

China's Rise Challenges Democracy

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the view that a superpower post-Mao China is suddenly challenging the unique hyperpower of America for global supremacy. Instead, it shows that China has long been a world power. What is new in the post-Mao era is, first, the soft power capacity of China to make authoritarianism seem better than democracy, and, second, the capacity of the CCP regime to contribute to a roll-back of democracy globally. The unanswered question is why the OECD democracies are incapable of recognizing, let alone responding to, authoritarian China's challenge to democracy world-wide.

CHINA AS A WORLD POWER

The conventional wisdom has China suddenly rising to become a great power only after Mao Zedong died in 1976. China is said to have risen because the new paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, opened China to the dynamism of the world market in 1978-1979. In fact, the 1949 unification of China, which made CCP leader Mao into China's second great unifier, Qin Shi Huang the Second, had already made China a world power in 1949. The PRC's 1950 alliance with Stalin's Soviet Union changed the world's balance of power. When Mao, but a few years later, broke with the Soviet Union to try to make China the leader of the world anti-imperialist movement, that again changed the world balance of power. Another large global re-balancing occurred at the start of the 1970s when Mao found that Brezhnev's militaristic Soviet Russia, which had sent troops into Czechoslovakia, and which would soon act militarily in Ethiopia, Angola and Afghanistan, constituted an immediate threat to the CCP regime. Mao then turned to America's Nixon administration to help deter Brezhnev.

In addition, Mao correctly understood that Nixon came to China in 1972, in part, because the USA no longer was the world's sole hyperpower. America experienced a run on the dollar in the late 1960s. Nixon's ending of the dollar's fixed linkage to gold on August 15, 1971 revealed that the dollar-backed Bretton Woods system created in 1944 could no longer be supported by U.S. wealth. At the end of WW II, with all the other industrial powers devastated by the ravages of war, America then truly was a hyper power, controlling most of the world's wealth, production, and gold. But, because the Bretton Woods's institutions and policies facilitated great growth for nations which plugged into them, both Japan and West Europe rose. The four East Asian tigers – South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore – similarly benefited from Bretton Woods advantages. By 1971, the international system was multi-polar. When Kissinger went to China in 1971, Mao was informed of Nixon's view that there were five world powers – America, China, Europe, Japan and Russia.

In the 1970s, led by Saudi Arabia, petro-states also rose. There were now six global centers of power. Analysts in the 1980s, focused on a declining America and a multi-polar world. Clearly, America has not suddenly declined as a result of the 2008 financial crash. That misleading view must be dismissed to understand the actual impact of post-Mao China's economic rise on global politics.

Confusion exists because in 1991 a confluence of ephemeral events created the impression that America was once again the global hyperpower. The January 1991 walkover by an American-led military against Saddam Hussein's overextended, weak military which had invaded Kuwait led to a misperception of omnipotent America might.

The reality was clarified by George W. Bush's subsequent self-wounding 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Adding to the 1991 view of America as a hyperpower was the puncturing of a Japanese financial bubble in 1991. It seemed that America's economic challenger had failed. That misperception obscured the reality that Japan was still an export powerhouse, that Asian development state policies were still successful, and that Japan remained formidable, the world's second largest economy.

In China in 1991, anti-reform conservatives halted China's economic rise. It was renewed in January 1992 by reform dictator Deng Xiaoping. China's fabulous post 1978 rise would then continue unabated. The petro-states seemed powerless in 1991 because energy prices were momentarily low. In 1991, in addition, the Soviet Union imploded, making it seem that Russia was a pitiful state being "Africanized." Russia's post 1998 rise could not be imagined. As Yeltsin in 1991 momentarily moved in the direction of democracy, it seemed to many that America and democracy had won globally.

In short, the essentials that made for a multipolar world in the 1970s and were presuppositional in the 1980s actually still operated in the 1990s. The 1991 notion of a hyperpower America was a myth, although given the events of 1991, it is easy to understand why so many were fooled into thinking that America was, as in 1944, the sole hyperpower.

In 1991, China's rapid rise was virtually inconceivable. What matters are the purposes advanced by China's new economic clout. The asymmetry that may be on the horizon is a super power China able, without using inordinate military force, to advance an agenda of making the world safe for the authoritarian CCP regime. Such authoritarian

system continuity is the CCP state's over-riding interest. The evidence summarized below shows that China is succeeding in making an anti-democratic trend the mainstream of international politics.

Susan Shirk does not touch on most of these topics because her focus is war and peace. She obscures the Chinese challenge to democracy because she finds that superpower China is fragile. Shirk is correct that Chinese society is fraught with tensions that explode in numerous instances of localized violence. But those local matters do not undermine the national system. Actually, this contradiction of localized violence and national and international power are reminiscent of England and America during their rise. The suffering of the English working class was well known to Karl Marx and Charles Dickens. General strikes were called. Still, no matter the vicissitudes at the societal level, national level success made 19th century England a hyperpower. The state is semi-autonomous and not an immediate reflection of societal contradictions.

The same story of societal pains and nation-state success was true of the USA during its rise. American society was fraught with nasty anti-foreign, anti-labor, and anti-black violence. It was the age of the Ku Klux Klan and worker sit-ins taking over factories. But the nation-state level remained stable and the international rise to world power continued unabated. So it is with China.

In short, the many real problems of Chinese society, which are accurately described by Shirk in her wonderful book, do not constitute a threat to the CCP state or to China's rise internationally. What is of concern is how a world power, authoritarian China, uses its prestige and clout to oppose human rights and democracy world-wide.

THE GLOBAL DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY

Either the so-called Third Wave of democracy has ended or it was, from the outset, a partially misleading concept which obscured how the era following the end of the Bretton Woods system also fostered anti-democratic forces. The new era witnessed the rise of authoritarian petro states and a new financial globalization which facilitated an income polarization that leads elites to fear and oppose democratization, plus the rise to superpower influence of an authoritarian China, a combination which has wounded the prospects for further democratization all around the world (Lynch; Friedman 2008a).

States rise economically because of proper economic policies and institutions and not because of the political regime type. Whatever the actual economic causes of China's economic rise, the authoritarian CCP insisted that not democratizing was central to that amazing success. Russia was said to have failed in the 1990s because it momentarily experimented with fundamental political reform. To Chinese analysts, democratization, except in historically peculiar circumstances, tended to bring chaos, as with the centuries following the French revolution, or as with the continuing societal violence in democratic India, or as with post-Tito Yugoslavia. Outside observers increasingly accept the Chinese explanation that authoritarianism was a secret of economic success, although no systemic social science study buttresses that claim.

The ordered liberty of constitutional governance was stigmatized by China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, as "western-style stuff." "Multi-party elections" were characterized as a source of "chaos" which the American government supposedly promoted precisely because Washington wanted to stop a rise of a China that could otherwise challenge American global dominance. China's goal, according to the chair of the CPPCC on January 16, 2009 was to "build a solid defense against the Western Two-

party or Multi-party system; against the Two Houses, Three Power Center System [division of power into executive, legislative and judicial branches] and various other wrong ideas” (Hsiao, 1.2). The CCP purpose is to legitimate and sustain its authoritarian order.

Authoritarian regimes all over the planet have cited the Chinese case to show they were correct to resist pressures (e.g., EU and IFI conditionalities) to democratize. A conservative American analyst agreed. “The larger lesson, as we think about future efforts to reform the Middle East and combat extremism, is that the Chinese model probably works best” (Brooks). A leading conservative columnist concluded that the age of expanding liberties “is over” (Caldwell). “There clearly is such a thing as benevolent despotism” (Harris). *Financial Times* columnist Martin Wolf asked, “Is the international order created by the western powers after the Second World War obsolete and if so....[m]ight the authoritarian capitalism of China replace it”?

As a rich person is presumed to be smart and good-looking, so, with China’s economic success, it is natural that authoritarian governments find the CCP regime’s story of a link between authoritarianism and growth to be credible. With authoritarianism legitimated, most careful observers of democracy’s fate see China’s anti-democratic project winning globally.

Larry Diamond, a leading analyst and promoter of democracy, finds, in a 2008 volume, that the rise of an authoritarian China is globally transforming. Combined with the Bush administration’s disaster in Iraq, understood as the consequence of democracy promotion, China’s impressive rise persuades governments and analysts to look for useful lessons in authoritarian China and not in democratic America. Diamond finds that the

Deng government's June 4, 1989 crushing of China's nation-wide democracy movement showed that the CCP's "authoritarian rule can endure for a very long time." Indeed, China's "resilient form of capitalist authoritarianism" can dominate an economically dynamic Asia, the world's fastest growing region. This authoritarian-dominated "Asia will determine the global fate of democracy" (Diamond, pp. 224, 211 and 212).

Powerhouse "China's continuing rise...under authoritarian rule...could inspire other non-democratic governments...to follow the model of capitalism without democracy....China unquestionably holds the key to further democratization of the region and other parts of the world" (Shin, p. 121). "The bad news" "about democracy's prospects...in Asia...is truly awful....In China, one-party control remains tight...." Roland Rich, an Australian who heads the U.N. Democracy Fund finds "that 'China is the core civilization of Pacific Asia.'" Therefore, "it is difficult to see [how] a civilizational consensus in favor of democracy can emerge" as long as the CCP regime persistently opposes democratization (Limaye, pp. 169 and 172).

Virtually no serious analyst differs. As Michael Signor put it in his study of "The Fight to Save Democracy from its Worst Enemies," "democracy teetered. Authoritarian China continued its meteoric rise..." (p. 20). In 2009, the director of research at Freedom House found that "Global freedom suffered its third year of decline in 2008." The data revealed a "gathering authoritarian pushback" against the forces of freedom. All around the world, there was a "growing influence of...authoritarian states." From the point of view of Freedom House, in the Asia-Pacific region, "the most disappointing development...was the failure of China to enact significant democratic reforms" (Pauddington, pp. 93, 95, 105, 103). But why should China or others democratize if, as

Diamond finds, these authoritarian regimes deliver “booming development, political stability, low levels of corruption, affordable housing and a secure pension system” (Diamond, p. 25)?¹

An article in *Foreign Affairs* found that the democratic project, because of the rise of China, was in trouble. Compared to China’s way, is democracy “as effective in efficiently creating just and peaceful...[societies]?...China, a nondemocratic state, has had the greatest success meeting the basic needs of its people and pulling them out of poverty in the past 20 [sic 30] years...the simple fact [is] that in many societies political legitimacy is a function of performance....The 366 million Chinese who lifted themselves out of poverty in a single generation have a...narrative...that emphasizes state control of economic growth at the expense of political freedoms...hundreds of millions in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia who experimented with freedom, democracy, and free enterprise...are poorer, sicker, and more likely to die in violent conflict than they were 30 years ago....State-led economies that consciously rid themselves of democratic freedoms are no longer assumed incapable of producing great wealth” (Jentleson, pp. 45, 46).

The success of China is taken to prove the superiority of authoritarianism. An Asian Development Bank labor specialist concludes that authoritarian China can remove obstacles to growth that “Indian democracy” cannot (Pilling 2008). Authoritarianism is found to be an advantage for growth. According to Fareed Zakaria, that is why China outpaces India. “[N]ot having to respond to the public has often helped Beijing carry out

¹ China actually experiences a very high and cruel level of corruption and does not enjoy a national pension system.

its strategy.”² What China has done “would be impossible in a democracy” (Zakaria 2008, pp. 95, 96).

China’s authoritarianism is increasingly treated as a secret of success rather than a source of abuses of fundamental human rights. Some now dismiss the promotion of human rights as neo-colonialism (Mamdani). “Just because it is so large, populous and diverse, China can only be held together by authoritarian government”³ (Wintle). It is understandable to a *Financial Times* columnist that a developing country with serious problems such as China “does not allow for the luxury of multi-party elections” (Stephens 2008). Democracy is trivialized as a luxury and not supported as central to a life of dignity.

In short, the economic rise of an authoritarian China has a global impact in favor of authoritarianism by demonstration effect and by the assumption by others of a link between political regime type and economic performance that lends credence to the authoritarian regime’s self-legitimization.

DEFEATING DEMOCRACY WORLD-WIDE

But far more is happening. Because the CCP regime imagines the spread of democracy as a direct threat to its very survival, and to China’s rise to global glory, Beijing promotes the cause of rolling-back democracy and human rights all around the world. Since the 1989 democracy movement in China, followed by the 1989-90 democratization of Leninist party dictatorships in Eastern and Central Europe, and the

² Actually, analysts find that the regime has been compelled to heed the opinion of the nationalists it has fostered for legitimacy. It even feels compelled to respond to public outrage against abuses of the powerless by the powerful.

³ Actually, democratic India, whose economy is also doing well is just as populous and far more diverse.

disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 which lost Moscow its superpower status, connected to a momentary attempt at democratization in Russia, the CCP leadership has taken as a major threat an American or Western attempt to topple CP regimes globally which is supposedly aimed ultimately at China. The CCP leadership therefore imagines itself as defending against an assault on its very survival. It fears that any concessions to the forces of democracy and human rights will, as with the Solidarity movement in Poland, lead to the undermining of CP rule.

The CCP regime sees efforts by the OECD democracies in China to promote constitutional law or to expand the space of civil society or to support NGO work as a continuation of the John Foster Dulles Cold War policy of rolling-back Communism by undermining CP rule through the encouragement of a “peaceful evolution” to democracy. The CCP imagines itself as on the defensive against an “aggressive” democratic world led by the USA which is out to establish democracy as a universal value. Within the CCP, “what the political elite most fears is peaceful evolution” into democracy. The CCP leadership finds the democracies working at “weakening its legitimacy.” It responds, in part, by finding democracy an alien threat to “Chinese...culture and...identity” (Li Mingjiang, p. 302). Therefore to save the party, the nation and the culture, the CCP finds a need to defeat democracy, understood as a subversive threat to all that is best for China.

Consequently, Deng in 1993 resisted the attempt of the Clinton administration to condition granting Most Favored Nation trading status to China on its meeting some very minimal human rights standards. Clinton soon conceded to China and abandoned human rights conditionality. Beijing then began to challenge the international human rights movement. In 1997, after Denmark introduced a motion to the U.N.’s Commission on

Human Rights meeting in Geneva to look into the human rights situation in China, the CCP regime dis-invited a Danish trade mission. Denmark suffered. France got the message. It stopped promoting such motions on China. France was immediately rewarded by multi-billion dollar deals in China. Beijing was learning how to use its newly won economic clout against the forces of democracy and human rights. When Washington did not get the message, Beijing persuaded its friends in Africa and elsewhere to vote the USA off the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

The message was that it was pointless and perhaps even counter-productive to pressure China on human rights. Quiet diplomacy was said to be the better way to go. Those conversations became vacuous rituals. Authoritarian China had won.

After defeating the international human rights movement so China could suppress with impunity Tibetan Lama Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, NGO activists trying to help China grapple with AIDS, environmental degradation, and the exploitation of vulnerable Chinese, lawyers trying to defend victims of the state, the Government of China in the late 1990s began to co-opt international organizations to serve the purpose of legitimizing and lending grandeur to the authoritarian Chinese regime. The Beijing regime won leadership positions in the International Labor Organization despite a CCP policy of crushing attempts to freely organize labor unions in China which would defend worker interests (Kent), the absolute antithesis of ILO purposes. Likewise, the CCP, taking a leadership role on the U.N. Human Rights Council, got the Council to bracket issues of political and civil rights and instead to concentrate on matters such as a right to development. The result, according to Yong Deng, is that, on universally recognized human rights, “the PRC has pursued a broad revisionist strategy” (Deng, Yong, p. 89).

The most important audience for the CCP regime's discrediting of human rights is the Chinese people themselves. They are propagandized to see the international human rights movement as an anti-China plot of neo-colonialists trying to smear, divide and weaken China. As a consequence, in 2008, Chinese all over the world, full of patriotic passion, responded to human rights activists during the torch relay preceding the Beijing Olympics, who stood up for an end to a denial of human rights to Tibetans. Congratulating themselves for bullying the human rights supporters into silence, Chinese patriots saw their activism as proof that for "the first time the Chinese people as a whole stood up to the world." A lone Chinese voice speaking up for Tibetan human rights was dismissed as a "race traitor" (Liu and Hewitt).

Beyond a successful defenestration of international human rights, China supported international organizations that did not challenge authoritarian states, in part, to push back against democratizers. This was the case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Central Asia. In Southeast Asia, China would show its displeasure when ASEAN tried to pressure the cruel dictatorship in Myanmar. The PRC had the Chinese delegation walk out and fly to Myanmar to show support for the Burmese military. On North Korea, the one solution to the persistent crisis that authoritarian China rejected was a democratic and unified Korea.

China's anti-democratic pressures were also manifest in Africa. Beijing founded its own organization with African states which excluded the OECD democracies. The CCP regime propagandized African member states against democracy. It undercut the EU policy of conditioning loans on progress against corruption and for human rights, including societal space for citizens organizing NGOs to help grapple with fundamental

problems. Authoritarian African leaders welcomed purportedly “no strings attached” Chinese loans to avoid European conditionalities.⁴ The CCP political elite experienced European anger at the anti-democratic Chinese policy as the hypocrisy of imperialists forced out of control over their former colonies. Since the Chinese view is that their way wins growth and the policies of the democracies bring chaos, Beijing has a good conscience about what it is doing to undermine global efforts promoting democracy and human rights.

China’s anti-democratic policies are similarly pursued among the dozen plus small island nations of the South Pacific. In that region, it is the efforts of Australia to promote constitutional governance which are undermined. China, as with Uzbekistan in Central Asia, globally celebrates authoritarians who defeat democratizers.

The CCP regime was persuaded all over again that this policy was defensive and at one with international law by the NATO use of force in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia. Beijing did not like the OECD democracies using UN PKOs to promote democracy in the new states of the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, to keep UN PKOs from being used for democracy promotion, China has, according to Chinese analysts, become an active participant in UN PKO efforts.

In the early 21st century, when breakthroughs toward democracy occurred in some of the new states of the former Soviet Union, CCP leaders saw these so-called Color Revolutions as an American plot to use NGOs and protests against stolen elections to

⁴ Actually there are strings attached to Chinese monies. The recipient government cannot have official relations with Taiwan. It should vote in international bodies to protect China from investigations and condemnations of its massive human rights abuses.

mobilize people on behalf of genuine democracy.⁵ The Hu Jintao administration then responded by constricting NGO space in China.

Authoritarian China's economic clout has reversed global forces of democratization. In the post-Cold War era, according to Canadian political scientist Guoguang Wu, with economics privileged in OECD countries, "China's success in economic development negatively influences the civil liberties and democracy practiced in the West" because "multinational corporations [Yahoo, Google, Wal-Mart, etc.] [are] vulnerable to Beijing's political pressure." As a result, "Western countries are now prepared to drop human rights issues from their agendas." They respond to PRC threats of Chinese economic retaliation, as when a "Chinese purchasing delegation...snubbed France" in response to the French president meeting with the Dalai Lama. The CCP regime's ability "to assert its economic advantage to the detriment of democratic values among industrial powers" is found by Wu to reverse the Seymour Martin Lipset modernization theory claim that expanding economic wealth promotes democracy (Wu, pp. 81, 83, 86). Democracy is eroding in the democracies.

India felt compelled, as Beijing saw it, to impose "limits on Tibetan fugitives' anti-China activities....Indian officials would...contact the...Tibetan government in-exile before a visit by Chinese leaders to India to request that they refrain from...demonstrations...." (Li Li).

China bullied the Nobel Committee in 2008 not to award its Peace Prize to a human rights promoter languishing in a Chinese prison. The CCP regime similarly

⁵ There is a large scholarly literature on these mobilizations for democracy known as the color revolutions. The perspectives on the issue are quite diverse. Some see the color revolutions as an American disaster of fostering artificial and fragile democracies that will fail and leave behind a mess. Others see color revolution successes as facilitated by domestic forces and not by a democratizing strategy of INGOs.

pressured the EU's Sakhovov Prize Committee. Any institution in a democracy which hosts an event whose speaker's truths upset authoritarians in Beijing risks receiving a threat from a Chinese consulate warning that if the institution does not cancel the event, then the institution could be undermining its linkages inside of China. A person who was born in China but lives in a democracy, should he or she publicly decry the abuses flowing from the CCP's authoritarian practices, risks being silenced as a result of harassment and threats to parents still in China, thereby diminishing the democracy's ability to protect and benefit from the freedoms it offers to its residents. Chinese hacking even wipes out websites in the democracies committed to promoting freedom in China.

During the Olympic torch relay prior to the summer 2008 games in Beijing, democracies conceded to the Chinese insistence that their security people be used, instead of local police. The European satellite company Eutelsat caved into pressures from China and violated the convention under which it operates in order to deny broadcast access to a democratically-oriented Chinese language television broadcaster.

At the Beijing Olympics in August 2008, almost all the major democratic heads of state honored China's leadership with their attendance and by public silence while in China about the regime's systemic abuses of basic human rights. Yet all knew of how the CCP regime denied Lama Buddhist Tibetans of religious freedom. All knew how grieving Sichuanese families seeking redress for the construction industry corruption, in cahoots with local party leaders, which produced death-trap schools that killed their children in an earthquake had been silenced.

The democratic governments debate which concessions to make to Chinese authoritarianism. As long as the Canadian head of state can point to other democracies

whose leaders show respect to the Dalai Lama, the Canadian Prime Minister can honor the Tibetan leader. The policy tendency, however, is to concede to the CCP regime by not seeing the Dalai Lama in the leader's official position (Cobb 2008). Should Ottawa honor the peace-oriented Dalai Lama, who seeks a conciliatory resolution of Tibet's problems by making a deal with the repressive and discriminatory CCP regime? If he treats the Dalai Lama with dignity, the Canadian Prime Minister invites attack for supposedly being "anti-China." The Canadian leader will be mocked for not being a realist, criticized for hurting the country's business dealings with China (Godoy 2008). The CCP regime has used its economic clout for authoritarian political purposes.

In Australia, as Canada, another middle range power, a Labor MP described China's policy expectation in Australia "as a 'pre-emptive kow-tow.'" That is, Australia, to get along with the CCP regime, should be and is "motivated by the desire to propitiate Beijing," to make "concessions to increased diplomatic pressure from China" (Atkinson, 102 and 241-3), although Australia, as most of China's neighbors, also hedges.

In order to enjoy good relations with world power China, the OECD democracies feel compelled to erode democratic commitments. The EU pulls away from democratic Taiwan and considers ending its ban on arms sales to an authoritarian China.

Democracy is ever more on the defensive. The PRC is investing many billions of dollars in an effort of media persuasion. Since China's rise and deep international involvement have only recently begun, a not unlikely future is that peoples will ever more credit the Beijing claim that its economic success is predicated on its authoritarianism, what the CCP refers to as gradualism, meaning the permanent postponement of democratization. Much as in the post World War One era, when fascism

and Stalinism seemed to offer solutions for unemployment that democracies practicing pre-Keynes classical economics could not, the authoritarian alternative is winning.

Finding itself an ethical global power leading the world in a superior moral direction, the CCP regime makes palpably clear that *a sine qua non* of good relations with China is abandoning efforts to promote democracy and human rights in China. That is the price of stable relations with China.

In the official CCP story, democracy is a cause of chaos. In this narrative, the 2009 democratic elections in Iran brought unrest and democracy brought Hitler to power. Numerous similar tales are told. To me these ideational constructions are historically absurd and politically self-serving. In Iran, it was anti-democrats who chose fraud and violence. In Germany, Hitler destroyed democracy. But, and this is key, the official Chinese narratives increasingly seem persuasive and facilitate concessions by other actors to authoritarian Chinese interests.

The dominant narrative is that China deserves to be conceded to in order to restore China to its natural global centrality. Supposedly, China lost its global centrality because of imperialist aggression and that all that is now happening is that a once-victimized and always defensive China is returning to its rightful place in world affairs. The world tends to credit the Chinese story. China's self-presentation is ever more persuasive, helping the CCP regime in rolling back the forces of democracy and human rights. The democracies feel pressured to compensate for their alleged past historical wrongs to China and therefore to concede to China today and tomorrow. They do not cooperate to defend democracy against the Chinese roll-back of democracy and human rights. After all, the official CCP story is that it is China which is merely defending

against aggressive efforts by the democracies to subvert the admirable Chinese political system which is winning China its superpower status. The democracies are called on to drop an anti-China offensive.

WHY THE DEMOCRACIES CONCEDE TO AUTHORITARIAN CHINA

That the OECD democracies concede to or appease China's anti-democratic foreign policies seems over-determined. The PRC wins because of a demonstration effect and the persuasiveness of its narrative about the sources of China's success. The CCP regime is not subverting democratic regimes or invading and toppling them. To be sure, Beijing applies lots of diplomatic pressure and economic muscle to get what it wants, but so do all world powers.

In addition, OECD illusions facilitate success for authoritarian China. Even though the CCP regime will not, for reasons of basic regime survival, subordinate itself to international organizations whose rules promote democracy and human rights, OECD analysts and leaders have persuaded themselves that China is joining such organizations and learning to play by those rules. In addition, the OECD democracies have embraced a policy of what some EU analysts call "unconditional engagement." This is a view in which engaging, accommodating and even appeasing China is alright because China's economic rise engenders new forces which will compel China to democratize, especially the interests of an educated, urbanized, propertied or professionalized middle class.

Lipset's hypothesis, which posits that modernization fosters political freedom, reigns supreme (Gilley). A September 2007 article in the APSA's *Perspectives on Politics* argued, while "the international norm seems to emphasize democratization," a direction, not a political system, "China's system and actions fit that profile" because it is

“liberalizing – albeit at a slow pace...” “...as China opens, the increase in travel and education abroad, the spread of free speech and ideas on the internet, and experiments with even limited voting and choice are expected [!] to inspire a taste for liberty that feeds democratizing impulses that will more happily align China with international standards” (Legro, pp. 518, 520). Or, as another analyst put it, it is “likely” that China “will move gradually in the direction of more open, law-based and representative governance” (Kroeber, p. 32). Similar arguments are made by political leaders and China specialists. Societal liberalization that expands private spaces in China and is crafted by the CCP so as not to threaten the unaccountable power of the authoritarian regime is treated as proof of inevitable political democratization.

The assurances of mainstream analysts on China’s guaranteed transition to democracy misled. In fact, political repression in China, according to the detailed reports of internationally-recognized human rights groups, has intensified in the era of Hu Jintao starting in 2002. EU analysts said in 2009 that unconditional engagement had failed. A leading American political scientist who studies regime transition finds, upon examining up-to-date empirical data, that “There is...very little evidence to support the argument, often made by Western policy-makers for relatively self-serving reasons, that the ‘right’ kinds of policies can encourage dictators to become democracies” (Bunce, 3). During the 1990s many asserted that the new information technologies would automatically democratize China. In fact, “modernization need not entail political liberalization “ (Gershman; Moore).

Market success has stabilized the CCP’s authoritarian rule (Gallagher). Top analysts of Chinese politics conclude that “China’s authoritarian ruling elite is

determined to hold on to power and has been smart enough to take steps countering the liberalizing effects of economic development” (Pei). The CCP has been “effective in adapting” to diverse challenges and “will continue a process of adaptation” (Fewsmith). “The rise of [an authoritarian] communist China in tandem with these [market globalization] trends suggests an inadequacy of any naïve identification of the two processes,” market globalization and political democratization (Whitehead, p. 13).

The OECD democracies, however, have persuaded themselves of the validity of narratives, such as the notion of a fragile China, which have hidden from their governments and citizens that China is a stable and resilient authoritarian regime whose foreign policy of rolling-back the forces of human rights and democracy has been winning. Still, however much Beijing works to crush forces of democratization, the CCP leadership understands that democracy is a good sounding word in the world community. The CCP used to call its system a democratic dictatorship. The CCP argues that its dictatorship is more democratic than merely “Western” democracy. The CCP does not block out the work of foreign well-wishers who treat the CCP’s system of “village self-administration,” trying to use elected village committees to keep the local party committee from ignoring the policies of the center, as village democracy and a harbinger of national democracy.

In reality, the regime will squash autonomous efforts from civil society, e.g. Falungong or NGO activists or lawyers defending citizen rights, that actually seem to have the potential to burgeon into a pro-democracy movement. The regime monitors, constrains and manipulates the internet to prevent its promoting of democracy. The authoritarian government nips pro-democratic parties in the bud. The CCP is serious

about its effort to defeat the forces of democracy, even as it, at the very same time, preens before the world as a “real” democracy.

Beijing tries to co-opt the term democracy. It describes its foreign policy purposes as the “democratization of international relations.” This is a serious IR concept. It refers to the tendency, in a new age of globalization, for citizens to have a larger impact across borders, thereby increasing societal participation, i.e. “democratizing” international relations by bringing societal actors into play (Omelichera; Smith). Here one should think of the activities of Green Peace and numerous other environmental movement organizations, or Amnesty International, or Doctors Without Borders and Reporters Without Borders. These INGOs (international non-governmental organizations) are even trying to open up the WTO to make it possible for INGOS to file friends of the court briefs before judges hearing the parties to WTO disputes.

The CCP regime, in invoking the notion of a “democratization of international relations” as a Chinese goal, however, refers to none of the above IR concepts, and for good reasons. INGOs are highly constrained and localized in China. They are compelled to serve the purposes of the authoritarian state. What Beijing does mean by its championing of the democratization of international relations is that China is committed to reducing the global influence of the OECD democracies, imagined as undemocratically running the world. The goal of Beijing is to defeat OECD democratic norms so that the agenda of the authoritarian Chinese regime and its friends can better prevail. That is, the Chinese state’s commitment to the democratization of international relations is a policy in fact to counter the influence of the democracies in international politics. In response to

European human rights efforts, “The dream expressed by some Chinese is ‘Bringing Europe to its knees’” (Cabestan, p. 18).

China’s appropriation of the label democracy in order to oppose democracy was apparent during the 2008 summer Beijing Olympics. Part of China’s offer to the IOC in its bid to host the games was that the CCP regime would improve human rights. In fact, the regime, given its desire to present China to the world as an embodiment of authoritarian harmony, actually intensified repression so that no Chinese would gain an audience by calling the world’s attention in Beijing in August 2008 to state-protected criminality, corruption or cruelty. When the IOC prodded Beijing to fulfill its commitments to allow demonstrators space, it set up a demonstration zone and a registration procedure. Any Chinese who tried to register or protest, however, was detained.

The PRC, nonetheless, was a great success in availing itself of the honor of hosting the Olympics in order to stage a spectacular for the world in which authoritarian hierarchy was presented in a positive and persuasive manner. The IOC never criticized the PRC for reneging on its commitments about human rights. Instead, China was congratulated for its great success. Chinese narratives are increasingly hegemonic.

The grand narrative of Chinese nationalism, as mentioned above, describes how a peaceful and defensive great power China was made poor and weak by capitalist imperialism in the modern age starting with the Opium War in 1840. One might never know that reform leader Deng Xiaoping (as Karl Marx) dismissed the Opium War myth of China’s sudden weakness. Deng promoted world market integration and blamed self-sequestration for China’s drastic decline. He explained on October 22, 1984 that

“Isolation would prevent any country’s development. We [Chinese] suffered from this and so did our forefathers. However, it was probably a case of an open door policy...when [Admiral] Zheng He was sent on voyages...by the Ming Emperor Zhu Di....The Ming dynasty entered a decline with the death of Emperor Zhu Di....As a result, China fell into poverty and ignorance. Later, we [i.e. Mao Zedong *et al*] closed our doors and economic development slowed” (Deng Xiaoping, p. 61).

Nonetheless, Chinese patriots are taught to imagine their task as righting the wrongs done to China since the Opium War. The volume on “The Beginnings of Modern China, 1840-1864,” in Zhang Haipeng’s ten volume *Comprehensive History of Modern China* declares that “The modern age...starts in 1840,” that is, with the Opium War. Chinese patriots are taught that the modern world has, from its initial impact on China, the Opium War, been rigged unfairly against China. Modern Chinese history is “150 years of invasions and turmoil, from the Opium wars...which left China far behind the West” (Eckholm).

Of course, there is little nice to be said about what the British narco-traffickers did. They fought to get a share of China’s huge opium business. But the CCP narrative invents other evils. In the Chinese popular imagination, in 1840 Britain was “a government that saw fit to turn a nation of healthy Chinese into Opium addicts just so it could force the Chinese [sic – the Manchu Qing dynasty Aisingoro family regime] government to trade with it.” “British merchants, backed by their government’s gun boats, had twice gone to war to introduce [sic] opium into China” (Tan, p. 41).

Actually, “Opium was forbidden by the Chinese [sic, actually, Manchu] emperors after 1729 in an attempt to protect their subjects” (Pomeranz and Topik, p. 80). But if

mass consumption of opium worried the Manchu emperor in 1729, England had nothing to do with China's opium problem, since Britain's influence on China only began more than a century later.

A distant little Britain in the 19th century could only defeat the great Qing because self-isolation had helped weaken Manchu rule. Opium was not an 1840 British imposition. Opium had long since become quintessentially Chinese. By the Tang dynasty, Chinese took opium as a medicine. Over time, the commodity's role in a hierarchical and marketized society evolved. By the Ming, alchemists purveyed opium as an aphrodisiac. The commodity became a leisure-time pleasure of the court and elites. By the 18th century, as Chinese returning from Southeast Asia introduced pipe-smoking as a way of ingesting opium to Qing dynasty subjects, the highly marketized society facilitated opium's transformation to a mainstay of a popular commodity culture, as were tea, sugar and tobacco.

A basic change in elite attitudes came when the poor began to inhale. The rulers then redefined smoking as a degraded, criminal act, similar to alcohol abuse. Reading opium's history among Sinified people as Mao did, as a Western imperialist imposition that blocked China's modernization, hides 1,000 plus years of usage and popularity (Zheng). The Opium War mythos of victimization and revenge, resonates in the Chinese popular imagination such that the actual story, Deng's story of China's self-sequestration and self-wounding, does not inform the Chinese nationalist imagination.

The regime has created a tiger and is riding precariously on that man-eating beast of vengeful nationalism. As a result, the regime is continually denounced inside of China

for not using its new-found might to stand up to the other world powers and right historical wrongs. Such patriotic passions could yet put in jeopardy China's peaceful rise.

APPEASEMENT?

Everything written above is factual. It should not be controversial. What follows may seem a tad provocative, although it is ordinary political science analysis.

In popular consciousness in the OECD democracies, British Prime Minister Chamberlain's failed appeasement policy at Munich makes appeasement synonymous with the rise of Hitler and the out-break of WW II. But to political scientists (Powell; Ripsman), appeasement is an ordinary tactic of realism. It is the policy of a temporarily weak party to buy time and make good use of that time by concessions to a stronger party; the concessions need not be territory. In this sense, China sees itself as having often appeased the United States and then made good use of the time bought so China could rise and compete with America on global policies. Foreigners who echo the CCP Opium War mythos of China as a great and uniquely peaceful state until undermined by western imperialism in the Opium War are treated as the wise observers who truly understand China. The OECD democracies are expected to act accordingly. They are expected to appease a rising authoritarian China. I support policies toward China of engagement, accommodation, and even appeasement. Appeasement is a failure only if the appeasers do not use the time bought by their concessions to successfully avoid worse evils. If the administration of Taiwan President Ma preserves Taiwan's democratic autonomy through concessions to China, it should be judged a successful policy of appeasement. Appeasement is an analytical term, not a judgmental label.

Despite China's continuing rise and successful roll-back of human rights and democracy world-wide, surely the OECD democracies should not be seeking war with China. There is nothing wrong with a policy of appeasing China as long as the time bought is well-used. But what the data in this chapter establishes is that that time has not been well-used. Instead, the OECD governments, embracing the assumptions of Lipset's modernization theory, waited for the magic of the market to transform an authoritarian China into a democratic China. For the reasons discussed above, no such transition seems likely in any immediately foreseeable future.

It is increasingly unlikely that the OECD democracies can cooperate to respond to China's world-wide challenge to democracy. A proof of China's soft power is that China increasingly is not even categorized as an authoritarian state.

From the point of view of the OECD democracies, there are two kinds of political systems, democratic and authoritarian, with a clear separation, a threshold separating one from the other. Democracies don't have political prisoners or a fear of repression because of peaceful activism. Authoritarian states act in a diametrically opposite way.

But as the Chinese political leadership sees it, it would be absurd to have China in the same category of political regime type as Burma or North Korea or Zimbabwe or Uzbekistan. Academic classification increasingly reflects China's perspectives. It just seems ridiculous that a dynamic and successful China that ends poverty, becomes a superpower, provides for achievements in space and the Olympics should be put in a negatively marked category of authoritarianism.

Therefore democracy and authoritarianism are ever less dichotomous variables. Instead they are end points on a spectrum. No country is truly democratic. Really existing

democracies are closer to some medium point. And China itself is imagined as situated far away from the bad authoritarian, far end of the spectrum, much closer to the democracies. Given this categorization of the Chinese political system as closer to the democracies, the prospect of an international mobilization against an authoritarian China becomes almost inconceivable. A risen authoritarian China has won. Appeasement seems inevitable. So does the roll-back of the democratic project.

The big question for the democracies then is, what now? Are there no obstacles to authoritarian China continuing to impose its value preferences on international institutions and political regimes? Surely, the democracies should not seek a new Cold War with China. It is correct to welcome China's economic rise which has done so much to raise the living standards of the Chinese people.

This chapter does not offer an answer to the policy question. It offers only analysis, not prescription. But I would like to legitimate a conversation about whether better policies to defend the democratic project are possible. The alternative this chapter shows is a continuing global roll-back of human rights and democracy by a CCP regime under pressure by super-patriots to act against the democracies on the basis of a nationalistic narrative of victimization and revenge.

A former British diplomat likewise treats seriously how China's global rise is defeating democracy globally and concludes that because China is "a dangerous opponent of democracy internationally," "democratic countries should defend their own democratic values in dealing with this country....it is a legitimate and realistic diplomatic task for the democratic states to defend their values robustly both in their bilateral

dealings with China, and in multilateral fora” (Garside, p. 131). But how? The major purpose of this chapter is simply to legitimate that question.

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