

Interpreting the Rise of China

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Interpreting the Rise of the China: A Challenge to American Hegemony and Liberal Global Order?

Chapter I: Introduction

The rise of the People's Republic of China has created significant debate for 21st Century international politics. Interpretations of China's rise greatly differ and predictions of its economic, military and political future equally vary. On the one hand, scholars view China's incredible economic growth as a remarkable feat; the annual growth rate of national income averaging 9.7% percent between the start of Deng Xiaoping's market-orientated reform in 1978 and 2005 (Reddy, 2007, p.49). On the other hand, a handful of scholars view the rise of China as a cause for anxiety and a recipe for conflict; this stems from the realist presumption that a rising power inevitably uses the anarchic international system and its growing economic power to expand its military might, creating a situation ripe for conflict.

In this dissertation I aim to outline and evaluate the various interpretations of a rising China. Ultimately, I look to assess whether the rising China will challenge both US hegemony and the existing liberal global order; the key word being 'challenge'. In the first part of this dissertation I will emphasize the competing theories concerning the emergence of China as a new power, primarily drawing on both the realist and liberal premise. I believe that no one theory has complete authority over this debate; it is important to stress the complexity of this topic whilst securing a definitive conclusion. I will outline two main positions regarding the interpretations of China's rise; within these two positions I will be drawing particularly on structural realism, neoliberal institutionalism and liberal internationalism. I believe that by debating not only between the two main theoretical camps of realism and liberalism, but through opening the contest within each camp, it will be possible to gain more insight into the complexity of China's rise.

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I will turn to the empirical side of this debate. Firstly, I will examine China's international engagement and their 'Road to Peaceful Development'. I attempt to draw on current international issues: global warming, nuclear proliferation and the global financial crisis. All of these individually have a significant impact across the globe. Moreover, I will evaluate China's contribution to tackling these issues, assessing whether these efforts provide us with an insight into China in the future. A nation's international image has become an extremely influential and important aspect of international relations, and subsequently, China's 'Road to Peaceful Development' has received much international political attention. Designed to ease fears of a rising China, I will look at how the 'Road to Peaceful Development' displays a certain sentiment towards both Sino-US relations and the current international order.

With China's rise, the balance of power in the region is expected to change significantly. The dynamics of the East Asia region has led to considerable apprehension among both the US and Japan (Dent, 2008, p.121); the traditional Hobbesian culture of the security dilemma creates a suspicious atmosphere and a potentially conflictual outcome. In the second part of the third chapter I will look closely at both the issue of Taiwan accompanied with China's military build-up and the US-Japan alliance. I begin by looking at how China's military build-up creates cause for concern, particularly surrounding the Taiwan Strait. It is very easy to become drawn in by the realist premise regarding a military-build, but to pigeon-hole China's military-build is for the most part ignoring the complexity of the situation. Similarly, I will examine the US-Japan alliance, focusing my evaluation on both China's reaction and handling of the relationship since the mid 1990s. I will outline the reasons for China's concern, but I will be sure to dedicate much

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effort into unraveling China's benign regional ambitions regarding the trilateral relationship.

Chapter II: Competing Visions of China's Rise

Often theoretical visions focus on a single aspect of their proposition with the belief that it holds the key to explaining the complexity of the situation. In some cases, competing interpretations directly conflict with each other, and accommodating one view means excluding another. With regards to rising powers, realist and liberal positions tend to contrast; the former being less optimistic than the latter. Each theoretical position seeks to answer questions about the future of the international order.

In this next section, I don't want to simply pigeon-hole realists as 'sinophobes' and liberals as 'sinophiles', but I have divided this theoretical chapter into two camps. The first argues that China is not happy with the role of US in world affairs and ultimately aims to challenge both US hegemony and the current liberal global order that it manufactured after the Second World War. The second argues that China does want to openly challenge the US hegemonic position upsetting the status-quo, but instead seeks to gain more authority and leadership within the existing international order.

2.1 A Rising Power in Pursuit of Hegemonic Status and a New Order

2.1.1. *The Anarchic State of Nature*

Emerging powers tend to disrupt fragile balances and destabilize the global order (Breslin, 2010, p.53). Since each of the realist theories emphasize, to varying degrees, the centrality of the balance of power in their positions regarding conflict and war, the prospect of a rising great power is unlikely to be welcomed (Levy & Thompson, 2011, p.38). The realist paradigm has various assumptions of world politics. For realists, power is the key factor in understanding international relations. Global politics is considered a contest for power among states; there is no overarching power regulating states and their actions. International diplomacy is based on power politics, and a state's power is measured primarily in terms of its military capabilities; therefore force or the threat of force is the means by which states pursue their interests. According to realists, the international system is in an anarchic state of nature, therefore states are in fierce competition against each other, and provide their own defence and security. As consequence, rather than base foreign policy decision on ideals or morality, they are primarily based on power and security (Genest, 1996, p.46).

Much of this research paper will be centred on the more contemporary proponents of the realist theory. Neo-realism, or otherwise known as structural realism, departed from its classical counterpart by suggesting that the struggle for power is the result of the structure of the international system as a whole, rather than the nature of man. Structural realists are pessimistic about the prospects for international cooperation. Kenneth Waltz argues that self-help systems "make the cooperation of parties difficult . . . Rules, institutions, and patterns of cooperation . . . are all limited in extent and modified from they might otherwise be" (Waltz, 1979, cited in Glaser, 1995, p.50). Charles Glaser, a more optimistic realist, suggests that if structural realism is properly understood adversaries can best achieve their security goals through cooperation policies, not competitive ones, and should, therefore choose cooperation when these conditions prevail. Unlike neo-liberal institutionalists, who see institutions as the key to cooperation, Glaser's (1995) theoretical premise is not focused on institutions; instead he argues that 'self-help' can lead states to cooperate. Glaser argues that the standard realist perspective overlooks the risks of competition, and implies that "self-help" necessitates competition, when in actual fact cooperative policies are an important style of self-help (Glaser, 1995, pp.50-53).

Offensive realism breaks away from defensive realism, dividing structural realism into two. Although the two positions roughly start from the same set of bedrock assumptions, they arrive at fundamentally divergent conclusions about the nature of international politics. Where defensive realists such as Glaser and Kaufman believe that the offence-defence balance can favour the defender, providing the defending state with security, Mearsheimer's offensive realism supports a system in which states seek security by intentionally decreasing the security of others (Glaser & Kaufmann, 1998).

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As prominent offensive realist, John Mearsheimer, argues that all great powers have some offensive military capability and no state can know the future intentions of the other with certainty. Mearsheimer (2006) has presented an explicit argument that the rise of China will not be peaceful. As China's impressive economic growth continues over the next few decades, the United States and China are likely to engage in deep security competition with considerable potential for war (Mearsheimer, 2006, p.160). In a debate with Brzezinski, Mearsheimer (2005) suggested that the mightiest states attempt to establish hegemony in their own region while making sure that no rival great power dominates another region. The ultimate goal of every great power is to maximize its share of world power and eventually dominate the system. Mearsheimer (2005) understands the United States to not tolerate peer competitors. The United States is determined to remain the world's only regional hegemon, and will seek to contain China and ultimately weaken it to the point where it is no longer capable of dominating Asia (Mearsheimer & Brzezinski, 2005, pp.2-4).

Mearsheimer's voice sends ripples throughout the scholarly and policy-making world of IR as he sends the most worrisome message to the United States and any other status-quo power. Kirshner (2010) argues that Mearsheimer's offensive realist perspective is wrong and dangerous. Mearsheimer argues that 'if states want to survive, they should always act like good offensive realists' (Mearsheimer, 2011, p.11-12). Moreover, according to Mearsheimer, the ideal situation is to be there hegemon in the system (Mearsheimer, 2011, cited in Kirshner, 2010, p.61). Kirshner (2010) argues that a major flaw in Mearsheimer's argument is his failure to distinguish between being a hegemon and bidding for hegemony. A central theme of Mearsheimer's theory is a state's survival; this position seems to insinuate that to ensure its survival China must bid for regional hegemony. Kirshner explains that bidding for hegemony is one of the few and rare paths to destruction for a great power. Moreover, most great powers are extremely likely to survive; most great powers that bid for hegemony do not survive (Kirshner, 2010, p.61). Confrontation with China as suggested by offensive realism would be a self-mutilating geopolitical gesture that would damage the US and undermine its international political influence. Instead classical realists would base their policies on how to best shape China's domestic political debates and international opportunities so as to encourage and accommodate its peaceful rise to great power status (Kirshner, 2010, p.71).

2.1.2. The Threat of China's Regional Rise

Mearsheimer (2010) expects China to first of all pursue regional hegemony; China will want to make sure that it is so powerful that no state in Asia has the wherewithal to threaten it. China's neighbours will eventually join American-led balancing coalition designed to check China's rise, much of the way Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and even China, joined forces with the United States to contain the Soviet Union during the Cold War (Mearsheimer, 2010, p.391). Mearsheimer (2010) does not tell an optimistic story about the prospects for peace in the Asia-Pacific region. For him, international politics is a nasty and dangerous business and no amount of good can ameliorate the intense security competition that sets in when an aspiring hegemon appears in Eurasia (Mearsheimer, 2010, p.396).

China's regional rise is of particular concern to political theorists. There is a the hostile China threat rhetoric, arguing that 'China's emergence as a regional hegemon in North East Asia will be the most dangerous scenario the United States might face in the early 21st century' (Liu, 2004, cited in Stivachtis, 2007, p.92). China is in many ways mimicking America's own emergence as a great power; the largest and potentially most powerful state in Asia, is seeking a more assertive political, military, and economic role in the region, and even challenging America's present dominance in East Asia (Layne, 2008, p.18). Mearsheimer (2010) echoes Layne's argument, expecting a much more powerful China to try to push the United States out of the Asia-Pacific region, in a similar to fashion to how the United States pushed the European great powers out of the Western Hemisphere in the 19th Century (Mearsheimer, 2010, p.389).

While it they may only just be beginning to do so, the competitive interactions that lead to greater instability could gain strength quite rapidly. Christensen (1999) describes the East Asia region as characterized by 'major shifts in the balance of power, skewed distributions of economic and political power within and between countries, political and cultural heterogeneity, growing but still relatively low levels of intraregional economic interdependence, anemic security institutionalization, and widespread territorial disputes that combine natural resource issues with postcolonial nationalism' (Christensen, 1999, p.49). Moreover, Christensen posits that the security dilemma theory states that, in

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an uncertain and anarchic international system, mistrust between two or more potential adversaries can lead each side to take precautionary and defensively motivated measures that are perceived as offensive threats (Ibid, p.50). Friedberg (1994) argues that this security dilemma is an amplifier of anxieties, in which the defensive exertions of the participants stimulate each other and feed back upon themselves. A multi-sided competition in high technology power-projection capabilities is underway; therefore needless to say, this scenario is fraught with uncertainties and dangers (Friedberg, 1994, pp.28-29).

American leaders have suggested offering China a stake in the existing system within which China benefits. China is thus encouraged to be a status quo power within a US-led regional and global order. The problem with this approach is that as time passes China will be less accommodating and more defiant as time passes. Accepting this premise relies on China accepting the liberal line of thinking, and moreover, that Chinese interests and ambitions are elastic which can be moulded according to the circumstances of China's rise; the flaws in the relationship model constructed by Washington are more increasingly apparent (Lee, 2010).

For Neo-realists "smaller is better ... [and] two is best of all". Waltz (1979) argues that there is greater prospect for peace if power is shared between a smaller number of states (Waltz, 1979, p. 161). Friedberg (1994) argues that whether or not they are correct about the comparative virtues of bipolarity, the neo-realists are probably right that, all other things being equal, multipolar systems are intrinsically unstable (Friedberg, 1994, p.9).

The East Asia region remains precarious. Furthermore, the growth of Chinese soft power coincides with the decline of American soft power. Kurlantzick (2006) argues that America's declining attractiveness is both particular and widespread. The United States is slowly but surely losing its ability to persuade and influence other countries through its values, its culture, and its institutions. Meanwhile, as China's economy continues to grow, Beijing begins to enunciate its values and market its institutions and culture, projecting Chinese influence further with more clout and authority (Kurlantzick, 2006). Breslin (2010) suggests that in many respects, the interest in the rise of China's soft power should be seen alongside the concomitant concern about the loss of US soft power in particular, and challenges to US hegemony in general (Breslin, 2010, p.828). Furthermore, Follath (2010) goes on to argue that China is able to challenge US hegemony through successfully pursuing an aggressive trade policy toward the West, applying diplomatic pressure to their partners, pursuing a campaign bordering on cultural imperialism to oppose human rights we perceive to be universal; China is spreading its wings and imposing itself through the use of soft power instead of hard power (Follath, 2010).

Similarly, Stephen Walt (2011) suggests that the American era is drawing to a close. The rise of new powers is bringing the short-lived "unipolar moment" to an end, and the result will be either a bipolar Sino-American rivalry or a multipolar system containing several unequal great powers. The situation of a weakening US will encourage Beijing to challenge the current US role in Asia. Walt (2011) believes that over time China will become uneasy regarding Washington's network of Asian alliances and its sizeable presence in East Asia and the Indian Ocean (Walt, 2011). As American unipolar dominance draws to an end and Chinese influence and strength amplifies, it is predicted that China will pick its moment and challenge American global hegemony.

2.1.3. *Overturing Liberal Global Order*

The various theories that view a rising China as a threat assume that when an emerging state becomes economically wealthier and militarily more powerful, it will inevitably seek greater political influence, causing a change in the existing global structure (Xing, 2010, p.52). Kagan (1997) believes that the Chinese leadership views the world today similar to the way that Kaiser Willhem II did a century ago: the current world order serves those who constructed it. The existing order is poorly suited to the needs of a Chinese dictatorship trying to maintain power at home and increase its clout abroad. It is not so easy to enjoy the advantages of one aspect of the Western-dominated international system – trade and economic benefits – without becoming vulnerable to the potent ideological forces of the West. Chinese leaders must change the rules of the international system before the international system changes them (Kagan, 1997).

China has not yet openly challenged the ideology of *Pax Americana*, however they have started thinking beyond the

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existing order. Pu and Schweller (2011) suspect that when China become more coherent, increasing its power and prestige, they will develop a more appealing and consequential ideology. On the one hand China currently pragmatically accommodates U.S. hegemony, but on the other it contests the legitimacy of U.S. hegemony (Pu & Schweller, 2011, p.52). The United States has successfully shaped world politics with some big ideas such as “capitalism is better than socialism” and “democracy is better than dictatorship” (Jentleson & Weber, 2008, p.43), but China’s new vision of a new Chinese order fundamentally disputes the notion that Western ideas and culture are superior to those of the rest of the world. There has been a rekindled interest in the philosophy and history traditional Chinese order. Contemporary philosopher Zhao Tingyang suggests that these traditional Chinese ideas provide a better philosophical framework for solving global problems (Tingyang, 2006, cited in Schweller & Pu, 2011, p.60).

Barma and Ratner (2006) similarly argue that the real threat of China isn’t economic or military – it’s ideological. China’s rise brings with it illiberal conceptions of internal governance and international norms. According to Barma and Ratner, the “China model” strongly combines two components. First, China is an advocate of illiberal capitalism, the practice and promotion of a governance strategy where markets are free but policies are not. Second, China supports illiberal sovereignty, an approach to international politics that emphasizes the inviolability of national borders in the face of international intervention. These two factors pose a distinct alternative to Western-style democratic liberalism (Barma & Ratner, 2006, p.57). There is a desire amongst world leaders for China to become a “responsible stakeholder” in bolstering the liberal international order, but in doing so they have overlooked the degree to which Beijing has already begun to articulate and design a parallel to it (Barma & Ratner, 2006, p.66).

The present international system is designed primarily to represent and promote American interests. Where some believe that the current international system is far more resilient and adaptable than previous systems and therefore likely to be reformed from within rather than replaced, others have opposing views. Martin Jacques (2009) predicts a ‘twin-track process’. First, China and other rising powers force the dominant powers make reluctant and inadequate reform to existing Western-centric institutions. The second development, a long term vision, is the creation of new institutions sponsored and supported by China but also embracing other rising countries such as India and Brazil. Jacques (2009) argues that China is likely to operate both within and outside the current international order system, seeking to transform the system at the same time. China will exist along the system and is likely to usurp it, whilst sponsoring a new China-centric international system. Moreover, the United States will bitterly resist the decline of an international system from which it benefits so much: as a consequence, any transition will inevitably be tense and conflictual (Jacques, 2009, pp.358-362).

Today many Chinese scholars see China’s hierarchical world as the solution to the world ills. Chinese culture is taken to be superior, and many feel that it is the duty of patriotic Chinese to spread Chinese values, language, and culture not just in Asia, but around the world; what Nyiri (2006) has described as the “yellow man’s burden” (Nyiri, 2006, p.106). Rasmussen (2004) argues that a rising China will find it difficult to find their ‘place in the sun’ with the spread of Western values through globalisation. China will not reject the technologies, organisation techniques, or even democracy, but they will reject the cosmopolitan institutions which the West insists follow from globalisation. Consequently, China will present visions of world order and peace that rival the Western vision (Rasmussen, 2004, p.179). Economy (2010) states ‘never mind notions of a responsible stakeholder; China has become a revolutionary power’. Economy argues that China no longer wants to be a passive recipient of information from out the world, rather, China has launched a grand strategy designed to remake global norms and institutions; changing the rules of the game (Economy, 2010).

2.2. A New Interconnected and Cooperating World

Each of the aforementioned theories predicts some sort of conflict between China and the United States. In the second part of the literature review I will turn to the more optimistic positions on the rise of China. The works of Foot and Walter, Ikenberry, Keohane, amongst others arrive at the conclusion that the Liberal global order is more robust than the previous section anticipates. The works of neoliberal institutionalists and liberal internationalists both suggest that great powers can cooperate and coexists; moreover, there is peace and harmony beyond hegemony. There has been great debate over whether the liberal global order can sustain amidst the rise of new powers. Furthermore, there is debate over whether America’s hegemonic position must be challenged to assert one’s

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position. The Liberal school of thought posits that the flexibility of the current order can provide both roles and authority for new entrants, accommodating the rise of new great powers without conflict.

2.2.1. Anarchy and Complex Interdependence

The establishment and success of international order, according to transnationalism, depends largely on four major factors: the role of international institutions; international rules and norms for the behaviour of states; the increasing economic interdependence between nations; and the technological advancement and growth of global communication (Genest, 1996, p.13) Both realism and liberalism accept anarchy as an important feature; Lipson (1984) describes anarchy as the “rosetta stone of International Relations”, arguing that neorealists exaggerate the importance at the expense of international independence (Lipson, 1984, p.22). Axelrod and Keohane (1985) describe anarchy as important because it permits a variety of patterns of interaction between states (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985). Moreover, even though we live in a world where states have often been dissatisfied with international anarchy, Axelrod and Keohane (1985) argue that despite the reality of anarchy, beneficial forms of international cooperation can be promoted (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985, p.254).

Keohane and Martin (1995) believe that Measheimer’s offensive realism holds too many generalizations; his grim picture of the realist world is not specified. When both states can benefit they construct institutions as they provide information, reduce transaction costs, and make commitments credible (Keohane & Martin, 1995, pp. 41-42). Keohane and Nye (1989) firmly believe that we live in an era of interdependence; interdependence most simply defined means ‘mutual dependence’ (Keohane & Nye, 1989, p.8), as opposed to a world defined by security competition and power politics. For Keohane and Nye, power has become an elusive concept for statesmen and analysts of international politics; the resources that produce power capabilities have become ever more complex (Ibid, p.11). Keohane and Nye argue that interdependence has transformed international politics; the territorial state which dominated world politics has been eclipsed by nonterritorial actors such as multinational corporations, transnational social movements, and international organizations. Furthermore, the use of force has become increasingly costly for major states as a result of four conditions: risks of nuclear escalation; resistance by people in poor or weak countries; uncertain and possibly negative effects on the achievement of economic goals, and; domestic opinion opposed to the human costs of force (Ibid, p.246).

Complex interdependence does not mean that the prospect for conflict has been eradicated; in fact interdependence in the world economy generates conflict. In times of unexpected price change and unemployment, workers turn to their governments, and governments seek to shift the costs on others. To avoid this discord, cooperation is necessary. Keohane (1984) argues that one way of achieving mutual policy adjustment is through the activities of a hegemonic power, either through *ad hoc* measures or by establishing and maintaining international regimes that serve their own interests and are compatible with the interests of others (Keohane, 1984, p.243).

Hegemonic leadership can help create a pattern of order. Cooperation is not antithetical of hegemony; on the contrary, hegemony depends on a certain kind of asymmetrical cooperation, which successful hegemons support and maintain. In accounting for the creation of international regimes, hegemony often plays an important role, even a crucial one (Keohane, 1984, cited in Genest, 1996, p. 199). Keohane (1984) suggests that US hegemony will decline, and if we are to have cooperation, it will be cooperation without a hegemonic power. As hegemony erodes, an environment for institutions will come to the fore. Institutions that facilitate cooperation do not mandate what governments do, rather, they help governments pursue their own interests through cooperation. Building information-rich institutions that reduce uncertainty may make agreement possible in the future, irrespective of a guiding hegemonic power (Keohane, 1984, pp.243-247).

2.2.2. Responsible Regional Leader

Gurtov (2008) asserts that the United States and China need each other, and the sooner both leaderships recognize that, the sooner will they reap the huge benefits that come with cooperative engagement (Gurtov, 2008). Larson and Shevchenko (2010) believe that China has shown capability and potential to become a responsible and international “citizen,” an upholder of world economic stability when the crucial moment may come around (Larson & Shevchenko,

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2010, p.198).

Lui (2004) argues that there are more benevolent and open attitudes towards China's future role on the world stage, confirming that 'China has begun to take a less confrontational, more sophisticated, more confident, and at times, more constructive approach to regional and global affairs (Lui, 2004, cited in Stivachtis, 2007, p.92). Where realists claim that cooperation is a derivative from overall patterns of conflict, Institutionalists suggest that if international politics were a state of war, institutionalised patterns of cooperation on the basis of shared purposes should not exist except as a part of a larger struggle for power. The realist explanation fails to explain the extensive patterns of international engagement that we observe on issues such as diverse trade, financial relations, health, telecommunications, and environmental protection. Keohane (1984) argues that institutionalists do not expect cooperation always to prevail, but they are aware of the malleability of interests and they argue that interdependence creates interests in cooperation. Liberal international arrangements for trade and international finance are a response to the need for policy coordination created by the fact of interdependence (Keohane, 1984, pp.7-8).

For the past two decades the United States has been the undisputed global hegemon. Neither the United States nor China is accustomed to formulating policy through multilateral institutions, yet Beijing seems more open to it than Washington. Freeman (2010) argues that it is important to see China as it is, not as we wish or fear it to be. China will take its place alongside the United States at the head of a multilateral system of global governance. In such an oligarchic world order, China will have great prestige but no monopoly on power comparable to that which the United States has recently enjoyed. Moreover, Freeman suggests that America has already lost its global political hegemony, but China is neither inclined nor capable of succeeding this role. China will cooperate and share power; the future will provide ample opportunity for countries with trusted relationships with Washington and Beijing to influence how they participate in global affairs. For Freeman, there will be no hegemon (Freeman, 2010).

The financial crisis has consolidated Freeman's suggestion gradual change is imminent. There is growing support for the need to find alternatives to the 'Washington Consensus' model of international financial governance which has important regional implications. Although the crisis highlights the fears of the Sino sceptics, Breslin (2010) argues that crisis offers opportunity for China to peacefully come to the fore of the international scene. Furthermore, the crisis has allowed China's leaders to reinforce the idea of China as a responsible regional actor. Breslin (2010) suggests that China has emerged as almost *uber*-responsible regional state that is working not just to stabilize its own economy for its own sake, but also to stabilize the regional economy as a whole (Breslin, 2010, pp. 833-834).

2.2.3. Continuing Liberal Global Order

There is no doubt that today's rising states are mostly large non-Western developing countries that support the idea that liberal internationalism could give way to a more contested and fragmented system of blocs, spheres of influence, mercantilist networks, and regional rivalries. This narrative fails to recognise the deeper reality: although the United States' position in the global system is changing, the liberal international order is alive and well. Rather than contest the basic rules and principles of liberal international order, these emerging powers, particularly China, wish to gain more authority and leadership within it (Ikenberry, 2011).

Those who believe China's rise as a potential super power eventually overthrowing the current international order, made their arguments based on China's radical efforts to replace the international order during Mao's era (Stivachtis, 2007, p.2). In the existing age of interdependence, globalization and regionalism are simultaneously a means for which China can integrate itself into the international order and a means through which the new international order imposes constraints on China (Wang & Zheng, 2008, p.6).

It is not a case of simply overthrowing the existing international order because of the rise of a new great power and its differences. Ikenberry (2011) argued that China faces a broader international order that is a product of centuries of struggle and innovation. The current order is highly developed, expansive, integrated, institutionalized, and deeply rooted in the societies and economies of both advanced capitalist states and developing states (Ikenberry, 2011, p.3). Ikenberry states that the U.S. grand strategy should be built around the motto "The road to the East runs through the West" (Ikenberry, 2008). Not only is it near impossible task to overthrow the existing international order, it

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is in fact in China's interest to preserve the liberal internationalist system.

In his recently published book, *Liberal Leviathan*, Ikenberry suggests that the American-led liberal hegemonic order is now in crisis. Pressures for change – and for the reorganization of order – are growing. Ikenberry's claim is that it is a crisis of authority – a struggle over how liberal order should be governed, not a crisis over the underlying principles of liberal international order, defined as an open and loosely rule-based system (Ikenberry, 2011, p.334). Furthermore, Ikenberry suggests that there will be increased pressure for more extensive forms of international cooperation – and global institutional capacity – to deal with economic and security interdependence. In other words, Ikenberry believes that if the current organizational logic of international order is in crisis, the solution to this crisis is more – not less – liberal international order (Ikenberry, 2011).

Essentially, for Ikenberry, the liberal international order is built around rules and norms of non-discrimination and market openness – not only creating condition for rising states to participate within the order but to also advance their expanding economic and political goals within it. Moreover, past orders have tended to be dominated by one state, but today the order a constructed of a wider group of states are bound together and govern the system. The ever evolving liberal international order gives it an unusual capacity to accommodate rising powers. Its sprawling landscape rules, institutions, and networks provide newer entrants into the system with opportunities for status, authority, and a share in the governance of the order. China has incentives and opportunities to join, while, at the same time, the possibility to overturn or subvert this order is slight or non-existent (Ikenberry, 2011, pp.342-346).

Despite concerns about promotion of a Chinese alternative in Asia, the evidence seems to suggest that attitudes about and opinions of China seem to improve as it increasingly transforms to meet existing global norms (Breslin, 2010, p.831). Foot and Walter (2011) argue that, despite their asymmetries, both the United States and China have played a significant role in generating or constituting global normative frameworks. Although contemporary global order may be associated with American values and power, China's generally rising level of behavioural consistency within have been driven by a reasonably strong association between domestic values and some global norms. Chinese leadership is willing to reshape and refocus domestic societal and political values that are more consistent with existing global norms (exceptions to which include the areas of civil and political rights and democratic forms of domestic governance) (Foot & Walter, 2011, p.299).

Foot and Walter also argue that states also care about their image, and are sensitive to international perception. China therefore has a desire to create an image of a peaceful, non-threatening and responsible great power (Foot & Walter, 2011, p.291). Pursuing liberal integration further consolidates this peaceful and non-threatening image. Hurrell (2006) argues that liberal integration provides a means of achieving goals of greater influence and a more prominent role in the world (Hurrell, 2006, p.18). As it stands, China has no incentive to overthrow the existing order because as its power grows so does its role in world governance.

Chapter III: Interpreting China's Rise

In the previous section of the dissertation I set to outline the main theoretical perspectives on the rise of new powers. I aimed to indicate the causal mechanisms of the different strands of both realism and liberalism that can be applied to the rise of China. Moreover, the overlapping themes of these theories and inconclusiveness of some hypotheses help to demonstrate the full complexity of the Chinese position with the international system.

In this section I plan to assess the more tangible features of China's progress; more specifically, China's international engagement, its 'Road to Peaceful Development' policy, and its approach to the East Asian security dilemma. This chapter will provide empirical evidence to support my claim that China will challenge neither American hegemony nor the existing liberal global order.

3.1. China's International Engagement and 'Road to Peaceful Development'

China has entered the arena as a key international player, and the United States has indicated that it plans to make a return to multilateralism after eight years of retrenchment under the Bush administration, making it clear the US will

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not only share the world stage, but will ask other countries to do their part to make the world a safer place in the 21st century (Beddor et al, 2009, p.1). In this section of my dissertation I will put forward a supporting argument that China is complying with international norms through international engagement and it's 'Road to Peaceful Development'. In the first part of this Chapter I will cover three important global issues, global warming, nuclear proliferation, and the global economic crisis; three international concerns that China has both cooperatively and effectively been helping to tackle. In the second part of this section I will highlight the significance of China's proclaimed 'Road to Peaceful Development'; a policy that shows despite emerging 'China threat' theories, China is working towards a positive international image that shows China does not intend to challenge the US hegemonic position nor dismantle the existing international order.

3.1.1. China's International Engagement

China has not tried to radically alter or undermine current rules or institutions. Rather, it has been mastering them to further its own interests (Baddor et al, 2009, p.46). China's international engagement has benefitted China's movement toward compliance with international economy, through the diffusion of international norms to China's meso- and micro-level actors, and by giving rise to a group of domestic actors who understand and advocate for Chinese adoption of international norms (Wilson, 2009, p.11). China is working with leading powers in an attempt to tackle prominent issues that engulf the international system today, and nullify the speculation of a growing China as a 'threat'.

Global Warming

China has worked to transform its image on the international stage, from a hostile, aggressive "rogue" outside the international system to a full and active participant in global institutions, and a sometimes constructive player in global problem solving (Beddor et al, 2009, p.17).

China's growth is having impacts far beyond its own boundaries. A major problem facing China is climate change and the environmental impact on its economic growth. China has recently eclipsed the US as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. India is now the world's third biggest emitter of CO₂; by contrast China emits around six tonnes per person, and India only 1.38. China emits more CO₂ than the US and Canada put together – up by 171% since the year 2000 (Evans & Rogers, 2011). China is the world's largest energy consumer, and remains under international pressure to reduce its carbon emissions, pursue clear energy alternatives and participate in international frameworks. The Department for International Development (DIFD) claims that the Chinese Government is working towards this goal. At the top level, there is now an understanding that China can, and must, contribute to the global climate change effort. China's position at the Bali meeting at the end of 2007 reflected this shift in thinking (House of Commons & International Development Committee, 2009, pp.30-31).

The Chinese central government has been demonstrating its increasing awareness of the severe ecological and economic damage associated with climate change. In 2003 Beijing established the National Coordination Committee on Climate Change and in 2007 the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) issued *China's National Climate Change Programme*, outlining basic principles and keys areas of action to address climate change. Additionally, China has been a visible and active player in the international effort to address climate change. China ratified both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, the two most important international climate agreements (Lang & Maio, 2010, p.411). This is the first time in China's history that the head of government is leading the efforts to solve environmental problems, domestically or internationally.

China has always implemented its obligations under the Convention and Protocol since ratification. The Chinese government has made environmental protection a fundamental state policy and adopted a series of proactive policies and measure regarding environmental protection and climate change (You, 2009, p.346). This shows clearly that China is not only accepting its responsibility as a global power but working with international community and within the international norms in an effort to secure the world's peace and prosperity.

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Nuclear Proliferation

Nuclear proliferation is a central transnational threat of our time. The transformation of China's view on multilateral non-proliferation efforts over the past three decades is viewed as comprehensive and extraordinary. China has become a believer in and vocal supporter of the international non-proliferation regime (Beddor et al, 2009, p.31). Progress in China's disarmament and nuclear proliferation policies occurred between 1980-2001, as it became bound ever more tightly into the diplomacy of international security organizations and conferences, and as it responded to the pressures of the non-nuclear, non-aligned states to represent their interests in the counsels of the Permanent Five (Kent, 2009, p.72).

China witnessed several breakthroughs in international arms control and disarmament in the last years of the twentieth century, with both Russia and the United States engaging in deep cuts of deployed strategic nuclear weapons. These developments encouraged China, providing confidence that the international system was entering a multilateral world in which China would be an indispensable component. Since 1992, the Chinese government signed a number of international arms control regimes, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and willingly complied with the requirements of the Missile Technology Control Regime (Chu & Rong, 2009, p.179). Johnston (2003) argues that China's record does not reflect any dramatic new normative opposition to arms transfers, simply a loss of market share. In fact, China's participation in almost all international institutions and its conformity to international norms have come at the expense of China's nuclear capabilities (Johnston, 2003).

China has adopted a series of legislative, administrative and judicial measures, progressively establishing a broad export control regime covering nuclear, biological, chemical, and missile fields. China's import and export control pattern for non-proliferation has shifted from one relying mainly on administrative measures to a law-based control system. China has joined all relevant non-proliferation international treaties, cooperated multilaterally and integrated with current international standards. China stands for the creation of an international environment favourable to the common development of all countries (Sen, 2011, p.165).

Beijing was also one of the original members and a strong supporter of the US-Russia led "Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism;" moreover, China has joined the leadership body of that organization, which is charged with developing its work plan (Beddor et al, 2009, p.33). According to Ewing and Lampton (2003) China has three stakes in the global war on terrorism: firstly, terrorism created an opportunity for Sino-US cooperation; second, terrorism poses a threat to trade and global economic performance; and finally, China is always concerned about separatist groups becoming radicalized by external groups (Ewing & Lampton, 2003, p.2). In short, the war on terrorism has forged a limited partnership between the United States and China. The common threat of terrorism presents opportunities for the US and China to cooperate and coordinate policies.

In addition, China had signed a major American antiterrorism program, the 'Container Security Initiative' (CSI), designed to prevent terrorists from smuggling a nuclear weapon into the United States in a shipping container (Hachigian & Sutphen, 2008, p.7). This particular initiative aimed to protect vulnerable American ports, finding WMDs before they are loaded onto ships. The United States and China are increasingly interdependent and share responsibility for addressing global security threats, such as nuclear proliferation and terrorism. The United States welcome a strong, prosperous, and successful China that plays a greater global role in supporting international rules, norms, and institutions (Department of Defense, 2010, p.5). China's shift in nonproliferation behavior signifies the support it has for current international institutions and norms, seeking to work within the existing global order rather than to pursue a Chinese vision.

Global Financial Crisis

The Global financial crisis disrupted, if not, severely weakened economies all around the globe. Advanced economies output contracted; the first such fall in the post-war period. After the major downturn in the summer of 2008, the United States and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) called for global action to support financial markets and provide further stimulus and monetary easing to help limit the decline in world growth (International

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Monetary Fund, 2008). Although China accounts for only twenty-five percent of the US overall current account deficit, the Chinese government made it her top priority to combat the financial crisis in 2009. The Chinese government launched a \$585 billion investment program to jump-start growth by boosting domestic demand, reinvigorating industries, developing science and technology, and improving the social safety net. China showed serious commitment to immediate collaboration with the US, tackling bilateral trade imbalance and global financial crisis, inviting more confidence between the two great powers (Jia et al, 2011, p.166)

China's stimulus package offers a valuable lesson in understanding Chinese behavior as a great power. Its actions were centred on the principle of self-help, much like Glaser's theoretical premise. Pei (2011) argues that the primary concern for China was how to raise domestic growth rates (Pei, 2011, p.118). The health of Chinese economy and the trajectory of its power are contingent on the health of the US economy, supporting Keohane and Nye's (1989) theory of complex interdependence. To use the financial crisis as an opportunity to challenge US hegemony would have only been detrimental to Chinese growth. As expected, the Chinese escaped a severe recession. Recent indicators point to a strengthening recovery, where Chinese growth accelerated to an annual rate of 7.1 percent in the first half of 2009, driven entirely by domestic demand (International Monetary Fund, 2009, p.72).

International economic and financial institutions are central to global economic governance. The IMF has been key in addressing the global financial crisis; its mission to monitor the financial system, lend to financially unstable countries in times of crisis, and provide technical economic expertise to developing countries. China stumbled at first with regards to complying with IMF membership requirements. More recently China has been an active participant in these global economic institutions, shaping its own conduct significantly to comply with rule, benefitting greatly. China has come more in line with IMF norms and practices, adopting a variety of recommended economic policy prescriptions, such as making its current account convertible in 1996, and following IMF guidance more consistently on, for example, producing economic statistics based on international methodologies (Beddor et al, 2009, pp.24-25).

3.2. China's 'Road to Peaceful Development'

China is acutely aware that its rise is on the radar of other great powers, in particular the United States. The American concern originated from its hegemonic status in the world politics and the ideological incompatibility of China with the Western value system. Three different logics have been constructed to substantiate the "China threat" thesis. First, ideological and cultural factors make a China threat. Communism has long been the enemy of the United States, and Samuel Huntington suggested that the cultural clash is the most fundamental threat to the West. Second, geopolitical and geoeconomic factors; worries surfaced that China would pursue its own interest and respect. Finally, the collapse of China. Advocates of the China threat feared that a sudden Soviet-style sudden-death, spinning out of control would create an even worse scenario. The sheer size of the population makes refuge problem, the failed state and the followed crises (warlordism, civil war, crime, proliferation of nuclear weapons etc) (Xia, 2005).

Despite the widespread fears regarding the motivation of China's rise, the Chinese government committed itself to a peaceful rise. China is a nondemocratic country and so worries of other states are justifiable, but the Chinese government does not believe that its future depends on overturning the fundamental order of the international system (Zhou, 2010, p.11). Faced with a distorted international image by those advocates of the 'theory of China threats', the Chinese authorities sought to ensure that China's peaceful development means that China will emerge in the world with an ethical and progressive image (Lai & Lu, 2012, p.49). Zheng Bijian, the architect of China's "peaceful rise" concept, received criticism from both inside and outside of China. Therefore recognizing the advantages in deployment of an effective reassurance language, China developed a new policy reassurance and strategic option, relabeling "peaceful rise" to "peaceful development". The main advantage of "peaceful development" as a term is that it focuses attention onto China's internal socio-economic development rather than its external political-military rise (Scott, 2012, pp.48-49).

China developed "five principles of peaceful coexistence" which were evoked in the 2006 defence white paper: "China maintains military contracts with other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and develops cooperative military relations that are non-aligned, non-confrontational and not directed against any third party" (Dellios, 2010, p.98). Caine et al (2011) laid down the five principles of peaceful coexistence:

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1. Peaceful development is the inevitable way for China's modernizations;
2. promoting world peace and development with China's own growth;
3. developing by relying on its own strength, reform, and innovation;
4. seeking mutual benefit and common development with other countries;
5. building a harmonious world of substantial peace and common prosperity (Caine et al, 2011, p.54).

Shengnan (2012) argues that the white paper is fundamental to China's outlook on nation building and foreign policy. Wang Yajun, a policy researcher at the Foreign Affairs Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that China is not repeating the traditional development model by seeking hegemony. The central goal of China's diplomacy is to create a peaceful and stable international environment for its development (Shengnan, 2012). China seeks to eradicate any rising tide of anti-Beijing sentiment in the United States. State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan said that China's development is an opportunity rather than a threat to the world. The more China develops, the more it can contribute to world peace, stability and prosperity and the more opportunities it can bring to the rest of the world (China Daily, 2005).

Sutter (2012) argues that unlike previous Chinese policy and behavior, the peaceful development policy seeks not to publicly confront the United States on most issues. Chinese leaders still recognize that both the two parties have strong differences with US dominance in Asian and world affairs, and equally remain concerned about how that US power hurts Chinese interests regarding Taiwan and other sensitive issues. Sutter (2012) believes that the Chinese have sustained a policy that plays down differences, striving to keep US-Chinese relations on the generally positive footing that is seen as needed for Chinese stability and economic development (Sutter, 2012, p.64).

Li Keqiang (2011), currently the vice premier of China, firmly believes that the world community does not have to fear a growing China; there is a long history to China's pursuit of the path to peaceful development. To build a harmonious society, China's development calls for international cooperation over access to markets and resources, and more importantly requires a peaceful external environment. Most importantly China's development benefits other countries, and China, as a major country, does not shirk its responsibilities (Keqiang, 2011). Lai and Lu (2012) argue that "peaceful development" is now firmly embedded in China's foreign policy lexicon. For example, China's participation in the UN peacekeeping missions is telling evidence that China adheres to the road of peaceful development (Lai & Lu, 2012, p.49). Although this debate has more relevance for China's neighbours and the United States; nevertheless, it is also intended to reassure the rest of the developing world. Hu Jintao promoted a friendly coexistence, equality-based dialogues, and common development and prosperity of different civilizations, in order to create a harmonious world, marking a significant shift in the leadership's understanding of China's position in the world and has become a guidepost for foreign affairs. China's economic well-being is of the highest priority but this will only be possible in a benign international environment; engaging in extensive UN peacekeeping missions show a tangible commitment to this philosophy (Eisenman & Shinn, 2012, p.49).

China's 'new security concept' was to abandon Cold War-era views; establishing confidence-building as the foundation of security; using economic and trade cooperation to enhance security and vice-versa; and establishing a regional collective system to fight international terrorism and crimes. At the core of this new concept was the "Four No's": no hegemonism, no power politics, no alliance and no arms races. China's new security concept stands against the "old thinking" and represents a Chinese view of the region and the world, which is different from that of the past and reflects China's search for a national security strategy and a regional security arrangement for the Asia-Pacific region for the future (Yunling, 2010, pp.52-53).

3.3. Security Dilemma

The security dilemma in East Asia is a delicate and complex issue. As mentioned in the theoretical discussion, the security dilemma lies in one's uncertainty and anxiety to his neighbours' intentions. There are a number of aspects that contribute to the inherent feeling of insecurity in the region; the big question is whether these factors that contribute to the security dilemma are exaggerated or, are instead, malign. In this Chapter I will look at two important issues that contribute to the East Asia security dilemma; illustrating how neither the issue of the Taiwan Strait and the military build-up that surrounds it nor the US-Japan alliance present fundamental challenges to US hegemony and

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the existing international order.

3.3.1. *The Taiwan Strait and China's Military Build-up*

The Taiwan Strait is regarded as a political hot topic. China's relationship with the United States remains internationally important; within this relationship, the Taiwan issue has always been a crucial factor. The fragile "status quo" relationship between China and Taiwan has been existence since 1949, when the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) leaders of the republic of China regarded the Communist government as illegitimate and fled to the small island off the coast of the mainland establishing the Republic of China (ROC). The People's Republic of China (PRC) denied the ROC de jure political status. Although interpretations between the two parties vary, according to the 'One China' principle, mainland China still considers Taiwan to be an inalienable part of it. While Taiwan's former president Chen Shui-bian rejected this principle, through the 1992 consensus, the KMT accepts it as a starting point for negotiations (Roberge & Lee, 2009).

What makes Taiwan such a precarious and a delicate issue is the ties it maintains with the US. With regards to China's 'One China' principle, the PRC sees the United States as a major attainment of this goal; the United States is bound by its Taiwan Relations Act to protect the island against any aggression. For this reason, it is not surprising that the PRC feels that the United States still views the country as a potential enemy in its regional defence calculus (Yusof, 1999, p.63). The cooperation between the United States and Taiwan creates tension between the PRC and the US. China seeks supremacy over not merely Taiwan, but the entire region, in pursuit of regional hegemony (Mearsheimer & Brzezinski, 2005, p.4). An Economist article argued that Taiwan is the main spur for China's military expansion. China's new gunboat diplomacy promises to be a formidable array of assets; designed not to match American military power in the Western Pacific but rather to exploit its vulnerabilities. China's strategy is built around the possibility of cross-strait armed conflict in which China would have to not only overcome Taiwan, but deter, delay or defeat American forces (Economist, April 7 2012).

This military build-up does not go without response. The Pentagon is stepping up investments in a range of weapons, jet fighters and technology. Despite talks of budget cuts, the development of China's first radar-evading jet, as well as anti-ballistic missile that could hit American aircraft carriers, pushed the Pentagon to make improvements in American weaponry a priority (Bumiller, 2011). Moreover, America has raised the possibility that it might sell Taiwan the F-16 C/D fighter jets, in an attempt to close Taiwan's so-called 'fighter-gap' (Economist, May 1 2012). Taiwan continues to modernize both its missile forces and its amphibious assault capabilities. Between 2000 and 2007, Taiwan received \$8.4 billion in arms deliveries from worldwide sources; the United States has consistently been a significant source of Taiwan's arms purchases. The influx of arms from the United States further guarantees their commitment to protecting Taiwan from any aggressor (Roberge & Lee, 2009).

In addition, the medium and short-range ballistic missile capabilities pose considerable threat to the East Asia region. China no longer feels that it can depend on sheer manpower for its defence. So instead China has invested heavily in the strength and technical sophistication of its missiles, putting Taiwan within easy range of a devastating cruise and ballistic-missile attack (Economist, December 6 2010).

The situation regarding military-build up combined with a nationalistic element only lends support to the realist argument. Walt (2010), a defensive realist, argues that there is likely to be fairly good prospects for other Asian states balancing against the rise of China. Yet on the other hand there is still a good chance of 'bandwagoning'. If the former, containment will be relatively easy; if the latter, the gradual emergence of a Chinese "sphere of influence" may be difficult to prevent (Walt, 2010). Mearsheimer (2005) argues that if China pushes the US out of Asia it will increase the prospects of achieving regional hegemony and the only way the PRC will take Taiwan back (Mearsheimer & Brzezinski, 2005, p.3). As discussed in the literature review, pursuit of regional hegemony in East Asia acts as a challenge to global hegemony of the United States, supporting Mearsheimer's offensive realist claim.

This said, we don't necessarily have to view the rise of China in the East Asia region and the ever-evolving Taiwan issue as challenge to US hegemony. Walt (2011) claims that the American era in which it acts as the global policeman, politician and treasurer is coming to an end, and China is nowhere near ready to fulfill this role (Walt,

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2011). Fortunately enough for the international system, the global order that the United States created after the Second World War accommodates rising powers, and so therefore it is neither a challenge to the existing global order yet. Although there may be a standing security dilemma teamed with an underlying element of nationalism, nonetheless, there are strong signs that conflict between China and Taiwan is not inevitable.

The flourishing economic ties and political rapprochement are evident in the last decade. Bilateral trade between China and Taiwan in 2007 reached \$102 billion, up from \$8 billion in 1991. China is Taiwan's largest trading partner; in 2007, 30 percent of Taiwan's exports were sold to China. Likewise, Taiwan ranks in the top ten of China's trading partners; Taiwanese businesses have invested an estimated \$150 billion in the mainland of China since 1988 (Roberge & Lee, 2009). Recently, China and Taiwan signed 'The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA); a preferential trade agreement aiming to reduce tariffs and commercial barriers between the two sides. Hogg (2010) argued that the ECFA is to be the most significant agreement since the civil war split the two governments over 60 years ago (Hogg, 2010). Through a policy analysis, Rosen and Wang (2010) echo Hogg, suggesting that the economic projections of the effects of a China-Taiwan economic liberalization agreement point to significant benefits of a cross-Strait economic reform, especially for Taiwan. More importantly, the ECFA is likely to have an impact on the larger relationship between China and Taiwan, between those two and the region, and between that region and the United States (Rosen & Wang, 2010, p.3).

Taking these tangible steps towards a more economically binding relationship is only likely to make political rapprochement more feasible. Since Ma Ting-jeou's inauguration in May 2008, the pace of change in the direction of closer economic ties and greater political amity has moved faster than most had expected, dramatically reducing the threat of Taiwan independence and war across the Taiwan Strait (Glosny, 2011, p.1). The acceleration of economic integration has been accompanied by intensified social and cultural exchanges; ranging from Buddhism to environment, from philanthropy to consumer rights, from assistance to battered wives to preservation of cultural heritage. Taiwan-based religious groups have played a key role in reviving the traditional religions, in particular Buddhism and Daoism, in Mainland China. Looking towards the horizon, if the trend of cross-Strait economic integration continues at its current pace, one cannot rule out the possibility that the rising tide of Taiwanese nationalism will be reversed while the growing awareness of the imperatives of cross-Strait economic interdependence may load the dice of national identity in favour of cross-Strait political integration over the long-run (Yun-han, 2009).

The decreased cross-strait tension and the tentative, but nevertheless existing, political rapprochement have raised the prospect for fundamental changes in China's security challenges. The deeper rapprochement would not necessarily resolve the issue of Taiwan's political status, but it would greatly reduce the chances that the PRC would use force; yet it must be mentioned that the East region is far from entire stability. China's rise and military modernization remains a concern for states both within and outside the region. If China is more restrained in how it modernizes and employs its military, such as through relaxed modernization, focus on constructive and cooperative regional and extra-regional activities, China's reassurance may alleviate some of these worries and help maintain a stable international environment (Glosny, 2011, p.13).

Many Chinese scholars appear to subscribe to the views of neoliberal institutionalism with regards to how China should respond to this particular security challenge. It has been suggested that China's rising status should be built on the rules and norms of existing international institutions and regimes (Li, 2009, p.219). This is clearly demonstrated through China's engagement in confidence building measures (CBMs), focusing primarily on transparency measures. One of the most important developments in this realm has been the establishment of the Asian Regional Forum (ARF); Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) being the driving force of the Forum. Similarly 'The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific' was set up to provide an informal mechanism for scholars, officials and others in their private capacities to discuss political and security issues and challenges facing the region. Moreover, the Council has established linkages with institutions and organisations in other parts of the world to exchange information, insights and experiences in the area of regional political-security cooperation (CSCAP, 2012).

The issue of Taiwan and the military build-up that accompanies the situation is not simply black and white; the way in

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which Mearsheimer has portrayed it. Walt (2011) suggests that the period when the United States could manage politics, economics and security arrangements for nearly the entire globe was never destined to endure forever, and its passing need not herald a new age of rising threats and economic hardship if we make intelligent adjustments. Moreover, Walt (2011) argues that Americans should see the end of the American Era as an opportunity to rebalance their international burdens and focus on their domestic imperatives (Walt, 2011). Considering Walt's point, there is an argument that China isn't outright challenging US hegemony in the traditional sense. While China's reach, strength and power is on the incline, the American reach, strength and power is on the decline; China is taking a less confrontational and more constructive approach to regional affairs (Lui, 2004, cited in Stivachtis, 2007, p.92). China recognizes that a security dilemma and Taiwan issue remains unsolved; subsequently China is working within the existing parameter building additional ties through business, as well as using international institutions and agreements in an attempt to nullify the security dilemma, sending a message that it does not intend to challenge US hegemony and the existing global order. As Brzezinski (2005) notes, China is determined to sustain its economic growth. A confrontational foreign policy could disrupt that growth, harm hundreds of millions of Chinese, and threaten the Communist Party's hold on power. China is conscious of its rise but also of its continued weakness (Brzezinski & Mearsheimer, 2005, p.1).

3.3.2. US-Japan Alliance

Enhanced security ties between Washington and Tokyo since the mid-1990's, particularly over the past few years, have transformed the US-Japanese alliance and reshaped the East Asian security environment; Japan has shown increasing willingness to work with the United States militarily (Xinbo, 2006, p. 119). Originally the US-Japan alliance was based on the 1951 bilateral Security Treaty. As a product of the Cold War's bipolarity, the security arrangements between Tokyo and Washington served a purpose to deter the communist threat and expansion. However, the structural changes in East Asia after 1989 necessitated a redefinition of the alliance's strategic rationale. These changes included the decline and disappearance of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the new security challenges, notably related to the North Korea nuclear developments, and, last but not least, China's rise and consolidation of its status as a major power in East Asia (Chanlett-Avery, 2011, p.1). The alliance between the United States and Japan provides an opportunity for both powers to better identify shared interests and coordinate policies that may affect the choices China makes (Osius, 2002, p.32).

The US-Japan alliance has been, and remains, a political hot potato. Through the Armitage report, Washington looked to upgrade the US-Japanese alliance. The revised guidelines sought to expand the Japanese role in a transpacific alliance, regarding the defence cooperation as the floor, rather than the ceiling; the report set the US-British relationship as the model for US-Japanese ties (Xinbo, 2006, p.121). The Chinese view of the US-Japanese alliance and the revised defence guidelines rejected the argument that the alliance was necessary to handle loosely defined threats to regional security. Moreover, Chinese strategists understood the language of the alliance to be purposefully ambiguous, and instead, served as a thinly veiled reference to containing China. Thus, rather than working to constrain Japanese militarism, the United States was actually empowering Japanese militarism (Bates, 2010, p.145).

Chinese scholars accept that the 'China threat' is not the only basis upon which Japan maintains its alliance with the United States, but the US-Japan alliance is extremely important in maintaining Japan's security. Equally, the alliance is seen to be vital in security American involvement in tackling any potential regional crisis. More broadly speaking, Japan hopes that the alliance would play a key stabilizing role in Asia-Pacific security (Li, 2008, p.126). In all of this, Chinese analysts are convinced that the Japanese will exploit their relationship with the US, with the ultimate aim of achieving a status of a military and political power (Wu Huaizhong, 2006, cited in Li, 2008, p.126).

One of the primary concerns of the US-Japan alliance was the development of the Theatre Missile Defence systems. Japan's agreement to help the US develop defences against theatre missiles as part of a revitalized US-Japan alliance was the most sensitive among the Chinese analysts and officials in the 1990s (Christensen, 2011, p.241). Jervis (1978) argued that the buildup of defensive weapons and the adoption of defensive doctrines should not fuel the security dilemma as they are not useful for aggression (Jervis, 1978). Christensen (1999) argues that this cannot be applied to China. In cross-strait relations Beijing considers traditionally defensive weapons in the hands of Taiwan

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and any of its potential allies to be dangerous, because they may give Taiwan officials additional confidence in their efforts to legitimize the territorial status quo (Christensen, 1999, p.65).

The main function of the alliance would be to deal with Chinese threats to Taiwan, including armed intervention and direct military conflict with China (Bates, 2010, p.145). The strengthened US-Japanese alliance has led to Japan's accelerated involvement in the Taiwan issue. As the US-Japanese alliance assumes the function of security guarantor to Taiwan, it serves to embolden the separatist forces in Taiwan, who believe that regardless of who provoked the conflict, Washington and Tokyo would be ready to come to their rescue. The reality is that, if the Taiwan Strait situation spun out of control, Beijing would have to face not only the United States, but a more militarily active Japan (Xinbo, 2006, pp.125-126).

It must be mentioned that China's attitude towards the US-Japan Security Treaty has continuously changed over time. China has moved from opposition up until the early 1970s to tacit endorsement throughout the 1970s-1980s, and onto suspicion in the 1990s. China's varying attitude was affected not only by the changing international circumstances and Sino-Japanese relations, but also by changing security perspectives held by the top leadership, with increasing input from the IR think tanks (Liao, 2006, p.245). In contrast to previous cases, Chinese IR think tanks paid more attention to specific issues such as the impact of the Security Treaty on Taiwan (Liao, 2006, p.248).. The Chinese government on the US-Japan Security Treaty implied that, in spite of its overall suspicion towards the alliance, it is also looking for opportunities to promote Sino-Japanese relations in the existing circumstances (Zicheng, 2010).

Regardless of its underlying suspicion of the US-Japan alliance, China has an overwhelming desire for a stable environment. China has historically been skeptical of multilateral schemes, instead preferring to deal with most security issues case-by-case, on a bilateral basis. Part of the reason for this reflects an adherence to a zero-sum view of alliances; the positive-sum notion that an alliance can serve to preserve stability and deter aggression is somewhat new to Chinese security thinking. Since the late 1990's, China has begun to reassess its attitude towards multilateralism (Ong, 2007, pp.121-122). The pressure felt by US alliances in the East Asia region has pushed China to improve relations with other East Asian countries, and in the direction of regional multilateral cooperation. Han and Jianbo (2012) argue that China's fundamental shift in attitude, supporting enhanced integration has accelerated the East Asian regional cooperation process. China's behavior and ideas suggest that it is not taking measures to weaken or exclude the US influence in Asia, and China's multilateral diplomacy shows its ability to handle relations with its neighbouring countries in a more open and mutually beneficial way (Han & Jianbo, 2012, pp.115-116).

Cossa (1999) argues the Chinese have accepted that the US has permanent interests in Asia and is intent on defending them. At the base of future of Sino-US cooperation is an understanding that Japan and others share this desire for active US engagement, a continuation of US bilateral alliances and the regional security they provide (Cossa, 1999, p.90). Some have questioned China's intention of promoting East Asia integration and cooperation as a strategy to push the US out of Asia and assert regional dominance; for Shambaugh this is not the case. Shambaugh (2005) argues that no Asian states wish to see the American presence and role in Asia diminished. Asia is believed to be big enough for both powers to exercise their influence and power. On the balance, the US and China find themselves on the same side as many of the key issues affecting the future of Asia (Shambaugh, 2005, pp. 41-42).

Japan has significant economic, political and security interests in East Asia which are best served by regional cooperation and integration. Unfortunately, Zhang (2010) argues that holding Japan back is their "American syndrome" as well as their "China syndrome". On the other hand, China and ASEAN has moved in the right direction by initiating a "Code of Conduct" aiming at reducing tension and security stability in the dispute over the South China Sea. Equally, The Shanghai Organization of Cooperation has set a good example in the cooperation of tradition security by building trust through joint-military reduction along the border areas (Zhang, 2010, pp.45-47). China has supported cooperation regarding common security issues in the East Asia region. For example, China, the United States, and the two U.S. allies – Japan and South Korea – have cooperated actively on the North Korea nuclear issue in the Six Party Talks framework (Christensen, 2011, p.243); this provides opportunity for China, Japan and the United States to develop and consolidate their trilateral relationship.

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While in Northeast Asia, bilateral security arrangements may remain the backbone of Northeast Asian security for a considerable period of time. This means that strategic thinking based on realism is still necessary in order to foster the basis for multilateral security cooperation (Sung-han, 2008, p.152). Despite the strategic uncertainty and prevailing bilateralism, China has come to learn that it can benefit through a regional multilateral strategy. China has gradually come to accept America's security existence in East Asia, and basically affirms America's role in East Asia stabilization (Han & Jianbo, 2012, p.116).

Similarly, China has come to accept that challenging America's role in the region in a bid for regional hegemony is entirely counterproductive. The proliferation of multilateral institutions and the relatively peaceful environment in Asia after the Cold War at least vindicate the legitimacy of institutional balancing as a policy choice for states to pursue security under anarchy (He, 2008, p.159).

China's engagement with Japan must not be misunderstood; engagement does not mean that realist elements become obsolete. Engagement can range from unconditional engagement to conditional engagement, coercive engagement to containment. In fact engagement relies as much on realist foundations, with their deterrence and balance-of-power elements, as on liberal foundations, which stress the positive forces of increasing international economic interdependence and integration, the establishment of rule and institutions to regulate, the spreading of international norms and enable peaceful cooperation between nations (Drifte, 2002, p.5).

The US-Japan alliance shows that China cannot be simply pigeon-holed into either realism or liberalism. On the one hand, China seeks to act more cooperatively, engaging in multilateral diplomacy, yet on the other hand, this does not mean that China's suspicion of the development of Japanese missile defences and its relationship with the US will suddenly disappear; naturally China will always approach issues with diplomatic precaution. What can be ascertained from my analysis is that China does not seek to challenge the role of the United States in East Asia or its hegemonic position. Furthermore, China is making a significant effort to work within the existing global order, emphasizing the importance of East Asian integration on international security.

China has accepted that it would not be in their interest to openly challenge America's role in East Asia and its hegemonic position. China has other important domestic issues that need to be tended to before they not only lead a region, but challenge a superpower for that position. As Walt (2011) stated, the American era is not going to last forever (Walt, 2011). China can diplomatically push for more influence in geopolitical and security issues without challenging US hegemony. Ultimately there will come a time when the US is forced to hand over the guardian responsibility of the East Asia region, but this does not imply that China is challenging the US; rather, it implies the decline of American unipolarity.

China's dealing with the US-Japan alliance shows emerging signs of Ikenberry's (2009) 'Liberal Internationalism 3.0'. China is accepting that multilateralism is the method in which states can deal with increasingly intrusive and interdependent economic and security regimes. Moreover, China has both accepted that it cannot alone manage the East Asian region and that the US has a significant role; supporting Ikenberry's proposition that a post-hegemonic hierarchy will emerge, in which various groupings of leading states will occupy governing institutions (Ikenberry, 2009). Rather than contest the basic rules and principles of the liberal international order, China looks to gain more and authority and leadership within it. China's economic success and influence are tied to the liberal internationalist organization of world politics, and they have a deep interest in preserving that system (Ikenberry, 2011, p.2).

Chapter IV: Conclusion

It is becoming increasingly evident that the power of US hegemony is shifting. China's breathtaking rise is evidence that a new peer-competitor is rapidly emerging. China is on course to overtake the United States as the world's largest economy. Jim O'Neil, the head of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, has predicted that China could overtake the United States as the World's largest economy by 2027 (Ahmed, 2011). China overhauling the U.S for the title of the world's largest economy is an extremely important sign. The interaction among four key drivers is causing America's hegemonic decline: the rise of new great powers; imperial overstretch; the erosion of the US economic dominance; and a looming fiscal crisis that imperils the dollar's reserve currency role (Layne, 2012, p.226).

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I outlined several theoretical approaches to interpreting China's rise. The argument I have put forth in this dissertation lends more support to liberalism. While realists cannot be entirely written off as irrelevant as there are still signs of power politics and arms racing, international institutions and economic interdependence play a significant role in prolonging peace in not only the East Asia region, but the international system overall.

'Challenge' is the most important word in this particular research. China is not challenging US hegemony and the existing global order in the same sense that Imperial Germany (1900-1918), Imperial Japan (1931-1945), Nazi Germany (1933-1945), and the Soviet Union during the Cold War (1945-1989) did. As realist John Mearsheimer (2005) argued, each of these tried to match what the United States had achieved in the Western Hemisphere in the nineteenth century (Mearsheimer, 2005, p.161). China's policy of a 'Road to Peaceful Development' highlights the importance of socio-economic development over power politics that dominated international relations throughout much of the 20th century.

The current global order is fundamentally different from preexisting orders in that emerging powers have the opportunity to become more prosperous and capable by operating inside the existing international order, benefitting from its rules, practices, and institutions. Ultimately, China does not want to contest the basic rules and principles of the liberal international order; they would rather legitimately gain leadership and clout within it (Ikenberry, 2011). China's current focus remains on economic development and winning acceptance as a great power (Brzezinski & Mearsheimer, 2005, p.1). China will not seek hegemony confrontationally or engage in aggressive military expansion now or in the future, no matter how developed it will become. At the same time however, 'hegemonism' and power politics still exist in world politics, regional turmoil keeps spilling over, and local wars keep happening. It must be highlighted that China underlines its foreign policy as purely defensive and refuses to engage in power politics (Louka, 2011, p.48-49).

China's relationship with the international system is still evolving. When it comes to international threats, China's conduct has increasingly fallen in line with the international architectures, rules, and norms of the global community (Beddor et al, 2009, p.56). Since the mid-1990's, China's global and regional security diplomacy has dramatically changed. Overall, China is pursuing positions on regional and global security matters that are far more consistent with broad international norms and practice than in the past. China has taken a more proactive, practical, and constructive approach to regional and global security affairs (Gill, 2010, p.1).

As argued by Walt (2011), the American era is coming an end, and the United States is not exercising the same influence it once enjoyed (Walt, 2011). China does not necessarily have to challenge American hegemony to increase its own power; for the decline of America's hegemonic status automatically provides space for a rising power. As the current international order accompanies rising powers, equally China has no real incentive to overturn the liberal global order. In fact, China's growth is likely to be faster and more immense by operating within the current order. By working to tackle global problems such as nuclear proliferation, global warming and global financial crisis, China not only projects itself as a cooperative and peaceful rising power, but will gather support, rather than isolate itself.

The security dilemma, from alliances to China's military build-up, certainly adds to sensitivity of the East Asia region. Naturally, any rising power will aim to build upon and strengthen its military forces; those who have much to gain equally have much to lose. In this case, China's geopolitical relations can be viewed as starkly realist, but China is doing much to improve both communication and transparency through multilateral forums and international institutions, eclipsing the realist problem with neoliberal institutionalist solutions. Through these measures China is helping to mediate the uncertainty within the region, and is more importantly sending a passive message to the United States that China does not seek to challenge America's hegemonic position; instead the Chinese authorities are looking to work within the existing global order. Similarly, China has an unmatched desire for a stable environment, and therefore aims to embrace regional multilateral cooperation in an attempt to enhance East Asian integration, ensuring that US-Japan alliance does not isolate the two parties from the region, creating further problematic divisions.

I conclude that China neither intends to challenge US hegemony, nor overturn the existing liberal global order. The

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bottom line of Chinese foreign policy is the “four no’s”, namely no hegemony, no power politics, no military alliances and no arms racing. It is these guiding principles that separate the rising China from more traditional rising powers. This highlights a significant movement away from the traditional realist politics that dominated international relations throughout much of the 20th century, instead moving towards a more interconnected and cooperating world, with too much at stake for it to be worth adopting an aggressive foreign policy. Beijing has affirmed these views with the assertion that it is interested in a peaceful rising in the international system and wishes to promote greater international harmony. China wishes to encourage better and fairer international relations through expanded cooperation and development. Through cooperation with each other, states can draw on each other’s strengths and work together to advance economic globalization in the direction of balanced development and share benefits; abandoning its previous adherence to zero-sum politics and supporting a positive-sum game (Lanteigne, 2009, pp.11-12).

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