

Repackaging Confucius PRC Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power

Xiaolin Guo

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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association for South East Asian Nations
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
<i>Hanban</i>	Office of Chinese Language Council International
KMT	Nationalist Party (Kuomintang)
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China

Executive Summary

Nearly three decades of economic reform have seen China emerge as one of the world's largest and fastest growing economies. Amid the recent clamor over the label "Made in China," the international media is becoming increasingly fixated on the rise of China as an economic and military power, perceived as a challenge to the existing world order. Underlying all this is a growing concern over China's economic potential and, what is seen by some as disconcerting, China's political influence in Asia and beyond. The country's ever larger military budget, trade deficit, and alleged commercial espionage, computer hacking, and the like, continue to make international media headlines. In the West in particular, this has manifested itself in an alarmist threat perception concerning China's "rise."¹ For its part, China's changing environment in external affairs compounded by development challenges at home has prompted it to rethink its role and its image in the play of international politics. The perception of its own role and the management of its image are at the center of a major PRC public diplomacy effort that has aroused great interest not just abroad but within China as well.

Diplomacy is all about interrelations and interactions. The foreign relations of all countries are shaped by both external pressures and domestic developments; China is no exception. In the 1950s, the newly founded People's Republic embarked upon an unprecedented social transformation, for the duration of which it closed its door to the anti-communist West. Foreign relations were, with minor exceptions, limited to the Soviet Union and the socialist camp in Eastern Europe and Asia. In the 1960s—having severed its close ties with the Soviet Union—China's foreign policy was dominated by its backing of revolutionary and anti-colonial movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with Mao envisioning a central role for

¹ One such example is Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America* (Washington: Regnery, 2000).

China in the world revolution against hegemony, imperialism, and social-imperialism (namely the Soviet Union). At the start of the post-Mao reforms, however, China reached out to the capitalist world for the sake of its own long overdue modernization; foreign policy was re-oriented accordingly to attract foreign investment and expand foreign trade. Thus far, there had been considerable consistency between domestic development strategy and foreign policy.

The political setback at home and sanctions imposed by the West after the crackdown on the student movement in Beijing in the summer of 1989 had serious foreign policy repercussions for China, with its subsequent shift toward its neighboring countries and the gradual expansion of its role in the Asian region. The economic success that led China to join the WTO in the beginning of the twenty-first century and the success of its bid to host the 2008 Olympics raised China's profile immensely. Along with the consolidation of power in the decade after Deng Xiaoping (who passed away in 1997), assertions concerning the peaceful rise of China began to draw international attention. This paper examines China's foreign policy-making over the course of the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, representing two periods of development in China. During the two periods, China came to face different challenges in terms of development at home and abroad, and in the process its foreign policy shifted from a strategy of "lying low" to one of "peaceful rise." Emerging a decade apart and seemingly exhibiting a distinct contrast in terms of trajectory, the rhetoric of lying low and peaceful rise may nonetheless be viewed as the result of a consistent foreign policy-making process constrained by internal and external developments. In these two periods, China has continued to repeatedly emphasize world peace and domestic stability, while reiterating its opposition to hegemony at the same time as maintaining its continued adherence to socialism.

As it is well understood, the role of ideology in post-Mao has notably receded in everyday life as well as in government work. Yet, there are certain ideological elements that remain and exert influence on political rhetoric and policy-making. This has been referred to, in political science vocabulary, as informal ideology. It is, in the Chinese case, political thought with a cultural

dimension, drawing on the classics of formal ideology (Marxism and Mao Zedong Thought) on the one hand, and traditional Chinese values (Confucianism) on the other. The cultural aspect of foreign policy-making is not just tightly interwoven with the national interest, but has also a popular appeal to the nation in general. The strategy of lying low and the rhetoric of peaceful rise both identify with the essence of Confucian teachings. With a focus on the name and image of Confucius, this paper elaborates on the cultural dimension of policy-making, and shows that public diplomacy largely serves the interest of domestic development. In this light, there is really little difference between lying low and peaceful rise in spite of the seemingly contrasting terms.

The undertaking of setting up Confucius Institutes (*Kongzi xueyuan*) abroad, as discussed in the paper, is a practice of employing culture as a medium in managing foreign relations. Its form, the aim that the organization espouses, and the way it operates are revealing; and as a service to China's public diplomacy it constitutes an integral part of China's image management, intended to create and maintain an environment desirable for continued development inside China. The intended audience of this cultural symbol is both domestic and foreign, and the message it delivers is "harmony," a theme chosen by China's current leadership to push for balanced development in the new century. The internal agenda for development has a decisive influence on China's foreign policy. At the same time, the fluidity of international relations has had a discernible impact on domestic policy. All of this illustrates that domestic development policy and foreign policy constantly interact and are interlocking. Likewise, the controversy in the international context over the rhetoric of China's peaceful rise is ultimately a reflection of a growing volatility of the world order. It is not a clash of images; rather it is a clash of image perceptions—all boiling down to Chinese-ness as understood by both the Chinese and by foreigners, respectively.

Introduction

The management of foreign affairs in the PRC has always had a distinct “character of the times” reflecting aspects of communist party rule as well as fluctuating international relations. It involves a tripod organization, that is, government-to-government (relations managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, subordinate to the State Council), party-to-party (relations managed by the CCP International Liaison Department, subordinate to the party Central Committee), and people-to-people (contacts under the auspices of the “mass organization” that bears the name Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries). The conjoined effort between the three served, in the early years of the PRC, to open and expand communication channels with the world at large—with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with the governments of countries that had diplomatic relations with the PRC, the CCP International Liaison Department and the People’s Association for Friendship engaging, separately, in exchanges with other communist parties (in or out of office) and “progressive” organizations, and with countries that had no diplomatic relations with the PRC. Party-to-party and people-to-people diplomacy used to bear a distinct ideological preference, but this changed as the Cold War ended, and the subsequent ideological void in public diplomacy has become increasingly filled with cultural elements. Adopting a pragmatic approach, party-to-party diplomacy is now oriented toward cultivating relations with all political parties in the world, irrespective of their ideologies; people-to-people diplomacy is meanwhile becoming increasingly dynamic, and involves organizations that are not normally regarded as part of foreign affairs apparatus. Much of this development is being shaped by the PRC government’s own image management, as China aspires to play a more active role in world affairs.

China’s post-Mao reforms marked a fundamental shift in the management of state affairs, from rigid ideological control to pragmatism. Within this framework, the role of domestic development in foreign policy-making has

remained consistently central, whereas foreign policies have been formulated in different periods with different emphases, in response not only to international changes but domestic challenges as well. In the first decade of China's economic reform (1980s), the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" laid down by the late Chinese premier Zhou Enlai were reaffirmed to improve relations with neighboring countries and the world at large. China was seen as being embraced by the West, in a manner of speaking, acquiring a panda-like image as cute and naïve. This changed in the late 1980s, however, when the Chinese leadership met head-on with both political liberalization at home, and the crumbling and eventual collapse of the "Socialist Bloc" in Eastern Europe. Faced with international sanctions in the wake of the Tiananmen student movement in June 1989, China's central leadership resorted to a strategy of lying low in international affairs, thus setting the tone, rather inadvertently, for the subsequent development of the rhetoric of peaceful rise, the latter being greeted outside China with an unspecified skepticism and seen by some as a threat, even. The country's international image was subsequently transformed.

During the transition from lying low to peaceful rise, China's central leadership changed hands from Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin, and finally to Hu Jintao. Despite differences in style and practice, there has been notable consistency between these central leaderships with regard to policy-making in domestic and international affairs. Since Deng Xiaoping, at the beginning of the economic reforms, put forward to the CCP Central Committee the goal of reaching the stage of a comparatively well-off society, his successors have pushed forward the same agenda, each in his own way. At every juncture of volatility in international affairs, China's central leadership has invariably reiterated its determination to stick to socialism in domestic development while opposing hegemony in international affairs. From Deng to Hu, there has been a notable consensus that hegemony is detrimental to world peace, and that it impacts adversely on economic development in China. Policy-making has, therefore, been oriented toward creating a benign environment for the country's economic development and modernization. The management of foreign relations has, without exception, been adapted to the pursuit of that goal.

The present study deals with the interrelationship between China's management of foreign relations and domestic development, with an emphasis on the way in which PRC public diplomacy is conducted in the changing circumstances, both internationally and domestically. A review of foreign policy-making vis-à-vis domestic development in the early decade of economic reform provides background for a closer look at the current controversy over the rhetoric of China's peaceful rise. As the paper shows, the emphasis on peace and harmony is part of the overall image management by the Chinese government, seeking to maintain favorable conditions for continued development at home. In this light, the Confucius Institutes that have been established worldwide constitute one major diplomatic effort by the Chinese government, and is intended to make a global impact. The name Confucius, however, does not solely serve the purpose of managing China's international image. Notably, the revitalization of the great Sage and his teaching occurred at a juncture when China was entering a new phase in its development. The reiteration of harmony (and order)—the essence of Confucianism—constitutes a policy revision with regard to the direction of China's economic reforms, begun more than a quarter of a century ago. The present affirmation and elevation of the importance of traditional values is intended to soften the social impact of economic development on the citizenry at large. All these interrelating factors add intricacy to Chinese policy-making and, more importantly, to our understanding of its processes and effects.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first section offers an overview of the historical circumstances wherein the strategy of lying low was formulated and put into practice. Primarily drawing upon Deng Xiaoping's speeches made to different audiences in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, it attempts to reconstruct the logic and trace the progress of foreign policy-making during this most volatile period of post-Mao China's development in both international relations and domestic reform. Policy-making in this period had a decisive impact on later developments in foreign relations and domestic reform. The second section engages with the on-going public debates revolving around the rhetoric of peaceful rise. Despite the conflicting image that it may generate, the latter—peaceful rise—has more

bearing than is immediately apparent on the earlier policy of lying low. The third section is about “soft power building” as one of China’s new diplomatic offensives, centered on the establishing of Confucius Institutes that have multiplied in the past few years. Contrary to the cultural image reflected in Confucian teaching, the setting-up of the institutes seems to emphasize the global influence of China as one of the world’s largest economies. The creation of the brand value of Confucian culture takes us to the last section of the paper, which elaborates on the cultural aspects in China’s domestic and international politics. Behind the veil of Confucianism, there is a quiet rise of conservative rhetoric composed of reassertion and a reassessment of China’s role in international politics. Soft power building is, therefore, all about the image of China’s rise. How successful China’s public diplomacy will be depends on how successfully China can manage its image.

Strategy of Lying Low

Foreign policy-making in post-Mao China has been credited with an increasing emphasis on professionalism and bureaucratic pluralism; as a result, it has produced a better-organized and more effective foreign affairs apparatus.² Professionalism refers to the training of younger diplomats, investment in policy research, and widening channels of policy-making, all of which have come to serve the interest of a different style in the management of foreign relations. Departing from Mao's foreign policy, dominated as it was by thinking in terms of revolution against imperialism and in terms of the socialist bloc, Deng Xiaoping stressed that the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence be "the best way to handle relations between nations."³ The reiteration of the Peaceful Coexistence policy was not just a matter of political ideals but also an imperative for the daring economic reform that China embarked upon after the death of Mao.⁴ The moment when Deng Xiaoping was made *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" (1978) seemed to epitomize the Western world's (that had little previous contact with China) captivation with China, which derived not only from the huge size of the country, but also due its fascinating culture, and more importantly, its unknown potential as a market and an environment for investment. One decade on, China—with its booming domestic economy and foreign trade—has managed to win much goodwill and has significantly improved relations with the U.S. and Western Europe.

² See A. Doak Barnett, *The Making of Foreign Policy in China: Structure and Process* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); David M. Lampton, "China's Foreign and National Security Policy-making Process: Is It Changing, and Does It Matter?" in David M. Lampton ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 1-36.

³ Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan* [Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping], Vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1993), pp. 96-97.

⁴ The statement has a special reference to Sino-Burmese relations at a time when the CCP broke off its ties with the Communist Party of Burma. For more on this topic, see Xiaolin Guo, *Towards Resolution: China in the Myanmar Issue*, The Institute for Security & Development Policy, Silk Road Paper (March 2007).

Amid the initial fanfare and exhilaration generated by the launch of the economic reform, China proceeded to enter a bumpy period of development wherein the nation's leadership was embattled by political challenges at home while sustaining a serious setback in foreign relations. The showdown between the country's top leaders and pro-democracy students was, in a way, a ramification of the economic reform that had expanded the public space and enlarged the role of Chinese intellectuals in the pursuit of a market economy. On the other hand, the event was by no means a phenomenon unique to the PRC under communist rule, but rather one of numerous historical occurrences in a similar repertoire.⁵ For the liberal intellectuals, a political system bearing the name democracy was a marker of modernization, for which they advocated a political reform agenda. The fall in 1987 of the CCP Secretary-General Hu Yaobang, who had offered his personal support for the campaign of political liberalization, showed that the CCP leadership in the end had little tolerance for liberalism. Hu's death two years later, caused by a fatal heart attack, sparked student protests in Beijing that called for political reform and demanded the castigation of corrupt officials. From initially sporadic to later loosely coordinated, the student demonstrations proceeded and dragged on for more than a month, during which the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev came on a visit to Beijing and left, and another CCP Secretary-General, Hu Yaobang's successor Zhao Ziyang, was dismissed from his post. As the standoff between the protesters and the government continued, troops were called in and opened fire in the name of restoring order, as they closed in on Tiananmen Square. The word "massacre" dominated the headlines in the Western media and characterized what had happened in the night and the dawn of June 3-4, 1989. The event provoked an international outcry.

Up to this point, there had been considerable fluidity in as far as ideological persuasion and the direction of China's economic reform were concerned, with public debate inside the country being much dominated by rights and

⁵ See Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Student Protests and the Chinese Tradition, 1919-1989," in Tony Saich, ed., *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), pp. 3-24; and Elizabeth J. Perry, "Introduction: Chinese Political Culture Revisited," in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 1-14.

wrongs revolving around certain practices considered to be violating socialist values. Despite political uncertainties, the international community had generally maintained optimism and had been, by and large, positive about the changes taking place in China, as a hybrid form of property rights and market economy evolved seemingly to replace rigid public ownership and a planned economy. Reactions to the Tiananmen student movement demonstrated a clash of ideologies, conflict between intellectual thinking and power play, and above all, a demarcation of the world by the rule of democracy. As television images of tanks rolling into Tiananmen Square were transmitted from Beijing, the West watched aghast. Overnight, the CCP seemed to have lost its mandate and, in the world's eyes, China lost any veneer of "panda-like" innocence it may have had. Emotions ran high: Western policy makers were told by members of the academic community to prepare in the long run to embrace a China no longer ruled by the communist party; in the near term, they were told that if "we" (a West in which scholars and politicians were presumed united in purpose) "want to continue dealings with China, it should be on our terms rather than those set by a harsh, authoritarian regime."⁶ No Western government under the circumstances could afford not to react, and react as each did by imposing sanctions against China. Between internal troubles and external pressures, domestic control took precedence for the Chinese leadership. Sanctions (in the form of trade and technology embargoes, and the suspension of government-to-government exchanges) doubtlessly mounted a serious setback to China's economic reform, but as far as the country's leadership was concerned, internal stability remained paramount. Hence while condemning Western interference and sanctions, Deng Xiaoping vowed resolutely after the Tiananmen Square Incident that "China cannot afford to descend into turmoil," stressing that stability surpassed in importance all issues of human rights or civic rights.⁷ Though external pressure did not seem to exert a negative impact on domestic politics in any significant sense (as China's economic reform proceeded), it did help shape China's foreign policies for the decade to come.

⁶ See, for example, Tony Saich, "Preface" in Saich ed., *The Chinese People's Movement*, pp. viii-ix.

⁷ Deng, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, pp. 359-61.

In the face of international sanctions, anti-imperialist rhetoric resurfaced in the speeches of Chinese leaders.⁸ Counteracting the perceived foreign hostility, socialism was reaffirmed in terms of it being a matter of survival for the Chinese nation. In his address to the leading members of the CCP Central Committee, Deng Xiaoping urged vigilance, insinuating that the West was trying to overthrow the socialist system in China.⁹ This was the time when democratic transformation was unfolding in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, an event which caused tremendous concern among China's central leadership; this was conveyed by Deng Xiaoping in his speech on September 4, 1989: "There is no doubt that the imperialists want socialist countries to change their nature. The question now is not whether the banner of the Soviet Union will fall—there is bound to be unrest there—but the real test is whether the banner of China will fall."¹⁰ The only way for socialism in China to survive the international turbulence, Deng firmly believed, was by continuing its reform to "once more double" its GNP in real terms. To limit the negative impact of deteriorating foreign relations, Deng stressed the need to maintain friendly exchanges with countries that might hold misgivings against China, while keeping a clear mind of what those countries were doing; he particularly warned against criticizing other countries without good reason or going to extremes in words and deeds. Reflecting his general assessments of the situation in international affairs, Deng specifically instructed: "First, we should observe the situation calmly; secondly, we should hold fast onto our ground; and thirdly, we should act with prudence." He then urged the central leaders again and again to be patient, prudent, and pragmatic in every pursuit worthwhile for the benefit of China.¹¹ This is what later came to be referred to as the essence of Deng Xiaoping's thinking on foreign relations—"lying low" (*taoguang yanghui*).

⁸ Deng Xiaoping made a direct connection between the sanctions imposed by the Western countries (announced at the G-7 Paris Summit) and the Western colonization of Chinese coastal cities in the nineteenth century (Deng, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, pp. 357-58).

⁹ With no hesitation, Deng Xiaoping pointed a finger at the U.S. for playing a role in the upcoming student unrest. See David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 28.

¹⁰ Deng, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, p. 320.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

The live pictures of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and perhaps most disturbingly, the execution of Romanian Communist leader Ceausescu sent shock waves through Beijing. If the Chinese leadership had so far hesitated about which road—socialist, or capitalist—to take as far as economic development was concerned, events in Europe at this point seemed to have provided an answer. If there had been any sympathy for political reform prior to that point, the 1989 Tiananmen student movement and its fallout very much put that agenda on the back burner for the time being. Harsh action taken by the Chinese government was seen as necessary to prevent the country from descending into chaos. In contrast to the Chinese intellectuals who saw the modernization of China and its restoration as a player in world affairs as hinging on the implementation of democracy, the nation's supreme leader regarded political and social stability as non-negotiable. Bourgeois liberalization was blamed for breeding unrest, detrimental to the interest of China's development. For those who held power in the wake of the Tiananmen student movement, what was happening in Eastern Europe served as "a warning taken from the overturned cart ahead," and there were plenty of reasons for them to believe that "Western countries have the same attitude towards China as towards the East European countries," and that "they are unhappy that China adheres to socialism."¹² From China's perspective, the end of the Cold War was thus seen as a beginning of new wars waged against the Third World countries on the one hand and socialism on the other.¹³ The perceived threat to the socialist system and foreign hostility prompted China's central leadership to reassert socialism.

Throughout the 1990s, China remained low-key in foreign affairs while continuing its economic reform. The end of the Cold War brought human rights issues to the forefront of international affairs. Charges of human rights abuses followed China almost everywhere in matters of political as well as social concern. When Deng Xiaoping finally passed away in 1997, China's rural crisis, which had been caused by rapid land development, urbanization, and most of all, the abuse of power by rural cadres, had been

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 344.

¹³ *Ibid.*

escalating for some time, while in the cities, laid-off workers and the increasing commercialization of government operations (particularly in the education and health sectors) had formed new sources of grievances. Stability, to the central leadership, remained as central as ever. A benign environment for domestic development was painstakingly sought and cultivated.

As the West continued to be perceived as hostile, China turned its attention to its neighboring countries. One after the other, China restored or established diplomatic relations with Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, and South Korea, normalized relations with Vietnam and Mongolia, and improved relations with India and Nepal. A major diplomatic breakthrough came in the establishment of a dialogue mechanism with ASEAN, and the ensuing economic cooperation with the Southeast Asian countries. The Hong Kong take-over in 1997, having long been awaited, finally became reality. On the other hand, the military exercises in the Taiwan Strait and, half a decade later, the Hainan Island Incident (a collision between a U.S. Navy reconnaissance aircraft and a PLA Navy fighter jet) added more ripples to China's troubled foreign relations. Amid these ups and downs, China entered the WTO, an event that would seem to be more of an economic success story than a breakthrough in foreign relations as such. As the international competition for the Chinese market intensified, sanctions became a thing of the past. The beginning of the new century saw a more confident China having so far maintained a double-digit GDP growth and also having managed to reach the comparatively well-off stage as envisioned by Deng Xiaoping. Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang Zemin as CCP leader and as head of state. It was at this juncture that the rhetoric of peaceful rise emerged, turning a new page in China's foreign relations.

Rhetoric of Peaceful Rise

Despite hard talk, the Deng Xiaoping era was anything other than strong on ideology in foreign or domestic policy. Pragmatism continued to dominate decision-making, and economic development remained the priority in government work. Deng's successor Jiang Zemin carried over the "lying-low" profile, and during his tenure China was further integrated into the world economy.¹⁴ Throughout the 1990s, China remained a target of international critics, mainly in the area of human rights. By lying low, it focused on reaching the goal of being "comparatively well-off," as formulated by Deng Xiaoping. The next generation of central leaders headed by Hu Jintao envisioned in the new millennium a different role for China, which signaled a notable change in foreign policy. The very development coincided with an important shift in domestic politics that came to stress balanced development between the eastern and western regions, between the urban and rural areas, and between the rich and poor. China's development strategy continues to impact on its international relations in important ways. In this regard, one may even say that the differences between the Mao and post-Mao eras are minor. At the same time, however, the deepening of China's economic reform and opening to the outside world can have profound and unpredictable repercussions in China's international relations.¹⁵ A changing rhetoric that has a bearing on China's international role is an illustration of such.

In the same year that Hu Jintao began his tenure as the Chairman of the CCP and concurrently the President of the PRC (2003), the rhetoric of

¹⁴ The "Three-Representatives" (the Party always representing the development trend of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people), the trademark of the Jiang Zemin administration, which arguably redefined the ideological principles of the CCP, essentially sought to rally all forces (and resources) to deepen China's economic reforms.

¹⁵ See Barry Naughton, "The Foreign Policy Implications of China's Economic Development Strategy," in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh eds, *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 47-69.

peaceful rise emerged. It was delivered when Prime Minister Wen Jiabao addressed an audience at Harvard University in December 2003. The intellectual property right to the slogan, and the theory that accompanied, it is that of Zheng Bijian, a senior CCP theorist. His formulation of a peacefully rising China is said to have come about as the result of his careful pondering of what he saw as the “pervasive uncertainty and polarized views in the United States about China’s future as a major power.”¹⁶ In the absence of an official definition of peaceful rise, however, the use of the term prompted heated debate in Chinese academic circles.¹⁷ Before long, it was dropped from the speeches of central leaders and the Chinese official media, and replaced by the words “peaceful development” in order to quell misinterpretations, suspicions, and even fear associated with the word “rise” outside of China.¹⁸ Those Chinese scholars who held reservations about the phrase argued that “a peaceful rise” was not attainable because there had not been such historical precedent.¹⁹ There were also understandably concerns that the rhetoric of peaceful rise ran contrary to Deng Xiaoping’s thinking on foreign affairs: namely, lying low.

Lying low and peaceful rise may indeed appear to be contradictory. Yet, the latter expression does, in many ways, bear the imprint of Deng Xiaoping, who, in spite of the political setback in the aftermath of the Tiananmen student movement in 1989, continued to be resolute in reasserting China’s “rightful place in the region and ultimately the world.”²⁰ The personal mission of Deng Xiaoping—born in the twilight days of the last imperial dynasty and having witnessed turbulence in the decades since—parallels in many respects that of Sun Yat-sen, whose “awakening China” spurred on the Republican Revolution (1911) and the ensuing nation building in the early

¹⁶ Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, “The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of ‘Peaceful Rise,’” *The China Quarterly*, No. 190 (June) 2007, pp. 292-93.

¹⁷ See, for example, Yan Xuetong et al., *Zhongguo jueqi jiqi zhanlue* [Rise of China and Strategy] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Wang Jisi, “America in Asia: How Much Does China Care?” *Global Asia*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2007 (Fall), pp. 26-27.

¹⁹ “Minjian waijiao yu heping jueqi” [People-to-people Diplomacy and Peaceful Rise] *People’s Daily Online*, May 21, 2005, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/14641/14644/2514015.html>

²⁰ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, p. xi.

twentieth century.²¹ Both nation builders, Sun Yat-sen and Deng Xiaoping, more than half a century apart, shared a similar “power-nation dream” (*qiangguomeng*). Like “awakening China,” the rhetoric of China’s peaceful rise that is currently much talked about is essentially a redefinition of the relation of the nation vis-à-vis the Western powers. The difference is that today, with the rhetoric of peaceful rise, the power-nation dream is no longer self-lamenting, as it was one century ago. With the current central leadership, it is now about *taking action* (and making things happen). Seen from this angle, peaceful rise is essentially the consequence of lying low that, in the 1990s, aimed at securing a favorable international environment for China’s reform and modernization. Now, as the nation is gaining strength and is ready to be counted, the time has come for China to assert itself—or so the wisdom perceives.

In view of the way today’s world politics is evolving, the strategy of lying low is regarded by government think tanks as no longer suitable to the image of China because “maintaining self-constraint” is increasingly equated with being “irresponsible and opaque.”²² Action means assuming responsibility, that is, engaging in “modest operations” when China’s national interest is at stake; needless to say, the “modest operations” must be exercised with “self-constraint.”²³ This line of argument marked a transformation in the Chinese perception of China as a nation vis-à-vis the world. Seeing that the low-key non-engagement strategy had done little to make “China bashing” go away, as witnessed during the long period of transition during Jiang Zemin’s tenure linking Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao, Chinese government think tanks supported different tactics, lifting the profile of PRC diplomacy by actively responding to foreign critics (such as through publishing government white paper series, sending delegations abroad, promoting tourism, participating in peacekeeping, and holding multilateral talks) while influencing public opinion at home and disseminating the influence of China and Chinese

²¹ For Sun Yat-sen and the nationalist reform, see John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

²² Yuan Peng, “A Harmonious World and China’s New Diplomacy,” *Contemporary International Relations*, No. 3 (2007), p. 10.

²³ *Ibid.*

culture abroad.²⁴ Through this shift of strategy, the role of China is seen to have experienced a transformation from that of a listener to that of a speaker, which, in the words of one CCP Central Party School international strategist, marked a transition in China's international strategic thinking from "inward looking" (evasive) to "outward looking" (engaging).²⁵

Following the same logic, peaceful rise, as some scholar-officials maintain, is arguably more suitable than peaceful development as a way of thinking vis-à-vis guidance for China's foreign relations and for serving its national interests.²⁶ Peaceful rise in this context has direct reference to the power of the nation in relation to the rest of the world, in particular, the big and powerful nations, but has little to do with the nation's GDP *per se*. This way of thinking involves the adjustment of foreign policy toward the world's major powers. As it has been argued, being seen as rising will allow the Chinese government to orient its foreign policy not around the U.S. but to focus more on its neighboring countries; secondly, being seen as rising will oblige China's leaders to assume more responsibilities in international affairs; and thirdly, it will realign China's national interests from centering on the domestic economy to centering on national security. Underscoring the last point is the issue of Taiwan.²⁷

All of the above—policy adjustment (in foreign affairs and domestic development)—is ultimately the manifesto of a new leadership at a time of power consolidation, intended to make an impact both at home and abroad. In this sense, the rhetoric of peaceful rise is a matter of how China views itself, and how China wishes to be viewed by the world at large. It is, above all, a matter of image management. Using a simple metaphor to make a point, as has been alluded to, the time has come for the neighborhood (i.e. the

²⁴ For the role of China's think tanks in foreign policy-making, see Glaser and Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise,'" pp. 307-08. The increasing role of elites in foreign policy-making has been referred to as "corporate pluralization," see Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, pp. 12-19. See also A. Doak Barnett, *The Making of Foreign Policy in China*.

²⁵ "Guanhuai shijie: Zhongguo guoji zhanlue guannian you neixiangxing zhuanwei waixiangxing" [Caring for the World: China's International Strategic Thinking in Transition from Inward-looking to Outward-looking], *People's Daily Online*, December 23, 2005, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/3969424.html>

²⁶ Yan et al., *Zhongguo jueqi jiqi zhanlue*, p. 3.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 4-7.

international community) to acknowledge the “coming of age” of China, and, in turn, for China to adapt to its new role; by this transformation China comes to face, in the words of one elite think tank member, a choice between *inaction* and *action*.²⁸ This image makeover is associated with the growing influence of China, not just as one of the world’s biggest economies, but also as a political broker. The success of the Six-Party Talks, in which China has played a significant part, has been encouraging and also inspiring. Under the circumstances, the rhetoric of peaceful rise was intended to heighten the profile of China and make it counted as a player in international politics.²⁹

Underlying the rhetoric of peaceful rise one sees what has been referred to elsewhere as “centrality in practice” in traditional Chinese diplomatic methods.³⁰ Half a century ago, Mao called on China to “make greater contribution to humanity.”³¹ At the height of his power, the Chairman expected China to become increasingly viewed by others as the “center of world revolution,”³² and at the same time, urged *not* to “impose [our will] on others.”³³ Similarly, when Deng Xiaoping laid down his policy of lying low in international affairs, he too saw a special role for China to play, as a force to contribute to a new international political and economic order. According to his prediction, the world in the future would become multi-polar—with three, four, or more poles—and China would be counted as one pole, one way or another.³⁴ The aspiration to “stand up and be counted” is at the very core of China’s “peaceful rise.” The rhetoric does not necessarily reflect the level

²⁸ Yuan Peng, “Zhongguo jueqi yu Zhongguo de guoji chujing” [China Rising up and Its International Environment], *Xiandai guoji guanxi*, No. 10 (2005), pp. 20-21.

²⁹ *People’s Daily - Overseas Edition* (December 23, 2005).

³⁰ William C. Kirby, “Traditions of Centrality, Authority, and Management in Modern China’s Foreign Relations,” in Robinson and Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, p. 15.

³¹ Mao Tsetung, *Selected works of Mao Tsetung*, Vol. 5 (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1977), p. 331.

³² The CCP came to the aid of revolutions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; see Cheng Yinghong, “Xiang shijie shuchu geming: Wenge zai yafeila de yingxiang chutan” [Exporting Revolution to the World: A Preliminary Study of the Impact of the Cultural Revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin America], http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=5577; See also Guo, *Towards Resolution: China in the Myanmar Issue*.

³³ Zhonggong Zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi ed. *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* [Mao Zedong Manuscripts since the Founding of the Nation], Vol. 12 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998), p. 274

³⁴ Deng, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, p. 353.

of development itself, but as a process by which the gap between China and other world powers is being narrowed. By the mode of rising, China sees itself as an alternative balance of power. Accordingly, to play a role, but not to dominate (or impose, in Mao's language), is a Chinese doctrine, which echoes, in a sense, the Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean*.³⁵

To maintain the image that China seeks to project to the world, a policy of different wording was adopted in domestic and foreign affairs, two years after the peaceful rise rhetoric was dropped from official use. On two important occasions—the Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference in August 2006 and the Sixth Plenum of the 16th CCP Congress two months later—Hu Jintao raised in his speeches a common theme of harmony: “harmonious world” and “harmonious society.” On the earlier occasion regarding foreign policy, Hu stressed peace, development, and cooperation.³⁶ These three words came to form one package: *peace* is about image, encompassing the existing principles of Peaceful Co-existence and a newly formulated win-win principle, opposition to hegemony, and the ideal of a harmonious world; *development* directly concerns national interest, entailing the drive to be rich and strong, as well as the concept of modernization; while *cooperation* refers to responsibility or a self-perceived role in matters concerning the Chinese diaspora, neighboring countries, and world politics. All these elements are interlocking, and together delineate the whole of China's foreign policy.

Regardless of the fact that the new image may be considered controversial, the rhetoric of peaceful rise is essentially a continuation of lying low should one take into account the context wherein the strategy of “lying low” had been formulated in the first place. Given the size of the country, its diversity and disparity, the utmost concern of the Chinese government is continued development, and for that a favorable environment—external and internal—is most desirable. Under the circumstances, China sees that competition or any form of conflict would not be in China's best interest. To avert any

³⁵ *The Doctrine of the Mean* is believed to have been composed by Confucius's grandson, and its purpose is to illustrate the usefulness of “the Golden Mean” to gain perfect virtue.

³⁶ “Zhongyang waishi gongzuo huiyi zaijing juxing” [The Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference in Beijing], *Xinhua Net*, August 23, 2006, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-08/23/content_4999294.htm

undesirable situation, China has advocated and deliberately seeks to maintain international relations based on a win-win principle. Conflict aversion naturally compels China to be careful in stressing its intention not to seek domination, while differentiating itself from the world superpower. Bearing a distinct Cold War ideology, there had been a time when China staunchly claimed its opposition to hegemony and had aligned itself with the Third World. In the post-Mao reform era, China upheld the same line that “China will always side with the Third World countries, but never seek hegemony over them or serve as their leader.” This should not, however, be read as an ideological statement; rather it was simply a policy underscored by pragmatism. As Deng Xiaoping further explained, “There is nothing to be gained by playing that role, and we shall lose all our initiatives” (by playing a leader role).³⁷ This has hitherto been the basic policy of China’s foreign relations. Yet such measured disposition does not mean that China will simply do nothing in international affairs. The contribution that China can, and will, make, as Deng so envisioned, is to “help promote establishment of a new international political and economic order.”³⁸

On a different level, the rhetoric of China’s rise seems to have strongly encouraged members of the public to flaunt their newfound wealth, drawing the attention of the world to the large number of Chinese tourists flocking to Southeast Asia and European countries. Their somewhat boorish image (as reported in the media, Chinese as well as foreign) would almost certainly not be what the rhetoric of peaceful rise had intended. Reflecting on the role of China vis-à-vis the talk of a “China threat,” the architect of the term “peaceful rise,” Zheng Bijian, urged the Party and the public that the problem of demonizing China may derive in part from hostility toward communism, but may also in part be blamed on the behavior of Chinese people themselves. To solve this problem, the CCP theorist stressed the need to elevate the power of Chinese civilization as a way to improve the image of China.³⁹ “Elevating the nation’s soft power” was duly raised by Hu Jintao at

³⁷ Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan*, p. 363.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Zheng Bijian, “Zhongguo hepingjueqi jinchengzhong mianlinzhe sandatiao zhan” [Three Challenges Facing China in the Process of Peaceful Rise], *People’s Daily Online*, April 10, 2006, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/30178/4283438.html>

the National Writers' Convention in 2006 as "a grave and realistic task that confronts all Chinese."⁴⁰ It was reiterated at the CCP's 17th National Congress in 2007, which stressed: "Culture has become a more and more important source of national cohesion and creativity and a factor of growing significance in the competition in overall national strength."⁴¹ In this context, peaceful rise entails the revitalization of civilization (*wenming fuxing*).⁴² The building of Chinese soft power has occurred at the juncture of U.S. soft power declining as a consequence of the Iraq War. The medium that China has chosen to boost its soft power is, interestingly, akin to that of the American one of through culture—albeit not in the form of moving pictures,⁴³ but rather in the form of language teaching that has the name of Confucius written all over it.

⁴⁰ *Guangming Daily* (Xinhua, April 10, 2007).

⁴¹ "Hu Jintao Calls for Enhancing 'Soft Power' of Chinese Culture," *People's Daily Online*, October 15, 2007, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90002/92169/92187/6283148.html>

⁴² Zheng Bijian, "Zhongguo hepingjueqi: Shixian wenmingfuxing he qiangguomeng" [China's Peaceful Rise: Realizing the Power-Nation Dream of Civilization Revival], *People's Daily*, June 14, 2006, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/4472048.html>

⁴³ In the statement from 1938 by the US Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association, motion pictures were said to be "the most conspicuous of all American exports... [They are] demonstrably the single greatest factors in the Americanization of the world and as such fairly may be called the most important and significant of America's exported products." Quoted in Mats Jönsson, *Film och historik: Historisk Hollywoodfilm 1960-2000* [Film and history: Historical Hollywood Films 1960-2000] (Lund: KFS, 2004), p. xv.

Building Soft Power

Cultural exchange has long been a principal form of public diplomacy. In today's world of power politics, soft power building is increasingly gaining currency as an alternative force to the use of military might in international affairs. In Chinese media and academic circles, soft power has been a hot topic for some time. A widely cited source is Harvard Professor Joseph S. Nye's book entitled *Soft power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). The book has enjoyed a generally positive reception in China, because it raised the profile of China and asserted the nation's growing influence in the world today. The international interest in, and recognition of, China's role in the global economy and international politics appear to coincide with a Chinese government rethink of the image of China as a world power in tune with its reputation as an ancient civilization. This development gives pause for reflection upon a number of issues, internal as well as external.

The soft power that China is seeking to build draws on its cultural heritage (often spoken of in terms of a 5,000-year civilization). At times, it has been treated as a heavy burden, but at present it is being hailed as a huge reservoir of great and positive assets. In modern Chinese history, since the May Fourth Movement of 1919, tradition and culture have been repeatedly interacting with state politics of social change. At the time when China felt the most vulnerable and was experiencing volatility, politically and economically, culture and tradition tended to bear the brunt of attacks, being blamed by radical reformers and advocates for socio-political change as standing as obstacles in the way of efforts to build a strong and modern China (in terms of development in science and technology). Conversely, when China gains strength, as it is now doing for almost the very first time in modern history, a sense of cultural pride ascends. The current revitalization of traditions amid the rhetoric of peaceful rise offers a rare revisionist view of a political China vis-à-vis its cultural heritage.

China's economic reform (opening-up in terms of market economy, foreign investment, and trade) went hand-in-hand with the development of cultural liberalism. In the 1980s, anti-traditionalist and Neo-Confucianist factions jointly fanned what was known at the time as "cultural fever" in an attempt to search for an alternative intellectual framework to replace the official ideology, namely, Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought.⁴⁴ Bearing a variety of labels (conservative and liberal), this intellectual movement was primarily Beijing-based, and best described as an amalgamation of cultural and political elites. The height of this cultural liberalism was marked by the critically acclaimed broadcast of a six-episode TV documentary entitled *River Elegy*. With highly symbolic images (the Dragon, the Great Wall, the Yellow River), the theme of the documentary challenged the relevance of what was termed a "dying Chinese traditional culture" and blamed it for retarding the process of China's modernization.⁴⁵ The crackdown on the student movement in Tiananmen in 1989 ended the "cultural fever" that had by then prospered for a full decade, and the sole survivor of the assorted cultural groups rallying under the banner of liberalism was the China Cultural Academy, created and managed by Neo-Confucian intellectuals distributed across a wide spectrum in China's higher learning establishments. Some of these cultural elites became involved in the work of the Confucius Foundation, a high profile organization devoted to promoting Confucianism.

The Confucius Foundation was established in 1984 (in the same year as the China Cultural Academy) in the birthplace of the Sage himself, in Ji'nan, Shandong province. Its founding members included, notably, veterans with backgrounds in the communist party sectors of propaganda, international party-to-party liaisons, and united front work, as well as in the teaching and researching of subjects such as Marxism-Leninism and philosophy at elite universities. At an ideological level, an organization in the name of Confucius clearly filled the void created by the disappearance of Marxist teachings from public life. In post-Mao China, Confucianism, as an alternative ideology, does not seem in any way to contradict the one-party

⁴⁴ Edward Gu, "Cultural Intellectuals and the Politics of the Cultural Public Space in Communist China (1979-1989): A Case Study of Three Intellectual Groups," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (May/1999), pp. 389-431.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

system. On the contrary, it is compatible with the existing political system in important ways. On a practical level, the image of Confucius served the interest of foreign relations, or the united front, in the course of regaining sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macao, appealing, in particular, to Chinese scholars and Chinese communities outside of the mainland. The responsible superior for the Confucius Foundation is the Ministry of Culture. The organization draws funding jointly from the Chinese government and NGOs as well as from Chinese entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and beyond.⁴⁶

Exactly twenty years after the Confucius Foundation was founded, the program for the creation of a global network of Confucius Institutes was launched in Beijing in 2004. This is a very different program of cultural exchanges from the Confucius Foundation. Rather than targeting the elite, the Confucius Institutes promote and engage in education at a popular level. The institutes operate under the auspices of the Office of Chinese Language Council International—*Hanban*—in Beijing, and serve unreservedly the purpose of public diplomacy. Though a relatively new organization, because *Hanban* is well connected, coordinated, and financed, its operation is extremely dynamic. In formal terms, the Confucius Institute is said to be modeled on similar cultural organizations promoting cultural exchange abroad (namely, the Goethe Institute of Germany, the British Council, and Alliance Française). In practice, the Confucius Institute opts for a wide range of arrangements (in some cases, university to university, in others, government to government), and there is considerable flexibility in funding and operation. Generally speaking, there are three forms: direct *Hanban* involvement and investment, joint financing with foreign agencies, and operation with special permission from *Hanban*.⁴⁷ United in one purpose, the Confucius Institutes of various arrangements aim to reach out in order to promote a better understanding of China and win goodwill in the world.

The first Confucius Institute was inaugurated in Seoul in 2004. Since then, institutes bearing the name of the Chinese Sage have multiplied—on average,

⁴⁶ PRC Ministry of Culture, http://www.ccnt.gov.cn/whst/stml/mschwh/t20060120_22960.htm

⁴⁷ “Zhongguo Kongzi xueyuan zai Eluosi fangxing weiai [China’s Confucius Institutes in Russia in the Ascendant], *China Daily*, July 6, 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqzg/2007-07/06/content_911869.htm

every four days a new one is established.⁴⁸ The latest announcement has it that by December 2007 China had established 210 Confucius Institutes in over 60 countries (for details, see Appendix).⁴⁹ Some 60 Chinese universities and organizations are involved in promoting Confucian culture abroad by means of Confucius Institutes.⁵⁰ In only a handful of cases may one university have been involved in the setting up of a dozen or more Confucius Institutes abroad (for instance, the Beijing Foreign Languages University), whereas in a majority of cases, each university may only be responsible for managing the Confucius Institute at one or two foreign universities. The selection of foreign universities seems to be random. The personal contacts of Chinese visiting scholars clearly play a role, and existing exchange programs between Chinese and foreign universities are often instrumental in facilitating ties. There is, nevertheless, a distinctive regional emphasis. Yunnan University, Yunnan Normal University, and Yunnan University for Minority Nationalities, for instance, have facilitated the establishment of the Confucius Institute in Bangladesh (North-South University), Thailand (Chiang Mai University), and Sri Lanka (University of Kelaniya), respectively. Confucius Institutes in the Central Asian countries have been primarily sponsored by Lanzhou University (in China's northwestern province of Qinghai) and Xi'an Foreign Languages University. The Xinjiang Education Department is planning to undertake the same task in countries in Central Asia and West Asia.⁵¹ In many cases, Chinese embassies and consulates offer to serve as the venue for signing contracts.

Due to differing circumstances under which initiatives arise, some contracts may take years to work out, whereas others are more straightforward.

⁴⁸ "Kongzi xueyuan yingxiangli dute: siqianwan yangren xuexi Hanyu" [Special Influence of Confucius Institutes: Forth Million Foreigners Learning Chinese], *Zhongguowang* (March 20, 2007), http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2007-03/20/content_7987819.htm

⁴⁹ "Kongzi xueyuan da 210 suo fenbu zai 64 ge guojia he diqu" [The Number of Confucius Institutes Reaching 210 across 64 Countries], *Xinhua Net*, December 7, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/edu/2007-12/07/content_7213276.htm

⁵⁰ *People's Daily* – Overseas Edition, May 28, 2007.

⁵¹ "Zhongguo zheng choujian zhongya xiya guojia Kongzi xueyuan" [China Preparing to Establish Confucius Institutes in Central and Western Asian Countries], *Xinhua Net*, January 24, 2007, china.com.cn/07/02/21; "Xinjiang jiangzai Hasakesitan dengguo choujian Kongzi xueyuan" [China Planning to Establish Confucius Institutes in Kazakhstan and the Neighboring Countries], *Zhongxinshe*, January 31, 2007, china.com.cn/07/02/21

Normally, the Chinese side provides funds to launch the operation, in addition to sending one or two language teachers. In Southeast Asia and Africa, investment from China in Confucius Institutes is notably larger than in Europe and other developed countries.⁵² Services that Confucius Institutes offer, in addition to Chinese language teaching, are said to include language teacher training, the supply of textbooks, and providing information about China's education, culture, economy, and society, as well as facilitating research on China.⁵³ Chinese language teachers sent through the *Hanban* and foreign teachers of the Chinese language trained by the *Hanban* every year number *not* in the hundreds but well over a thousand (and even more). Depending on the nature of contracts, some Chinese universities may offer more cultural activities than others. The language teachers are chosen within individual universities under contract, and those who are sent abroad to teach the Chinese language are salaried by the *Hanban*. Aside from an extra income, the real incentive for the Chinese universities to undertake Confucius Institute projects is to boost their domestic academic credentials, since "international exchanges" (frequencies and activities) serve as an index on the basis of which China's national key-point higher learning institutes are evaluated.

The success of the Confucius Institutes abroad (if only measured by virtue of their sheer number) has greatly elevated the profile of their supervisory body. In April 2007, the Confucius Institutes HQ was inaugurated. Its head is Chen Zhili, concurrently director of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (*Hanban*) and a member of the State Council. This high profile leadership speaks for the importance of the Confucius Institutes in government work. The *Hanban* has in the past years launched relentless campaigns to propagate its great achievements in reaching out to the world through cultural exchanges. It has been claimed that as many as 100 universities in South Korea have Chinese language classes with over one

⁵² The Confucius Institute of Nehru University, for instance, received US\$50,000 from China as a start-up fund, in addition to a multi-media language teaching facility. "Zhongguo xiang nihelu daxue tigong Kongzi xueyuan qidong jijin" [China Providing Nehru University with Funds to Start the Confucius Institute], *Xinhua Net*, March 23, 2007, http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2007-03/23/content_8005370.htm

⁵³ *China Daily*, July 6, 2007.

million people learning Chinese; in Japan, Chinese has become the second largest foreign language next to English with over two million people studying the Chinese language; in the UK, students enrolled in Chinese language programs have doubled during the period 2002-2005; in France, enthusiasm for learning Chinese is growing by leaps and bounds; in the U.S., meanwhile, middle school Chinese language programs tripled between 2003 and 2006, and over 40 U.S. states have applied to establish Confucius Institutes.⁵⁴ In all of this, one Nordic country with a small population stands out, having been in so far as hailed for producing something worthy of admiration; it is said that the Swedes, normally keen on protecting their own language and even guarded against English and German, or at least according to the *Hanban*, have shown great enthusiasm in learning Chinese and have admirably opened their arms to the Confucius Institute.⁵⁵ The *Hanban* has set a target of establishing altogether 500 Confucius Institutes worldwide by the year 2010; by then, according to its own estimation, the number of people learning the Chinese language outside China will have reached 100 million.⁵⁶ An internet-based Confucius Institute has already been scheduled. To “polish the plate of Confucius,” the *Hanban* plans to dispatch a delegation of high profile scholars to tour the world giving lectures about Chinese culture.⁵⁷

The popularity of the Chinese language seems to have grown in tandem with China’s economic development, and it has stimulated what one may call an “awakening of language consciousness,” prompting a rethinking of China’s role in relation to its cultural heritage. Confucius Institutes around the world represent a coordinated effort by government, educational establishments,

⁵⁴ “Kongzi xueyuan gei shijie yige wennuan jiji de Zhongguo” [The Confucius Institute: Offering the World a Warm and Positive China], *Guangming Daily*, April 10, 2007, http://www.gmw.cn/01gmrb/2007-04/10/content_587585.htm

⁵⁵ This particular model refers to the Nordic Confucius Institute affiliated with Stockholm University, see http://www.hanban.edu.cn/en_hanban/content.php?id=2470

⁵⁶ “Hanyu quanqiu: Kongzi xueyuan cheng Zhongguo ruanshili zuiliang pinpai” [Global Popularity Chinese Language: Confucius Institutes Becoming the Brand Value of China’s Soft Power], *Guangming Daily*, April 10, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2007-04/10/content_5955253_2.htm

⁵⁷ “Guojia Hanban: Haiwai chengban Kongzi xueyuan jianshe chengxian jiasudu” [The State Hanban: Accelerating Establishment of Confucius Institutes Abroad], *China Daily Online*, August 13, 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqzg/2007-08/13/content_6024699.htm

entrepreneurs, and individuals to revive and raise the awareness of Chinese culture commensurate with that of a great power. Those who are promoting Chinese language teaching abroad believe that the popularity of a language corresponds to a nation's status in the international community. Hence, the trend of an increasing number of foreigners speaking Chinese becomes an indicator of China's rising soft power. The recent election of an Australian prime minister who speaks Chinese has been a tremendous boost to the celebration of China's soft power,⁵⁸ and it may indeed give an extra push for the call to "internationalize the Chinese language" in anticipation of seeing, ultimately, Chinese replace English as a global language.⁵⁹ This "cultural revolution" seems to have made the name of Confucius bigger than that of Mao, who was himself a product of the anti-traditionalist May Fourth Movement, and whose rule, ironically, was based on the destruction of Confucianism. However, perhaps to Mao's own profound consternation, his own rule never quite managed to shed all its vestiges of the Confucian past.

The founding of Confucius Institutes is, by and large, an image management project, the purpose of which is to promote the greatness of Chinese culture while at the same time counterattacking public opinion that maintains the presence of a "China threat" in the international community. The drive to build soft power, as reported, also includes dispatching language teachers to foreign countries,⁶⁰ posting career diplomats abroad who are younger and more professional, increasing foreign aid and investment abroad, promoting China studies world-wide, and intensifying trade, in addition to sending young international aid volunteers (modeled on the American Peace Corps) to developing countries in Asia and Africa, while providing scholarships for

⁵⁸ The so-called "Kevin Rudd phenomenon" has been hailed as a positive reaction to the rise of China. See "Lu Kewen xianxiang zheshe Zhongguo yingxiangli buduan shangsheng" [The Kevin Rudd Phenomenon Reflects the Ascending Influence of China], *Xinhua Net*, November 26, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2007-11/26/content_7144970.htm

⁵⁹ *Guangming Daily*, April 10, 2007

⁶⁰ The number of volunteer language teachers in 2007 grew from 1,000 in 2006 to 2,000. See "Xinyipi Zhongguo Hanyu jiaoshi zhiyuanzhe fu Feilübin renjiao" [A New Batch of Chinese Volunteer Language Teachers Heading for Philippines], *Xinhua Net*, May 30, 2007, http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2007-05/30/content_8322814.htm

Africans to study in China.⁶¹ More coordinated efforts to promote Confucianism are also underway in China. In 2006, the CCP Central Propaganda Department entrusted the Confucius Foundation with collecting samples of artistic renderings of Confucius to be used as official portraits of the Sage, prescribing specific character features such as “moderate but strict, authoritative but not fierce, reverent and peaceful.”⁶² Reportedly, the Confucius Foundation has recently signed a deal with the Shenzhen-based Phoenix multimedia group to produce a 100-episode cartoon series of Confucius’s life, as a drive to promote Confucian values worldwide. The undertaking is aimed to promote a more popular image of Confucius other than the “standard” and “official” portrait of him released a year earlier by the Confucius Foundation (see illustration on the next page). The release of the cartoon series is expected to coincide, in 2009, with the 2,560th anniversary of Confucius’s birth.⁶³ As the fever of elevating soft power continues to rise, the world may well see Confucius being “paraded” at the opening of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.⁶⁴ Fanfares aside, the image of Confucius and the Confucian values promoted have come to represent an ideal consistent with the central leadership’s pursuit of harmonious society, which forms a component of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

⁶¹ “Zhong ruanshili waijiao zhanlue chansheng feifan chengjiu” [Remarkable Achievements of China’s Soft Power Diplomacy], *Xinhua Net*, October 20, 2006, http://city.china.cn/china/txt/2006-10/20/content_224915.htm

⁶² “Zhongxuanbu pizhun Kongji jinjinhui zhengji Kongzi biao zhunxiang [With the Approval of the CCP Central Propaganda Department the Confucius Foundation Soliciting Official Portrait of Confucius], *Visionshow.com*, February 24, 2006, <http://www.visionshow.com/news/play/20070430/223.html>

⁶³ “Baiji daxing dongman ‘Kongzi’ zai Jinan juxing qianyue yishi” [Contract of 100-episode Cartoon Series of Confucius Signed in Jinan], *Xinhua Net*, November 10, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newmedia/2007-11/10/content_7043284.htm

⁶⁴ “08 Aoyunhui gaibugai ‘ba Kongzi taichulai?’” [Should or Should not Confucius Be Paraded during the 2008 Olympics?], *China Daily Online*, August 10, 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqzg/2007-08/10/content_6021727_2.htm

Official Portrait of Confucius



Source: *People's Daily*, June 15, 2006, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/15/eng20060615_274317.html

More on “Chinese Characteristics”

The operation of the Confucius Institutes, though different in organization, follows the same logic and serves a purpose similar to its two forerunners; namely, the Confucius Foundation (under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture) and the China Culture Academy (initially affiliated with Beijing University), which were established almost simultaneously two decades ago by high-profile Chinese professors and cultural elites, with some espousing conservatism and others liberalism. These establishments highlight an interesting development accentuating Chinese-ness, a phenomenon that may well be analyzed through the prism of the quintessence of Chinese culture, as some have observed on both sides of the Taiwan Strait in conceptions such as the PRC’s “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and the Republic of China on Taiwan’s claim to be the “repository of Chinese culture” (though in the latter case, the recent de-Sinicization attempt by the authorities on Taiwan would have undermined that rhetoric).⁶⁵ Economic reform under Deng Xiaoping raised the slogan of building socialism “with Chinese characteristics.” The current development rhetoric of peaceful rise has taken on the same mantle. Clearly, there is consistency in all of this, the importance of which lies not in socialism *per se* but in Chinese characteristics. The characteristics are, then again, not about what the Chinese people identify themselves with, but rather a link that enables the state to reach out to society. The way in which Chinese characteristics are propagated is at the core of pragmatism vis-à-vis ideology in policy-making in China today.

As has been observed, there is disconnect between the formal ideology and specific foreign policies pursued by the Chinese government, to a point

⁶⁵ Kirby, “Traditions of Centrality, Authority, and Management in Modern China’s Foreign Relations,” p. 15.

where the gap between rhetoric and action has often been a large one.⁶⁶ This, however, does not mean that ideology has ceased to matter; rather, the issue is that ideology in flux is itself bifurcated in formal and informal terms—the latter entailing the cultural component that underpins the formal process of policy-making. Such a phenomenon is by no means specific to the PRC; rather it has been regarded as part of the enduring practice of traditional Chinese statecraft predating the PRC.⁶⁷ The informal ideology is said to have weighed heavily as a perceptual element, which constitutes, in a manner of speaking, to be “part of a generic Chinese nationalism rooted in a sense of Chinese identity that developed historically over a very long period.”⁶⁸ The Chinese approach to international politics is rooted in a distinct moral aspect of foreign policy, the formation of which draws extensively on traditional Chinese wisdom; this particular cultural aspect of foreign policy-making, as noted, puts the emphasis on collective goodwill.⁶⁹ Mao Zedong’s conception of the Three Worlds, and China’s consistent opposition to world hegemony both fit this profile.⁷⁰

In the early period of economic reform, Deng Xiaoping laid down as a basic state policy that China will always identify with the Third World, but cannot and will not become the leader of the Third World even though some developing countries would like China to do so.⁷¹ The peaceful rise debate raised anew the Third World thesis, and it was reiterated that China would never seek hegemony, in contrast to the existing world superpower.⁷² Shunning the role of world leader has little bearing on China’s economic strength; it rather reflects China’s relations to other countries in political

⁶⁶ Levine, “Perception and Ideology in Chinese Foreign Policy,” in Robinson and Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, pp. 30-46.

⁶⁷ Kirby, “Traditions of Centrality, Authority, and Management in Modern China’s Foreign Relations.”

⁶⁸ Levine, “Perception and Ideology in Chinese Foreign Policy,” p. 43.

⁶⁹ Wang Jisi, “International Relations Theory and the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy: A Chinese Perspective,” in Robinson and Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, pp. 481-505.

⁷⁰ The CCP Chairman saw the United States and the Soviet Union as making up the first world and the “in-between” countries of Japan, Europe, and Canada the second. Asia, with the exception of Japan, belonged to the third world, as did all of Africa and Latin America.

⁷¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping nianpu 1975-1997* [Chronology of Deng Xiaoping’s Life 1975-1997], Vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2004), p. 841.

⁷² “Minjian waijiao yu heping jueqi” [People-to-people Diplomacy and Peaceful Rise], *People’s Daily Online*, May 21, 2004, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/14641/14644/2514015.html>

terms. Some have argued that the reason for China's opposition to hegemony lies in its modern history of being subjected to the Western colonial powers in the nineteenth century.⁷³ China's experience of colonization has indeed been regarded as having played a significant part in foreign relations for both the CCP (communists) as well as its predecessor the KMT (Nationalists).⁷⁴ History aside, the Third World thesis and anti-hegemonic stance seem to have more to do with China's present international standing. As one government think tank has analyzed: "By rising, it means that China is no longer a developing country, and has joined the ranks of the developed countries. But, due to different values, China is likely to be rejected by the Western powers currently dominating the world system, hence remaining in limbo; under the circumstances, China's peaceful rise must not leave the framework of the developing countries."⁷⁵ Underlying the Third World thesis is, more significantly, pragmatism, which has everything to do with national interests. Today, China's cooperation (investment and trade) with developing countries has little to do with anti-imperialism, but is aimed at securing resources much needed for the country's continued development and at the same time safe-guarding national security; the Third World thesis thus allows China to stand by and be close to those of which some may prefer to call "pariah states" (i.e. North Korea, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, and Burma/Myanmar).⁷⁶ As such, the Third World thesis demonstrates a political ideology with distinct Chinese characteristics.

Ideology is culturally embedded, and cultural heritage in turn enriches ideology. Without a specific cultural base, ideology cannot survive. Confucianism constitutes the cornerstone of the quintessence of Chinese culture, and the Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean* finds expression in both the strategy of "lying low" and the rhetoric of "peaceful rise." Similarly, in the domestic development strategy, the very doctrine has been translated into "building socialism with Chinese characteristics," rephrased at the CCP 17th National Congress as "*developing* socialism with Chinese characteristics."

⁷³ Glaser and Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise,'" p. 295.

⁷⁴ William C. Kirby, "Traditions of Centrality, Authority, and Management in Modern China's Foreign Relations."

⁷⁵ Yan et al., *Zhongguo jueqi jiqi zhanlue*, p. 239.

⁷⁶ Yuan Peng, "A Harmonious World and China's New Diplomacy," pp. 12-13.

Socialism with Chinese characteristics is, in effect, a cultural approach to development entangled with politically sensitive issues. It, on the one hand, allows the Chinese leadership to circumvent ideological pitfalls by pursuing development that may be viewed as unorthodox socialism, while on the other, it generates a less harsh image of socialism associated with a particular rule at odds with the capitalist world. More importantly, perhaps, the reiteration of Chinese characteristics resonates with the overseas Chinese population and communities, a public diplomacy requisite, so to speak.

The *Doctrine of the Mean* is all about balance. Depending on the circumstances, the need to lie low and the aspiration to rise both seek a balance between internal and external forces. Hence, the rhetoric of peaceful rise embodies two layers of meaning—one with reference to becoming strong and taking responsibility, basically a question of external image, and the other with emphasis on balanced development, essentially appealing to the domestic audience. The striving for balance underscores an interesting development amid the public debate on China's rise, that is, the so-called schools of Liberalism versus Populism (or the New Left). The former advocates market economy, private ownership, globalization, democracy, human rights, and individualism; the latter is basically anti-capitalist with an emphasis on social justice and national interest. The center of the debate between the two schools is the issue of “linking up China with the international track.”⁷⁷ In the view of the populists/conservatives/nationalists, the world ought to meet China half way, and some even go so far as to call on China to “propagate its own culture by sending missionaries around the world, promote the reforms of the Gregorian calendar [*sic*], and entice more and more foreign countries to celebrate Chinese New Year.”⁷⁸ The Confucius Institutes, it can be argued, amount to a step in that direction.

The Liberalism-Populism debate highlights what one may phrase as the impact of “cultural revisionism” on policy-making. It is effectively a backlash against the cultural liberalism that had previously embraced the influx of Hong Kong and Taiwanese pop culture. The fervent public

⁷⁷ Hongying Wang, “Linking up with the international track’: What’s in a slogan?” *The China Quarterly*, No. 189 (March 2007), pp. 1-23.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

consumption of imported culture from overseas and assorted variants of vulgar entertainment permeating public media as well as performing arts in mainland China in the course of economic reforms have inevitably been seen by some cultural elites as an indication of weakness in the influence and transmission of home-grown culture. As China has gained sufficient strength in national economic terms, the propaganda sector is becoming increasingly troubled by the incompatibility of the cultural influence that China, in its view, ought to have as a world player; revitalization of (Chinese) culture and the transmission of (traditional Chinese) culture are therefore raised to the level of a matter of national survival.⁷⁹ This trend of cultural revisionism has taken a number of forms, including the creation of popular culture out of Chinese classics, the invention of traditions, and the restoration/rectification of various cultural symbols.

The creation of popular culture out of Chinese classics is a campaign to restore traditional values, which is essentially a public education program, spearheaded by a professor from Beijing Normal University, Yu Dan. Her book *Notes on Reading the Analects* became a bestseller in the winter of 2006-2007, conspicuously on display along with the concurrent sale of Jiang Zemin's *Selected Works* in major bookstores in the national capital. Reportedly, three million copies were sold within a period of four months.⁸⁰ Public appetite for the classic teaching of high morals seems to have filled an ideological vacuum ensuing the disappearance of Mao Zedong Thought from the everyday lives of Chinese people. As mammon literally became the new god for many striving to get rich, those who have made little money turned to the teaching of traditional morals for comfort. Uneven development in the course of economic reform has enlarged the gap between the rich and the poor, and fed unrest in society and growing anxiety among the masses, ultimately calling for restoration of not just order but also morality. The mission of Yu Dan has won support from the public, but has equally met with criticism, mostly from her own academic counterparts. Whether or not

⁷⁹ "Kaizhan 'ruanshili' yu duiwai chuanbo de yanjiu" [Developing Research on 'Soft Power' and Overseas Dissemination], *Zhongguowang*, July 14, 2006, http://www.china.com.cn/zhuantizoo5/txt/2006-07/14/content_6275823.htm

⁸⁰ "Anxiety, Emptiness Fuel Confucius Craze in China," Reuters quoted in *China Daily*, May 9, 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-05/09/content_868446.htm

the restoration of traditional values will have any merit in the reconstruction of moral and social order, the controversy over the new reading of the Confucian *Analects* does reflect the need for policy revision regarding economic development, which has come to emphasize balance.

The celebration of Confucius's birth is another coordinated effort to invent traditions for the sake of cultural revitalization. It has been proposed that the twenty-eighth of September be officially designated the birthday of the Sage, in the same way that Christmas is celebrated by Christians around the world.⁸¹ Coinciding with the launching of cultural offensives in foreign relations in the name of Confucius at the national level, the local government in Confucius's birthplace is frenetically promoting local tourism exploiting the name Confucius.⁸² Shandong province boasts to be the birthplace of many sages: Confucius, Mencius, and Sun-tse (Sun Tzu, Sunzi). These sages, or rather their names, all have special purposes to serve today, notwithstanding the lapse of millennia since their lifetimes. And in the pursuit of a market economy driven by relentless consumption needs, they are turned by the public media of all forms into brand value commodities. The creation of a so-called "brand value culture" (*pinpai wenhua*) is part of China's soft power building. Aside from Confucius, there are the Great Wall, Giant Panda, Peking Opera, Olympic champions, film stars, spaceships, the Three-Gorges Dam, and all that dressed up in "Chinese characteristics."⁸³ Image management has meanwhile placed the "dragon"—the symbol of China—under scrutiny. Reportedly, there have been proposals for the Chinese translation of the English word "dragon" to be phonetic so that it becomes *juegeng*, while the Chinese word "*long*" in turn is to retain its phonetic form in English to become the neologism "loong;" such terminological rectification, as argued, will allow people to disassociate their

⁸¹ "Zhuanjia tiyi ba Kongzi de danchen 9.28 dingwei Zhongguo shengdanri" [Experts in Favor of Designating September 28, Birthday of Confucius, as China's Christmas], *New Beijing Daily*, September 29, 2006, <http://www.investchina.com.cn/market/news/446990.htm>

⁸² "Shandong zairi litui pinpai lüyou xiangmu: Kongzi wenhua zhilü" [Experiencing Confucian Culture: Shandong Province Promoting Brand Value Tourism in Japan], *Zhongguowang*, March 30, 2007, http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2007-03/30/content_8035305.htm

⁸³ *Zhongguowang*, July 14, 2006.

possible negative image of the dragon and China.⁸⁴ The Confucius Institutes that have found home in foreign countries are seen to be turning China into a “benign dragon” (*loong*).⁸⁵

Academic discourse can be bizarre at times, but it seldom has any immediate impact on policy-making. There is little doubt, however, that China’s soft power building has indeed injected an ever greater dose of culture into official political ideology. Notably, China People’s University, established specifically to train CCP cadres and devoted to teaching Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought after the founding of PRC, now has a Confucius Research Center and has published *The National Essence Reader* (*guoxue*) 365—a selection of Confucian classics with annotations, illustrations, as well as an English translation.⁸⁶ This alone would indeed suggest increasing cultural components in statecraft as a general practice. As ideology, adherence to the Chinese classics is far more effective than naked political slogans and so more likely to strike a chord with the populace at large. The revitalization of its ancient civilization raises the profile of China. Compatible with Chinese characteristics are the ideals of harmony and balance. The current building of a harmonious society, the pursuit of balanced development, and the reiteration of opposition to hegemony are all bundled into one big package of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics. This again bears out that domestic development and foreign policy-making are interlocking, and mutually effective.

⁸⁴ *Beijing Youth Daily* (November 21, 2007); “Chinese Dragon Needs Renaming to Remove the Possible Misunderstandings?” *People’s Daily Online*, December 6, 2007, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90782/90873/6316326.html>

⁸⁵ “Kongzi xueyuan rang Zhongguo chengwei ‘youshan de long’” [Confucius Institutes Turning China into A Benign Dragon], *Xinhua Online*, December 5, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/overseas/2007-12/05/content_7207393.htm

⁸⁶ *New Beijing Daily*, September 29, 2006.

Conclusion

The end of the Cold War saw the unequivocal ascendancy of Western power (in both hard and soft forms), with China withstanding a severe challenge in international relations that tested not only the country's political system but also the survival of the nation in terms of development and modernization. If the Iraq War marked the turning point where the soft power of the Western world began to descend, it also meant opportunities for China. The change would bring a sense of relief, if not triumph, in that, as one Chinese government think tank has put it, the world order is moving from uni-polar to multi-polar. In this multi-polar world, China, along with India, Russia, and Brazil, is seen as rising to balance the existing superpower (i.e. the United States).⁸⁷ In this fluctuating process, China's foreign policy is maturing. From lying low to peaceful rise, China's strategic thinking has turned from inward-looking to outward-looking. Underneath the change, there is consistency and continuity, in the process of which the CCP has reinvented itself as a ruling party by incorporating Chinese traditional values into its political ideology.⁸⁸ China's policy to augment its influence, and yet not to dominate, has finally found expression in its soft power building. At this critical juncture, public diplomacy that bears the brand of Confucius has come to serve the national interest of continued development. The image engineered is intended to interact with a world nervous about China's fast-growing economy, and simultaneously, the changing order of international relations.

⁸⁷ Pang Zhongying, "Weihu he suzao zhixu jiei and shiyong liliang" [Creating and Maintaining Order, Accumulating and Exercising Strength], *Xiandai guoji guanxi*, No. 10 (2005), p. 22.

⁸⁸ For an in-depth analysis of the CCP reinventing itself as a ruling party by manipulating discourses to meet new challenges of development, see Michael Schoenhals and Xiaolin Guo, *Cadres and Discourse in the People's Republic of China*, The Institute for Security & Development Policy, Asia Paper (August 2007).

What is particularly interesting about the Confucius Institute undertaking is the much-talked-about soft power, the acquirement and enhancement of which, ironically, puts China all the more under the spotlight. This is the dilemma that China will have to face for some time to come, as the country is becoming more and more integrated into the world economy and more involved in global politics. China has always maintained, since the beginning of the post-Mao reforms, that it will follow its own path of development. The adherence to Chinese characteristics allows the Chinese leadership to maintain its initiative, while steering away from the ideological pitfalls associated with development (typically, socialism versus capitalism). The foreign policy that has moved from lying low to peaceful rise suggests that the more internally stable China is, the more assertive it is likely to become in international affairs, and the bigger role it will aspire to play. As China's foreign policy-making is invariably in response to external pressures, the higher the pressure from outside the tougher the stand the government is likely to take.

This paper draws attention to some finer details of China's domestic politics vis-à-vis international relations. The rhetoric of the China threat that is resounding across the globe reflects the tension under which the current world order is being restructured. As China entered a new era of development, its government adopted a policy with a distinct emphasis on harmony (with reference to domestic politics) and peace (with reference to international politics). Foreign policy rhetoric thus reflects conditions in domestic development, albeit that the line between the two is often blurred. The historical burdens of China and the new mission it envisions underscore the rhetoric of peaceful rise. Contradictory though they may appear to be, peaceful rise is a logical development of lying low, as this paper has demonstrated. As such, it allows one to "take a view from another position" (*huanwei sikao*). This phrase, in frequent use today by Chinese government think tanks in the context of international politics, does, in a roundabout way, come back to the basics of Confucian teaching, which reads: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others" (*Confucian Analects*—Book XII, Book XV). Despite all the attempts of cultural destruction carried out over the past century, either in the name of democracy (e.g. the May Fourth

Movement in 1919) or in the name of revolution (e.g. the Cultural Revolution 1966-1976), Confucianism continues to be entrenched in Chinese political thinking today, without, perhaps, many being quite aware of its vitality.

Appendix

LIST OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES IN THE WORLD

ASIA

People's Republic of China (1)

Mongolia (1)

Republic of Korea (11)

Japan (12)

The Philippines (1)

Singapore (1)

Thailand (13)

Malaysia (1)

Nepal (1)

India (2)

Bangladesh (1)

Sri Lanka (1)

Pakistan (1)

Kazakhstan (2)

Uzbekistan (1)

Israel (1)

The Lebanon (1)

Turkey (1)

Georgia (1)

EUROPE

Sweden (1)

Finland (1)

Belarus (1)

Russia (4)

Ukraine (1)

Poland (1)

Czech (1)

Hungary (1)

Germany (8)

United Kingdom (7)

Ireland (1)

The Netherlands (1)

France (5)

Belgium (3)

Austria (1)

Spain (3)

Portugal (1)

Italy (1)

Yugoslavia (1)

Romania (1)

Bulgaria (1)

AFRICA

Egypt (1)

Nigeria (3)

Rwanda (1)

Kenya (2)

Zimbabwe (1)

South Africa (2)

OCEANIA

Australia (3)

New Zealand (1)

NORTH AMERICA

Canada (4)

United States (17)

Mexico (5)

Source: The Office of Chinese Language Council International, http://www.hanban.edu.cn/en_hanban/kzxy_list.php?ithd=gzky (accessed December 9, 2007).

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