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"China's Political and Economic Ascendancy and the Global Terrorism Burden: Prospects for US-China Cooperation"

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Introduction[1]

The political and economic rise of China is arguably the most significant geopolitical transition of the early 21st century. A recent report from the National Intelligence Council ("NIC 2025") stated that "few countries are poised to have more impact on the world over the next 15-20 years than China. If current trends persist, by 2025 China will have the world's second largest economy and will be a leading military power."[2]

However, like many rising powers before it, China has begun to realize that an activist and robust commercial and political profile throughout the world sometimes carries a violent price tag. Recent violent incidents conducted against Chinese nationals (or commercial interests) in Africa, Central Asia and South Asia are indicative of this trend. Moreover, since the mid-1990s, China has experienced a series of violent attacks emanating from (or associated with) its restive northwest Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), a trend that, for historical and political reasons, will likely continue for the foreseeable future.

Rising Powers and the Global Terrorism Burden: a Blueprint for China's Future?

Terrorism is an asymmetric tool or strategy typically used by nonstate actors to achieve certain political objectives in either local (national) or international contexts.[3] At its most basic level, terrorists seek to break "the spirit and create a sensation of fear within the target group [typically the ruling government], which will cause it to initiate political change."[4] In some cases, terrorism may be employed in the context of larger insurgencies directed at an incumbent regime, as can be seen in Sri Lanka or the Philippines. Often a "war of attrition" is a key part of this strategy, in which the terrorists will seek to have the targeted regime ask whether it is really worth maintaining a certain policy (or physical presence) in light of psychologically-disorienting and destabilizing violence.[5]

In an international context, terrorism can be seen as a tactic of compulsion, particularly when directed against individuals, officials or commercial entities representing a rising or hegemonic power. As the United States emerged as a powerful state in the 20th century, it found itself increasingly targeted by national and international terrorists. Thus, as Martha Crenshaw has asserted, the United States, since the late 1960s, "has been a preferred target, the victim of approximately one-third of international terrorist attacks over the past 30 years."[6] Richard Betts argues that American primacy (after the end of the Cold War) accelerated anti-American terrorism because of the penetrating nature of American cultural, military and political dominance throughout the world.[7]

Consequently, based on the estimates contained within the NIC 2025 report, the international system is currently undergoing a tectonic power transition, in which American relative decline is being matched by China's gradual ascendancy.[8] Based on the analysis above, therefore, it would be logical for China to take on more of the "terrorism burden" associated with great power status, while the United States may enjoy some slight relief from the same. At the very least, both China and the United States may discover that they are facing a common but differentiated transnational challenge, one

that potentially threatens—in an age of globalization in which terrorists can conduct spectacular attacks with conventional or non-conventional means—the entire global trading system upon which both countries depend.[9]

During the past few years, China has discovered that an activist commercial posture in certain parts of the world can incur a terrible human cost. Most recently, nine Chinese employees of the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) were kidnapped in the Southern Kordofan State of Sudan in October 2008. Five were subsequently killed, apparently as a result of a botched rescue operation. In April 2007, nine Chinese oil workers were killed in Ethiopia when militants associated with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) launched a raid on an oil facility. In Nigeria, five Chinese telecommunications workers were abducted in January 2007 in the Niger Delta by unidentified armed men believed to be linked to the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND).[10] In Niger, a Chinese uranium company executive was taken hostage. The executive, Zhang Guohua, was reportedly abducted by members of the local Tuareg tribe "who were upset at the company's policy of employing people from the capital rather than locals."[11]

China has also experienced violence in other parts of the world. In Afghanistan, eleven Chinese construction workers were killed in June 2004 when their construction site was raided by militants operating near Kunduz.[12] According to reports, the militants attacked a compound where the Chinese workers were sleeping and opened fire. In June 2005, a bus carrying Chinese nationals was attacked in northern Kyrgyzstan, although none of the bus occupants was killed. In an earlier case, a group of 19 Chinese businessmen traveling from Bishkek to China was less fortunate; all 19 were killed when their bus was attacked by "unidentified men armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles."[13] In June 2002, Chinese diplomat Wang Jianping, who worked at the Chinese embassy in Bishkek, was gunned down as he was riding in his car along a street in the Kyrgyz capital.

In Pakistan, which enjoys a close relationship with China, Chinese workers have also been targeted by various militant groups. In July 2007, a bus full of Chinese engineers was bombed in the southwestern province of Baluchistan. None of the Chinese was killed (although a number of policemen on detail to protect the Chinese were).[14] On 8 July 2007, three Chinese workers were shot dead in Peshawar. A year earlier in February 2006, militants shot and killed three Chinese engineers in the town of Hub. In October 2004, two Chinese engineers were kidnapped, while in May 2004, three Chinese were killed in a car bomb attack.[15]

Domestically, China considers the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), home to roughly eight million non-Han Uighurs and other minorities, to be its most serious security challenge. Beijing is particularly concerned with Xinjiang's Uighur population, which is ethnically Turkic, largely Sunni Muslim and has diaspora linkages throughout Central Asia. China claims that it has been fighting insurgent violence or terrorism in the region for at least 19 years, ever since the Baren [Barin] Township riot on April 5, 1990, in which as many as 1600 people (Uighurs and Chinese police) were killed.[16] Beijing is particularly concerned that a global Islamic revival—and particularly rising consciousness regarding an international Islamic community, or *Ummah*—may cause separatist aspirations in Xinjiang to be redefined in religious terms.[17]

In recent years, there has been clear evidence that a small minority of Uighurs has engaged in violent attacks against Chinese interests in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China

(to include attempted and completed suicide bombings). An instance of such violence occurred on 7 March 2008, when a China Southern Airlines jet took off from Urumqi (capital of the northwest Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region) at about 10:35am and headed toward Beijing. About two hours later, the plane made an emergency landing in Lanzhou, capital of neighboring Gansu Province. Investigators would later report that a 19-year old female ethnic Uighur had attempted, with the assistance of a male collaborator, to set fire to the airplane while in flight. The airline's crew was able to subdue the woman in a timely manner. The Chinese government later characterized the attempted attack as "organized and premeditated."[18]

In 2003, China identified four groups as being "East Turkistan terrorist organizations."[19] They included: the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, or ETIM (东突厥斯坦伊斯兰运动), the East Turkestan Liberation Organization, or ETLO (东突厥斯坦解放组织), the World Uighur Youth Congress, or WUYC (世界维吾尔青年代表大会), and the East Turkestan Information Center, or ETIC (东突厥斯坦新闻信息中心). Of the four groups, clearly ETIM has evoked the greatest concern within the Chinese Government. It has also been linked most directly to Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda organization.[20] In 2002, the United States, China, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan petitioned the United Nations to classify ETIM as a terrorist organization under U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1267 and 1390.[21] Such act "deeply gratified Beijing and simultaneously led many Uighurs to despair of receiving international support."[22]

Anti-Globalization Terrorism and China's Growing Risk

Contemporary international terrorism is often viewed as not only a violent reaction to globalization, but a phenomenon that is actually nourished by various processes—e.g., the computer internet revolution—associated with globalization.[23] In an earlier assessment of long-term future trends published in 2004, the National Intelligence Council noted that globalization's effects will be spread around the world, while its benefits would be most likely contained to certain regions or actors. In other words, globalization will create "winners"—China and India, for instance—and "those left behind."[24] The second category would likely resent countries such as China "especially if they feel squeezed by their growing dominance in key sectors of the global marketplace."[25]

As China's economy grows and reaches across the globe—in some cases displacing local industries or stimulating layoffs of local workers—China is likely to emerge as the new and, in some cases, resented "face" of globalization. Displaced and vengeful workers in countries affected by Chinese economic penetration will view China as the economic culprit behind their woes. China's challenges may be particularly acute within developing countries in which Chinese infrastructure development, investment, trade and resource acquisition have enriched urban elites while leaving the poor in the provinces behind.

Currently, China's global drive for energy supplies and other resources serves as a key underlying motive for its increased presence and economic activism around the world. According to one assessment, the most significant influence on 21st century global energy markets is likely to be the rise of two key players: China and India.[26] For its part, China

is increasing its dependence on foreign oil, which has grown from 6.3 percent (of total oil consumption) in 1993, to 30 percent in 2000 and 46 percent in 2004.[27] Based on current projections, China's crude oil imports are expected to double by the year 2020.[28] Dr. Fatih Birol, Chief Economist at the International Energy Agency, recently told an audience at the Council on Foreign Relations that "China will import about 10 million barrels per day of oil around 2015, and 13 million barrels per day in 2030, similar to the United States."[29] In essence, he noted, "China, in terms of oil imports, will be United States tomorrow."[30] An increasing appetite for oil has driven Chinese companies, both state and private, to oil-rich countries throughout the world, some of which are dangerous and politically unstable.[31]

Consequently, China's desire for energy and other commodities potentially exposes the country to terrorist violence. China has sought to pursue a policy of non-interference within the internal affairs of the countries in which it conducts business. However, this policy almost invariably requires cooperation with corrupt elites or unpopular governments, which may be in a state of conflict with antagonistic internal forces. This dynamic can be seen particularly in Africa where China has often entered into agreements (regarding energy extraction, etc.) with governments facing significant internal opposition, to include active insurgencies. In some parts of Africa, China has been accused of engaging in a new form of commodity and resource-based colonialism. Reflecting this sentiment, one African business analyst, writing for a major African wire service, noted that "this wild Dragon (China) has tasted and discovered that Africa is really sumptuous…Enter the Dragon—the latest colonial master—ravaging Africa from Sudan through Nigeria to Angola trailing the aroma of oil."[32]

In the Middle East, China's drive for energy security has led to a much more profound economic and political presence in the region, a source, ideologically and functionally, of much terrorist violence during the past century. The Middle East in general supplies 47 percent of the crude going to China. According to the International Energy Agency, China may consume the equivalent of Saudi Arabia's entire expected production of crude by 2015 if the current pace of Chinese economic growth continues.[33] Underlying this trend is an increasingly intimate relationship between Saudi Arabia and China, a relationship driven by a mutual symbiotic dynamic.

From Beijing's perspective, Saudi Arabia has the capacity to significantly quench China's growing thirst for imported oil, evidenced by the fact that Saudi Arabia retained the position of China's top supplier of crude oil in 2008, which represented an increase of 38.1% over 2007.[34] For its part, Saudi Arabia sees China as a source of capital for infrastructure projects and as a political balance against over-reliance on the United States and other Western states (the disadvantages of such over-reliance became apparent to the Saudi Arabian government in the wake of rising anti-Saudi sentiment in the United States, following the 9/11 attacks).[35] During his February 2009 visit to Saudi Arabia, Chinese President Hu Jintao signed a number of agreements in several areas, including energy, health care and transportation. Perhaps the largest breakthrough was an agreement in which China was awarded a contract to build a monorail system that would connect various Islamic holy sites within the Kingdom. Such economic interaction will inevitably bring an increased Chinese presence and a heightened Chinese profile, which could generate tensions and increase the possibility of violence.

China's relationship with Iran is also strong and growing. The country is emerging as one of Beijing's top suppliers of crude oil. In December 2007, the Chinese firm Sinopec signed a $2 billion deal over Iran's Yadavaran oil field. The Chinese government made it clear that the deal was commercial in nature, signed under the "principle of equality and mutual benefit" and "should not invite the interference of the U.S. government."[36] Politically, relations between Beijing and Tehran appear to be getting closer every year. Iran has enjoyed observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and this year may be granted full membership status. China has also played a significant role in the improvement of Iran's ballistic missile program.[37] Although close Sino-Iranian relations may help immunize China from Shia-based terrorist violence worldwide, risks still remain particularly if Beijing is seen as favoring a particular faction within the Iranian leadership, which subsequently loses power.

Overall, as commercial interests grow between Beijing and Middle Eastern countries, they will most likely lead to a greater Chinese commercial (and potentially military) presence, thus attracting the attention of terrorist organizations. First, if Beijing is seen as favoring key factions or elements within countries (such as in the fractured Iraqi state, where China recently signed an energy agreement),[38] it could lead to dissatisfaction among groups or factions who feel left out, which could then manifest in violence. Moreover, China could also become susceptible to charges or themes that Al Qaeda has leveled against the United States and other oil-consuming countries. For example, Osama bin Laden has urged Arab governments to preserve oil as "a great and important economic power for the coming Islamic state."[39]

Al Qaeda often speaks of Middle Eastern oil as having been "stolen" and, directing its wrath toward Middle Eastern regimes, exhorts its followers "to not allow the thieves ruling [Muslim] countries to control this oil."[40] Finally, China could find itself increasingly at odds with one of Al Qaeda's most persistent and trenchant grievances: pervasive foreign presence and influence within the Middle East. A recent U.S. Congressional study summarized Al Qaeda's (and affiliated groups') strategic goals as relating to two key themes: expelling foreign forces and influences from Islamic societies and establishing an Islamic state governed by Sharia law.[41]

Another area of the world that may expose China to terrorist violence is Central Asia, a region of the world known for its abundant energy supplies. Following the end of the Cold War, China has increasingly viewed Central Asia within the prism of its western development strategy ("西部大开发战略"). China has launched a number of ambitious pipeline projects in Central Asia to diversify both the sourcing and importation of oil and gas supplies. Beijing has shown particular interest in Kazakhstan, with which it shares a long border, and already receives its oil through a long (roughly 3000 km) pipeline.[42] Most recently, major Chinese and Uzbek energy firms established a joint venture to build a gas pipeline between Uzbekistan and China.[43] In Kyrgyzstan, Chinese companies are exploring potential oil and natural gas sources in the southern part of the country.[44]

Pipelines connecting Central Asian states to China may traverse areas with known or suspected terrorism threats, potentially rendering Beijing vulnerable to terrorist or criminal violence in this region. Central Asia hosts a number of extremist or terrorist organizations that operate in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, although the threat level varies according to the country (and even regions within countries). For example, some countries, such as Kazakhstan, have a relatively mild

threat, while other countries (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, for example) are more vulnerable.[45]

China is also exposed to potential terrorist violence in South Asia. This vulnerability is perhaps most acute in Pakistan, a country that hopes to become an energy and trade conduit that links China to important oil-exporting states in the Middle East. In a February 2006 interview, former President Pervez Musharraf stated: "We are interested in setting up a trade and energy corridor for China."[46] Pakistan views the development of Gwadar Port as the key node linking African, Iranian and other Middle Eastern oil to China via Pakistan's Karakoram Highway, which links Pakistan to China's Xinjiang Province.[47] Gwadar's primary purpose, according to one analyst, is to "build a direct thoroughfare to China over land, to connect China with oil-producing countries in the Middle East and Central Asia via Pakistan through a network of railways and highways."[48]

However, Gwadar port is located in Pakistan's restive western province of Baluchistan. Chinese construction activities in Gwadar have inflamed the low-grade insurgency in Baluchistan that has been directed against the Pakistani government since at least 2002. The displacement of local residents away from the port area, the influx of non-Baloch immigrants into the region and the increased Pakistani army presence (associated with Gwadar port-building activities) have all inflamed what was already a relatively tense security environment.[49] As a result, Chinese personnel and other interests have been targeted, particularly as Balochi militants view the Islamabad-Beijing link as a critical but vulnerable lifeline for the Pakistani regime.[50]

An alternative (or perhaps complementary) theory behind anti-Chinese violence in Pakistan proposes that the actual source of the attacks can be found in Chinese militants residing in Pakistan's tribal area. An unnamed Pakistani intelligence official told a Karachi-based publication:"We are now quite certain that foreign militants living in Pakistan and their Pakistani hosts infuriated with Islamabad's cooperation with Beijing, are carrying out these attacks."[51] This is consistent with a report in 2008 in which the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, Luo Zhaohui, alleged that ETIM fighters from Xinjiang "sometimes use Pakistani soil for their activities" and are thus "trying to sabotage [the] Pakistan-China relationship."[52] This may also be related to alleged linkages, particularly in the early 1990s, between Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate and Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang.[53]

China's Internal Threats

China will likely continue to face internal threats of terrorist violence emanating from traditional sources (Xinjiang) or from new actors (labor activists, environmental protestors, etc.). The perennial issue of Xinjiang will not likely abate in the near future. Xinjiang is a classic case of where the boundaries of the state do not necessarily correspond to the boundaries of a nation. The ethnic (non-Han) minorities of Xinjiang arguably have more in common with the cultures and ethnic groups found in Central Asia than they do with the eastern Han (汉) civilization, which is considered the cultural nucleus of modern China. However, the exigencies of modern statehood—including China's growing energy appetite—nevertheless require that Beijing consolidate authority

over the region, and it has accomplished this through a number of measures, some of which have fostered various resentments.[54]

China's pursuit of energy security within Central Asia is likely to strengthen the importance of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) to Beijing, thus reducing any possibility that the Chinese government might be willing to grant meaningful autonomy. First, Xinjiang plays a critical transit role for energy supplies entering China from Central Asia. The volume of oil supplies shipped through the Chinese-Kazakh oil pipeline continues to grow each year, according to media sources; in 2008, China imported more than 4.98 million tons of crude oil through this pipeline, which represented an increase of 24% compared to the previous year.[55]

Second, Xinjiang is itself a source of critical oil and gas supplies for the growing Chinese economy. In early 2009, Chinese state media reported that Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region "produced 27.22 million tons of crude oil and 23.59 billion cubic meters of natural gas in 2008," which exceeded amounts from any other region in China.[56] In January 2009, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) announced plans to "ramp up oil and gas production from two fields in the Junggar Basin in Xinjiang province."[57] Extraction of natural gas from Karamay was also expected to increase, from 3.4 bcm in 2008 to roughly 10 bcm by 2015.[58] Sinopec also announced its intention to increase production at its Tahe field "from 6.59 million t/y this year to 10 million t/y in 2010."[59] This suggests that energy interests may drive Beijing to emphasize political consolidation over Xinjiang, which in turn may contribute to increased Uighur activism (including, among extreme sectors, violent activities).

China's Response to Terrorism and the Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

China's response to terrorism is manifesting on several levels. First, in the wake of the June 2004 attacks in Afghanistan that resulted in the deaths of 11 Chinese nationals, China's State Council ordered that security for Chinese working abroad be improved. It also established an "emergency response system to avoid incidents that endanger Chinese people and property."[60] Simultaneously, China has urged countries that host significant numbers of Chinese workers (or companies) to increase security for Chinese nationals. This is most apparent in the Sino-Pakistan relationship. Pakistan considers China its top ally and primary lifeline, and thus takes Beijing's warnings against violence (against Chinese personnel) particularly seriously. In 2004, Pakistan's prime minister made assurances to Beijing that his country condemned terrorism in all of its forms and would "take practical measures to ensure safety of Chinese citizens in Pakistan."[61]

Second, some Chinese companies are taking specific measures to mitigate the risk of terrorism and criminal violence. In early December 2008, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) conducted a special training session for roughly 100 of its employees on how to protect overseas interests from violent attacks. CNPC announced that it has 29 overseas projects and that it provides engineering services in an additional 44. Of these countries, 18 have been identified as "high risk" for possible militant attacks. In response, CNPC has considered replacing Chinese workers with local workers in these high-risk locations during a phase-in period lasting three years.[62]

Third, China has sought international cooperation to facilitate the arrest of individuals it believes are involved in terrorist activities. This reflects Beijing's realization that a significant part of the Xinjiang terrorist threat is actually based outside of Chinese borders, thus requiring international assistance. In October 2008, China issued a broad international appeal, calling for the arrest and extradition of eight individuals (believed to be operating outside of China) suspected of organizing or being otherwise involved in terrorist plots coinciding with the Beijing Olympics. China has also called upon the United States to return ethnic Uighurs (Chinese nationals) who are or have been incarcerated in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (or other detention centers). The United States has resisted such requests due to human rights concerns, which has generated some tension in the U.S.-China relationship.

Fourth, China has worked for the establishment of an institutional structure designed to address terrorism and other transborder challenges. The organization, now known as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), traces its origins back to 1996 with the creation of the Shanghai Five, which was mainly focused on border disputes, transnational violence and other primarily local concerns. Later at the summit meeting held in Bishkek in August 1999, the Shanghai Five passed a declaration that would constitute a central pillar of the subsequent SCO, namely, the declaration against "the three evils," terrorism (恐怖主义) , separatism (分裂主义) and extremism (极端主义).[63]

Although not the sole purpose of the SCO, counterterrorism has played a major rationale for the organization's continued evolution. At its inaugural meeting in June 2001 in Shanghai, SCO members signed the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism.[64] The Convention, known in Chinese as: "打击恐怖主义, 极端主义, 分裂主义上海公约," states that the six signatory parties are "firmly convinced that terrorism, separatism and extremism…cannot be justified under any circumstances, and that the perpetrators of such acts should be prosecuted under the law."[65]

Moreover, Beijing has strongly pushed the counter-terrorism agenda in light of internal challenges (e.g., Xinjiang) and was instrumental in the creation of a new counterterrorism center—the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)—that was originally planned to be located in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (but later was moved to Tashkent, Uzbekistan). RATS, which currently houses approximately 30 personnel (analysts and terrorism expert representatives from member-states), is designed primarily to function as an analytical and coordinating body with little or no operational role.[66] From a strategic perspective, the SCO has evolved into a mechanism for greater political integration among participant states to counter the threat of terrorism and crime within participant states. In a recent assessment of the SCO, Russia's Foreign Ministry stated that "the themes of counteracting terrorism, extremism and transfrontier crime are firmly established in [the SCO's] agenda."[67]

Fifth, China has sought to increase its military counterterrorism capacity, particularly through improvement of special forces and expeditionary (land and maritime) capabilities. This is significant because in the future, the Chinese population may demand more vigorous responses from their government, particularly in the event of high-profile or nationally-humiliating terrorist attacks that are directed at Chinese interests. Following the attacks on Chinese workers in Ethiopia (April 2007), for instance, Chinese internet posters (or "bloggers") urged their government to consider

retaliatory measures, including military responses. Such pressure may increase in the future as the power of Chinese nationalism—traditionally used as domestic tool by the CCP to maintain its legitimacy—continues to grow in China.

As described in the recently-released Chinese Defense White Paper (2008), the People's Armed Police Force (PAPF) assumes a prominent role in counterterrorism missions within China. This agency, somewhat analogous to the National Guard or Department of Homeland Security in the United States, is a component of China's armed forces and is under the "dual leadership of the State Council and the CMC [Central Military Commission]."[68] It consists of an internal security force and various police components, including also "border public security, firefighting and security guard forces."[69] As far as its counterterrorism role is concerned, the Defense White Paper states that: "the PAPF is an important counter-terrorism force of the state."[70] Among other things, the PAPF has sent delegations "for bilateral or multilateral counter-terrorism exchanges" to over 30 countries.[71] In addition, China has deployed PAPF personnel to various countries (including France, Israel, Hungary, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand) to attend various classes and other events related to counterterrorism.[72]

China places a high priority on conducting joint military exercises with other countries; in some cases, these have been conducted primarily with a counterterrorism focus, while in other cases other objectives have been stressed. In its 2006 Defense White Paper, the Chinese government revealed that "since 2002, China has held 16 joint military exercises with 11 countries."[73] Clearly this number has increased in the intervening years, as evidenced by (among others) the December 2007 joint exercise between China and India. This joint exercise, considered the first counterterrorism between the two neighbors, was based on a fictional scenario in which an unnamed terrorist organization had established a base along the border between the two countries. It was followed by a similar exercise in December 2008 conducted by the two countries within India.[74] Other examples of joint exercises include the September 2006 joint military exercise between China and Tajikistan ("Cooperation 2006") that was conducted with a counterterrorism focus. China has held numerous counterterrorism military exercises with Pakistan as well, including "Friendship 2004" (the first ever joint counterterrorism operation held by the PLA and the Armed Forces of Pakistan) and "Friendship 2006" (China and Pakistan's second joint anti-terror military training exercise).[75] On the maritime front, China held the "Peace 2007" (March 2007) joint maritime training exercises with seven countries (including Pakistan) in the Arabian Sea.[76]

In some cases, improving military capacity has been pursued multilaterally through the SCO structure. In August 2007, SCO members held their first joint military exercise (involving all permanent SCO members) in China and Russia—known as "Peace Mission 2007"—which was directed primarily against terrorism. This was a two-stage exercise that began in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and then moved to Chelyabinsk, Russia. After this exercise, the SCO Secretary-General Bolat Nurgaliyev announced that the SCO would be holding regular anti-terror exercises.[77] This exercise followed a similar one, "Peace Mission 2005" that involved only Russian and Chinese troops (other SCO members were invited as observers).[78] Overall, these various military exercises have given Chinese security forces extensive experience in the types of military conflict that Chinese analysts believe are (and will remain) paramount in the 21st century,

namely localized insurgency-type conflicts, terrorism and transnational crime.[79] Also significant is the fact that "Peace Mission 2007" marked the first time that the PLA engaged in a major land-air joint exercise outside Chinese territory.[80]

The Choice: Prospects for US-China Cooperation on Counterterrorism

In the weeks and months following the 9/11 attacks in the United States, China and the United States found that despite political differences, they had common interests in mitigating the threat of international terrorism. This was remarkable because up to that point, Sino-American relations were heading in a negative direction. Only five months earlier, the two countries had confronted the EP-3 surveillance aircraft crisis in Hainan Island (in the South China Sea). In addition, American arms sales to Taiwan had also increased tensions. President George W. Bush, moreover, had characterized China as a "strategic competitor" during the 2000 election campaign.[81]

Nevertheless, following 9/11 Chinese leaders offered support and condolences to the United States and expressed a willingness to cooperate against international terrorism. Such goodwill was reciprocated on the U.S. side as well. At an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum meeting held in Shanghai in October 2001, President George W. Bush referred to China as a "great power" that had stood "side by side with the American people."[82] China quickly repositioned some of its policies to coincide with American counterterrorism objectives (including offers to share intelligence). In addition, Beijing asserted that it also faced a terrorist threat in the restive northwestern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), a narrative that Washington would eventually accept.

This leads to an essential question: can two major powers—which some have characterized as geopolitical rivals—cooperate against international terrorism in the long term? An optimistic response to such question would posit that political leaders in Washington and Beijing are recognizing that in a post 9/11 era, terrorism manifesting anywhere in the international system is likely to have destructive effects throughout the globe, which would negatively affect the interests of both countries. Moreover, both countries are acknowledging the value of cooperation, both on a bilateral as well as multilateral basis, in mitigating the threat of terrorism. This perhaps explains why the United States was so keen on providing counterterrorism aid, technology and assistance prior to and during the 2008 Olympic Games.[83] In fact, FBI director Robert Mueller commented that he hoped that Sino-American counterterrorism cooperation would continue well past the Olympic Games.[84]

Moreover, both countries have an interest in managing or mitigating the threats posed by quasi or failed states (including ungoverned spaces).[85] In this regard, the Sino-Pakistan relationship is perhaps one of the most important strategic partnerships in South Asia with implications for stability in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, which will clearly affect U.S. interests. Such partnership potentially gives China an effective foundation to urge Pakistan to reduce militancy and extremism (and its official support of the same). This is perhaps why India sought, in the wake of the Mumbai attacks of November 2008, to leverage Chinese influence over Pakistan as a way of putting pressure on Islamabad to take measures "so that cross-border terrorism against India ends."[86] The United States

may want to explore similar leverage, particularly as Pakistan is increasingly viewed as the key factor to stability in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Despite disagreements over various geopolitical and human rights issues, China and the United States have found common ground with regard to the threat of international terrorism, an issue that will not likely abate for the foreseeable future.[87] In late 2008, following the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao stated that China "is firmly against all forms of terrorism, and [is] ready to cooperate with [the] international community, including India, to fight against terrorism."[88] Similarly, in an address to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte characterized terrorism as one of the five key global challenges that will "require U.S.-China cooperation now and in the generation to come."[89]

In their mutual desire to achieve a stable and prosperous international system, Beijing and Washington will find that cooperation and other forms of multilateralism will provide the only real way to mitigate or manage the terrorism threat in the long-term. Such a cooperative posture would also be useful in mitigating other transnational or nontraditional security problems (非传统安全问题), such as international crime, climate change, proliferation of nuclear weapons, maritime piracy, pandemics, among other similar issues.[90] However, such cooperative spirit is contingent on the ability of the two countries to prevent geopolitical antagonisms from undermining what would otherwise be a powerful bulwark against militant extremism and the instability that it promotes.[91]

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[1] The views and opinions contained within this essay are the author's own and do not represent the official positions of the U.S. Naval War College, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.
[2] *Global Trends 2025: a Transformed World* (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, November 2008): 29.
[3] Based on a technique of disaggregating its various elements, terrorism can be defined as "indiscriminate violence committed by nonstate actors against noncombatant persons to instill or perpetuate fear within a wider audience for the ultimate purpose of achieving some political objective." See Paul J. Smith, *The Terrorism Ahead: Confronting Transnational Violence in the Twenty-first Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2008): 14.
[4] Peter R. Neumann and M.L.R. Smith, "Strategic Terrorism: The Framework and its Fallacies," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, v. 28, n. 4 (August 2005): 576.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Martha Crenshaw, "Why America? The Globalization of Civil War," *Current History*, v. 100, n. 650 (December 2001): 425.
[7] Richard K. Betts, "The Soft Underbelly of American Primacy: Tactical Advantages of Terror," *Political Science Quarterly*, v. 117, n. 1 (2002): 20.
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