

Nationalism, Internationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy

CHEN ZHIMIN*

This article examines the role of nationalism in shaping Chinese foreign policy in the history of contemporary China over the last 100 years. Nationalism is used here as an analytical term, rather than in the usual popular pejorative sense. By tracing the various expressions of contemporary Chinese nationalism, this article argues that nationalism is one of the key enduring driving forces which have shaped Chinese foreign policy over the period; as China increasingly integrates herself into this globalized and interdependent world and Chinese confidence grows, the current expression of Chinese nationalism is taking a more positive form, which incorporates an expanding component of internationalism.

In recent years, nationalism has been one of the key focuses in the study of China's foreign policy. In the 1990s, several Chinese writers started to invoke the concept of nationalism, both in their study of Chinese foreign policy and in their prescriptions for the Chinese foreign policy. Likewise, in English-language scholarship the study of Chinese nationalism largely sets the parameters of the debate about the future of Chinese foreign policy and the world's response to a rising China. An overarching theme of this Western discourse is a gloomy concern with the worrisome nature of recent expressions of Chinese nationalism. Samuel P. Huntington was famously concerned about China's intention 'to bring to an end the overlong century of humiliation and subordination to the West and Japan'.¹ Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro echoed this view by charging that 'driven by nationalist sentiment, a yearning to redeem the humiliations of the past, and the simple urge for international power, China is seeking to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia'.² Even Edward Friedman, a long-time China-watcher, stated that 'the new, post-Mao

* Chen Zhimin, Ph.D., Professor, Chair of the Department of International Politics, School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China. His research interests include: International Relations Theory, Diplomacy, Chinese Foreign Policy. Recent Chinese publications include *Foreign Policy Integration in European Union: An Mission Impossible?* (Beijing: Shishi Publishing House, 2003, with Gustaaf Geeraerts); *Subnational Governments and Foreign Affairs* (Beijing, Changzheng Publishing House, 2001). This paper was originally presented at the International Relations Theory workshop held at Fudan University in Shanghai in April 2002. I would like to thank Dr William A. Callahan for his encouragement and advice in the process of the writing and revising of this paper. I also thank my graduate student at Fudan, Mr Jian Junbo, for his contribution to this paper.

1. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 229.

2. Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, 'The coming conflict with America', *Foreign Affairs*, (March/April 1997), p. 19.

nationalism in China not only challenges Taiwan's autonomy, it also could endanger peace in the Pacific–Asia region'.³

While many scholars tend to view Chinese nationalism as a new and negative development in the post-Cold War period, this paper will elaborate a different understanding of the role of Chinese nationalism in articulating Chinese foreign policy. It will argue that (a) nationalism has been a lasting element of Chinese foreign policy since the early years of the twentieth century; (b) Chinese nationalist fever has generally softened since the early 1980s; and (c) it will conclude that a positive form of nationalism has been constructed since the 1980s which is able to accommodate both the Chinese desire for a national rejuvenation, and the general welfare of the world community.

The nationalist turn of China's approach to foreign relations

Nationalism is relatively new for China in its relations with the rest of the world. Before the twentieth century, the predominate Chinese approach to foreign relations was culturalism. As this *Pax Sinica* fell apart with the intrusion of the Western powers in the nineteenth century, nationalism eventually found its way into the Chinese mind at the dawn of the twentieth century. Thereafter, it became the key driving force of China's handling of foreign relations.

Foreign relations in the eyes of traditional culturalism

China's traditional culturalism, as envisaged by leading Chinese writers like Liang Qichao, Sun Yatsen and Feng Youlan, and analyzed by American scholars such as Joseph Levenson and John K. Fairbank, dominated the Chinese approach to foreign relations for over 2,000 years before the twentieth century.

This culturalism articulated a clear distinction of a Chinese 'Us' vis-à-vis the non-Chinese 'Others'. As the twentieth century Chinese philosopher Feng Youlan observed, 'what the Chinese were always concerned about was the continuation and integrity of the Chinese culture and civilization ... from the early Qin dynasty onwards, Chinese had clearly made a distinction between the "China", or "Huaxia", with the "Barbarians (Yidi)". Feng argued that 'such a distinction was made according to a cultural criteria rather than racial differences'.⁴ James Harrison also pointed out that 'the traditional Chinese self-image has generally been defined as "culturalism", based on the historical heritage and acceptance of shared values, not as nationalism, based on the modern concept of the nation-state'.⁵ From a culturalist point of view, the primary identity of the Chinese was the general acceptance of

3. Edward Friedman, 'Chinese nationalism, Taiwan autonomy and the prospects of a larger war', *Journal of Contemporary China* 6(14), (March 1997), p. 5.

4. Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhixue jianshi* [A Concise History of Chinese Philosophy] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1985), pp. 211–222.

5. James Harrison, *Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Hunter College of the City of New York: Research Institute on Modern Asia, 1969), p. 2. Also see John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

traditional Chinese culture, namely, the Confucianism that dominated the minds of the Chinese for almost 2,000 years. It is the acceptance, or not, of this culture that separated the Chinese and the Others, or the ‘barbarians’. Furthermore, culturalism did not regard the boundary between the Chinese and barbarians as static or fixed. Once the ‘barbarians’ adopted Chinese culture, they became Chinese, and vice versa.⁶

In defining the Chinese relationship with the ‘barbarians’, culturalism adopted a view of China-centric universalism (*Tianxia zhuyi*). Such a view firstly envisaged a hierarchical world system with China sitting at the center. As the highest developed culture within that system, China saw no other entities that could claim equal status with China. China was the center of this system, and the Chinese emperor, as the Son of Heaven, had the mandate of Heaven to rule All-under-Heaven (*Tianxia*).⁷ The institutional expression of this China-dominated world system was the tributary system that emerged in the Han Dynasty. In this hierarchical system neighboring ‘barbarian’ tribes and kingdoms showed political submission to the Chinese emperors, and in return received material rewards from the Chinese emperors.

This Sino-centric universalism was a view mainly about Chinese world order, not about inter-national or inter-state relations. As the line drawn between the Chinese ‘Us’ and non-Chinese ‘Other’ was mainly a cultural construction, inter-cultural relationships constituted the essence of this Chinese world order. Within this world, China did not see herself as one state among others, but as the only civilized entity that had to live with uncivilized ‘barbarians’. The relationship with the ‘barbarians’ was one of conversion of these ‘barbarians’ to accept the universal Chinese culture. This politics of conversion worked mainly through China’s moral example—though it occasionally employed force.

Such a view was a reflection of the isolation of the East Asian international system from the rest of the world before the mid-nineteenth century. For thousands of years, China encountered no other advanced cultures that could pose an effective cultural challenge. Other cultures might be militarily more powerful, and they might conquer the Chinese heartland occasionally. Yet, they had to adopt the Chinese culture when they wanted to rule the vast Chinese population and land. The concepts of nation-state, nationalism and patriotism were never strongly rooted in Chinese thinking. That is why Feng Youlan could write that ‘the reason underlying the lack of Chinese nationalism was that the Chinese are used to seeing things from a universal perspective’.⁸ Likewise, Liang Qichao argued that, ‘we Chinese are not by nature an unpatriotic people. The reason Chinese do not know patriotism is because they do not know that China is a state’. Rather, Chinese people tended to regard China as the universe.⁹

6. Liang Qichao, *Liang Qichao zhaxue sixiang lunwen ji* [Collection of Articles by Liang Qichao of His Philosophical Thoughts] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1984), p. 7.

7. Yongjin Zhang, ‘System, empire and state in Chinese international relations’, *Review of International Studies* 27(special issue), (2001), p. 53.

8. Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo Zhaxue Jianshi*, p. 222.

9. Liang Qichao, ‘Aiguo lun’ [‘On patriotism’], in *Yinbingshi heji* [Yinbingshi Collected Works] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), Vol. III, p. 66.

The transition from culturalism to nationalism

In his classical work, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*, Joseph Levenson presented an elegant culturalism-to-nationalism thesis, which sought to understand the changing self-perception of the Chinese in their relations with other nations. This culturalism-to-nationalism thesis sees culturalism and nationalism as the competing ideas among the intellectuals at the turn of the century, the time when 'nationalism invades the Chinese scene as culturalism gives way'.¹⁰

The collapse of this culturalism rested on the invalidation of its central assumption: the supremacy of the Chinese culture in the world. China was invaded by non-Chinese people a number of times before the Opium War. Yet the invasion and conquest of China by these so-called 'barbarians' never posed a serious threat to Chinese culture. However, the new 'barbarians' from the sea were not only militarily stronger. They also were formidable in terms of culture and religion. The Western powers (and then Japan) rocked the very foundation of the long-lived Chinese world order first by defeating the Qing empire militarily, and then by posing an unprecedented threat to Chinese culture. In little more than half a century after the First Opium War, China suddenly found that it was no longer the center of the universe. Rather it was thrown out to the margins of the world, as a semi-colonized land in a Eurocentric world.

This 'biggest change in the Chinese three thousand years' history' propelled Chinese intellectuals to search for alternative ideas to save China. Nationalism was thus summoned and culturalism was rejected. As Levenson argued, 'a culturalism bars foreign ideas, but it may actually invite or not actively oppose foreign material force. Nationalism reverses these relations; it may admit foreign ideas, but it will blaze against foreign material incursions'.¹¹ With the survival of both Chinese culture and world order at stake, nationalism was enlisted as a non-Chinese remedy to the problem of Chinese survival.

However, nationalism came in two different forms: the state nationalism of Liang Qichao and the ethnic nationalism of Sun Yatsen. As the leading Chinese figures at the turn of the twentieth century, Liang and Sun both turned to nationalism to save China; but they differed sharply in their conceptions of a proper Chinese nationalism, and thus in their political agendas.

Liang's nationalism was a state nationalism, a combination of retrenched culturalism and modern nationalism. His exposure to Western ideas and experiences in later years convinced him that 'what we Chinese lack most and need most today is an organic integration and forceful order'. Liang felt that 'Han, Manchus, Mongols, Hui, Miao and Tibetans should unite as a broad nation. Together as one-third of the world's population, they would occupy a prominent position in the world'.¹² China needed nationalism to unite its people, as Western powers had done, to survive in a Darwinist world. On the other hand, due to his traditional Chinese education in his

10. See Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), Vol. 1, pp. 98–104.

11. Joseph Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*, 2nd revised edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 110.

12. Liang Qichao, 'Zhengzhixue dajia Bolunzhili zhi xueshuo' ['The teachings of Bluntschili, the great political scientist, 1906'], in *Yinbingshi heji*, Vol. XIX, p. 76.

early years, the Confucian culturalism also had its imprint on Liang's thinking. Although Liang repudiated culturalism's universalism and replaced it with the concept of nation-state, Liang's nationalism led him to incorporate a retrenched culturalism that joined the state and the nation. Therefore, he supported a 'broad nationalism' which called on the uniting of all the nationalities in China to deal with foreign nations, not the 'narrow nationalism' or ethnic Han-Chinese nationalism.¹³ The reason underlying this was his belief that the Manchus, whom the small nationalism sought to expel, were already assimilated into the Chinese nation.¹⁴

The revolutionaries initially rejected Liang's lingering culturalism at the turn of the twentieth century. Sun Yatsen, the founding father of the Republic of China (1911–1949), upheld a radical ethno-nationalism, calling on Han Chinese to overthrow the Manchu Qing Emperor. Sun developed a set of ideas which he later called the Three Principles of the People—nationalism, democracy, and people's livelihood—which became the ideological force behind the 1911 revolution, and the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT). In Sun's own words, 'the Three Principles of the People equalled the idea of saving the state'.¹⁵ The aim was to seek an equal status for China in the world, and to ensure the eternal survival of China in the world.

Sun's first principle was nationalism. Nationalism, according to Sun, was 'the treasure for a state to prosper and for a nation to survive'.¹⁶ Ernest Gellner defined nationalism as 'primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent'.¹⁷ Before the Republic of China was founded in 1911, Sun's concept of the nation was a product of racial difference.¹⁸ His nationalism was a Han Chinese nationalism, which called on the Han Chinese to 'recover the state for our own nation . . . [and] not allow other nations to take away our nation's government'.¹⁹ The first priority of Chinese nationalism at the time thus was to launch a national revolution to overthrow the Manchu rulers, and to build a Chinese state ruled by Han Chinese.

Sun's nationalism did not dissipate after the Republic of China was founded. Though the Han Chinese had regained their own state in 1911, the need for a strong nationalism never disappeared. In his six lectures on nationalism, Sun even developed a more sophisticated concept of nationalism to address the political and economic oppression from foreign countries that was turning China into a 'sub-colony'—an even worse condition than a colony or a semi-colony.²⁰

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 75–76.

14. Liang Qichao, 'Shen lun zhongzu geming yu zhengzhi geming zhi deshi' ['On the gains and losses of racial revolution and political revolution, 1906'], in *Yinbingshi heji*, Vol. XIII, p. 31.

15. Sun Yatsen, 'Minzhu zhuyi liu jiang zhi diyi jiang' ['On nationalism: lecture one, 1924'], in *Sun Yatsen wenji* [*Sun Yatsen Corpus*] (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1997), Vol. I, p. 61.

16. Sun Yatsen, 'Minzhu zhuyi liu jiang zhi disan jiang' ['On nationalism: lecture three, 1924'], in *Sun Yatsen wenji*, Vol. I, p. 86.

17. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 1.

18. Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu de, guomin de, shehui de guojia: zai Tokyo *Minbao* chuanguan zhounian qingzhu dahui de yanshuo' ['State of nation, citizen and society: speech at anniversary celebrating assembly of *Minbao* in Tokyo, December 2, 1909'], in *Sun Yatsen wenji*, Vol. I, p. 22. Sun's concept of nation changed somewhat, but he still regarded ties of blood as the first force in producing a nation, along with common life, language, religion and habit.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.

20. Sun Yatsen, 'Minzhu zhuyi liu jiang zhi dier jiang' ['On nationalism: lecture two, 1924'], in *Sun Yatsen wenji*, Vol. I, p. 78.

Nationalism and the communist road to power

Prior to 1931, under the nationalist anti-imperialism banner Chiang Kai-shek's KMT government was able to reduce the extraterritorial privileges enjoyed by foreign powers, winning unprecedented diplomatic status for China.²¹ However, Chiang's monopoly on Chinese nationalism was eroded when his government failed to stand up to the Japanese occupation of China's Northeast provinces (Manchuria) in 1931. Chiang was preoccupied with his fight to control the whole China against unruly warlords and communist enclaves. His decision to adopt the notorious policy of 'internal pacification before resistance to external attack' aroused nation-wide protest.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), after being repressed by its nationalist KMT partner in 1927, went to the countryside to continue its military struggle. Following the Comintern's guidelines, the CCP set the completion of the 'bourgeois democratic revolution' as its short-term mission.²² The imperialists, the nationalist government, warlords, bureaucratic capitalists and feudal landlords therefore were its immediate enemies.

After the Japanese invasion, Mao Zedong immediately raised the anti-Japanese nationalist banner. His Chinese Soviet Republic in Jiangxi declared war against Japan in April 1932. After the Red Army settled in Yan'an in 1935, the CCP's short-term mission was also reformulated into one of nationalist revolution, which was 'to make China an independent, free and territorially-integrated state'.²³ The CCP thus adopted a pro-active policy seeking to form a national united front against Japanese invasion.

After the Xi'an Incident in 1936, the CCP persuaded a reluctant Chiang Kai-shek to join the anti-Japanese nationalist united front. From then on, the CCP's army directly engaged Japanese troops, and fought an eight-year guerrilla war in north China. As the main resistance force in north China, the CCP for the first time successfully rallied the nationalistic feelings of the peasantry, expanding the pre-war elite nationalism to a new mass-based peasant nationalism.²⁴ As Harrison observed, 'it was the Japanese invasion that first aroused a mass nationalist consciousness, and it was the Communists who offered the most effective response to the Japanese challenge'.²⁵ Reviewing the record of the period 1931–1945, Harrison found little doubt that the Communists captured the leadership of anti-Japanese nationalism and their success in north China set the stage for their ultimate triumph.²⁶

21. Selig S. Harrison, *The Widening Gulf: Asian Nationalism and American Policy* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 70.

22. Mao Zedong, 'Jinggangshan de douzheng' ['The struggle in Jinggang mountains, 1928'], in *Mao Zedong Xuanji* [*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), Vol. I, p. 77.

23. Mao Zedong, 'Lun fandui Riben diguo zhuyi de celue' ['On tactics against Japanese imperialism, 1935'], in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, p. 152.

24. According to Chalmers Johnson, nationalism in China was a powerful sentiment among many leadership groups, but the social milieu in which they acted was not nationalistic. The Japanese invasion changed this situation, and brought the peasant nationalism onto the scene. See Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and the Communist Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962); also see John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927–1937* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1966).

25. Harrison, *The Widening Gulf*, p. 70.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Nationalism and socialist internationalism

Nationalism under socialist internationalism (1949–1971)

When the CCP founded a new state in 1949, it inevitably confronted the uneasy relationship between Chinese nationalism and communist internationalism. As a principle, proletarian internationalism ‘reflects and expresses the international community and identity of the fundamental interests among the proletarians of the world in their struggle against capitalism and for the victory of socialism and communism, and as such it requires unity of action by the working class of all nations and countries’.²⁷ As a Communist Party in China, the CCP had been encountering this issue since its early years. However, during the Anti-Japanese War and then the Civil War against the KMT, Mao and the CCP had addressed the problematic relationship between Chinese nationalism and communist internationalism by defining the CCP’s central task before 1949 as making the New Democratic Revolution, which had national independence and democracy as its major aims. As early as 1938, Mao wrote that ‘Chinese Communists must therefore combine patriotism with internationalism. We are at once internationalists and patriots . . . Only by achieving national liberation will it be possible for the proletariat and other working people to achieve their own emancipation. The victory of China and the defeat of the invading imperialists will help the people of other countries. Thus in wars of national liberation patriotism is applied internationalism’.²⁸ For Mao, practicing nationalism in China was practicing internationalism in the service of socialist world course. This also conformed to the Soviet Union’s orthodox view of Marxism. As Lenin said, ‘The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support’.²⁹

While Soviet orthodoxy supported the nationalist revolution led by the Chinese Communists in their struggle for an independent state, it opposed nationalism in any socialist state. As the CCP took power in China, it was expected by communist ideology and by socialist brother states to demonstrate communist internationalism in its foreign policy: that is, to stand with other socialist countries and to take joint actions for the common course of socialism and communism. For the CCP, shouldering this new international responsibility with a state’s capacity became a new obligation, which it could not reject.

The term ‘nationalism’ was abandoned; ‘patriotism’ was preferred. As Premier Zhou Enlai put it, ‘socialist patriotism is not a narrow nationalism, but a patriotism aimed to strengthen national pride under the guidance of internationalism’.³⁰ Although the vocabulary had changed, the nationalist agenda of China’s foreign

27. S. Anghelov *et al.*, eds, *Socialist Internationalism: Theory and Practice of International Relations of a New Type* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), p. 50.

28. Mao Zedong, ‘Zhongguo Gongchandang zai minzu zhanzheng zhong de diwei’ [‘The role of the Chinese communist party in the national war, 1938’], in *Mao Zedong Xuanji*, Vol. II, pp. 520–521.

29. V. I. Lenin, ‘The right of nations to self-determination’, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, 4th English edn (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), p. 412.

30. Zhou Enlai, ‘Women de waijiao fangzhen he renwu’ [‘Our diplomatic guidelines and tasks, 1952’], in *Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan* [Selected Articles on Diplomacy by Zhou Enlai] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1990), p. 55.

policy continued. We can detect this nationalistic sentiment in the major statements and policies of the PRC in the 1950s: (1) Mao Zedong declared that the Chinese people had finally stood up on 1 October 1949; (2) Mao tried to get a more equal treaty with the Soviet Union in 1950; (3) Mao purged all Western political and economic influence after 1950; (4) Mao sent troops to Korea to fight against the US; (5) Mao attempted to use military means to recover Taiwan; and (6) Mao sought independence from the Soviet Union. Thus, Mao still attached great importance to China's independence, territorial integrity and autonomy. He wanted to remove all foreign privileges, including those enjoyed by the Soviet Union. As he later recalled, Mao was very unhappy when Stalin demanded to maintain privileges in China's Northeast and Xinjiang in 1950, as well as when Soviet leaders looked down upon and distrusted the Chinese more generally. He was outraged at the Soviet intention to set up a joint navy fleet in China in 1957.³¹

Obviously, Chinese leaders could not pretend that pursuing nationalistic agenda was equal to practicing internationalism after the PRC was founded in 1949. They had to integrate their nationalistic agenda with their commitment to socialist internationalism. This task was difficult, particularly because the Soviet Union saw internationalism as the unconditional compliance of other socialist states to Soviet policy. The CCP leadership tried to pursue this double objective in China's foreign policy. The new treaty with the Soviet Union, on the one hand, demonstrated to the world socialist solidarity between the two most powerful socialist countries. On the other hand, the alliance served China's security interest through the Soviet commitment of military assistance. However, when these two objectives collided, the Chinese leaders still had to make a choice. During the early 1950s, it could be argued that internationalism prevailed when China was forced to face such a dilemma. China's decision to directly engage the US military in Korea in 1950 served the interests of the socialist world and saved communist North Korea. But it incurred heavy losses of Chinese soldiers, and postponed the recapture of Taiwan.

By forcing the US to accept a truce in Korea, and achieving remarkable economic and political progress on the domestic front, Mao and his colleagues attained greater confidence in the 1950s. As the socialist transformation within China marched ahead, and the Soviet Union entered the post-Stalin era, Mao was more reluctant to accept the new leadership in Moscow within the socialist camp.³² His nationalist impulse propelled him to challenge the unequal relationship between what he called the 'father party' and the 'son party'. Meanwhile, ideological differences with the Soviet Union also widened, both for the proper socialist model for China, and for the proper relationship with the capitalist world. While the Soviet Union started to talk about

31. Mao Zedong, 'Tong Sulian zhuhua dashi youjin de tanhua' ['A conversation with the Soviet Ambassador to China, 22 July 1958'], in *Mao Zedong Waijiao Wenxuan* [Selected Writings of Mao Zedong on Diplomacy] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1994), pp. 322–333.

32. Michael Yahuda observed, 'True proletarian Internationalism consists in the Soviet view of being closely linked to Soviet Union, following its experience and sheltering under its protective umbrella'. However, 'Proletarian Internationalism for Mao never meant that one party would lay down the line for others to follow, or that one Party would sit at fulcrum of a tightly organized alliance with centrally coordinated networks radiating outwards. For him proletarian Internationalism meant mutually supportive, popular, independent, revolutionary activity'. See Michael Yahuda, *Towards the End of Isolationism: China's Foreign Policy after Mao* (London: MacMillan Press, 1983), pp. 32–33.

the possibility of peaceful coexistence with the United States, Mao called on the socialist camp to take an offensive stance.³³ With the Great Leap Forward and its resulting economic difficulties, Mao's foreign policy became increasingly radical.

Nationalism through socialist internationalism

As Mao's version of Chinese nationalism found itself increasingly at odds with the Soviet version of socialist internationalism, the nationalism-under-internationalism formula was in crisis. In the 1950s, Chinese leaders agreed to recognize the Soviet Union as the leader of the socialist bloc. That recognition stemmed from the complementarity of Chinese anti-imperialist nationalism and Soviet-defined anti-imperialist socialist internationalism. As the Soviet Union sought detente and peaceful coexistence with the United States and the West, the CCP still confronted the United States over Taiwan and Indochina. China's anti-imperialist nationalism thus was increasingly in conflict with the Soviet policy, which was seen as contrary to China's core national and ideological interests. On the other hand, as the Soviet Union became much stronger in military power and more secure in its control of smaller communist states, it was less willing to allow dissent within the socialist bloc. It even resorted to various coercive measures to force China to follow Soviet leadership. In a dramatic move in 1960, the Soviet Union abruptly pulled out its experts from China and suspended most aid projects. The coercive policy of the Soviet Union was seen as extremely insulting by China's leaders who felt much nationalist pride for winning China's independence and raising China's international status.

Mao's decision to reject the Soviet version of socialist internationalism did not lead to a rejection of socialist internationalism *per se*. On the contrary, Mao proposed an alternative version, a Chinese version of socialist internationalism, which was more radical, revolutionary and militant as well as being in line with Mao's view of Chinese nationalism. In 1963, the *People's Daily* unveiled this Chinese socialist internationalism: 'Workers of all countries, unite; workers of the world, unite with the oppressed peoples and oppressed nations; oppose imperialism and reactionaries in all countries; strive for world peace, national liberation, people's democracy and socialism; consolidate and expand the socialist camp; bring the proletarian world revolution step by step to complete victory; and establish a new world without imperialism, without capitalism and without the exploitation of man by man. This, in our view, is the general line of the international communist movement at the present stage'.³⁴

The new Chinese version of socialist internationalism assigned 'world revolution' as its task 'at the present stage', making imperialism, capitalism and reactionaries its primary targets. It committed Chinese support for revolutionary forces around the world. It was not only a departure from the more moderate Soviet policy (which was labeled revisionism), but also a further radicalization from the more narrowly

33. Mao Zedong, 'Guoji xingshi dao le yige xin de zhuanzhedian' ['The international situation has reached a new turning point, 18 November, 1957'], in *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan*, p. 291.

34. 'Guanyu guoji gongchanzhuyi zongluxian de jianyi' ['A proposal concerning the general line of the international communist movement'], *Renmin ribao* [*People's Daily*], (14 June 1963), p. 1.

targeted anti-American imperialism united-front policy pursued before. Having set the general policy line in 1963, the CCP started to implement this foreign policy with the publication of Lin Biao's 1965 article 'Long live the victory of people's war'. The article summarized the major features of the Chinese revolution: relying on the peasants, establishing rural base areas, and surrounding the cities from the countryside, and then capturing the cities in the end. Lin then claimed that such a strategy had universally applicable values. By portraying North America and Western Europe as 'world cities', and Asia, Africa, Latin America as the 'world countryside', Lin proclaimed that world revolution was taking the form of 'surrounding the cities from the countryside' on a global scale. He called on China to support all revolutionary struggles around the world as part of its internationalist obligations.³⁵

In 1966, amid the ideological fever of the newly-launched Cultural Revolution at home, Mao enlisted the Soviet Union and its followers as China's new enemies: modern revisionism. His slogan was 'Down with Imperialism! Down with modern revisionism! Down with reactionaries in every country!' This marked the most radical stage of China's foreign policy.

By promoting a 'world revolution', China developed a qualitatively different version of socialist internationalism, and viewed itself as the new 'thought center' in the world communist movement. China vehemently supported revolutionary struggles around the world. While in Vietnam the support took the form of material and manpower, in most other countries it took the form of ideological inspiration. In this limited capacity, China launched an all-out offence against United States and its capitalist and nationalist followers, against the Soviet Union, its revisionist allies and its nationalist followers in the Third World. As a result, in the late 1960s China was diplomatically isolated and in direct militarily conflict with the two superpowers: the Sino-Soviet border conflict, and China's military involvement in the Vietnam War. As Xie Yixian lamented, by attacking on all fronts, China 'made and faced too many enemies!'³⁶

Though I do not deny the important communist ideological elements and ambitions in this new version of Chinese socialist internationalism, I would argue that it could also be seen as an international expression of a revolutionary Chinese nationalism. This new nationalism-through-internationalism formula allowed China to regain absolute independence by rejecting any international leadership coming out of China, namely, the Soviet leadership, while obtaining a sense of greater international status through its 'thought center' role in world revolutionary movements. From such a perspective we can detect the logic underlying the sudden shift of China's foreign policy in the early 1970s.

35. Lin Biao, 'Renmin zhanzheng shengli wansui' ['Long live the victory of the people's war'], *Renmin ribao*, (3 September 1965), p. 3.

36. Xie Yixian, *Zhongguo waijiao sixiang shi* [A History of China's Diplomatic Thought] (Kaifeng, Henan: Henan daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 241.

Nationalism over socialist internationalism (1972–1977)

In 1969, Sino–Soviet tensions escalated into a border war. The existence of one million Soviet troops along the 4,000 kilometer Sino–Soviet border, and the alleged Soviet verbal threat to make a surgical attack to destroy China’s infant nuclear capability,³⁷ both posed a serious security threat to China. With a hostile Taiwan in the East, an unfriendly India and the Vietnam War in the South, ‘China faced the most unfavourable international strategic situation since the founding of the PRC’.³⁸

As national security was in imminent danger, Chinese leaders started to rethink their foreign policy priorities. Mao asked the ‘four veteran marshals’ to review the situation, and provide a policy proposal. The report they submitted called for a return to the Realist understanding of international relations. It suggested that China could model its policy after the Zhu Geliang’s ancient alliance strategy: ally with the US in the East to resist the Soviet Union in the North.³⁹ Mao accepted this proposal, and a clear shift of foreign policy followed. The new policy put China’s national security ahead of Mao’s world revolutionary mission. After a series of remarkable diplomatic maneuvers, including the famous ‘Ping Pong Diplomacy’, an astonishing Sino–US rapprochement came about in 1972 with the signing of the historic Shanghai Communiqué. Along with the rapprochement with the United States, China also normalized diplomatic relationships with most Western countries, improved its relations with developing countries, and joined the United Nations in 1971.

Such a move signaled a profound redefinition of China’s revolutionary nationalism and its international expression. Independence was still of paramount importance, yet to secure it China needed an international united-front against its most dangerous enemy: the Soviet Union. To form this international united-front, China had to play down its ambition to lead world revolution movements—if not in rhetoric, at least in substantive policy. Thus a redefined version of Chinese nationalism prevailed over the ‘world revolution’ policy, and caused a subsequent modification of Chinese commitments to the world revolutionary movement.

Mao’s new ‘Three Worlds Theory’, outlined in 1974, provided theoretical guidance to Chinese foreign policy. The Soviet Union and United States were categorized as the ‘first world’, developed capitalist and East European states were the ‘second world’, and developing states were the ‘third world’. China would join with other ‘third world’ countries to win support from ‘second world’ countries, in order to resist the imperialism and colonialism of the ‘first world’, particularly the Soviet Union. Thus, the ‘three world theory’ narrowed its struggle mainly to fight the Soviet Union, seeking to form a broad united-front against it. ‘World revolution’

37. See Xie Yixian, ed., *Dangdai Zhongguo waijiao shi, 1949–1995* [Contemporary Chinese Diplomatic History, 1949–1995] (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1997), pp. 253–254.

38. Su Ge, *Meiguo dui hua zhengce yu Taiwan wenti* [American Policy towards China and the Taiwan Question] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1998), p. 382.

39. During the Three Kingdoms period, Zhu Geliang served as the prime minister of the Kingdom of Shu. Facing a militarily stronger Kingdom of Wei in the North, he designed a strategy of allying with the Sun’s Kingdom of Wu in the East to resist Wei in the North. See Xiong Xianghui, ‘Dakai Zhong–Mei guanxi de qianchou: 1969 nian siwei laosuai dui guoji xingshi de yanjiu yu jianyi’ [‘The prelude of the opening-up of Sino–US relationship: four veteran marshals’ study of international situation and their proposals in 1969’], in *Xin Zhongguo waijiao fengyun* [Diplomacy of New China] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1996), Vol. 4, pp. 7–34.

rhetoric did not totally disappear, but it no longer dominated China's foreign policy. It occupied a secondary, though not totally insignificant place.

Positive nationalism and interdependence (1979–the present)

Positive nationalism in the 1980s

At its watershed Third Plenum of the Eleventh Congress in December 1978, the CCP endorsed a fundamental change in its domestic as well as its foreign policy priorities. Economic modernization and improvement of the Chinese people's living standard were assigned as the 'central task' of the government. Therefore, Chinese foreign policy was called upon to maintain a stable international context over a prolonged period of time, so as to assist the modernization program by securing expanded international economic cooperation. The impulse for world revolution was put aside, as was the nativist nationalism of previous years. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the CCP initiated various domestic reforms and encouraged foreign trade and investment.

In line with this new policy of reform and opening to the outside world, in 1982 the CCP's secretary-general Hu Yaobang formulated the new Chinese foreign policy that stressed 'independence and peace', which will be beneficial to China's long-term economic and social development. According to one Chinese scholar, 'peace' indicates that 'China formulates its foreign policy from the viewpoint of whether it is beneficial to international and regional peace and stability, instead of the viewpoint of pursuing military superiority'. 'Independence' means that 'China formulates its foreign policy according to its national interests and the common interests of peoples of all the countries in the world'.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the new policy also abandoned most of the ideological elements in China's foreign policy. In other words, China's relationship with other countries would no longer be decided by ideology, but rather by national interest. China therefore could develop a good relationship with any country—regardless of its capitalist or Soviet-style socialist ideology—as long as it did not pose a security threat to China, and could help China's modernization efforts.

The change of policy priority did not imply the fading away of nationalism, but a transformation of nationalism. In contrast to the expressions of Chinese nationalism in the early PRC years, the new form of Chinese nationalism increasingly has positive features.

1. Unlike its communist form before, this newly developed positive nationalism is pragmatic, able to free itself from the fervor of world revolution, and to address the real problem of China: economic weakness. Pragmatic nationalism, as Zhao Shuisheng asserted, 'sees foreign economic exploitation and cultural infiltration as a source of China's weakness, but believes that the lack of modernization is the reason why China became an easy target for Western imperialism. China fell victim to external imperialism because of political decay, technological backwardness, and economic weakness had eliminated any possibility of

40. Xia Liping, 'China: a responsible great power', *Journal of Contemporary China* 10(26), (2001), p. 18.

defending itself'.⁴¹ For pragmatic nationalists, the road to greatness was to adopt whatever approach would remedy China's economic weakness. By firmly placing economic modernization as the central task of the government, and by making all necessary economic reforms at home, pragmatic nationalism was able to redirect the Chinese people's energy and talents to strive for their own economic welfare and national greatness.

2. Unlike nativist and autarkic nationalism, this positive nationalism embraces a benevolent form of economic nationalism. As Benjamin Cohen argues, 'malign nationalism seeks national goals relentlessly, even at the expense of others; benign nationalism, by contrast, is prepared to compromise national policy priorities where necessary to accommodate the interests of others. The difference between these two types of nationalism lies in the willingness of a country to identify its own national interest with an interest in the stability of the overall international system. Benign nationalism acknowledges a connection between self-interest and systemic interest; malign nationalism ignores or denies it'.⁴² Positive nationalism regards the economic isolation of the pre-reform years as the source of economic deficiency, and is willing to participate in the positive-sum game of international economic interdependence. From 1978 to 1989, China's trade volume increased from around US\$20 billion to US\$111.7 billion. Consequently, the foreign trade dependency rate rose from 12.6% in the 1980s to 29.7% in 1990.⁴³
3. Unlike revolutionary nationalism, positive nationalism is moderate and conservative, placing a premium on stability and a peaceful international context. Throughout the 1980s, China sought to develop a cooperative relationship with the United States after the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1979; it forged extensive economic ties with Japan and Western European states; it gradually improved its relationship with the Soviet Union. When the Sino-Soviet relationship was fully restored to a normal status during Gorbachev's visit to Beijing in 1989, it seemed that China had not only helped maintain world and regional peace, but also became one of the major beneficiaries of the peaceful international context. Though the rhetoric of anti-hegemony never died out, China at the end of the 1980s had developed a vested interest in the status quo of the world.
4. Unlike militant nationalism, positive nationalism is reactive and defensive. David Shambaugh characterized Chinese nationalism as 'defensive nationalism', which is 'assertive in form, but reactive in essence'.⁴⁴ In the PRC's early years, the PLA's prolonged shelling of the Taiwan-controlled offshore islands, and the notion of 'Liberating Taiwan' were regarded as one of the manifestations of China's militant nationalism. In the late 1970s, the new leadership in Beijing ceased the shelling, dropped the 'Liberating Taiwan' rhetoric, and embarked on a new policy emphasizing peaceful unification through negotiation. The percentage

41. Zhao Shuisheng, 'Chinese nationalism and its international orientations', *Political Science Quarterly* 115(1), (March 2000), p. 9.

42. See Benjamin Jerry Cohen, *Crossing Frontiers: Explorations in International Political Economy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), p. 47.

43. See Asian Development Bank, *Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries: 2001* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

44. David Shambaugh, 'Containment or engagement of China', *International Security* 21, (Fall 1996), p. 205.

of government budget devoted to military expenditures decreased, the size of the PLA reduced, and defense industries were encouraged to manufacture civilian goods.⁴⁵ In bilateral relations with other countries, the actual use of military force or the threat of use has also decreased dramatically. Nevertheless, in reacting to foreign pressures and defending Chinese interests, positive nationalism, to quote Oksenberg, was ‘also a determined and resolute nationalism, flexible in tactics, subtle in strategy, but deeply committed to the preservation of national independence, the reunification of China and the attainment of national wealth and power’.⁴⁶

5. Unlike the unconfident nationalism before, positive nationalism was confident in China’s position in international strategic settings, and China’s eventual attainment of greatness. For over three decades, China was overwhelmed by a constant search for security. In the 1950s, the security threat came from the United States; in the 1960s, from both superpowers; in the 1970s, from the Soviet Union. However, in the 1980s as the relationship with the Soviet Union improved, the Soviet military threat waned. The result was that for the first time in the PRC’s history, China could be confident enough to anticipate no major enemies, to enjoy a peaceful international context, and to attain an ascending role in international affairs through an independent foreign policy.

Challenges to positive nationalism

A series of events during 1989–1991 raised questions about the basic assumptions of positive nationalism. Domestically, the events of June 1989 exhibited the internal legitimacy problem faced by the CCP leadership. The immediate sanctions adopted by Western countries raised the prospect of ‘peaceful evolution’. Faced with internal problems and foreign pressures, old policy debates re-emerged: would the reform policy weaken the CCP’s leadership in China? Would the policy of opening-up result in Westernization? And were Western powers adopting a hostile policy aiming to bring down the socialist social–political system in China?

Internationally, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union gave birth to a new international system, which exacerbated the problems China already faced. The 80-year long East–West ideological rivalry came to an end, while liberal capitalism and democracy marched into these countries. Although China felt no strong brotherhood with communist countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union after China broke away from the Soviet bloc in the 1960s, the fact that China is the only remaining large communist state inevitably aggravated its sense of ideological insecurity. This crisis was exacerbated as China faced one of its most serious internal problems, while Western powers were imposing sanctions against China.

Moreover, the strategic triangle ceased to exist with the end of the Cold War. This triangular relationship, forged by Nixon, Kissinger, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in the early 1970s, gave China and the United States the upper hand in their relations

45. Michael Oksenburg, ‘China’s confident nationalism’, *Foreign Affairs* 65(3), (1986–1987), p. 507.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 505.

with the Soviet Union. Being the most important strategic partner of the US in Asia, China enjoyed a favorable strategic position and security assurance from the Soviet threat. Yet this triangular relationship rested on the existence of the hegemonic Soviet Union. As the Soviet Union fell apart, so did this strategic triangle. The United States no longer needed to court China for containing the Soviet Union, and thus China's strategic value was greatly reduced.

Thus, the end of the Cold War's seemingly contradictory upshot for China is that while the disappearance of the Soviet threat further enhances China's security level, it also downgrades China's strategic standing in world politics. China can no longer boost its power and influence by participating in the Cold War's balance of power. As that game ends, China becomes more vulnerable to foreign political pressures. The acute sense of ideological insecurity thus loomed large for the Chinese leadership in the early 1990s.

The response of the CCP leadership was two-fold. On the one hand, the CCP started to strengthen the patriotic education of China's youth. Leaders felt that the lack of patriotic education in the 1980s allowed the rise of a romantic political liberalism among intellectuals and students, which partly caused the political instability at the end of the 1980s. A 'Campaign for National Unity' was initiated, which targeted the youth for 'patriotic education'. The CCP urged the Chinese people to unite under its leadership—otherwise the country would descend into chaos. In September 1994, the CCP's Propaganda Department issued the 'Fundamental Principles on Implementing Patriotic Education' for all the people. The aim of this new campaign, as it is put in the *Beijing Review*, is to 'take concerted effort in various quarters to create a strong atmosphere in which the entire Chinese people will be influenced by the patriotic ideas and spirit'.⁴⁷

Apart from this top-down patriotic campaign in China, the CCP also sought further legitimacy by relaunching its reform and opening policy, especially after Deng Xiaoping's Southern tour in late 1991 and early 1992. The CCP leadership understood that the CCP could still claim its political legitimacy by appealing to its past credentials as the leader and defender of Chinese independence. However, it could not just rely on that. To sustain and consolidate its political legitimacy, the CCP had to deliver what the Chinese people desired: economic development, political stability and national unity. These three elements, as Zheng Yongnian observed, formed the core agenda of official nationalism, which they called patriotism. Among the three, economic development was placed as the top priority.⁴⁸

The rise of popular nationalism

Historically, nationalism in the PRC was primarily a top-down construction of the CCP. It is an undeniable fact that strong nationalistic feelings existed among the Chinese people throughout the PRC's history. However, before the mid-1990s it was

47. *Beijing Review*, (26 September–2 October 1994), p. 4. For a more detailed study, see Zhao Shuisheng, 'A state-led nationalism: the patriotic education campaign in post-Tiananmen China', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31(3), (1998), pp. 287–302.

48. Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 91.

the CCP that monopolized the discourses of nationalism and patriotism in China. The CCP was able to decide the direction, content and intensity of Chinese nationalism, and then to mobilize the people. The CCP could appeal to nationalism whenever it so wished, and dismiss it whenever it needed to shift its policy. Even after Deng Xiaoping initiated the reform and opening policy, the state or party monopoly of the nationalism discourse was still strongly guarded against intrusion from unofficial circles.

The early 1990s witnessed new developments. A bottom-up form of nationalism appeared, contending with the official discourse of patriotism. This popular nationalism has three different but inter-connected components: traditionalism, neo-conservatism and Say No-ism. The traditionalist version of popular nationalism, also called cultural nationalism, is mainly a construction of Chinese intellectuals. They 'see the Chinese nation and Chinese people as being rooted in Confucian tradition and philosophy', and 'emphasize the ideological function of Chinese culture in maintaining political order'.⁴⁹ In the late 1980s neo-authoritarianism urged a strong and authoritarian state to enforce modernization programs. They argued that the economic miracle of the 'four little dragons' in East Asia was successful because they all shared Confucianism and a patriarchal power structure. In the early 1990s neo-authoritarianism was repackaged as neo-conservatism (*xinbaoshou zhuyi*) with an emphasis on strong state control as well as moral values based on the conservative elements of Confucianism.⁵⁰ For neo-conservatism, it is time for the government to recentralize the power, since the decentralization strategy for development in the 1980s has produced acute problems for China. Although some of the neo-conservatives' conclusions are shared by the CCP leadership, the neo-conservative reasoning is not always welcomed by the CCP propaganda establishment.

As for their international orientation, these two components of popular nationalism generally opposed Westernization, and attempted to revive traditional Confucianism. But they 'can be better regarded as a response to severe domestic issues such as the decline of central power and national identity rather than as China's intention to flex its growing muscles as a result of rapid economic growth'.⁵¹ To some extent, the Say No-ism of popular nationalism is different, because it puts forward a nationalistic and robust view of China's foreign relations, especially with Western powers. This form of popular nationalism arose among Chinese people who obtained more self-confidence due to rapid economic development, and yet felt frustrated by the mistreatment and even insulting behavior of the West, in particular the United States. A series of incidents in the first half of the 1990s together convinced ordinary Chinese of the ill intentions of the West, particularly the United States: the selling of advanced fighter planes to Taiwan, the US search of a Chinese cargo ship Yin He on the high seas, the blocking of China's bid to host the 2000 Olympics, the Japanese sovereignty claim on the Diaoyu Islands, the sanctions and efforts to denouncing China in the name of human rights, and the sending of aircraft carriers into the Taiwan Strait. In May 1995, *China Youth Daily* conducted a large-scale public survey, interviewed

49. He Baogang and Yingjie Guo, *Nationalism, National Identity and Democratization in China* (Sydney: Ashgate, 2000), p. 3.

50. Zhao Shuisheng, 'Chinese nationalism and its international orientations', p. 17.

51. Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China*, p. 111.

over 100,000 young people across the nation. The results later published found 96.8% of respondents still outraged at the Japanese atrocity done to the Chinese in the 1930s and 1940s, 98.6% of respondents thought they should not forget that part of history. In the same survey, 87.1% of respondents believed that the United States was the country 'least friendly' to China and 57.2% of respondents regarded the United States as the most disliked country.⁵²

Beyond public opinion, in late May 1996, right after the Sino-US military confrontation in the Taiwan Strait, five previously unknown young authors published a more systemic formulation of popular nationalism. *China Can Say No: Political and Emotional Choices in the Post-Cold War Era* quickly became a bestseller throughout the nation.⁵³ While it is criticized for its excess of irrational emotion, this book urged the government to be more forthright in just saying no to the United States and Japan.⁵⁴ In the aftermath of the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, one of the Say No-ists, Wang Xiaodong, co-authored *China's Road under the Shadow of Globalisation*, which displayed the same combination of nationalist outrage and criticism of the Chinese government's policy.

Reaffirming positive nationalism

While challenges to its positive nationalism came from all directions, the CCP leadership managed to reaffirm it during the post-Cold-War years. The new leadership, with guidance from Deng Xiaoping in the initial years, is a firm defender of Chinese sovereignty and independence. This is reflected not only in their everyday policy, but also rhetorically as they more frequently invoke the notion of 'Chinese nation' and the 'rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'.⁵⁵ As Jiang Zemin's 'Three Representations' speech indicates, serving the fundamental interests of the Chinese people is becoming the ultimate mission of the CCP. In a word, the CCP is speaking with an ever more clearer voice that national—rather than exclusively proletarian—issues constitute the core of the CCP's mission.

The leadership acknowledged that to reclaim its political legitimacy at home and regain its pre-eminent position in the world, the best way is not to fan an excessive and hostile nationalism towards foreign powers. Upholding nationalism and patriotism is important for the CCP and the state to maintain unity and political stability, but the nationalism that the CCP uses is more an affirmative than an assertive or aggressive nationalism, more a pro-state, pro-CCP than uncontrolled and disruptive, emphasizing more international reconciliation and cooperation than hostility and confrontation. Nationalism or patriotism is employed as a way to boost

52. *Zhongguo qingnian bao* [China Youth Daily], (14 July 1995), p. 1.

53. Song Qiang, Zhang Zangzang, Qiao Bian *et al.*, *Zhongguo keyi shuobu* [China Can Say No] (Beijing: Zhonghua gongshang lianhe chubanshe, 1996).

54. Although the authors indirectly criticized the government of being soft towards foreign powers, Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen's assessment that 'the populism of the book had a distinctly anti-government edge to it' is a bit exaggerated. See Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen, 'The domestic context of Chinese foreign policy: does "public opinion" 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), p. 163.

55. In the speech, Jiang used the word 'nation' 33 times, and the word 'Chinese nation' 10 times. See 'Jiang Zemin's speech at the meeting celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of communist party of China', (1 July 2001). English version can be found at <http://www.china.com.cn/e-speech/a.htm>.

the CCP's legitimacy at home, while the dominance, if not the monopoly, of the official nationalism discourse is constructed so that popular nationalism could not have undue influence in the actual foreign policy making process.

The CCP claims its nationalist credentials by adopting three key nationalist agendas: economic development, national unity and independence, and greater international status. At the same time, the positive nature of this nationalism is reaffirmed and consolidated. Economic development is seen as the key to realize all other national missions. With remarkable economic growth in the 1990s, especially in the context of the post-1997 Asian financial crisis, the government was able to deliver unprecedented economic welfare to its citizens. By adopting an internationally oriented development strategy, China in the 1990s was able to forge expanding overseas economic links and thus raise the level of mutual economic interdependence. Such an economic strategy secured the smooth turnover of Hong Kong and Macao, and raised the economic cost of Taiwan independence, thus greatly serving the course of national unification. Furthermore, the ever-increasing economic relations with the West also stabilized China's political relations with them, helped neutralize or lessen the tensions with regard to human rights, Taiwan, Tibet and weapons proliferation. As for China's international status, the rapid development of the Chinese economy offset the negative strategic development in the early years of the post-Cold War era, and gave the Chinese people confidence in themselves and in their dealings with world powers. The entry of China into the WTO, the choice of Beijing to host the 2008 Olympics and Shanghai to hold the 2010 World Expo all demonstrate the success of this positive nationalism strategy, which further consolidates it at home. By not employing a hostile, militant, xenophobic, anti-Western or isolationist nationalism, China is able to see its ascending role in world affairs, and that ascendance is mostly based on its own capacity.

Nevertheless, in the 1990s, while the essence of the positive nationalism of the 1980s was kept intact, there were several adjustments in its latest stage. First of all, much greater emphasis was assigned to military modernization. The other change was the rise of popular nationalism. Although the government can still exert overall control of the nationalism discourse, it cannot monopolize it anymore. The existence of this unofficial popular nationalism is a development that both the Chinese leadership and foreign powers should deal with carefully, although its influence is still constrained and controllable. Thirdly, the new leadership under Mr Hu Jintao started to place a greater emphasis on the promotion of the overseas interests of individual Chinese citizens, along with the national interests of the Chinese nation and state as a whole. They developed a new doctrine, the so-called 'human-based diplomacy' (*renben waijiao*), to take in the needs of individual Chinese citizens and to protect their rights and interests abroad.

Conclusion

With the collapse of the Chinese empire and its supporting culturalist ideology at the turn of the twentieth century, nationalism came to the center of Chinese politics and in its relations with the world. The prominence of various kinds of nationalism throughout the twentieth century indicates the importance of nationalism in

understanding both China's domestic politics and its foreign relations. Nationalism provided the key to obtaining political legitimacy in the pre-PRC period as well as in the PRC's history. Even socialist internationalism could not sideline Chinese nationalism. As the Cultural Revolution demonstrated, the radical form of Chinese nationalism even found its expression in the form of a Chinese version of socialist internationalism.

During the past two decades, Chinese nationalism has taken on the face of positive nationalism. It is nationalist in the sense that it aims to realize the key unsettled national missions: economic development, nation-state building, political unity and independence, and the greatness of China. It is positive because it has adopted an internationally oriented strategy, emphasizing international cooperation and integration into the global economy. It is positive because it no longer calls for world revolution and the overthrow of the status quo. It is positive because the aspiration of Chinese nationalism is so designed that the achievement of the Chinese national agenda would also be able to contribute to the general welfare of the region and of the world at large.