹⁴¹ China Eximbank, ‘The Export–Import Bank of China’, <<http://english.eximbank.gov.cn/profile/intro.shtml>>; and CDB, ‘Strategic focus’, <<http://www.cdb.com.cn/english/Column.asp?ColumnId=109>>.

¹⁴² Davies et al. (note 49).

¹⁴³ China Eximbank (note 141). Concessional loans have low interest rates and long repayment periods and are typically offered to the least developed countries.

¹⁴⁴ The other policy bank, the Agricultural Development Bank, is focused on domestic lending.

¹⁴⁵ See e.g. Chen, Y. (陈元), Zheng, X. (郑新立) and Liu, K. (刘克崧) (eds), *积极财政政策退出问题研究* [Research on ending proactive fiscal policy] (中国财政经济出版社 [China Finance and Economics Publishing House]: Beijing, 2004). The CDB’s policy research is domestically oriented and only occasionally touches on foreign policy.

¹⁴⁶ Gao, J., ‘Chairman’s message’, China–Africa Development Fund, <<http://www.cadfund.com/en/Column.asp?ColumnId=13>>.

¹⁴⁷ The CDB was commercialized in Dec. 2008, but it is still owned by the Ministry of Finance and the state investment company; it is unclear if lending practices will change. McGuinness, P. B. and Keasey, K., ‘The listing of Chinese state-owned banks and their path to banking and ownership reform’, *China Quarterly*, no. 201 (2010), p. 134; and China Development Bank (CDB), ‘Commercialization reform’, *Social Responsibility Report 2008*, <<http://www.cdb.com.cn/WebSite/cdb/UpFile/srr2008/index.html>>.

Kazakhstan and the CDB's \$25 billion loan to the Russian oil and pipeline companies Rosneft and Transneft. Eximbank's loan was part of a deal that allowed the CNPC to take a 50 per cent share in one of Kazakhstan's largest oil and gas companies.¹⁴⁸ After the CDB's deal with the Russian companies work was finally started on a pipeline from Russia to China, which had been under negotiation since 1994.¹⁴⁹ In 2009 the CDB also granted a \$10 billion loan to Brazil's largest oil producer, Petrobras, in exchange for a 10-year supply agreement. Combined, the Russian and Brazilian deals committed an annual supply equivalent to nearly one-eighth of Chinese oil imports in 2009.¹⁵⁰

Energy companies

The Chinese petroleum industry has affected Chinese foreign policy in a number of cases in recent years. CNOOC has played a major part in China's territorial disputes with South East Asian states because of the Spratly Islands and with Japan over the East China Sea, in large part over the areas' untapped oil and gas reserves. In 2005 CNOOC opted to pursue joint research with Vietnamese and Philippine national oil companies around the Spratly Islands—a conciliatory approach that Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo lauded as 'a historic event . . . to turn the South China Sea into an area of cooperation rather than an area of conflict'.¹⁵¹ CNOOC had signed a bilateral agreement with the Philippine National Oil Company in 2004, but in 2005 included the Vietnam Oil and Gas Corporation to address Vietnamese demands. In contrast, in 2004 CNOOC preemptorily began work at the East China Sea Chunxiao field without consulting Japanese authorities, thereby sparking a diplomatic crisis. The ensuing dispute was deadlocked for four years until Hu Jintao and the Japanese prime minister, Yasuo Fukuda, officially agreed on 'cooperative development', a term which sidesteps sovereignty issues raised by the term 'joint development'.¹⁵² It is unclear in which instances these energy companies have served as shapers and in which instances they have been used as tools of Chinese foreign policy.

Sometimes the activities of Chinese companies can appear to be at variance with national objectives. CNPC and Sinopec investments in Sudan have spurred accusations by Western governments and international human rights organizations that China is propping up the Sudanese Government, which is accused of not making concerted efforts to stop the atrocities in Darfur. Even after the NDRC's decision in 2007 to remove Sudan from a list of preferred countries for

¹⁴⁸ Bhadrakumar, M. K., 'Cash-rich China courts the Caspian', *Asia Times*, 18 Apr. 2009; and KazMunay-Gas Company News, 'CNPC and KazMunayGas acquire 100% of MangistauMunaiGas shares through open trade on Kazakhstan Stock Exchange', 25 Nov. 2009, <http://lang.kmg.kz/page.php?page_id=986&lang=2&news_id=439>.

¹⁴⁹ 'Timeline of China–Russia oil pipeline negotiation', Xinhua, 19 May 2009, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/19/content_11402237.htm>.

¹⁵⁰ Duce, J., 'Sinopec to gain from Brazil deal as oil reserves fall (update 2)', Bloomberg, 20 May 2009, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601086&sid=a1Qjz_sdBqBc>; and BP (note 135), p. 21.

¹⁵¹ Cabacungan, G. C. and Ho, A., 'Philippine president lauds Spratly agreement with China, Vietnam', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 15 Mar. 2005.

¹⁵² Lee, W., 'China producing from East China Sea fields', *Platts Oilgram News*, 3 Feb. 2010; and Yoshida, R. and Terada, S., 'Japan, China strike deal on gas field', *Japan Times*, 19 June 2008.

oil investments, the two Chinese oil companies purchased Sudanese assets.¹⁵³ These acquisitions, alongside continued arms sales to the Sudanese military, resulted in denunciations by human rights advocates of the so-called ‘Genocide Olympics’, a public relations setback for China’s international campaign to promote the 2008 Olympic Games.¹⁵⁴ This example lends credence to either the supposition that energy security factors can override diplomatic interests or the notion that energy companies act independently, with disregard for foreign policy concerns.¹⁵⁵

The China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) has long played a role in the development of Pakistan’s nuclear industry, for example by constructing reactors at the Chashma nuclear complex. In light of China’s 2004 entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), a body that seeks to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons by controlling the spread of related technology and materials, the construction of new reactors was put on hold.¹⁵⁶ Subsequently, in line with its NSG obligations, the Chinese Government resisted CNNC pressure to export two more reactors to Pakistan. When the USA succeeded in securing a waiver for its nuclear cooperation with India, however, the Chinese Government’s political will to block the CNNC project evaporated. The contract was signed in 2009 and design work is underway. If the deal is brought to fruition, it would breach NSG guidelines and undermine international norms against proliferation. While a waiver could resolve the issue, it would require unanimous NSG consent, which would be relatively difficult for China to secure.¹⁵⁷

Other companies

China is the world’s largest importer of iron ore, which it uses to make steel for the booming rail, automotive, oil and gas, and construction industries that are so crucial to China’s development.¹⁵⁸ It has traditionally sought to consolidate its domestic buying power for iron ore through the China Iron and Steel Association (CISA), an import cartel responsible for negotiating favourable annual bench-

¹⁵³ Downs (note 48).

¹⁵⁴ Farrow, R. and Farrow, M., ‘The “Genocide Olympics”’, *Wall Street Journal*, 28 Mar. 2007.

¹⁵⁵ Wu, K. and Storey, I., ‘Energy security in China’s capitalist transition: import dependence, oil diplomacy, and security imperatives’, ed. C. A. McNally, *China’s Emergent Political Economy: Capitalism in the Dragon’s Lair* (Routledge: London, 2008), pp. 190–208; Downs (note 48); and Pronińska, K., ‘Energy and security: regional and global dimensions’, *SIPRI Yearbook 2007: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007).

¹⁵⁶ Under a grandfather clause allowing previously existing contracts to continue, 1 additional reactor was permitted. Kimball, D. G. et al., ‘Ensure compliance with NSG guidelines and nonproliferation standards’, Letter to the NSG, 17 June 2010, <<http://www.armscontrol.org/pressroom/NSGComplianceLetter>>.

¹⁵⁷ State Nuclear Power Technology Corporation (SNPTC), ‘恰希玛核电三、四号机组常规岛设计分包合同签署’ [Design subcontract signed for Chashma nuclear power plant units 3/4 and conventional island design], 7 Aug. 2009, <<http://www.snptc.com.cn/templates/list1/index.aspx?nodeid=34&contentid=14150>>; Hibbs, M., ‘Pakistan deal signals China’s growing nuclear assertiveness’, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Nuclear Energy Brief, 27 Apr. 2010, <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=40685>>; and Chaudhry, S., ‘Pakistan to receive grants for 25 projects in 2010–11’, *Daily Times* (Lahore), 21 May 2010.

¹⁵⁸ Bi, W. and Yuan, H., ‘China’s March iron ore imports rise on steel demand’, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 6 June 2010; World Steel Association, ‘Crude steel statistics 2010’, June 2010, <<http://www.worldsteel.org/?action=stats&type=steel&period=latest>>; and China Mining Association, ‘Steel consumption may further expand’, 11 Jan. 2010, <<http://www.chinamining.org/News/2010-01-11/1263197661d33254.html>>.

mark prices to stabilize costs by preventing price swings—a practice iron ore suppliers have long sought to undermine.¹⁵⁹ Tension between the CISA and Australian iron suppliers over price negotiations has become a major irritant in Chinese–Australian relations. In 2009, amid difficult negotiations, China arrested four employees of Rio Tinto, the partially Australian-owned iron ore supplier, on bribery and espionage charges. An Australian citizen, Stern Hu, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for bribery and theft of commercial secrets; the espionage charges were dropped.¹⁶⁰ Chinese officials also sought to ‘signal Beijing’s support for its steelmakers’ and pressure the Australian Government to intervene in the price dispute.¹⁶¹ These actions demonstrate China’s willingness to risk relations with close partners in order to stimulate economic development.

Chinese foreign policy deliberations are also affected by the overseas activities of companies outside the resource sector, such as in construction, which have made significant headway in developing countries, particularly in Africa.¹⁶² Correspondingly, the need to ensure the security of the growing number of Chinese citizens working in conflict-prone areas has risen on the Chinese foreign policy agenda. Between 2005 and 2008 revenues from Chinese engineering projects in Africa tripled and the number of Chinese construction workers and engineers in Africa more than doubled to a total of nearly 120 000.¹⁶³ Chinese workers have been abducted and killed in countries including Angola, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Niger, Sudan and Zambia.¹⁶⁴ Corporate security measures are largely limited to hiring local security companies and maintaining ties with local police.¹⁶⁵ In the event of an attack or threat, the MFA pressures the host government to take action—as it did following the 2009 threat against Chinese workers in North Africa from a regional arm of al-Qaeda, which was claimed to be acting in retaliation for Chinese suppression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.¹⁶⁶

Local governments

The international economic and technological cooperation corporations (IETCCs) that are operated by local governments to boost local economic development are heavily involved in overseas contracting and labour

¹⁵⁹ In early 2010, 3 major iron suppliers succeeded in overturning the annual benchmark system. Blas and Smith (note 131); and ‘China’s novel approach to iron ore negotiations’, Xinhua, 2 May 2010, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/02/c_13275665.htm>.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Rio Tinto’s Stern Hu gets 10-year sentence’, *People’s Daily*, 29 Mar. 2010.

¹⁶¹ Yap, C. W. and Zhang, Y., ‘China steel mills’ position eroding in iron ore talks’, Dow Jones Newswire, 5 Feb. 2010, <<http://www.foxbusiness.com/story/markets/industries/industrials/update-china-steel-mills-position-eroding-iron-ore-talks>>.

¹⁶² Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, *2009 China Trade and External Economic Statistical Yearbook* (China Statistics Press: Beijing, 2009), pp. 802–11.

¹⁶³ Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (note 162), p. 803.

¹⁶⁴ See e.g. ‘Angolan “mafia targets Chinese”’, BBC News, 14 Nov. 2009, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8358919.stm>>.

¹⁶⁵ Representative of an IETCC office in Zambia, Personal communication with author, 2 June 2010.

¹⁶⁶ Macartney, J., ‘Al-Qaeda vows revenge on China after riots’, *The Times*, 15 July 2009; and Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Foreign Ministry spokesperson Qin Gang’s regular press conference on July 14, 2009’, <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t573182.htm>>.

export.¹⁶⁷ The vast majority of their revenues come from overseas engineering projects, frequently funded by Chinese concessional loans, which are often tied to development contracts and involve construction of infrastructure.¹⁶⁸ Given their reliance on foreign aid-related funding, these companies have an interest in increasing China's generosity towards recipients, but their ability to affect the choice of projects is weak.¹⁶⁹ Formally, IETCCs are expected to express their policy preferences through the China International Contractors Association, a MOFCOM-linked semi-official body that relays suggestions and ostensibly participates in policy formation. However, when asked, eight of nine IETCC officials considered CHINCA to be ineffective at channelling policy recommendations.¹⁷⁰ One official stated that working relationships developed with the MOFCOM Department of Aid and the Bureau of International Economic Cooperation, as well as occasional contact with top MOFCOM leaders, provided more effective avenues for unofficial policy recommendations.¹⁷¹

National leaders are aware of the need to coordinate with local governments to ensure that 'Beijing's external activities continue to support, rather than undermine, China's domestic priorities.'¹⁷² Local governments have access to national decision makers up through the top levels of the CPC, where city and provincial leaders hold 2 of the 9 PSC seats and 10 of the 25 Politburo seats.¹⁷³ Local leaders also occasionally use their positions in the CPC Central Committee, the National People's Congress (China's parliament) and the China People's Political Consultative Conference (a political advisory body) to shape debate on a foreign policy issue, although the final outcomes of votes in these bodies are largely determined before debates take place.

In addition to IETCCs, Chinese local governments have a number of other overseas links. Businesses belonging to city or provincial governments accounted for over one-fifth of top Chinese companies investing overseas in 2008.¹⁷⁴ Many of these were provincial-level investment or foreign trade companies, reflecting the vast wealth and trade interests of sub-national governments. Coastal provinces and cities make up the lion's share of sub-national wealth—companies

¹⁶⁷ Through their IETCCs, successful provinces can each generate billions of dollars and provide employment for tens of thousands of people. Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (note 162), pp. 815–20.

¹⁶⁸ See e.g. China Heilongjiang International Economic & Technical Cooperative Corporation, '公司简介' [Company overview], <<http://www.hljchic.com/gongsi.htm>>; and China Guangxi Corporation for International Techno-Economic Cooperation (GITEC), '中国广西国际经济技术合作公司简介' [GITEC company overview], <<http://www.gitec.com.cn/about.asp?typid=27>>.

¹⁶⁹ Nine Chinese IETCC officials based in Guangxi, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, Qingdao, Cangzhou, Qidong, Weihai and Zambia, Personal communications with author, 21 May–2 June 2010.

¹⁷⁰ The sole exception was a representative of an IETCC that has a leadership role in CHINCA. Diao, C., 'Chairman's address', <<http://www.chinca.org/en/aboutus.aspx>>; and IETCC official (note 169).

¹⁷¹ Director of engineering at a provincial IETCC (note 169).

¹⁷² Glaser, B. S., 'Ensuring the "go abroad" policy serves China's domestic priorities', *China Brief*, vol. 7, no. 5 (9 May 2007).

¹⁷³ Liaoning and Shanghai are represented on the PSC; 2 officials from Beijing and 1 each from Tianjin, Jiangsu, Hubei, Guangdong, Xinjiang and Chongqing are on the Politburo. Bo (note 100), p. 93.

¹⁷⁴ Chinese Ministry of Commerce and National Bureau of Statistics (note 133), pp. 87–89.

based in Guangdong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang alone, for example, accounted for China's entire trade surplus in 2008.¹⁷⁵

Through the development of economic and cultural ties, local governments have tended to push Chinese foreign policy towards increased international integration.¹⁷⁶ Local governments—especially those of border and coastal provinces—have an interest in economic liberalization, including the lowering of trade barriers and the promotion of foreign direct investment. Southern provinces—Guangxi in particular—have been at the forefront of developing economic linkages with South East Asia. Guangxi's capital, Nanning, has constructed an expansive system of institutions devoted to promoting cross-border trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including the China–ASEAN expo, international business district, economic zone and logistics park. Heilongjiang province is an integral part of the 2009 Chinese–Russian plan for regional cooperation between north-east China on the one hand and the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia on the other. The plan calls for the construction of customs zones, bridges, roads and railways to link bordering areas.¹⁷⁷ Jilin and Liaoning provinces have been heavily involved in attempts to open up North Korea through trade, while Shandong has prospered from economic ties with South Korea.¹⁷⁸ In June 2010 work began on two pipelines stretching from Myanmar's Kyaukpyu port to Yunnan province in China. The pipelines may enhance China's energy security, but more significantly, it could cement growing mutual dependence between Myanmar and Yunnan. Chinese strategists are concerned about a possible blockade of the Strait of Malacca, a narrow waterway between Malaysia and Sumatra through which the vast majority of China's oil supply transits. The proposed pipeline would offer an alternative supply line, although tankers could also simply be rerouted through other sea lanes.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ I.e. without the trade surpluses of companies based in Jiangsu (\$83.8 billion), Guangdong (\$126.4 billion) and Zhejiang (\$97.5 billion), China would have had a net trade deficit in 2008. Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (note 162), p. 735.

¹⁷⁶ Yang, Y. (杨勇), '中国外交中的地方因素' [Local factors in Chinese diplomacy], 国际观察 [International Review], vol. 88, no. 4 (2007), pp. 42–47. Many of these activities are coordinated through the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the China International Friendship Cities Association.

¹⁷⁷ Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, '中华人民共和国东北地区与俄罗斯联邦远东及东西伯利亚地区合作规划纲要' [PRC's north-east and Russian Federation's Far East and Siberia cooperation plan outline], 26 Mar. 2007, <<http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/1179/t709754.htm>>.

¹⁷⁸ '吉辽建中朝边境开放先导区' [Jilin and Liaoning build pioneering zone to open China–North Korea border], 中朝经贸合作网 [China–North Korea Trade Cooperation Online], 18 Nov. 2009, <<http://www.idprkorea.com/news/news/view.asp?id=1485>>; and Jin, Y. (金益基), Lin, M. (林明鲜) and Fu, Z. (傅志明), 韩国投资与山东沿海城市发展 [South Korean investment and the development of Shandong's coastal cities], (吉林大学出版社 [Jilin University Press]: Changchun, 2008).

¹⁷⁹ CNPC, 'Myanmar–China oil and gas pipeline project commenced', 4 June 2010, <http://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/press/newsreleases/MyanmarChinaOilandGasPipelineprojectcommenced_.htm>. On the dubious benefits of pipeline shortcuts for oil supply lines see Erickson, A. S. and Collins, G. B., 'China's oil security pipe dream', *Naval War College Review*, vol. 63, no. 2 (spring 2010) pp. 89–111.

Research institutions and academia

Chinese policymakers, like officials the world over, struggle to fathom the complex nature of international affairs. In recent years, Chinese officials have spoken candidly of the steep learning curve decision makers face due to the speed with which China has extended its reach into every corner of the globe.¹⁸⁰ Many ministries lack the expertise needed to deal with challenges that have accompanied the active international expansion of Chinese companies.¹⁸¹ Consequently, when deliberating policy decisions, China's top leaders consult researchers, leading intellectuals and senior media representatives. A formal affiliation is not a prerequisite for those who serve in an advisory capacity; some advisors have gained prominence simply through their association with members of the CPC Politburo or the Foreign Affairs LSG.¹⁸² For example, three interviewees named Li Fenglin, former Chinese ambassador to Moscow (1995–98) and director of the Development Research Centre's Institute of Euro-Asian Social Development Research, as someone regularly consulted by Hu Jintao on China–Russia relations. While far less influential in foreign policy decision making than other leading actors—both official and on the margins—this diverse group is still noteworthy. The public and internal writings of academics, intellectuals and journalists not only offer expertise on specific issue areas, but also provide a window through which foreign ideas and both international and domestic debates are channelled to top decision makers.¹⁸³

Politburo collective study sessions

On his appointment as CPC general secretary in 2002, Hu Jintao started convening Politburo collective study sessions at which two experts from CPC, government and PLA institutions or universities are each invited to hold a 40-minute lecture on a specified topic.¹⁸⁴ The majority of the 66 sessions held up to July 2010 have focused on domestic or ideological issues. Roughly one-third of the lectures have described international experiences on a particular subject and their effects on China.¹⁸⁵ For example, EU specialist Zhou Hong and welfare

¹⁸⁰ Sun, K. (孙宽平), '21世纪中国面临的三大挑战' [The three big challenges facing China in the 21st century], 前线 [Front Line], 11 Apr. 2003 <<http://www.bjcx.org.cn/qxweb/n1300c195.aspx>>; and Wu (note 22).

¹⁸¹ Jakobson, L., 'China's diplomacy toward Africa: drivers and constraints', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2009), p. 421.

¹⁸² Chinese professor of international relations (note 140); Senior researcher at Chinese government institute (note 121); and Beijing-based European China specialist, Interview with author, Beijing, 4 June 2010.

¹⁸³ Lagerkvist, J., 'The rise of online public opinion in the People's Republic of China', *China*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Mar. 2005); and Lagerkvist, J., 'Internet ideotainment in China: national responses to cultural globalization', *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 17, no. 54 (2008), pp. 121–40.

¹⁸⁴ See '政治局集体学习一览' [Politburo collective study: an overview], Xinhua, <<http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/ssrc/zzjtxx/>>; and Liu, Y., 'The collective study sessions of the Politburo: a multipurpose tool of China's central leadership', University of Nottingham, China Policy Institute, Briefing Series no. 27, Oct. 2007, <<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/CPI/china-analysis/2007/index.aspx>>.

¹⁸⁵ The first Politburo collective study session was held on 26 Dec. 2002. The last for which data is available was on 23 July 2010. For a list of collective study sessions see '中共中央政治局集体学习(第十七届)' [Collective studies of the CPC Central Committee Politburo (17th Congress)], Xinhua, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2007-11/29/content_7164788.htm>; and '中共中央政治局集体学习(第十六届)' [Collective

expert He Ping's presentation in 2009, 'Social security system in major foreign countries and China's social security system construction', ended with a reflection on how China should develop its own social welfare system.¹⁸⁶ One Politburo study session focused on China's security.¹⁸⁷ Nearly all of the lecturers were based in Beijing. Only about one-quarter of the presenters were drawn from universities. Over half were representatives of the government, CPC or military; roughly one-fifth worked at official research institutions.

The Politburo collective study sessions are scripted events. The Party's Policy Research Office decides the topics, the ministries choose the research teams including the lecturers and the Party's General Office oversees the three-month preparatory process, which concludes with two or three dress rehearsals. The study sessions are not solely meant to provide analysis to Politburo members; they also serve as a platform for the leadership to promote new policies.¹⁸⁸ While most details of Politburo proceedings are secret, study sessions are publicized widely. For several months, the lecturers receive attention from the media and interact frequently with the Politburo's key advisors, all top officials in their own right. This kind of access to top leadership is rare for a researcher in China. It also potentially leads to invitations to less formal discussions with one or more of the top leaders, and on occasion may be a catalyst for promotion.¹⁸⁹

In the past few years, Hu Jintao has also invited three to four senior foreign policy specialists from universities, research institutes and defence academies to participate in an annual session with the so-called inner circle, which he chairs in December, to assess China's foreign policy successes and failures.¹⁹⁰ According to an attendee of the 2008 session, the task of an academic is to make a 10-minute presentation on his subject of expertise, but the opportunity to mingle with the country's most influential foreign policy shapers at this type of formal session often results in future invitations to informal high-level discussions.¹⁹¹

High-level policy recommendations

Another new institution that brings together officials and leading scholars is the Foreign Policy Advisory Council (FPAC). This MFA-funded group was initially

studies of the CPC Central Committee Politburo (16th Congress)], Xinhua, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2005-11/29/content_3849521.htm>.

¹⁸⁶ 胡锦涛: 加快推进社保体系建设 实现可持续发展 [Hu Jintao: accelerating construction of a social security system to achieve sustainable development], Xinhua, 23 May 2009, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2009-05/23/content_11424396_1.htm> (authors' translation).

¹⁸⁷ The lecture was delivered by Qin Yaqing of the China Foreign Affairs University and Zhang Yuyan of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Institute of World Economics and Politics. See Qin, Y. (秦亚青) and Zhang, Y. (张宇燕), '世界格局和我国的安全环境' [The world order and China's security environment], 23 Feb. 2004, 'Collective studies of the CPC Central Committee Politburo (16th Congress)' (note 185).

¹⁸⁸ Ma, S., '解密中央集体学习制度: 先学法而后治国' [Decipher the collective study system: learning law at first and then governing the country], 小康 [Middle Class], 1 Mar. 2007.

¹⁸⁹ Jiang Xiaojuan, a senior economist with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who lectured at a study session in 2003, was appointed deputy director of the State Council's research office the next year. Liu (note 184).

¹⁹⁰ Senior foreign policy specialists who have attended this year-end session chaired by Hu include Cui Lirui (China Institute of Contemporary International Relations), Wang Jisi (Peking University) and Jin Canrong (Renmin University). Chinese professor of international relations (note 140).

¹⁹¹ Chinese professor of international relations, Interview with author, Beijing, 23 June 2009.

created in 2004 as a special research group. It was originally made up solely of retired Chinese ambassadors but was broadened by Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in 2008 to include six heads of leading research institutes.¹⁹² In early 2010 the FPAC's core members, who constitute an informal executive committee, included Cui Liru, Qin Yaqing, Wang Jisi, Wu Jianmin, Yang Jiemian and Zhang Yuyan and about 12 former ambassadors.¹⁹³ The council is primarily concerned with long-term foreign policy. One of the FPAC's functions is to advise foreign policy officials; another is to 'get China's message across to the outside world', according to a core member. The group holds both large plenaries and small group meetings, depending on the nature of the issue. On a 2009 trip by FPAC members to Tokyo and the USA, the group's mission was to engage with US foreign policy officials, the media and foreign think tanks. The core member described the influence of the FPAC trips as 'bi-directional': foreigners are provided with information on China's views and information gleaned from trips abroad is brought back to China in the form of written memos, sometimes with policy recommendations, on how foreigners view China's policies.¹⁹⁴ The FPAC has also received briefings from Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Guangya and attended lunches hosted by Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.

An institute that is being promoted as a 'new type of uniquely Chinese semi-official, semi-civilian high-level think tank' is the China Center for International Economic Exchanges (CCIEE) under the supervision of the NDRC.¹⁹⁵ Founded in March 2009, this 'super-think tank' is chaired by Zeng Peiyan, former vice-premier in charge of economic affairs, and has a staggering total of 19 vice-chairmen who constitute a mixture of respected economists, leaders of corporations and banks, and former senior officials.¹⁹⁶ The organization was approved by Premier Wen and provides the government with analysis and policy proposals on macroeconomic management and important economic policies. Despite its

¹⁹² Former Chinese ambassador and head of a Chinese international relations institute, Interview with author, Beijing, 21 Sep. 2009; and Director of a Chinese international relations institute, Interview with author, Beijing, 26 June 2009.

¹⁹³ Cui Liru and Yang Jiemian (who is the elder brother of Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi) are the respective presidents of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS). Qin Yaqing is executive vice-president of the China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU); Wang Jisi is dean of the School of International Studies at Peking University; Wu Jianmin is former ambassador to Paris, former president of CFAU and vice-chairman of the China Institute of Strategy and Management; and Zhang Yuyan is director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Institute of World Economics and Politics.

¹⁹⁴ Retired Chinese ambassador (note 32), (authors' translation).

¹⁹⁵ Liu Kegou, former head of the State Development Bank, cited in Zhang, M. and Liu, Z., '中国新型智库“国经中心”正式亮相' [China's new type of think-tank, "China Center for International Economic Exchange", makes official debut], *经济参考报* [Economics Reference News], 3 July 2009 (authors' translation).

¹⁹⁶ CCIEE vice-chairmen include the heads of the CNPC, the China Investment Corporation and the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, an NDRC vice-chairman, a former governor of Guangdong, and a former Financial and Economic Affairs Office director. CCIEE, 'Leadership of China Center for International Economic Exchanges', <http://english.cciee.org.cn/Article_List.aspx?columnID=55>.

prestigious leadership the extent of the CCIEE's genuine influence on policy-making is questionable, according to both Chinese academics and media.¹⁹⁷

Economists who advise officials on economic policy, a field that is inextricably intertwined with foreign policy, have more leeway than foreign policy specialists to publicly criticize government policy. In the words of Hu Angang, one of China's most forthright scholars on economic and development issues, 'In China financial decisions are debated publicly. Foreign policy decision making is still too sensitive.'¹⁹⁸ Academics working on economic issues are also more openly recruited to government advisory roles than foreign affairs specialists. For example, Li Daokui, a Tsinghua University professor who has in public candidly commented on structural flaws in China's economy, is a member of the PBC's monetary policy committee.¹⁹⁹

Soliciting and sharing information

Officials at all levels seek the expertise and opinions of specialists from universities and research institutes. This trend has strongly accelerated in the 21st century. According to those interviewed for this paper, academics are regularly consulted in officials' internal discussions and asked to write and comment on policy proposals. Moreover, CPC, government and PLA officials give presentations and participate in discussions at academic seminars and workshops. Weekend off-site gatherings are commonplace. They bring together senior journalists, officials and academics from both civilian and military institutions—and in some cases, business representatives and PLA officers.²⁰⁰ Party and government organizations, such as Xinhua, the Ministry of Commerce and the Central Party School, not only consult Chinese researchers but also solicit the advice of overseas Chinese scholars (i.e. Chinese academics who are not citizens of the PRC).²⁰¹

At a lower level, younger researchers have increasingly been solicited by ambassadors to serve in advisory roles in junior posts at Chinese embassies. Those seconded to Brussels, Islamabad, New Delhi and Tokyo have all been from Fudan University.²⁰² At least one faculty member of the China Foreign Affairs University, the main training school of the MFA, accepted an offer to work at an embassy.²⁰³

¹⁹⁷ '中国新“外脑”' ['China's new "outside brains"'], 21世纪经济报道 [21st Century Business Herald], 3 Apr. 2009, <http://www.21cbh.com/HTML/2009-4-3/HTML_UXJO7Q2M0IC9.html>; Deputy head of Chinese government research institute, Interview with author, Beijing, 26 June 2009; and Chinese professor of economics (note 38).

¹⁹⁸ Professor Hu Angang, Tsinghua University, Interview with author, Beijing, 8 Apr. 2010 (authors' translation).

¹⁹⁹ Batson, A., 'Chinese central bank puts three scholars on policy committee', *Wall Street Journal*, 29 Mar. 2010.

²⁰⁰ Chinese professor of international relations, Interview with author, Beijing, 3 Sep. 2008.

²⁰¹ Overseas Chinese scholar and member of academic association Global Forum of Chinese Political Scientists, Personal communication with author, Sep. 2009.

²⁰² Pan Zhongqi and Wang Yiwei took leaves of absence from Fudan University in 2008 to serve as first and second secretary to the EU mission, respectively. Pan returned in 2009. Du Youkang was first secretary at China's embassy in Pakistan from 2002 to 2005 and has been at the embassy in India since 2008. In 2010 Ren Xiao was posted in Japan. Chinese professor of international relations, Stockholm (note 86).

²⁰³ Xiong Wei served as first secretary at the Chinese embassy in Berlin in 2010.

Table 4.1. Chinese foreign policy research institutions

Institution	Administering organization
<i>Communist Party</i>	
International Strategy Research Institute	Central Party School
<i>People's Liberation Army</i>	
Academy of Military Sciences ^a	Central Military Commission
National Defence University	Central Military Commission
China Institute for International Strategic Studies ^a	PLA General Staff Department
China Foundation for International Strategic Studies	PLA General Staff Department
<i>Government</i>	
Development Research Centre ^a	State Council
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences ^{a b c}	State Council
China Institute of International Studies ^{a b}	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations ^{a b}	Ministry of State Security
China Center for International Economic Exchanges	National Development and Reform Commission
<i>Local Government</i>	
Shanghai Institutes for International Studies ^{a b}	Shanghai City Government
<i>Academic</i>	
Institute of International Relations	China Foreign Affairs University ^d
Strategy and Conflict Research Center	China Foreign Affairs University ^d
Institute of International Studies	Fudan University
School of International Studies	Peking University
School of International Studies	Renmin University
Institute of International Studies	Tsinghua University
Institute of International Strategy and Development	Tsinghua University

PLA = People's Liberation Army.

^a This institution is ranked as one of China's top 10 think tanks.

^b This institution is ranked as one of Asia's top 40 think tanks.

^c The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) is by far the largest Chinese research institution in the realm of foreign policy. Several CASS institutes publish foreign policy-related research which is sent to decision makers—including the Institute of World Economics and Politics and the Institute of American Studies, as well as the institutes of Asia-Pacific Studies, East European, Russian and Central Asia Studies, European Studies, Japanese Studies, and Taiwan Studies.

^d The China Foreign Affairs University is operated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Sources: Institute websites; Chinese international relations scholars, Interviews with author; Yang, Q. (杨清林), '中国十大智库集体浮出水面' [China's 10 best think tanks emerge], 大公报 [Ta Kung Pao], 9 Nov. 2006; and McGann, J. G., 'The global "go-to think tanks" 2009', Revised, University of Pennsylvania, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, 28 Jan. 2010, <<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/irp/2009GlobalRankingsofThinkTanks.htm>>.

There are many types of research institution that focus on foreign policy issues (see table 4.1). The most prestigious ones are administered by CPC organs, the State Council, ministries or the PLA. One key exception is the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, which reports to Shanghai City Government.

Genuinely independent think tanks in the Western sense do not exist in an authoritarian state like China because public dissemination of what the authorities consider unsanctioned thought is not permitted. A Chinese researcher

cannot publish a column on his or her institute's website criticizing Hu Jintao's call to enhance 'four strengths' in Chinese foreign policy.²⁰⁴ However, once individuals have gained prominence they can express somewhat different views from the official entity that they represent. Academics at key universities (e.g. Peking University, Tsinghua University and Fudan University) and research institutes in Shanghai and other cities are looked on as having more independence of thought than those at official institutions in Beijing, although even they must stay within permissible limits in their public writing and speeches.

Internal discussions between researchers and foreign policy officials, in contrast, were described by several interviewees as frank and often heated. A senior researcher of a government research institute recalled one MFA meeting convened in 2009 to discuss China's relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). When most officials in the room concurred with both his and a university professor's stance that China should consider deepening its relationship with the transatlantic alliance, the official from the MFA's Russia department stormed out of the room with the emphatic exclamation that China should maintain its distance from NATO.²⁰⁵ Another foreign policy specialist, after returning from a September 2008 weekend gathering at which informal conversations continued into the late evening, described his 'shock' at how openly dissatisfaction with Hu Jintao had been voiced. This was the first time in the four years of attending such informal meetings that he had heard a senior Chinese leader criticized by name. In this instance several oil company and military representatives were upset by Hu Jintao's concession in June 2008 to Japan's Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to cooperatively develop a portion of the oil and gas fields in contested areas of the East China Sea in return for Fukuda's pledge to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics.²⁰⁶

In some cases, senior academics, by pointing out potential misinterpretations to foreign policy officials in meetings and internal reports, have been a driving force in trying to steer official language either away or towards specific policy formulations. A well-publicized example of the sway that scholars sometimes have over foreign policy terminology involved the term 'peaceful rise', introduced in November 2003 by leading CPC theoretician Zheng Bijian to describe China's broad foreign policy objectives. The term was initially used by Chinese leaders, but after a heated debate among scholars and officials, it was dropped from official language and replaced by the term 'peaceful development'.²⁰⁷ Although scholars cannot publicly criticize Hu Jintao's concept of a 'harmonious

²⁰⁴ Wu (note 22), (authors' translation).

²⁰⁵ Senior researcher at Chinese government research institute, Interview with author, Beijing, 9 July 2009.

²⁰⁶ Chinese professor of international relations (note 200). On the dispute see Manicom, J., 'Sino-Japanese cooperation in the East China Sea: limitations and prospects', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 30, no. 3 (2008), pp. 455–78; and Lee (note 152).

²⁰⁷ Zheng, B. (郑必坚), *China's Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian 1997–2004* (Brookings Institution: Washington, DC, 2005); and Glaser, B. S. and Medeiros, E. S., 'The changing ecology of foreign policymaking in China: the ascension and demise of the theory of "peaceful rise"', *China Quarterly*, no. 190 (2007), pp. 291–310.

world', some simply choose to convey their lack of enthusiasm by not talking or writing about it.²⁰⁸

Senior researchers whose advice is sought by Chinese foreign policy officials do not have a common vision of China's foreign policy objectives. China's international relations community is an eclectic group. Hence, decision makers receive a host of diverse and conflicting recommendations. Substantial divisions among scholars exist on fundamental questions. Is China a major power or still a developing country? What kind of global order should China strive to mould? How long will US dominance last? What strategy should China adopt vis-à-vis the USA?

Among the well-known advisor-scholars, most are US specialists and are pre-occupied with analysing and commenting on the crucial China–USA relationship. An exception is Qin Yaqing, who advocates that China should put more effort into strengthening its strategic position in East Asia.²⁰⁹ One common thread among mainstream senior researchers revolves around the question of what global role China should embrace as a result of its enhanced power. While they do not, in essence, stray from the basic foreign policy precept laid out by Deng Xiaoping that China should lie low and avoid a leadership position, many believe that, given China's rise, it should be more involved in international issues such as global governance. Following a 2009 speech in which Hu Jintao shifted emphasis to another of Deng's precepts, calling for China to 'actively' make modest contributions to international issues, some scholars publicly encouraged China to take a more proactive stance on issues ranging from regional security to global warming negotiations.²¹⁰

The overall impact of specialists at universities and research institutions on foreign policy decision makers is impossible to gauge with precision—and beyond the scope of this paper's goals. Many interviewees cautioned against overestimating the influence of researchers. Instead, interviewees stressed the significance of experts because they provide officials with a diversity of interpretations of international trends and a broader view of other countries' foreign policy decisions. A mid-career MFA official said that, while he regularly consults and reads the reports of four or five of the country's top foreign policy specialists, most researchers are too far removed from day-to-day policymaking to be useful. Senior foreign policy officials are overwhelmed with documents that analyse foreign policy and only read a fraction of them.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Director of Chinese government research institute (note 27).

²⁰⁹ Qin, Y. and Wei, L., '结构、进程与权力的社会化—中国与东亚地区合作' [Structure, progress and socialization of power—China's cooperation with East Asia], *世界经济与政治* [World Economics and Politics], vol. 319, no. 7 (2007).

²¹⁰ Wu (note 22), (authors' translation). See e.g. Le, Y. and Chen, F., '中国“国际人缘”十大前瞻' [Ten major prospects for China's 'international popularity'], *环球* [Globe], no. 19 (2009), pp. 22–28; and Deng, Y., '外交战略:中国可以有更多的国际担当' [Foreign policy strategies: China could take more international responsibilities], *国际先驱导报* [International Herald Leader], 30 Dec. 2009, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/herald/2009-12/30/content_12727491.htm>.

²¹¹ Chinese MFA official, Interview with author, Beijing, 8 July 2009.

The media and netizens

The role of public opinion in shaping China's foreign policy is a hotly debated phenomenon both inside and outside China.²¹² While there are numerous cases in which public opinion demonstrably has had a direct impact on domestic policy, in the realm of foreign policy it is more difficult to unequivocally make the same link.²¹³ Yet, it is increasingly apparent that within the Chinese media and online community there are groups that strive to influence the formulation of foreign policy.

Both the media revolution that has taken place in China over the past 30 years and the spread of Internet use among the Chinese public over the past decade have substantially transformed the manner in which Chinese citizens and officials communicate in general. This has also resulted in two distinct changes related to the public discussion of foreign policy issues. The first change pertains to the diversity of analysis reaching Chinese people, the speed with which news is circulating in China and the degree to which Chinese people are able to express their views on foreign policy issues. The second change is the dynamic and omnidirectional nature of communication. Previously, the media was a tool exclusively available to officials. Now, with the advent of the Internet, interest groups and citizens can also utilize the media and the Internet to influence public opinion as well as each other.

Diversity, speed and avenues of expression

The Chinese Government's decision in the 1980s to cut media subsidies forced media outlets to raise their own funds by competing on the market. Today nearly 2000 newspapers and magazines, hundreds of television stations and scores of Internet news sites vie for audiences and advertising revenue with different news angles. International news is in high demand. *Cankao Xiaoxi* (Reference News), which consists mostly of translations of foreign news reports and was originally an internal Xinhua publication for officials, is the best-selling newspaper in China, with a circulation of over 3 million. *Huanqiu Shibao* (Global Times²¹⁴), which also focuses on international affairs while catering to nationalist views, has a circulation of over 1 million.²¹⁵ Originally founded in 1993 by *Renmin Ribao* as a revenue source to offset its weak finances, *Huanqiu Shibao* has since evolved into

²¹² Qi, J. (齐建华), 影响中国外交决策的五大因素 [Five factors influencing China's foreign policy decision making] (中央编译出版社 [Central Compilation & Translation Press]: Beijing, Apr. 2010); Zhang, S., '民意表达, 我们还需要学习' [Expression of public opinion: we must learn more], 环球时报 [Global Times], 10 Mar. 2010; and Hong, J., 'The Internet and China's foreign policy making: the impact of online public opinions as a new societal force', eds Y. Hao and S. Lin, *China's Foreign Policy Making: Societal Force and Chinese American Policy* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2005), pp. 93–110.

²¹³ After Guangzhou police fatally beat a migrant worker, a legal challenge and outcry by millions of netizens led the government to dissolve the entire 'custody and repatriation' system under which he was detained. Hand, K. J., 'Using law for a righteous purpose: the Sun Zhigang incident and evolving forms of citizen action in the People's Republic of China', *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, vol. 45, no. 114 (2006), pp. 114–91; and Lagerkvist, 'The rise of online public opinion' (note 183), pp. 119–30.

²¹⁴ *Huanqiu Shibao* is also the parent paper of an English-language publication called *Global Times*, which was launched in Apr. 2009.

²¹⁵ WAN-IFRA, *World Press Trends 2009* (World Association of Newspapers: Paris, 2009), p. 317.

what every interviewee described as the most influential media outlet in the foreign policy domain.²¹⁶ Television talk shows on nationally broadcast channels CCTV-4 and -7, on which an anchor and one or two specialists discuss international affairs, draw millions of viewers weekly. Although the shows' setting and freewheeling conversation style are reminiscent of US talk shows, participants are not allowed to express any harsher criticism of official policies than they would in a *Huanqiu Shibao* opinion piece.

Today Chinese officials have less and less ability to hide news from the public. In addition, citizens have the option to express their views on a host of issues which would have been unimaginable a mere decade ago. The dramatic spread of Internet use in China has greatly accelerated the speed with which both domestic and international news reaches ordinary citizens. There were more than 384 million Chinese Internet users in 2009, making them by far the largest virtual community in the world.²¹⁷ A growing number of Internet forums are dedicated to international affairs. One of the most popular of these, the Strong Nation Forum, more than quadrupled its number of registered users between 2007 and 2010 and now has 2 million users.²¹⁸ Not only are ordinary citizens increasingly voicing their opinions on the Internet, many CPC intellectuals (e.g. Yu Keping), former ambassadors (e.g. Hua Liming) and active foreign policy officials (e.g. Gao Yusheng) write about foreign affairs on their blogs.²¹⁹

This explosion of new outlets for expression, along with the lively discussions about foreign policy in a handful of newspapers and on the Internet, does not mean that Chinese people enjoy freedom of expression. The Chinese authorities retain considerable powers to limit expression and make enormous efforts to control online discussions using a mix of technological and political tools. The ministries of Public Security and State Security monitor Internet bulletin boards, blogs and email. The authorities hire people to keep an eye out for subversive opinion and steer conversation to government positions. Known as the 'fifty cent party' (*wu mao dang*) for the payment they allegedly receive for each Internet posting, these hired commentators also report dangerous content to authorities and try to overwhelm unacceptable views with a barrage of messages.²²⁰

International evaluations of press freedom continue to give China dismal marks. Journalists are not allowed to report details about how the government's

²¹⁶ Senior *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) editor, Interview with author, Beijing, 28 Sep. 2009.

²¹⁷ China Internet Network Information Centre, 'The 25th statistical survey report on Internet development in China', Jan. 2010, <<http://www.cnnic.net.cn/uploadfiles/pdf/2010/3/15/142705.pdf>>.

²¹⁸ 强国论坛 [Strong Nation Forum], <<http://bbs1.people.com.cn/boardList.do?action=postList&boardId=1>>; 'Introduction to Strong Nation Forum', *People's Daily*, 23 Apr. 2007; and Yu, J., '揭秘强国论坛：四成网民最爱论政 版主日看几十万字' [The Strong Nation Forum revealed: four-tenths of netizens prefer to talk politics; moderators read several hundred thousand words daily], 人民网 [People's Daily online], 16 Mar. 2010, <<http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/11146828.html>>.

²¹⁹ See blogs of Yu Keping of the CPC Central Committee Translation Bureau, <<http://blog.ju51.com/yukeping>>; Hua Liming, former ambassador to Tehran and The Hague, <<http://hualiming.blog.sohu.com>>; and Gao Yusheng of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, <<http://blog.sina.com.cn/gaoyusheng2>>.

²²⁰ Bandurski, D., 'China's guerrilla war for the web', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 171, no. 6 (2008), pp. 41–44.

foreign policy decisions are reached.²²¹ The CPC Publicity Department regularly sends faxes to publications and television stations on topics that should not be mentioned. Commercial publications are part of media groups under the administration of an official publication that is supervised by a government or Party entity. Consequently, an editor-in-chief who crosses boundaries knows he or his staff risk dismissal.²²²

Omnidirectional influences

When assessing the question of public opinion's impact on Chinese foreign policy formulation it is worth noting that there are multiple channels of influence at play between several foreign policy actors. The Internet sets the agenda when there is breaking news, forcing officials, as well as the print and television media, to react. In turn, officials and foreign policy actors on the margins also do their best to influence the media, netizens and each other. Such complex connections between foreign policy actors, the media and the public—along with the unruly nature of the Internet in general—are all part of the omnidirectional influences that weigh on Chinese foreign policy formulation. Moreover, actions online that are taken to the extreme in the form of cyber attacks can have real-world consequences.

Chinese officials' position towards public opinion is ambivalent. At times, via the media, they tacitly encourage the public to express opinions on international issues; at other times, they do their utmost to block expression of public opinion pertaining to foreign policy.²²³ Above all, officials try to steer and control public opinion. One common method they use is to order media outlets to take guidance from the *Renmin Ribao* or Xinhua News Agency regarding acceptable interpretations of events. For example, when a senior *Renmin Ribao* editor characterized the 2004 assault on a Chinese woman by a US immigration officer at Niagara Falls as a reflection of US 'imperialism, power politics, hegemonic thinking and racial discrimination', Chinese officials gave the public carte blanche to express anti-US sentiment in both print and online.²²⁴ On the other hand, when in 2004 China's officials did not want Chinese–Japanese ties to further deteriorate after ferocious outbursts of indignation in the media and Internet over the Japanese

²²¹ Chinese journalist, Interview with author, Beijing, 9 July 2009. See also Shirk, S., 'Changing media, changing foreign policy in China', *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Apr. 2007), pp. 43–70.

²²² Buckley, C., 'China demotes editor after Obama interview—sources', Reuters, 13 Dec. 2009, <<http://af.reuters.com/article/idAFTRE5BCOBW20091213>>; and Lafraniere, S., 'Editor is fired after criticizing Chinese registration system', *New York Times*, 9 Mar. 2010.

²²³ Kahn, J., 'If 22 million Chinese prevail at UN, Japan won't', *New York Times*, 1 Apr. 2005. In 2005 the director of the State Council Information Office, Zhao Qizheng (赵启正), openly admitted to the media clampdown. Sugiyama, H., 'China tightens controls on domestic media reporting on Japan', *Daily Yomiuri*, 4 Oct. 2004. China's policies of 'peaceful co-existence' and 'good-neighbourly relations' are often denounced as weakness toward ASEAN countries. Song, Y. and Yang, K., '南海问题怎么办' [What to do about the South China Sea issue?], *南风窗* [Southern Window], no. 3 (2010), <<http://www.nfcmag.com/articles/1932>>. For harsh criticism by netizens see '南海问题暴露出中国肥大而不强软肋' [South China Sea issue shows China's fat, soft underbelly], *Tiexue.net*, 28 May 2010, <http://bbs.tiexue.net/post2_4277569_1.html>.

²²⁴ Zhu, M. (朱梦魁), '誓为赵燕讨回公道' [Vow to reclaim justice for Zhao Yan], 人民网 [People's Daily online], 29 July 2004, <<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guandian/183/4785/5513/2672775.html>> (authors' translation).

prime minister's visit to a controversial shrine and an incident near the Senkaku (or Diaoyu) Islands, the authorities shut down nationalist chat sites and ordered the official media to stop negative reporting.²²⁵

A further reflection of official ambivalence towards public opinion are the numerous foreign policy decisions that Chinese leaders have made with disregard for public opinion. For example, Hu Jintao chose to attend the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit hosted by US President Barack Obama in New York despite displeasure voiced by netizens and some media commentators over US arms sales to Taiwan and Obama's meeting with the Dalai Lama.

Nevertheless, in all of the authors' interviews, netizens were described as a new pressure group that has, at a minimum, an indirect yet increasingly felt—or perceived—impact on foreign policy formulation.²²⁶ A majority of interlocutors said the strongly nationalist opinions expressed in the media and on the Internet restrain officials' freedom of action, especially in conjunction with major news or on issues related to Japan and the USA. 'When public opinion is split, the government does not pay attention', a mid-level foreign ministry official said. 'But if an overwhelming majority of views on chat sites and in newspaper columns reflect a unified view on an issue, officials feel the need to act cautiously because they do not want dissatisfaction to escalate and lead to street protests.'²²⁷

The MFA has its own foreign policy-related online discussion forum. Ministry officials regularly refer to the forum and the huge number of emails they receive on any given issue to justify various Chinese policies to foreign diplomats. A majority of interviewees described Wen Jiabao's concern about a potential barrage of criticism by resentful netizens as either a determining or somewhat important factor in China's decision to cancel both the 2008 China–EU Summit, scheduled to take place in Lyon, and Wen's state visit to France—both of which were to be hosted by French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Prior to the cancellation, EU officials were told by Chinese officials that they had received 1000 emails saying that 'the MFA was being too soft' in its response to Sarkozy's meeting with the Dalai Lama.²²⁸

The CPC, the government and the PLA all make efforts to affect the views of society at large. They advance their agenda directly by disseminating speeches and articles in the media and on the Internet as well as indirectly by soliciting academics and leading intellectuals to comment favourably on official policy in the public domain. Senior academics are summoned to the MFA to hear officials explain important foreign policy decisions. For example, following Hu Jintao's decision to attend the April 2010 nuclear summit in New York, senior researchers were briefed at the MFA on the Chinese Government's decision to tone down its criticism of the USA and revert to emphasizing the importance of

²²⁵ In an apparent bid to clamp down on expression of anti-Japanese sentiment, nationalistic web forums such as the '918 Patriots' Alliance' were shut down in late 2004. Beech, H., 'Patriot games', *Time*, 22 Nov. 2004. See also Sugiyama (note 223).

²²⁶ See also Hong (note 212), p. 97.

²²⁷ Chinese MFA official (note 211), (authors' translation).

²²⁸ Beijing-based European Union official (note 28).

constructive ties. After internal briefings of this kind, academics have two choices. They may heed the MFA's encouragement to expound favourably on the decision by, for example, writing a column or taking part in a television panel. Or they can do nothing. They cannot, however, criticize the decision without risking their careers.²²⁹

At times researchers have come under intense pressure to publicly support unpopular government stances. For example, a prominent international relations scholar was approached by *Huanqiu Shibao* in January 2010 after critical comments about the Chinese Government appeared on popular websites because of Google's decision to pull out of China unless the authorities stopped censoring the search engine. The scholar was asked to submit a commentary reflecting the government's position, stressing the need for Google to abide by Chinese law. When he refused, the newspaper turned to another well-known scholar who agreed because he felt he 'had no choice'. During three rounds of editing the second scholar tried unsuccessfully to insert his own views, but in the end a text written by a leading *Renmin Ribao* editor was published in *Huanqiu Shibao* under the scholar's name. The commentary stated that Google's withdrawal from China would not be a 'big deal' and that it is unthinkable that China would change its law restricting access to reactionary and indecent content.²³⁰

Many foreign policy actors utilize nationalism to advance their own agenda in the name of China's interests. Those who strongly believe that China's rise depends on continued internationalization rather than on the protection of its perceived, narrowly defined national interests are, on the whole, less inclined to rely on nationalism. But they too succumb to this 'across-the board temptation', such as when MOFCOM defends Chinese companies in the name of national economic interests.²³¹ Thus, nationalism is not confined to any specific organ, such as the PLA or the security apparatus, although they may have stronger voices or are paid greater attention abroad.²³²

From the top leadership's viewpoint, the stoking of nationalist sentiment can prove a double-edged sword, as public opinion can shift rapidly from criticizing the actions of foreigners to admonishing Chinese leaders for acting too weakly. The anti-Japanese demonstrations in the spring of 2005 are a case in point. Chinese authorities initially gave their tacit support to an online petition urging the Chinese Government not to support Japan's campaign to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council until the Japanese Government acknowledged Japan's historic crimes. Although there is no way to verify their legitimacy, over 40 million online signatures were reportedly gathered. Chinese officials then continued to rouse nationalist sentiment by allowing Xinhua to publish an inflammatory article condemning yet another set of Japanese history

²²⁹ Senior researcher present at the MFA briefing, Interview with author, Beijing, 6 Apr. 2010.

²³⁰ Chinese professor, Personal communication with author, Beijing, 4 Feb. 2010.

²³¹ Cabestan (note 6). E.g. MOFCOM has described the annual benchmark pricing system for iron ore as a national interest. Yap and Zhang (note 161); and Ruan, V., 'China's interest should be reflected in iron ore talks', Dow Jones Newswire, 16 Mar. 2010, <<http://www.foxbusiness.com/story/markets/industries/industrials/update-chinas-reflected-iron-ore-talks>>.

²³² Cabestan (note 6).

textbook revisions.²³³ Disgruntled citizens moved their protests from the virtual community to the streets, and consequently anti-Japanese demonstrations were held in over 20 Chinese cities. In many places Japanese people were beaten, and the offices of Japanese companies in China were looted. The anti-Japan movement in combination with separate demonstrations over pollution, labour representation and unpaid pensions stirred increasing anxiety among leaders about a deterioration of social stability.²³⁴ Chinese leaders put a decisive end to the protests soon after demonstrators in Beijing who were heading for the Japanese embassy decided instead to try and march towards Tiananmen Square—the symbolic centre of power which has been off bounds for all demonstrators since 1989.²³⁵

In the view of three senior researchers, both Chinese and foreign observers pay too much attention to the netizens—in particular their ultra-nationalist positions—as a factor influencing foreign policy decision makers. Lacking the avenues that democracies have for citizens to express their discontent, in China the Internet is a useful outlet for nationalists to let off steam. A professor of international relations who advises the State Council Information Office on how to more effectively guide media reporting on international affairs pointed out that Chinese officials have been generally successful in steering public opinion to support China's foreign policy.²³⁶

²³³ See Shirk (note 221).

²³⁴ Shirk, S., *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), pp. 171–78.

²³⁵ Watts, J., 'Violence flares as the Chinese rage at Japan', *The Observer*, 17 Apr. 2005.

²³⁶ Chinese professor of international relations, Beijing (note 86). On official control over the media see '2009 SCIO Internet news work training session', *China Digital Times*, Dec. 2009, <<http://chinadigitaltimes.net/china/scio-training/>>.

5. Conclusions

In contemporary China a cacophony of voices urges Chinese decision makers to pursue a variety of foreign policies. The pluralization of Chinese society and China's growing interdependence with the international order are putting enormous pressure on the leaders of the Communist Party of China. The Party leaders rely on a host of interest groups to maintain social order and economic growth—a prerequisite for the CPC to stay in power. As a result, the leadership must accommodate numerous and sometimes competing agendas. This challenge is further complicated by the decentralization of power that has taken place over the past three decades and has been essential to China's economic ascent. Hence, consensus building within the CPC Politburo, the decision-making body that is intended to be representative of the Party, is imperative to ensure CPC unity and political stability.

Official policymakers and interest groups that strive to influence foreign policy formulation all interpret China's national interests based on their own, sometimes narrowly defined perspectives and preferences. There is no one overarching official formulation that unambiguously defines China's 'core interests'.²³⁷ As China's global reach has expanded, so has the range of issues debated as potential core interests. The wording of China's foreign policy objectives, summed up as a pursuit of a 'harmonious world', are often so lacking in specificity that it is possible to justify any sort of action.²³⁸ Today all foreign policy actors claim to operate in the name of China's national interests. The Ministry of Commerce promotes China's prosperity, the People's Liberation Army defends China's sovereignty, the oil companies ensure China's energy security, local governments raise living standards, netizens uphold China's dignity, and so on. The Politburo Standing Committee must grapple with the interests and good intentions of these actors and mould them into a coherent foreign policy while simultaneously taking into account the demands of the international community.

Of the new foreign policy actors the most dynamic are the netizens. The Internet and the commercialization of the media have dramatically transformed the interaction between officials and citizens. People in China are permitted to express their views both on opinion pages in commercial newspapers and on the Internet more freely than would have been imaginable a decade ago. The perspectives and sources of information available to the ordinary citizen have multiplied. Although the online community encompasses a wide range of views, nationalist sentiment is prevalent and can escalate to extremes. Criticism of Chi-

²³⁷ Outlines of China's 'core national interests' are deliberately vague. Dai Bingguo describes them as 'first, protecting the basic Chinese system and its national security; second, national sovereignty and territorial integrity; and third, continued economic and social stability and development.' Definitions of sovereignty and territorial integrity, in particular, have repeatedly expanded. Li, J. and Wu, Q., '首轮中美经济对话:除上月球外主要问题均已谈及' [First China-US economic dialogue discusses everything except moon landings], 中国新闻网 [China News Service], 29 July 2009, <<http://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/news/2009/07-29/1794984.shtml>> (authors' translation).

²³⁸ Jakobson, L., 'The burden of "non-interference"', *China Economic Quarterly*, no. 2 (2007), p. 15.

nese leaders for being too weak and bowing to international pressure is incessant on Internet forums. Chinese officials are acutely aware of how rapidly this dissatisfaction with foreign policy can give rise to questioning of the CPC's capability to govern. Hence, leaders' actions are indeed constrained by public opinion at large and especially by the views of the online community during international crises touching on China. This is especially relevant when Japan or the United States is involved or in conjunction with any issues related to Taiwan and Tibet. However, the vast majority of foreign policy decisions are made with little regard to public opinion. In international negotiations, the emergence of a vocal citizenry at times has implications as it allows Chinese political leaders to cite public opinion to justify a position, regardless of whether their actions are actually constrained.

CPC officials, government bureaucrats, PLA officers, intellectuals, researchers, media representatives and business executives try to influence each other and public opinion: they lobby, they write blogs, they take part in televised debates, and they engage in roundtable discussions about the direction of Chinese foreign policy. The participation of businessmen and PLA officers in these discourses is another phenomenon that did not exist 10 years ago. Awareness of such omnidirectional channels of influence is critical for understanding the complex foreign policy formation processes in China. It is no longer possible to think of China's decision makers as a unitary force. On any given foreign policy issue, those seeking China's cooperation need to evaluate the potential interests of several groups. A prime example was the willingness of the United Nations Security Council to exclude the energy sector from sanctions on Iran in June 2010 in order to ensure China's (and Russia's) support of UN Security Council Resolution 1929. It is also critical to take into account the nationalist undercurrent running throughout China and the constraining effect of this sentiment on leaders' room for manoeuvre, especially during a crisis.

From the authors' research and analysis of the new foreign policy actors, both the official and marginal ones, three broad trends are evident. First, in foreign policy decision making, authority has become fractured. Second, while in general China's continued internationalization is regarded by all actors as inevitable, there are varying views among both officials and marginal actors regarding the degree to which China should prioritize internationalization in its development. Third, the view that China should more actively defend and pursue its interests internationally is becoming prevalent, especially among new foreign policy actors. Each of these trends have implications for policymakers abroad.

The first trend is the fracturing of authority in foreign policy formulation, which has forced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to share power. Within the government, MOFCOM, the National Development and Reform Commission and the People's Bank of China have emerged as influential foreign policy players. Other ministries and CPC organs also vie for their voices to be heard. This trend will accelerate as China's share of the global economy grows and domestic developments increasingly have foreign policy ramifications. Even decisions made by lesser ministries will have an impact on countries near and far.

Due to a lack of information, changes in the roles of the Ministry of State Security and the PLA are the most difficult to assess. The combination of expanding interaction between China and the global community, intensifying international scrutiny of China's behaviour, and worsening tensions in minority areas within China have resulted in more funds and prestige for the Ministry of State Security, thereby elevating its status among foreign policy shapers. As for the PLA, the extent to which it has been distanced from foreign policy making is debated inside and outside of China; there are both Chinese and foreign experts who consider the PLA a re-emerging player. Without question, PLA officers now participate in the public debate, and this is a new phenomenon. Moreover, the PLA no longer shies away from displaying its power, as is evident from its increased maritime patrols and the 2007 anti-satellite test, actions which antagonize its neighbours and the USA.

Beyond the official establishment, the activities of several groups on the margins have a bearing on foreign policy. Some of these actors, such as local governments with international economic ties, researchers, media figures, netizens and the general public, strive to influence foreign policy. Other actors on the margins do not necessarily seek an active role in foreign policy but nevertheless often end up complicating Chinese diplomacy. For example, large enterprises primarily want to pursue commercial interests but inadvertently entangle foreign policy officials into a web of human rights, energy security concerns and political interests by their actions. Ironically, of the various peripheral groups, it is these enterprises that at times affect foreign policy the most—as has been the case recently in Central Asia, Iran and Sudan.

What are the implications of this fracturing of authority for policymakers abroad? Foreigners can no longer deal solely with the MFA and must instead take into account multiple actors who have both a stake and a say in the decision-making processes on any given issue. An illuminating example is the decision by the CPC Publicity Department to heavily censor a newspaper interview with US President Barack Obama during his visit to China in 2009. While the White House had secured MFA approval for the interview—mostly about innocuous subjects like Obama's love for basketball—the Publicity Department had not been consulted. In the same vein, on climate issues foreigners cannot discuss China's position on international climate issues with the MFA alone but must involve a host of actors, including the NDRC, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Land and Resources and the Ministry of Science and Technology. Awareness of rivalries and overlaps in jurisdiction is key to many forms of cooperation with Chinese partners.

The second trend that emerges from the analysis is the diversity of approaches to China's internationalization adopted by foreign policy actors. MOFCOM, local governments, large companies and segments of the research and online communities are strongly in favour of prioritizing China's internationalization. They stand to benefit from it. Free trade agreements, regional development projects and greater investment opportunities are all on the agenda of the internationalists. However, while no one opposes the CPC leadership's firm decision to con-

tinue China's engagement with the world, there are foreign policy actors who support it with caveats. The NDRC is wary of an over-reliance on world markets and views China's foreign policy in terms of the benefits it brings for economic development, especially energy security. The Ministry of State Security is concerned that internationalization will lead to an acceptance among Chinese citizens of Western values, undermining the CPC's ability to manipulate discourse on such topics as human rights, transparency and accountability. Segments of the PLA, online and research communities, in turn, worry that too far-reaching engagement will lead to China's leaders compromising with foreign countries on territorial disputes and sovereignty.

Foreigners need to recognize nuances in Chinese perspectives on China's internationalization and acknowledge that they are not dealing with a monolithic or static engagement strategy.²³⁹ Actors cannot be categorized along pro- or anti-engagement lines. For example, while the NDRC favours buying oil at the well, it also wants to strengthen collaboration with other oil-consuming countries to ensure a stable world market.

The third trend is the relatively widespread consensus especially among new foreign policy actors that China should defend its interests by being more active in defining rules of international engagement. For example, MOFCOM, the PBC, numerous netizens and leading economists advocate that China demand greater voting rights in the International Monetary Fund. Those who want China to assume a more proactive foreign policy posture are at odds with conservative officials who believe that China should not stray from Deng Xiaoping's advice to lie low and avoid leadership in the international arena. In essence, the present leaders share Deng's view that China must focus its attention on modernization. They did, however, in 2009 acknowledge pressure from the several new foreign policy actors by conceding that China should 'actively get something accomplished' on the global stage.²⁴⁰

Among leading researchers and intellectuals there are those who support China shouldering more responsibility in tackling global problems such as climate change, nuclear proliferation and infringement of intellectual property rights. But these constitute a minority. The mainstream view among both old and new actors is that calls by industrialized countries to contribute to global public goods are an attempt to slow China's ascent.²⁴¹ In public, Chinese officials avoid direct mention of these deeply rooted suspicions, although this scepticism is manifested in the continued emphasis in official statements of China's right to develop.

²³⁹ Zha, D. (查道炯), 'Oiling the wheels of foreign policy? Energy security and China's international relations', Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Asia Security Initiative, Policy Series Working Paper no. 1, Mar. 2010, <<http://www.rsis.edu.sg/nts/resources.asp?selsubcat=publications>>, p. 13.

²⁴⁰ Glaser, B. G. and Dooley, B., 'China's 11th ambassadorial conference signals continuity and change in foreign policy', *China Brief*, vol. 9, no. 22 (4 Nov. 2009).

²⁴¹ Jakobson, L., 'China', eds A. Korppoo and A. Luta, *Towards a New Climate Regime?: Views of China, India, Japan, Russia and the United States on the road to Copenhagen* (Finnish Institute of International Affairs: Helsinki, 2009), p. 29; and Lieberthal, K. and Sandalow, D., *Overcoming Obstacles to US-China Cooperation on Climate Change* (Brookings Institution: Washington, DC, Jan. 2009), p. 2.

More broadly, within all emergent interest groups there are voices that urge China to take a 'less submissive' stance towards the demands of industrialized countries. They would like China to more vigorously defend its right to set conditions when others—usually Western states—seek China's cooperation on initiatives such as reducing carbon emissions, sanctioning Iran and North Korea and pressuring the Sudanese Government to earnestly tackle the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Among these conditions are the cessation of US arms sales to Taiwan, recognition of China's 'core interests' in the South China Sea and a promise by heads of state and government not to meet the Dalai Lama.

The growing perception among Chinese people that leaders should more staunchly defend national interests has several implications for foreigners. On the one hand, only by persistently engaging China and involving it in international decision-making processes can foreigners hope to dispel suspicions that industrialized countries seek to slow down China's rise and avoid China becoming an aggrieved outsider in the international order. On the other hand, engaging China does not mean giving it *carte blanche* to set the agenda alone. The *quid pro quo* approach sought by the Chinese Government following, for example, the US announcement of arms sales to Taiwan in January 2010 will remain an enormous challenge for foreign leaders. If China's economic, political and military might—what Chinese people term 'comprehensive national power'—continues to increase, it will have even more leverage in its dealings with other powers, both large and small.

These three trends—fractured authority, varying views of how China should internationalize and demands that China defends its core interests—are changing the nature of Chinese foreign policy formulation and the way in which China will interact with the outside world. Although the decision-making process remains opaque, the growing influence of new foreign policy actors brings a degree of pluralism to foreign policy formulation. These changes compel the CPC leadership to consider and balance a broader range of interests more than before. If it does not, it risks losing the loyalty of vital elites, jeopardizing the support that the CPC needs to rule.

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New Foreign Policy Actors in China

The dynamic transformation of Chinese society that has paralleled changes in the international environment has had a direct impact on both the making and shaping of Chinese foreign policy. To understand the complex nature of these changes is of utmost importance to the international community in seeking China's engagement and cooperation. Although much about China's foreign policy decision making remains obscure, this Policy Paper make clear that it is possible to identify the interest groups vying for a voice in policy formulation and to explore their policy preferences. Uniquely informed by the authors' access to individuals across the full range of Chinese foreign policy actors, this Policy Paper reveals a number of emergent trends, chief among them the changing face of China's official decision-making apparatus and the direction that actors on the margins would like to see Chinese foreign policy take.

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