In-between Order

An Assessment of US and Chinese Programs of International Order

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We are confident that the relations between China and India will improve with each passing day and that certain outstanding problems which are ripe for solution will be solved smoothly for sure. Soon after the founding of New China, we established the principles of ways to handle Sino-Indian relations, namely, the principles of mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. There are bound to be problems between two big nations, particularly two big neighbouring countries like China and India. So long as these principles are followed, any outstanding problem which is ripe for settlement can be put on the negotiating table.

—Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, 1953

Zhou Enlai's remarks reveal that coexistence has formed part of China's foreign relations since Mao's proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Nevertheless, only after the Cold War did coexistence contribute to determining right and wrong international conduct at the global level. By contrast, US aspirations for integration on the basis of liberal values have influenced international conduct for the duration of the post–World War II period.

This article argues that contemporary international order is dominated by conflicting US liberal integrationist and Chinese coexistence principles. The most pervasive consequence of the United States' aspirations for international integration—its post–World War II efforts at constructing an alliance system—is based not merely on momentarily overlapping interests but also on common values of liberal democracy and human rights. The most obvious consequence of China's aspirations for international coexistence is

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its efforts since the beginning of the reform and opening-up period in the late 1970s to convince international society that China's rise to great-power status would remain peaceful through its engagement in multilateral security institutions all over the world.[1]

In the vacuum left by the Soviet implosion in the post–Cold War era, the liberal integration perspective has been revised to suit the changing international context, and the coexistence perspective has been translated into a program of global international order. The US program involves the right to use a broad interpretation of international norms to counter grave violations of civil and political rights.[2] The argument rests on the notion that serious threats towards the peace and security of individuals spill over to the international realm and threaten international peace and security. US efforts to revise international order entail the use of existing provisions of international law to establish new legal precedents to promote fundamental liberal notions of democracy and human rights at the global level. The viability of the US alliance system in all regions of the world and the support, especially in developed countries, for US proposals imply that the United States can continue to advocate and implement its program of international order. In particular, the strength of the US alliance system allows Washington sufficient overseas influence to implement its version of international order. US implementation proceeds, even in times of crisis when its policies meet with considerable and prolonged criticism, as when the United States decided to go to war against Iraq in 2003.

In response, China has presented an alternative, revised version of existing UN Charter provisions founded in its peaceful coexistence principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in the internal affairs of others, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.[3] The Chinese coexistence concept of international order is a program useful for a would-be great power that does not yet command the military and economic capabilities of a full-blown great power but that has already obtained political influence at great-power level. Coexistence engenders extensive policy coordination for purposes of conflict management and promotes the emergence of a system of comanagement of global security issues between great powers that subscribe to different programs of international order. The Chinese version of international order also draws on existing provisions of international law.

At the center of the Chinese proposal are the principles of absolute sovereignty and nonintervention adjusted to demands from the developing part of the world for enhanced regionalization and specialization of global security management. In the absence of a Chinese alliance system, Beijing relies predominantly on multilateral institutions based on the UN system across the world's regions to spread its version of international order. China's growing role in UN-based multilateral institutions engaged in security governance and support, especially in developing countries, for Chinese policies on global security issues in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) indicate the attractions of the Chinese program of international order.

The article first discusses the US liberal integrationist and the Chinese coexistence programs of international order. It then addresses the issue of US and Chinese strategies for implementing their programs. The article concludes by examining the implications of the findings on order for the dynamics of the international system.

US and Chinese Programs of International Order: Liberalism versus Coexistence

The US Liberal Program of International Order

The United States took the lead in formulating Western political aspirations as a program aiming at enhancing international integration.[4] The spread of the liberal ideas of civil rights, democracy, and market economy represents the long-term means for preserving the United States' position of dominance. The liberal idea of civil rights arises from the demand for respecting the autonomy of individuals.[5] A society based on individual autonomy requires the protection of civil rights by means of law to ensure the right to life and property as well as the obligation to respect agreements. No entity—not even the state—ranks above the law, and as such, the state apparatus itself must respect the law. The liberal idea of democracy holds that the people are sovereign and that the will of the people is respected by means of the right to elect representatives for the management of political authority. In essence the liberal democratic model implies that adult members of society determine what constitutes the good life and how it is realized. The liberal idea of the market identifies economic growth as the road to

prosperity. This economic philosophy suggests that the state plays a minor role in the economy, which allows the decisions of market agents to engender the most effective use of resources.

The US interpretation of the concepts of civil rights, democracy, and market economy after the Cold War involves the idea of globalizing these liberal concepts to ensure the strengthening of international peace, security, and prosperity. Economic globalization is not a fundamentally contested issue because of its acceptance worldwide, by and large. The financial and economic crisis of the late 2000s has not given rise to alternatives but to suggestions for revisions in market economic structures so as to make them more robust against abuse. According to some analysts, governments cannot resist the tides of international trade and finance; rather, they compete for the benefits of globalization by accommodating themselves as much as possible to the preferences of market agents to enhance their wealth. In trade this means opening the economy to foreign competition through commercial exchange and direct investment. In finance it means creating an environment of sound monetary and fiscal policies to sustain the confidence of creditors and portfolio managers.[6] Economic globalization is a more pervasive feature in terms of trade than of finance, but the trend points consistently towards enhanced financial interpenetration. Consequently, at present the principal US concern deals with maintaining the United States as the economic world leader by means of advancing proposals for economic freedom through open markets.

Liberal democratic and legal globalization, however, has yet to take root. The United States still believes that it has a mission to build and preserve a community of free and independent nations with governments that answer to their citizens and reflect their own cultures. Thus, the US national security strategy of January 2012 states that the United States seeks "a just and sustainable international order where the rights and responsibilities of nations and peoples are upheld, especially the fundamental rights of every human being."[7] Furthermore, because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to peace. The United States' belief in the concept of democratic peace means that international peace is best engendered by democracies governed by law. Such states are less likely to go to war against each other because they consider themselves legitimate entities behaving in accordance with common rules of state

conduct.[8] The United States may trade in the goal of spreading democracy in exchange for stability in the short term, but it remains the long-term objective of US governments. Even the Obama administration, which exhibits tendencies to prioritize stability rather than democratization, fights terrorism and rogue regimes such as Gadhafi's rule in Libya by military means in the first instance to create preconditions for the spread of liberal democracy in the long run, arguing that freedom defined as democracy offers the most reliable foundation for peace and international stability.

One central element in Washington's program of international order, the US alliance system, originates from the Cold War threat of Chinese and Soviet expansion and does not merely encompass the customary understanding of alliances as pacts of mutual military assistance. Rather, the United States developed an extensive system of alignments whose iron core consisted of the actual military alliances. Initially, the Soviet Union was surrounded by a virtual power vacuum along its entire periphery—from Scandinavia and the British Isles, along the rimlands of Eurasia, to Japan and Korea. The United States therefore established and maintained a substantial military presence in and close to the chief Eurasian danger areas, projecting US power across the water barriers.[9] After the Cold War, the US alliance—or, perhaps more precisely, alignment system—remained in place. One of the fundamental strategic objectives of the United States' national defense involves strengthening the country's security relationships with traditional allies and developing new international partnerships, working to increase the capabilities of its partners to contend with common challenges. The US overseas military presence operates in and from four forward regions: Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian Littoral, and the Middle East / Southwest Asia. The United States has embarked on a comprehensive realignment of its global defense posture to enable US forces to undertake military operations worldwide, reflecting the global nature of American interests. However, the enhanced prioritization of the Asia-Pacific in the US military force posture testifies to the fact that this region is of primary significance to US interests. As such, the United States must assure partners, dissuade military competition, deter aggression and coercion, and remain capable of taking prompt military action in this region. The continued US ability to perform in these capacities constitutes the structure that aids

Washington's attempt to implement the other aspects of its program of international order.

The Chinese Coexistence Program of International Order

Coexistence is characterized neither by extensive cooperation between status quo powers in an international system marked by integration nor by widespread conflict between revisionist powers in an international system dominated by autarky.[10] Instead, coexistence is a program of international order for rising would-be great powers that do not yet command the military and economic capabilities of a full-blown great power, but who have already obtained political influence at great-power level. Coexistence engenders extensive policy coordination for purposes of conflict management and promotes the emergence of a system of comanagement of global security issues between great powers that subscribe to different programs of international order.

The Chinese idea of coexistence as a strategic concept in Beijing's external relations with global great powers emerged from the US attempt to use military instruments during the 1970s to force China to abandon its revisionist international aspirations, including its independent program of international order. Contrary to Soviet responses to US hegemonic aspirations, China emphasized diplomatic rather than military countermeasures.

The Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 brought the United States and Soviet Union to the brink of war because of Washington's demand that Moscow abandon plans to install medium- and short-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. In the wake of this crisis, the United States abandoned any further attempts to demonstrate to the Soviet Union that all-out nuclear war would be a rational option. Formulation of the strategy of mutual assured destruction (MAD) in the early 1960s by US secretary of defense Robert McNamara created a basis for a US-Soviet strategic dialogue premised on a tacit acknowledgement that nuclear war was an option only between the great powers at the center, targeting each other's cities. MAD vindicated President Dwight Eisenhower's insight that if no one could be sure of surviving a nuclear war, there would not be one.[11]

The strategy allowed Washington to prepare for active commitment in Indochina. US involvement sought to frustrate a Chinese-instigated people's war through the adroit application of US instrumentalities designed to speed

up the transformation of China from an alleged revolutionary, nonrational power into a rational, nonrevolutionary power. The obvious response to this Washington policy towards China would have entailed Beijing's following the Soviet example and building up its strategic nuclear forces to US levels.[12]

Nuclear capabilities at those levels would come at considerable cost due to expenses involved in enriching uranium, but an authoritarian state of China's size would have made this a priority. However, China also would have had concerns about the consequences of acquiring a second-strike intercontinental ballistic missile capability, which would signal its entrance into the club of great powers with the responsibilities and rights of global powers. It remains highly debatable whether China could have carried the costs of the position of a global great power in the 1970s. Rather than nuclear parity, China chose to pursue coexistence. However, only after the Cold War did China obtain sufficient global influence to translate coexistence into a program of international order with significant influence on international conduct.

In its constitution, China defines the five principles of peaceful coexistence as mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in the internal affairs of others, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. On the one hand, the Chinese concept of coexistence is compatible with the global principles of absolute sovereignty, the legal equality of states, and effective territorial control as the legitimate basis of regimes. These principles form the essence of the UN system. This institution for global security management reflects the rules of international conduct, which the Western and Eastern bloc agreed had universal applicability.[13]

Well suited to China's program of international order, the UN system does not devise specific domestic political structures. In addition, China occupies a permanent seat on the UNSC and enjoys veto powers, allowing it to use the UN system as a defensive structure, warding off attempts at making changes to international order that are at odds with its interests. On the other hand, the principles potentially conflict with China's concept of national identity. Chinese nationalism involves a historical understanding of how to define proper international conduct, including a continuous commitment to recover its historically defined territorial rights from the days of the Ming Dynasty. China uses archaeological finds and references to its territorial occupations in ancient history to substantiate such claims and applies the language and practice of international law to give the claims the trappings of

modern legal principles.[14] For example, China has published a map of the South China Sea depicting a tongue-shaped, dashed boundary line that generally follows the 200-meter isobath, considered a traditional sea boundary line by the Chinese. Daniel Dzurek suggests that the traditional sea boundary line, which covers around 80 percent of the South China Sea, defines sovereignty over islands.[15] In addition, China pursues effective control, following the post–World War II practice for sovereignty claims. Examples of initiatives include deployments of military garrisons and the building of cities and airstrips on islands, islets, and reefs in the South China Sea. However, China has never defined the exact course of its claim to maritime space in the South China Sea. Consequently, the extent of China's claim remains unclear.

China manages to reconcile the dilemma between coexistence and national identity issues because it sees its program of international order as a means to an end—the restoration of Chinese superiority—rather than an end in itself. Coexistence is designed for a world consisting of states; as such, the program offers China protection from the threats of foreign powers while Beijing builds up the economic and military capabilities necessary to change the setup of the international realm. Consequently, China does not intend to use the principles to govern international relations permanently, but temporarily, while China restores its former greatness with an eye towards becoming a full-blown economic, military, and political great power comparable to the United States.[16] Upon completion of this process, China will likely reconsider which strategies are useful for pursuing its national interests.

In conclusion, several differences exist between the US and Chinese programs of international order (see table below).

Table. Comparison of US liberal and Chinese coexistence programs of international order

	United States	*China*
Program of international order	Liberalism	Coexistence
Type of power	Status quo	Within-system revisionist
Type of international system	Integration	Comanagement
Great-power relations	Cooperation	Coordination

US and Chinese Strategies for Implementing International Order

Ordinarily, programs of international order would address issues that concern securing state survival under conditions of international anarchy. How can states continue to go about their business of pursuing their interests without destroying the condition of international anarchy, which forms the basis of their political authority? Preservation of the states system requires a framework for international order that regulates the use of force, the control of persons and territory, and the entering into agreements with other political authorities.[17] The first requirement—principles on the use of force—is designed to ensure that peace is the normal condition in an international system in which states enjoy a monopoly on the issue of who holds political authority and, as such, form part of the diplomatic community. The second requirement—diplomacy—concerns the power, will, and intellectual and moral impetus to shape the entire international system in accordance with one's own values. Henry Kissinger points out that the elusive aspect of intellectual and moral impetus, nowadays often called ideational power, is at least as important as the more substantial elements when we address issues of diplomacy and great-power status.[18] Third, influence on international order demands legitimacy in the eyes of other international actors. International legitimacy depends on the collectivity of states' assessment of the righteousness of the designs on international order suggested by a great power. Influence is a function not only of a country's stature but also of its connections.[19] Goodwill with other states and status as a worthy partner form the basis for a state's successful interaction with other states. Reputation is an asset that states cannot afford to take lightly.[20] The fact that states routinely look to the collectivity of states for approval indicates that they invariably attach importance to acceptance of their foreign policy decisions from the diplomatic community.[21] In other words, allies and partners are a necessity if a state wishes to exercise influence on the rules of the game. To avoid the eclipse of common interests due to internal differences, even the most powerful state needs to convince partners that its policies are responsible and feasible.[22] The principles pertaining to a particular order will often be nested in actual state behavior rather than in written agreements since decades or even centuries may pass before all states accept a principle as a legal rule. The remainder of this section addresses the issue of

US and Chinese strategies on the use of force, diplomacy, and legitimacy as they are reflected in their international state practices.

The US Liberal Integrationist Program of International Order

US policies on the use of force, which constitutes one of the fundamental elements of international order, consist of three elements: deterrence, unilateralism, and hegemony. In the post–Cold War era, these three elements have formed the principal strategies for maintaining the US position of dominance in the Asia-Pacific. The United States has redefined all three strategies, long-standing elements of US foreign policy, to suit the international security environment of the post–Cold War era. Deterrence—the principal way that Washington deals with threats—is essentially a psychological instrument, its success measured by events that do not happen. One deters by maintaining a highly reliable ability to inflict unacceptable damage upon an aggressor at any time during the course of an armed exchange, even after absorbing a surprise first strike.[23] Deterrence covers a wide range of policy initiatives and options such as the United States' arms exports and its policy of strategic ambiguity with regard to Taiwan, the permanent US military presence on the Korean peninsula, and the US nuclear deterrent. Washington's post–Cold War definition of unilateralism encompasses the strengthening of existing alliances and the building of strategic partnerships, allowing the United States to reorganize its force posture to increase its flexibility and capabilities of rapid power projection. To implement these plans, the United States deploys permanently ground-stationed forces; forward operating bases with pre-positioned equipment; and facilities for training, exercise, and liaison activities.[24] The unilateral element in these policies is that Washington remains in control of bilateral asymmetrical relations, allowing it to define order on its own terms. The United States' post–Cold War definition of hegemony entails a commitment to maintain a preponderance of power as distinct from a balance of power.[25] This encourages Washington to opt for hegemony through a combination of enforcement and persuasion.

US policies on diplomacy—the second fundamental element of international order—derive from the US alliance system, which rests on the principle of military security guarantees in the event of aggression that threatens the survival of alliance members.[26] This alliance system, which

assists Washington in implementing its program of international order, is more correctly termed an alignment system. Washington's formal allies with whom it has pacts of mutual military assistance include states such as Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, and numerous other great, secondary, and small powers across the world. Moreover, the United States has defense responsibilities for areas such as the Pacific Islands of Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, which are US territories, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia, which have signed compacts of free association. Some countries have no formal alliance with the United States but are close de facto strategic partners. For example, Singapore hosts a contingency of US Pacific Command or the Unified Combatant Command, testifying to its importance in the US alliance system. Taiwan is not a state de jure, but considerable military assistance from the United States and Taipei's participation in the theater missile defense program indicate that it occupies a central position in the US alliance system. Outside this core, the United States has strategic partnerships with states such as Afghanistan and India. Russia is a strategic partner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On the very periphery, the United States has military cooperation agreements with states such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Thus, Washington uses its alliance system, which covers all the world's regions, to assure partners that they form part of the US security umbrella; to deter arms races, aggression, and coercion; and to enable the United States and its allies to take military action in this region. Hence, US dialogue with other states occurs in an institutional setting over which it has extensive control.

Concerning US policies on diplomacy, Washington in the first instance looks to members of its alliance system and in the second instance to multilateral security institutions. The involvement of global and regional organizations such as the UN and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is ad hoc and conditional, depending on their contributions to US security priorities. If their contribution does not compare with the cost, then the United States prefers to rely solely on its alliance system.[27] Washington is concerned about the emergence of multilateral institutions that may tackle security problems without the United States and is anxious that these might duplicate the work of existing institutions. The evolution of exclusionary

regional blocs would greatly challenge US interests.[28] Examples that fall within this category include the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, consisting of Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and the ASEAN+3, which includes Southeast Asia and China, Japan, and South Korea. Despite this concern, the United States remains the dominant power with the most extensive global network of alliances and strategic partnerships.

US policies on legitimacy, the third element in programs of international order, have their basis in the liberal ideas of civil rights, democracy, and market economy. This civilizational element constitutes the long-term strategy for preserving US preeminence.[29] For the most part, economic globalization is accepted around the world as well as in China. Beijing sees this aspect of liberalism as a strategy to resurrect China's historical position as a role model for other states and nations. The United States considers China's intentions with market economic development potentially disturbing; however, Washington's liberal understanding of international relations encourages it to entertain the hope that China's economic changes will socialize its population into adopting a favorable view of the political ideas of liberalism. The United States therefore adopts an approving attitude towards the fact that contemporary China has embraced the international market economic structures. Thus, economic issues are not at the top of the US security agenda with China although issues of contention remain, such as Beijing's reluctance to include the Chinese currency—the renminbi—in a system of floating exchange rates.

Liberal democratic and legal globalization, by contrast, has yet to take root and hence remains a long-term objective of US governments. The rationale behind this element is the idea of democratic peace—that is, democracies committed to the rule of law are less likely to go to war against each other since they consider each other entities that play by the rules. They consider each other less legitimate targets of enforcement strategies by default because it is not merely their governments but the people represented by governments whose decisions and activities are consequently called into question. This is so because in democracies, political structures ensure that governments answer to their citizens.[30]

The United States, however, does not necessarily pursue its aim of spreading democracy across the world by peaceful means. It conducted the war on terror principally by military means. The war on terror and the use

of force are considered elements in creating preconditions for the spread of liberal democracy and the rule of law in the long run. The US national security strategy of 2012 formulates it as the belief that "regime changes, as well as tensions within and among states under pressure to reform, introduce uncertainty for the future. But they also may result in governments that, over the long term, are more responsive to the legitimate aspirations of their people, and are more stable and reliable partners of the United States."[31] So the United States supports democratic reform. Elections are vital. However, democracy also requires the rule of law, the protection of minorities, and strong, accountable institutions that last longer than a single vote. In general, the eradication of terrorism is one of several ways of promoting stability at the domestic and international level. Stability is seen as a precondition for democratization since it is difficult to bring about lasting changes in governmental and legal practices without some measure of predictability in the basic political and military structures. Stability may entail working with authoritarian political establishments in the short run to pave the way for long-term liberal political and legal reforms.

The Chinese Coexistence Program of International Order

China has been good at demonstrating willingness to set aside short-term national interests on issues concerning the use of force and adjust its policies to the realities of relative power, one of the fundamental elements of international order. China has enlisted at least partial support for its policies from most regional powers in the developing world, including countries such as Russia, India, Brazil, Indonesia, South Korea, and others. Territorial and maritime border disputes are perhaps the most serious barriers to partnerships with some of the countries in the developing world. However, on issues of border disputes that have given rise to serious conflict and the use of force during the Cold War, Beijing is not merely focused on arguments supporting its sovereignty. China has pursued compromises with a view to enhancing international peace and stability on the majority of these issues. Although China takes steps to demonstrate effective control and has not renounced its claim, at the same time Beijing has agreed to shelve its claim in the South China Sea to encourage information exchange and coordination on resource exploration and exploitation between claimant states. These measures serve the purpose of avoiding the use of force. China and Russia

have agreed on a permanent settlement to their border dispute in the form of a roughly equal distribution of disputed territory that takes into account the relative importance of such territory for the contending states. The Indo-Chinese border dispute remains unresolved, in part because New Delhi suspects that China utilizes its current position of relative strength vis-à-vis India to strike a deal that will further diminish Indian influence in the eastern part of the subcontinent. In this area, the small rim states increasingly look to China to balance India's traditional position of dominance. Another reason for the lack of a settlement is that the Pakistan and the Tibet issues form part of the border dispute, causing both China and India to be reluctant to consider modest measures of interaction such as cross-border trade. Even in this protracted dispute, after the Cold War, China and India initiated negotiations at irregular intervals. Arguably, measures such as occasional formal meetings and popular cross-border interaction in an area such as Sikkim ensure that the conflict remains a low-intensity dispute that only rarely involves the use of force.[32]

In the diplomatic arena, China has demonstrated concern not only for pursuing its national interests but also for protecting the common interest in preserving international peace and security. China's diplomacy takes the old UN system and its principles of absolute sovereignty and noninterference in the domestic affairs of other states as a starting point. In contrast to the United States, China opposes a more flexible approach to these principles since it sees them as protection against unlawful use of force. In China's view, such unlawful aggression at times originates from states supporting US liberal integrationist aspirations by advocating that serious breaches of individual rights justify the use of force against other states. For example, China strongly criticized what it saw as NATO's misuse of UN Resolution 1973 to intervene in Libya, an intervention that brought about regime change.[33] At least in part, the Chinese position on NATO's intervention in Libya resulted in China's vetoing the adoption of sanctions against Syria in the UNSC. Beijing's argument is that political dialogue rather than forceful measures should be used to solve domestic political disagreements.[34]

Apart from China's attempt to limit the number and scope of resolutions that allow external actors to intervene in domestic conflicts, Beijing also argues that specialized or regional institutions should have a say in deciding if a threat towards international peace and security exists, remov-

ing decision-making power from the UNSC. China argues that these institutions are often better equipped than the UNSC to make such decisions due to their local or specialized knowledge of the context in which the alleged threat occurs. However, if the UNSC presents irrefutable evidence of a threat to international peace and security, China is willing to approve of actions not in its national interest to demonstrate sincerity in preserving international peace and security. For example, China has voted for Chapter VII resolutions adopting sanctions against Iran on occasions when UN or UN-affiliated institutions have proved that activities of the regimes engender threats against international peace and security. Beijing has voted in favor of these resolutions although it does not approve of using punitive measures as a means of resolving international conflict.

In the case of Myanmar, China has accepted nonbinding presidential statements that criticized the regime for its adoption of punitive measures against peaceful political opponents. China made this decision to accommodate demands from developing countries for protecting what they consider fundamental civil and political rights. China's principal constituency for its coexistence strategy is in the developing world. As a consequence, Beijing tried to meet these demands halfway. Because a presidential statement is not binding, it does not set a precedent in international law that might conflict with the status of absolute sovereignty and nonintervention as the most fundamental principles of international law.[35] By supporting the statements, China was able to express criticism of Myanmar's political and civil rights breaches without compromising on its insistence that absolute sovereignty is to be respected if no threat exists to international peace and security.

On the issue of diplomacy, China has combined a principled approach to Western calls for using more Chapter VII operations and for punishing breaches of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with a flexible approach to the implementation of its program of peaceful coexistence. This flexibility entails taking into account the demands of secondary and small powers. China has accepted Chapter VII resolutions on occasions when the UN or UN-affiliated institutions have presented irrefutable evidence that regime behavior engendered threats to international peace and security. At the same time, China has succeeded in limiting the number and scope of UN-approved punitive actions. Furthermore, Beijing has demonstrated

willingness to listen to demands from developing countries that regional and functional organizations be allowed more influence on global security management. When these demands concern breaches of civil and political rights, China has accommodated them by accepting nonbinding presidential statements on unsolicited domestic use of force. As a result, China strengthens its image as a principled power whose political practice corresponds to the principles of international conduct that it promotes. China's policies also strengthen its image as a pragmatic and equality-oriented power that listens to the demands of secondary and small powers.

On issues of legitimacy, China adheres to respect for the territorial integrity of regimes, including the right of governments to use violent means towards citizens who threaten the survival of regimes. The coexistence principles of equality and mutual benefit are interpreted as the prerogative of government to provide its citizens with basic economic and social means to ensure a stable polity. Issues of political legitimacy are secondary concerns controlled by regimes exercising effective control over territory and peoples. Consequently, individual demands for political change or redress are not legitimate cause for intervention into the internal affairs of other states. Beijing portrays great powers that do not demonstrate respect for these principles as irresponsible violators of international law. As such, their entitlement to exercise international leadership is called into question.[36]

On the issue of legitimacy, China has attempted to sideline entities that challenge its entitlement to a position of great power with sovereign rights over its territory and peoples, globally and politically. One example is mainland China's relations with Taiwan. Here, China has not utilized its growing position of strength vis-à-vis Taiwan to assert its sovereignty claim by using force. Instead, following the election victory of the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) in 2008 and the termination of plans for future referendums on Taiwanese independence, China has resumed political dialogue and initiatives such as direct flights and investments. The initiatives gradually increase economic and cultural interaction between mainland China and Taiwan. Beijing's approach demonstrates China's confidence that Taiwan will continue to be marginalized in international politics and will have to accept some kind of political integration with the mainland at some point.

China's Xinjiang province offers another example. Here, China insists on its prerogative to use violent means against separatist movements that allegedly threaten the unity of the Chinese nation. At the same time, China attempts to step up the assimilation process of the Turkish Uyghurs by means of socioeconomic development initiatives.

A third example concerns China's relations with Japan. With regard to Tokyo, China has engaged in a political dialogue that keeps a lid on conflict between the two powers. However, when Japan appears to challenge China's claim to sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, Japan is treated as an aggressor, which entitles China to use all means necessary to stop Tokyo's alleged violations of Chinese sovereignty. Beijing responded to the Japanese coast guard's arrest of the captain of a Chinese fishing boat that ignored requests to leave the East China Sea by taking four Fujitsu employees hostage, slowing down customs clearances for Japanese companies, suspending the sale of rare earth minerals essential for the production of electronics, cutting off official exchanges at the ministerial level, and rescinding invitations to Japanese youths to attend the Shanghai Expo. China's attempt at sidelining Taiwan, the internal Uyghur opposition, and Japan in the event of challenges to Chinese sovereignty falls on fertile ground. At the international level, Taiwan has experienced a steady downwards slope in terms of influence since its separation from mainland China. Militant Islam, fought by all major global powers, contributes to the unpopularity of Muslim separatism such as that associated with the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Finally, Japan's gradual marginalization as a great power with political influence on international order for the past couple of decades does not give cause for much criticism. One reason is that Tokyo never paid much attention to its image as a great power. Another reason is twentieth century memories in numerous Asian neighboring states of the widespread violence emanating from Japanese hegemonic aspirations in the first half of the twentieth century.[37]

Comparing the US and Chinese Implementation Strategies

The United States' implementation strategy centers on using its alliance system to spread liberal market economic structures and political and civil rights structures with the objective of bringing about integration between states and societies on the basis of common values. China's implementation

strategy centers on using the UN system and its principles of absolute sovereignty and nonintervention to preserve international peace and stability with the purpose of establishing coexistence between states on the basis of common interests. China has an uneasy position as a would-be great power with global political influence without the economic and military resources of a great power alongside US global great-power status. This situation gives rise to an international system without clear rules of the game and without permanent conflict resolution mechanisms. This in-between kind of system is sustained by the fact that China exercises sufficient political influence to allow it to continue promoting and implementing its version of international order. Hence, two competing orders continue to exist in the international system without indications that these will be replaced by one coherent version of international order.

US and Chinese Programs of International Order and the Dynamics of the International System

The US and Chinese programs of international order proceed from different dynamics. The US program draws on liberal values of integration. By contrast, China's program is based on overlapping interests in policy coordination when conflict between great powers poses a risk of the use of force. The two programs are not operating in different geographical hemispheres. Instead, they intersect on numerous issues and across economic, military, and political sectors of the international system in an uncoordinated fashion. This dynamic gives rise to a type of in-between international system not necessarily more prone to the outbreak of war than the Cold War system between the Soviet Union and the United States. However, the system is unpredictable and expensive to operate in because one cannot devise permanent mechanisms of conflict resolution in this type of environment. Instead, ad hoc frameworks of conflict management are used to address security threats. The membership and rules of these frameworks are defined on a trial-and-error basis. Furthermore, in this system secondary and small powers exert much influence because the United States and China compete for their backing and loyalty without succeeding in winning them completely over to their side.

Who benefits from this in-between order of disjointed and intersecting practices of international conduct? The United States has not been in

such an advantageous international position for a long time. In the current international system, Washington can pursue its economic goals without ideological constraints. The financial crisis of 2008 that threatened to derail world economic prosperity due to deficient credit structures has not discredited market economic structures or engendered the emergence or revival of alternative economic systems. China has become an arduous supporter of market economic structures because the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party depends upon the growing prosperity that these structures have helped bring about. Indeed, China seeks to use international economic and financial institutions to outplay the United States on its ideological home ground. For example, China promotes its renminbi as an international reserve currency. Such a development would further weaken the status of the dollar and US possibilities of financing its debt by means of foreign holdings of treasury bonds. In the economic and financial sector, competition and rivalry may be fierce. However, it takes place on the basis of a coherent set of fundamental rules and structures not essentially contested by any major international actors. This is a marked improvement for US goals and strategies compared to the Cold War system managed by the United States and Soviet Union. During the Cold War, Washington had to contend with a competing economic system that challenged the legitimacy of market economic methods for accumulating wealth.

Militarily, the US alliance system in combination with superior US military capabilities continues as a primary source of power and influence, not least because the majority of the world's states rely on US security guarantees. China is building up military capabilities, and the size of its defense budgets in 2011 included a hefty increase—up to 12.7 percent, according to Beijing.[38] These figures do not even reflect the true level of resources used by China's national defense because they do not include spending on items such as weapons purchased from overseas, revenue from arms exports, subsidies to the domestic defense industry, and research and development.[39] However, without an alliance system, Beijing can use its military capabilities only for very limited purposes beyond access denial. China has strategic partners in its neighborhood such as Russia, Pakistan, and Myanmar, which give Beijing access to military facilities and technology. However, these strategic partnerships are not based on mutual security guarantees that would entail lasting commitments of military engagement and cooperation.

Indeed, the cost of building and maintaining an alliance system lies beyond China's means for the foreseeable future. In addition, its aspirations for restoring the motherland and its national identity policies are not compatible with the establishment of an alliance system that requires a high level of defense integration and mutual commitment to the same fundamental objectives. China has very few loyal partners that would accept extensive exchange of information and expertise between national defenses because they suspect that China will not continue to treat them as independent sovereign entities. These suspicions originate from China's position on national identity issues.

China poses challenges to US visions of international order principally at the international political level rather than in the economic and military sectors. However, Beijing does not seem to threaten the preeminent position of the United States in the international system. Nor does China's behavior prevent the United States from pursuing implementation of its version of international order so long as peaceful coexistence remains the dominant theme in China's programs of international order. Indeed, peaceful coexistence implies that the use of force between the two powers probably will not occur except perhaps by accident. China uses military means principally for domestic purposes as long as it continues to focus on growing economically, increasing living standards, maintaining domestic stability, and catching up militarily by modernizing its national defense. China may challenge the legitimacy of US policies and make it difficult for the United States to keep secondary powers outside the Western hemisphere, such as Russia and India, as strategic partners without paying a very high price for their loyalty. Compared to the minimal, militarized system of the Cold War, however, it is an international system far more amenable to US interests and demands.

For secondary and small powers, the system is also quite attractive because it allows them substantial leverage on international order. The increased role in UN operations of regional and functional security institutions such as the African Union and the International Atomic Energy Agency is a good example. In these institutions, secondary and small powers have more influence than in the UNSC, whose agenda is dominated by the veto-wielding permanent members. Another example involves Russia's ability to cooperate with China, NATO, and the United States in order to

extract maximum security benefits from its attractions as a strategic partner for both Washington and Beijing. By contrast, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States established a common international order based on mutual nuclear deterrence, noninterference in the internal affairs of states belonging to the core of the opposing alliance, and the UNSC as the common forum for great-power management of international peace and security. This minimal order allowed secondary and small powers very little influence because the two great powers agreed to divide the world into separate spheres of influence. Within each sphere, one party implemented different versions of international order without much interference from the other. By contrast, the current lack of agreement between the United States and China on a fundamental structure of the system allows secondary and small powers to align with both Washington and Beijing without choosing sides. This situation increases the freedom of action and influence of those powers on the policies and strategies of the great powers.

In China's view, the current international system is also fairly amenable to its interests and demands. At present, China's influence on the dynamics and principles of the international system far outweighs its economic and military capabilities. The complexity and fluidity of the international system engendered by China's current international position constitute a development of its position as the third power in between the Soviet Union and the United States. China began to carve out this position in 1968 when it decided to make a priority of reaching a bilateral agreement that would restore relations with the Soviet Union based upon China's five principles of coexistence.[40] This step towards a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union was intended to allow China to pursue its national interests abroad without risking the provocation of violent conflict with Moscow due to a lack of policy coordination. Similar efforts to establish a managerial relationship with the United States to avoid confrontation involving the use of force followed this effort, resulting in the much-publicized US-Chinese rapprochement of 1971. Already at this time, China was pursuing an international position that would facilitate engagement without requiring integration into the partial orders of the Western and Eastern hemispheres.

A principal difference between now and then is that during the Cold War, China did not have status as a political great power, which it needed to implement its concept of peaceful coexistence on a global scale. During

the Cold War, China had the ideas but not the wherewithal, except in a very rudimentary form. Consequently, it remained a secondary power that gravitated towards the Soviet Union as well as the United States without choosing sides. Furthermore, China focused on maximizing its national interests rather than influencing the setup of international order. Contrastingly, after the Cold War, China began to wield the political influence that allows it to punch above its weight in terms of engagement in international politics. This change in China's position produces centripetal forces encouraging it to promote international coordination and comanagement of global security issues and centrifugal forces of national interests. These dynamics ensure that rivalry and competition continue to characterize international order. The advantages that great powers and secondary and small powers derive from the resulting in-between system imply that it will likely remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Notes

1. For a detailed account of the liberal integration–coexistence argument on US and Chinese programs of international order, see Liselotte Odgaard, *China and Coexistence: Beijing's National Security Strategy for the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press / Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 1–22.

2. The debate on US post–Cold War international order is vast. Two major tendencies in the debate, which have been pervasive themes regarding the United States and international order, concern whether the United States is driven merely by the political dynamics of power or if the element of idealism plays a role in its policies, as argued in this article. For arguments that trace such dynamics in US policies on international order, see, for example, Robert Kagan, "End of Dreams, Return of History," in *To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36–59; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001); and Robert J. Art, "The Fungibility of Force," in *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics*, 7th ed., ed. Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 3–22. For arguments that trace the roots of idealism in US policies on international order, see, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *National Interest*, Summer 1989, reprinted in Foreign Affairs / Council on Foreign Relations, *America and the World: Debating the New Shape of International Politics* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2002), 1–28; and Ian Clark, "China and the United States: A Succession of Hegemonies?," *International Affairs* 87, no. 1 (2011): 13–28.

3. For an account of the history of the Chinese concept of peaceful coexistence, see Han Nianlong, chief ed., *Diplomacy of Contemporary China* (Hong Kong: New Horizon Press, 1990), 213–30. For an analysis of peaceful coexistence as China's national security strategy, see Odgaard, *China and Coexistence*.

4. The approach to liberal integration used in this article is based on G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 3–79.

5. R. J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 17–36.

6. Benjamin J. Cohen, "Containing Backlash: Foreign Economic Policy in an Age of Globalization," in *Eagle Rules? Foreign Policy and American Primacy in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert J. Lieber (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 302.

7. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, January 2012), [i] (statement by President Obama, 3 January 2012), http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf.

8. Francis Fukuyama, "Democratization and International Security," in *New Dimensions in International Security*, Adelphi Paper no. 266 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1991/92), 18.

9. Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 206–9.

10. For an assessment of the literature on China's rise that focuses on the distinction between patterns of conflict and cooperation between China and the United States, see Avery Goldstein, "Power Transitions, Institutions, and China's Rise in East Asia: Theoretical Expectations and Evidence," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, nos. 4–5 (August–October 2007): 639–82.

11. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 79–82.

12. Robert S. Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969–1976* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 33–39.

13. On the origins and principles of the UN system, see Adam Roberts and Benedict Kingsbury, eds., *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Roles in International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993).

14. For an analysis of the origins and dynamics of China's definition of its motherland, see Liselotte Odgaard, *Maritime Security between China and Southeast Asia: Conflict and Cooperation in the Making of Regional Order* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002).

15. Daniel J. Dzurek, "The Spratly Island Dispute: Who's on First?," *Maritime Briefing* 2, no. 1 (1996): 12, http://hoangsa.org/tailieu/The%20Spratly%20Islands%20Dispute.pdf.

16. Chih-yu Shih, *China's Just World: The Morality of Chinese Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 42–45.

17. Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 66–67.

18. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 17.

19. C. A. W. Manning, *The Nature of International Society* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 190–91.

20. F. S. Northedge, *The International Political System* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 112–13, 150–51.

21. Manning, *Nature of International Society*, 160–61, 176–77.

22. Grotius, quoted in Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, ed. Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1978), 123, 130.

23. Jeffrey Record, "Nuclear Deterrence, Preventive War, and Counterproliferation," *Policy Analysis*, no. 519 (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 8 July 2004), http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa519.pdf.

24. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 2004–2005* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 14–19.

25. For the argument that unilateralism and hegemony are stable features of US international politics, see Gaddis, *Surprise, Security*.

26. For a detailed analysis of the US alliance system and its role in US policies, see Liselotte Odgaard, *The Balance of Power in Asia-Pacific Security: U.S.-China Policies on Regional Order* (London: Routledge, 2007), 169–91.

27. Robert J. Art has described this course of action as selective engagement. See "The Strategy of Selective Engagement," in Art and Waltz, *Use of Force*, 327–48.

28. Anonymous interview with US government official.

29. Clark, "China and the United States," and Ikenberry, *After Victory*, explain how the ideational element of what they call US hegemony serves to preserve the institutional structures of US international order long after the United States has stopped being a hegemon.

30. For an academic exposition of this argument, see, for example, Bruce M. Russett, with the collaboration of William Antholis et al., *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post–Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

31. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership*, 2.

32. A more detailed analysis of these arguments can be found in Odgaard, *China and Coexistence*, 87–127.

33. For a detailed analysis, see ibid., 128–52.

34. "China and Russia Veto UN Resolution Condemning Syria," *BBC News*, 5 October 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15177114.

35. Odgaard, *China and Coexistence*, 128–52.

36. Ibid., 153–80.

37. Ibid.

38. "China Says It Will Boost Its Defence Budget in 2011," *BBC News*, 4 March 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12631357.

39. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 2009* (London: Routledge, 2009), 375.

40. Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine*, 40.