

China: Growth Rates and Domestic Allies Concern American Security

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Abstract

China emerges as a national security concern for America for several reasons. The Communist mindset prevalent in China reduces the potential for insurgencies or uprisings. It focuses on the good of a community as a whole, not on an individual. This reduces the potential for staging coups or funding rebel forces in China to covertly undermine the current regime. The spike in China's economy results in a "going global" mindset and free market economy. International businesses have relocated their headquarters and factories to China for cheap labor and mass exports. China's government annually buys American federal debt, creating interdependency between America's and China's economies. The growth of China's military capabilities creates unrest in international and regional countries. China remains secretive about their military strategies, but openly claims a peaceful military growth designed to protect their sea trade lanes and amplify their weapon systems. Through military exercises with foreign countries, China expands their far sea expeditions and prepares for operations combating American weapons and forces. China's domestic alliances have developed due to the American war on terrorism. Two key allies are North Korea and Russia. North Korea threatens America with continued nuclear tests, while providing China with enhanced nuclear, biological, and chemical weapon capabilities. However, the fragile regime in North Korea injures China's global influence and foreign strategy. Russia has partnered with China since the fall of the Soviet Union, supplying them with fighter planes and other weapon systems and a common enemy against the United States. However, the competition between the two countries prevents their complete compliance and hinders their diplomacies. In order for America to covertly undermine China's global power, they must reduce their economic interdependency with China and capitalize on the vulnerabilities of China's domestic allies, namely North Korea and Russia.

Keywords: China, Jinping, Russia, North Korea, China's economy, China's military, China's domestic alliances, Chinese threat, China's growth rates

If one surveys Americans on their view of national security interests the result will be hundreds of different answers. While American democracy is the "people's government," the people do everything but make policy and laws; it ultimately relies on one person to decide how to execute policies, the president. For example, President Bush decided to enter Iraq in search of weapons of mass destruction. Intelligence pointed towards weapon stockpiles, and Vice President Cheney supported the President in his stance on preemptive action; President Bush moved without Congressional authority for a strike in Iraq showing that the final decisions involving U.S. national strategy is the choice of the President. As his successor, President Obama determines our current foreign policy, and as a stark contrast to Bush's or past presidential foreign strategies, President Obama seeks to withdraw American interaction from the Middle East and focus on China.

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While America considers China a global ally, they share little intelligence with Chinese agencies. Trust between the two countries has been strained over the past several years, largely as a result of Taiwan. The territory defies the desires of the Chinese government and remains separate, though not independent, from China. America supports Taiwan as a democratic ally, causing tensions between American and Chinese relations in numerous areas. However, while these tensions remain, focus has shifted towards newer developments in China producing their global influence. China's developments in economics, military, and diplomatic relations yield international concerns for the United States and necessitates creative national methods in negotiating with China as a superpower.

In 2007, Bolt and Gray published an article on the then relative strategy of China. While slightly outdated, their assessment highlights areas of current concerns involving China. These areas emerged into international attention and have continued to grow over the years.

In 2007, China's national security strategy reflected their efforts on developing global influence. While China insisted this rise to power pursues peaceful goals, America concerned themselves about China's international agenda. Bolt and Gray (2007) asserted that the War on Terrorism caused America to turn a blind eye towards Chinese improvements and focus security resources in Iraq and Afghanistan. This allowed China to grow economically and globally without concern or prevention from the United States. According to Gray and Bolt (2007), Chinese economic, military, and diplomatic growth creates three areas of concern for American national interest and strategy not addressed by American foreign policies.

China's powerful influence results largely from their continued developments. Its economic growth relies heavily on imports from neighboring countries combined with cheap labor to produce exports, thereby garnering a significant profit for the Chinese government. Chinese imports from surrounding neighbors create domestic ties and strengthens the Chinese economy and global influence. Exporting a high percentage of goods to the United States produces interdependency between the two countries; due to this interdependence, coupled with the yearly purchases of American debt, America's reliance on China increases annually. Through seeking new avenues of energy channels, China's list of allies expands into the Middle East, including Russia, Latin America, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. The Chinese government has effectively capitalized on developing global ties in areas lacking American investment due to the multi-year War on Terrorism.

China's developed military capabilities spark debates on its ultimate goals. A common theory on explaining this military development revolves around Taiwan. China seeks to insert its influence and power over Taiwan and coerce the territory into rejoining The People's Republic of China. China's strategy follows a long-term plan, as opposed to direct military options; yet, increased military capabilities allow China to overpower Taiwan's military if necessary. Another theory behind Chinese military growth portrays China's national strategy in expanding into a global power. Through weapon advancements, China enhances its second-strike potential and reduces foreign coercion techniques. While China seeks to escalate its global influence, neighboring allies continually grow suspicious of Chinese advancements and their broadening domestic threat.

China's diplomatic efforts result from the American War on Terrorism. America's focus after 9/11 shifted towards Afghanistan and Iraq, allowing China to expand alliances in Europe and Latin America. These alliances further China's economic growth, strengthen long-term efforts to re-claim Taiwan, and weaken American influence. Global alliances enhance China's influence in U.N. meetings and affect national markets and embargos.

Due to economic, military, and diplomatic expansions, briefly mentioned above in regards to Bolt and Gray's (2007) assessment on China's national security strategy, and the American War on Terrorism, China currently stands as a global power with influence and strong allies. Gray and Bolt (2007) assert that China should be a national interest due to their expanding global economy, military, and diplomatic advancements undermining U.S. superiority. They pose a new model to challenge China's growth: the U.S. government must transform their view of China to reflect their current global influence and develop a long-term strategic plan in combating Chinese power.

As of 2007, China claimed a peaceful rise to power; however, through analyzing their national security strategy, they appeared to covertly undermine America as a world power and continually prepare for nuclear and armed confrontation. The Chinese military remained vastly overpowered by American armed forces; although, China developed its second-strike capabilities, creating a capacity able to accept challenges from the United States and reduce American military coercion. Through broadened diplomacy, China retained domestic and international allies through expanding its global influence and threatened the United States by aligning themselves with America's enemies. Interdependence between China's and America's economy weakened American influence over China and strengthened China's strategy to become a world power.

While these concerns were mentioned in 2007, they still reign true to modern international relations. Since 2007, however, changes have been made in United States' national strategy regarding China. One key change centers on President Obama's transition from U.S. involvement in the Middle East towards China as a security threat. Our focus on the War on Terrorism has reduced over the past six years. The interdependence between China's and America's economy has also increased over the past six years, creating a need for America's strategy to focus on undermining China's global power and reducing their influence and capabilities over America's economy. An expanded analysis of China's economic, military, and diplomatic advances aids in recognizing the current national and international security concerns regarding China as a global superpower.

In reviewing China's history, it is important to note the lack of insurgency movements. This can be attributed to two reasons: either the Chinese people remain highly supportive of the government or the Communist party effectively terminates disgruntled citizens. Surveys reveal varying levels of trust in government and contrast in the reasons why these statistics contradict. In 2011, 95.9 per cent of citizens in China were satisfied with the federal government (Drysdale, 2011). In 2013, 75 per cent of citizens still remain satisfied with the government (Tang, Lewis-Beck, and Martini, 2013). However, Tang, Lewis-Beck, and Martini (2013) assert that the reason behind the high level of satisfaction is due to their belief in the government as a whole, not specifically on government entities and policies. Other critics argue that Chinese opinion polls simply are not accurate in stating satisfaction levels. These critics believe that, while being polled, the Chinese people may lie and claim satisfaction rather than show a lack of approval. (Tang, Lewis-Beck, and Martini, 2013). This may result from the sense of community found in Chinese culture. Citizens may feel obligated to support their government though they may dislike government services, national policies and laws, and the global direction initiated by their president. Another belief for the discrepancy between survey results suggests governmental censorship of the media (Tang, Lewis-Beck, and Martini, 2013). The Chinese government portrays a strong, united front to the world; this increases their global influence. Some critics speculate that the increase in China's economy over recent years and reductions in poverty levels

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have improved government ratings. The public's historic trend in obedience and support towards their government may be significantly due to the public ideology of Communism.

Regardless of the level of public support in China and the reasons behind conflicting surveys, a key concern remains embedded in the lack of insurgencies and uprisings among the people. This stems from effective ruling by the Chinese president and party. While the government may lack the talent to garner public support, they certainly possess the ability to halt public outcries of disdain. The Communism mindset lends toward community, meaning that the Chinese population remains united and focused on group as a whole, doing things for the good of the group and not the individual. (Tang, Lewis-Beck, and Martini, 2013). Therefore, China presents a unified threat, not a partial one. International concern with China involves not simply the government, but the whole community.

This concern affects the United States for two main reasons. The first resides in the contrast between American and Communist mindsets. Individuality pervades the American mindset; the public voices their opinion regularly and expects the executive and legislative branches to heed public opinion. These branches seek reelection every few years and therefore must listen and respond to public rating and views. If policies are disapproved by the general public, the president struggles to execute his will. However, the Communist mindset rests in obedience towards government and community focus. China's president does not have to win national elections to retain his power and position; therefore, any decision he makes does not need public support to be enacted, theoretically speaking. The people normally focus on the good of a community and less on the sole decisions of the president; if a popular opinion supports the well-being of citizens but defies the president's ideal, the people support the public opinion. They are not afraid to oppose their president; however, their ideas of opposition are weighed against the good of the community. This produces another concern for the United States: China's sense of community creates fewer opportunities for the United States to gain an advantage on Chinese soil. If the public swayed to the whims of individual opinions then the American government could capitalize on the dissatisfaction and stage a coup, start a civil war, supply weapons for rebel forces, etc. The manpower for undermining China as a global threat would depend on its people promoting their own ideals and refuting the regime's decisions; the citizens would either bring down the government or cause enough chaos that governmental focus would turn inward on domestic problems and thereby injure their regional and international alliances and influence. Essentially, other than funding or providing weapons, China could be brought down from the inside, and America could watch from the "sidelines." However, this concept exists only in theory because of the pervading Communist mindset. Community plays a predominant part in Communism, and consequently, the people unite for the good of the whole, displaying largely supportive attitudes of the regime, and diminishing hope of insurgencies and crucial public riots that would encourage violence and opposition.

China's economy started growing in 1979 due to increases in foreign trade and foreign direct investments but caused specific detrimental effects for the Chinese population. Economic reforms in 1979 allowed for a modified free trade market for farmers. Several economic zones were initiated along the Chinese coast to promote foreign investment, exports, and advanced technological products to enter into China's borders. Economic control transitioned into the hands of local governments, allowing free market principles, and away from a central government control model. Trade barriers were removed to enhance foreign direct investments on various levels. Due to these reforms, China, on average, doubles its economy every eight years, resulting in the second largest economy in 2013 with economists predicting its growth will

surpass the American economy by 2020. Experts cite two specific attributes to China's unprecedented rapid economic growth: capital investments and productivity advancements. Capital investments include national savings rates and foreign direct investments. As of 2008, China's savings rate, as a subset of its gross domestic product, was 53%, the largest savings rate in the world (Casarini). These savings allow China to increase its investments on domestic and foreign soil. Over 500 million people have been lifted out of poverty in China ("China") and foreign economies are sustained due to Chinese investments. In the 1990s, the Chinese government pushed a "go global" campaign, encouraging foreign companies to move within China's borders. This has allowed China to increase their technological capabilities by piggy backing on the technological advances of other countries. Many Chinese developments in science and math result directly from investments by foreign countries. The "going global" mindset allowed China to create their own global franchises and companies, separate from other countries, while introducing international brands in their own country to promote modernization. China continues to modernize its economy through free market reforms, technological and science developments, and globalization of foreign and domestic companies.

In looking towards the future, China transitions its focus towards stabilizing their domestic economy through various means. The rapid economic changes over the past several years lowered poverty rates but have not reformed living conditions. Millions of people earn less than \$2 a day, and China faces problems created by overpopulation in filthy living areas. While the national economy has significantly changed over the years with a bright future ahead, questions arise about the sustainability of China's economic growths and its effects on local populations. China's economic growth rate has slowed recently due to recessions in foreign countries. President Jinping paints this backslide in a positive light, claiming that the Chinese government planned growth reductions as an effort to focus on domestic problems. This recent development model shifts focus towards local government debt struggles and overcapacities in some industries. China implemented their own stimulus package designed to alleviate local government debt, create better living conditions for citizens, and increase tax reforms. ("Xi says China chose . . .", 2013).

However, China continues to invest in foreign countries. The Chinese government and businesses own over \$1 trillion of the U.S. debt in Treasury bonds. This bond resembles an IOU between the American and Chinese governments and results mostly from trade agreements enhanced by China's "going global" mindset. American companies engaging in business transactions with Chinese companies and pays with temporary Treasury notes and bills to settle trade agreements, as opposed to direct pay options. This provides money to the American government and companies to continue purchasing Chinese exports. (Rapoza, 2013, "Is China's ownership . . ."). Therefore, purchasing American debt supports both China's and America's economies. However, Chinese and American rating agencies have lowered U.S. monetary ratings, reflecting concerns in the ability of the American government to repay their debts and manage their debt ceiling. Since 2011, China asserts its right to influence American spending and strongly encourages the American government to review their spending habits and cut their annual debt. Beijing has turned its focus toward buying European assets instead of American debt. They set a new trend in transitioning away from the American dollar and toward euros, a view not yet reflected in other countries. China focuses mainly on buying euro-dominated assets in Germany, France, Austria, and the Netherlands, core members of Europe that maintain high ratings by international rating companies. This displays the Chinese mindset in investing in countries that produce a low risk for the government while still aiding the Chinese economy on a

global scale. While American Treasury bonds were once promoted as risk-free investments into the American dollar, Chinese spokesmen argue that this investment has become anything but risk-free due to the economic recessions in America and the government's inability to control their spending habits. This transition toward the Eurozone may also be influenced by the American current focus on the Asia-Pacific as a national interest. America's increased national concerns involving China may have pushed away China's heavy investments in the American dollar. However, the American government deepens their economic recession by not controlling spending levels and increasing monetary printing, causing the value of the American dollar to decrease and therefore reducing foreign enthusiasm to invest in the dollar as an internationally recognized monetary system. China's advancing interest in investing in the Eurozone is seen through their numerous interventions in Europe's debt crisis and reassurance of continuous economic support in Europe. However, through this support, China establishes conditions over the Eurozone, demanding they get their debt in order and lower spending. China has capitalized on the debt crutches of both America and the Eurozone; they have effectively used this authority as a means to influence international superpowers about handling their debt in a responsible manner while simultaneously reassuring global assets and continuing investments in global countries through exports. (Casarini)

The interdependency between America's and China's economies creates contrasting opinions on the national and international security crisis produced. One argument presents this interdependency as creating no harm for American security. China's annual purchase of U.S. debt builds an economic interaction successful for both countries; American dollars decrease in value at a highly reduced rate while China continues to receive economic support from American businesses through their purchases of Chinese exports. Proponents of this view claim that China will never encounter a situation where it becomes necessary to dump their Treasury bonds and collect their money with interest. They propose that this situation would significantly injure the Chinese economy by losing its primary buyer of exports, the United States. Due to the amount of support and money lost through collecting American debt, this argument states that no situation experienced in China will cause their government to accept this economic loss solely for the money owed to them by the U.S.; the payout does not equal the money received. Critics of this argument suggest a new idea: China may experience a severe situation in the near future where money will be needed quickly; therefore, China dumps their American bonds and expects its money immediately. This situation would severely injure both countries; however, America would be forced to rethink its entire strategy involving foreign relationships and their debt ceiling. Due to the difficulty for the American government to produce their debt owed to China on sudden demand, the value of the American dollar would plummet, ending or significantly limiting foreign investments in America and forcing the executive and legislative branches to reevaluate their perspective of federal debt and borrowing. New measures must be immediately initiated to drastically reduce or end monetary borrowing and to combat the debt ceiling while the American population would undergo another, more severe, economic recession. (Rapoza, 2013, "Is China's ownership . . ."). (Warnock, 2010)

While rapid Chinese economic growth and foreign domestic investments create an American national interest on an economic front, the increase of China's military numbers and capabilities create an international interest to America and Asian countries domestically situated around China. The PLA advances its armed forces in 3 primary ways: weapons, navy, and air force. China claims peaceful strategies for their increased capabilities, focusing on disaster relief and counterterrorism operations. However, these advancements supply Beijing with the potential

for negotiations, promoting personal national and international agendas and interests, and resolving disputes with favorable outcomes for China's strategy.

China's weapon systems show favorable advancements within the next few years. While China maintains a firm "no first use" policy towards nuclear weapons, they continue to advance their stockpile. New generations of mobile missiles contain MIRVs and penetration aids that parallel U.S. and Russian defense capabilities. These provide China with a more-than-capable ability for second-strike attacks. Universal command, control, and communication capabilities allow commanders to communicate simultaneously with several units, producing swift action and reaction skills of multiple units rather than requiring individual communications. They also generate rapid information sharing between forces to prevent destruction or attack abruptly. The PLA (People's Liberation Army, the Chinese armed forces) construct underground "tunnels" to store China's nuclear weapons; this was originally spurred by fear of a nuclear attack upon China due to their "no first use" policy. The tunnels are built deep underground to remain intact after a nuclear attack. China maintains an arsenal of short, intermediate, and long range ballistic missiles to engage in land attacks on surrounding and distant lands threatening China's security. Submarine launched ballistic missiles ensure sea-based capabilities to protect China's coastline. These missiles, coupled with other types of technology, are designed to counter U.S. and other countries' capabilities with ballistic missile defense systems, MARVs, MIRVs, decoys, jamming, thermal shielding, and anti-satellite weapons. (Office of SECDEF., 31). The PLA engages in training through simulated exercises to practice maneuvering, camouflaging, and specific operations to increase survivability in combat.

China focuses significant resources towards anti-access and area denial means designed to counter third-party intervention and coercion techniques. The primary focus of these measures is geared toward the United States and performed by the PLA Navy. Navy personnel expand forces to produce one of the largest areas of armed forces in Asia. This increase is due primarily to the necessity to protect Chinese shipping routes from piracy, terrorism, and foreign interdiction. It allows for naval diplomacy between China and surrounding countries. Its operations continue to advance in to far seas as naval weapon systems develop and the PLA gains naval confidence. Over the next few decades, the PLA plans to utilize their navy to "project power across the globe for high-intensity operations over a period of several months" (Office of SECDEF, 2013, 38). Currently, the furthest distant sea experience for China is the Gulf of Aden and group deployments to the first island chain in the western Pacific. It has conducted military activities in Exclusive Economic Zones most noticeably off the coast of Hawaii and Guam but performs these actions during the annual Rim of the Pacific making them legal activities. These long-distance training activities aid in enhancing deep sea navigation capabilities, C2, and multi-discipline warfare beyond land capabilities. The primary reason for the PLA Navy's lack of long-distance operations resides in limited logistical aid from coastal areas. However, their 10 year plan includes establishing multiple coastal access points to aid in simple naval tasks and allows the navy to expand their naval operations. Weapons located on PLA naval ships include aircraft carriers, cruise missiles, maritime strike aircraft, nuclear-power attack submarines, and surface combatants. (Office of SECDEF, 2013, 35). China continues to develop and focus their security strategy on naval capabilities as a form of transportation and warfare and as the primary avenue of combating and fighting American forces.

China's air defense and capabilities advancements aid naval weapons in simulated operations. The development of a 5th generation fighter force enhances air maneuverability, lack of visibility and radar observation, an internal weapons bay, modern avionics, and sensors. The

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fighter aircraft allows for timely situational awareness and advanced radar capabilities to protect against enemy electronic countermeasures and warfare systems. This aircraft differs from the 4th generation model by utilizing low-level air platforms and developed strike operations. China continues to build newer models of aircraft to expand their strike capabilities through weapons and reductions in radar identification. Weapon modernizations include long-range cruise missiles and long-range SAMs. Production of unmanned combat aerial vehicles aligns with China's air defense goals of combating third-party capabilities.

While nuclear weapons, naval increases, and air defense capabilities raise concerns in the United States, cyber warfare remains the largest threat from China's advancements. In 2012, the Department of Defense's websites were attacked by the Chinese government, demonstrating their abilities on the cyber front to cause harm and expand intelligence. The PLA focuses its military on cyber warfare capabilities in three key areas. Hacking into government websites and conducting information warfare on American computer systems provide data collection for Chinese intelligence and network attacks. Direct cyber-attacks could restrain enemy response time to attacks by slowing or stopping "network-based logistics, communications, and commercial activities" (Office of SECDEF, 2013, 37). Cyber-attacks, combined with physical attacks, could severely damage network and physical infrastructures of a country. These areas of cyber superiority elevate China into a global superpower and a capable enemy of the United States. While weapons and military developments allow China to compete with American systems, China's information superiority surpasses American counterparts. The PLA seeks to use this information warfare in a significant role during future conflicts. The main strategic focus rests on radio, radar, optical, infrared, and microwave frequencies to suppress or deceive enemy computing systems (Office of SECDEF, 2013, 37). They plan on combining cyber capabilities with land, sea, and air technologies and weapons to create a new form of warfare that multiplies damages on various fronts and provides offensive and defensive operations.

China's ground, sea, and air advances create concerns among domestic countries. Naval weapons affect countries using the same sea trading lanes as China. While China maintains its naval growth as peaceful and designed to provide defense for Chinese ships and trade, this strategy could be reversed to adversely affect other countries' economies via trade reductions. Air and land advancements produce domestic unrest due to superior Chinese capabilities. This contributes to China's supremacy over surrounding countries and creates new influences. Domestic allies support China but have recently developed concerns over the true strategy behind land and air advances; this concern escalates due to Chinese military secrecy and strategy of global influence. However, the largest international security threat remains in China's cyber capabilities. They expand their use of information warfare to gain intelligence on global superpowers to enhance their own technology, weapon capabilities, and defensive and offensive military strategies. Simultaneously, China has significantly expanded their cyber security to prevent outsiders from gaining access to their networks and information. China's security strategy transitioned in recent years to mostly cyber warfare and information warfare and includes the importance of technology advancements in the modern age. Future conflicts and relations between China and America will be influenced by technology and cyber warfare. (Office of SECDEF, 2013).

American concerns involving China include two strong diplomatic allies. The first strategic ally of China is North Korea. Relations between China and North Korea started during the Korean War when Chinese volunteer fighters crossed the border into Korea and aided Korean forces in fighting American troops. Recently, thousands of North Korean refugees have fled into

China's borders over the past 7 years. This developed camaraderie between the two countries that continues today and deepens their modern alliance. (Blanchard, 2013). However, tensions between China and North Korea escalated in 2013 due to nuclear tests and stalled diplomatic discussions. China supports U.N. sanctions against North Korea for a nuclear disarmament and encourages North Korea to end its nuclear and ballistic tests and surrender their nuclear weapons. They retain influence over North Korea as its economic provider and ally. Nearly 100 per cent of North Korea's energy imports, food, and products come from China. China supports Jong-un's regime and the fragile internal stability in North Korea. In return, China expects North Korea to join the fight against a common enemy, America. This causes China to inflict strong pressures on North Korea to stop nuclear testing and not engage in threats against the United States and South Korea. However, China's relations with North Korea remain fragile due to North Korean actions threatening China's security strategy. China promotes secrecy in their military actions and advancements and seeks to quietly increase their weapons systems and land, air, and sea forces. In contrast, North Korea resorts to loud threats and increased weapon testing to demonstrate their abilities and instigate outside attacks. While North Korea retains a "loud" security strategy and presents economic and social problems from an unstable regime, China invests too much in North Korea to turn on the country as an ally; instead, they exert their power over North Korea to quiet their threats and remove their weapons from the international spotlight.

The threat of China's relations with North Korea revolves around the instability of Korea and the amount of weapons located in North Korea. Thousands of American troops live on bases in South Korea, creating an American target for North Korea. The North Korean regime remains highly unpredictable and constantly ignores imposed sanctions on their weapon systems. They create concerns for America's national security due to the regime's fragile control over power and threats. Two resulting situations could produce negative outcomes for both America and China. The Jong-un regime could collapse causing chaos in Korea, hurting American forces in South Korea, and severely damaging the Chinese economy. Or, North Korea could attack American forces in either South Korea or on American soil, thereby instigating war with the United States and forcing China into a difficult situation on deciding between supporting Korea or distancing themselves from Korean strategy. North Korea retains an array of nuclear weapons with potential utilization by China for an attack or to create developed nuclear systems within China's borders. They also have a large array of missiles with the potential to be used as delivery systems for biological weapons or chemical weapons which North Korea currently owns. China's "no first use" policy on nuclear weapons could be bypassed by using North Korea's capabilities to take first aim at America and succeeding with further attacks applying China's weapon systems. The sheer amount of nuclear and chemical weapon stockpiles possessed by North Korea and China's influence create international security concerns for an array of countries, not just the United States.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between China and Russia have increased into mutual tolerance. Both China and Russia benefit from friendly relations along their border. In 1997, a strategic partnership developed between Russia and China, demonstrated by the current regimes meeting to negotiate contracts and heighten diplomatic ties. The joint diplomatic strategy between the two countries focused on enhanced cooperation in investments, high-technology research, new inventions, and construction of infrastructures (Cheng and Cohen, 2013). Their diplomatic relations developed due to significant increases in trading rates, energy agreements, and weapon systems. Russia is expected to become a major producer of China's

energy within the next few years and currently provides advanced weapon systems to China including fighters, airplane engines, and submarines. In 2012, Russia and China completed the largest bilateral military exercises to date between the two countries; these military exercises employed operations using aircraft and naval fleets with the capacity to combat U.S. power.

However, while diplomatic relations develop at a continuing rate, tensions persist between China and Russia that prevent complete trust. Russia relies on Chinese exports for their economy while China relies on Russia for energy supplies. China maintains several options for energy avenues and therefore does not solely rely on Russia for energy. Russia's weapon systems traded to China create new Chinese aircrafts and weapons that look highly similar to Russian technology, causing Russia to claim that China stole their technology capabilities. Russia remains allied to India and supplies India with any weapon system; this intensifies tensions between Russia and China because Russia refuses to trade certain weapons with the PLA. The Russian government remains suspicious of China's economic and military increases. They worry deeper ties with China will shift reliance of the Russian people away from Moscow and towards Beijing and improved relations between China and America could create a force detrimental to the Russian economy. Fears involving a Russia-China alliance prevail within Russia due to China's economic and diplomatic power dwarfing the Russian government. However, the thickest wall preventing a Chinese-Russian alliance is the competitive nature of the two countries. China pursues economic growth and military advancements while Russia seeks to rebirth from the Soviet collapse. Russia's economy focuses primarily on exporting weapon systems. China undermines this pursuit by copying current Russian weapon systems and including their own advancements to sell to foreign countries. Russia houses an advanced military, but China's inflation in armed forces present concerns to the Russian military. Each country endeavors to grow on an individual basis creating a competition to enhance their global influence and reputation. (Cheng and Cohen, 2013).

A national security concern for America arises if Russia and China create an alliance focused on their common enemy and not on personal tensions. Russia's and China's strategies focus on combatting U.S. capabilities and advancing their personal military and weapon forces to parallel American abilities. Should China and Russia capitalize on this similarity, their combined capabilities would pose a "mortal threat" (Cheng and Cohen, 2013) to American national security. This alliance would create one cohesive force dominating Asia, thereby enabling them to limit or shut down America's presence and influence in the region. American diplomatic or military forces would be forced to view China and Russia as a one enemy and combat both countries simultaneously. In reviewing the massive combined stockpiles of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons this alliance creates, America's forces simply do not have the money, weapons, or means to combat both countries and win. Therefore, this alliance could be severely detrimental to the future of the United States. However, it is important to remember that an alliance between the two countries remains highly speculative as Russia's and China's governments currently stand skeptical towards each other and continue in a competitive mindset.

America's security concern involving China contains two primary targets. The United States can severely injure the Chinese economy by reassessing their personal economic interdependence on China. It is the economic ties between the two countries that allow China influence, though minor, over the United States and presents security interests. The American government should reevaluate their budget to reduce imports to China and the amount of money borrowed. China is the highest buyer of U.S. Treasury bonds giving them the largest stake in the American economy. They also remain the largest supplier of imports to the United States. By

decreasing the amount of annual Chinese export products purchased by U.S. businesses, America can potentially cripple the Chinese economy by stalling their growth rates. Without America, China loses a significant economic supporter. Reassessing the federal budget allows the U.S. government to strategically transition away from the Chinese economy and align with stable European countries while learning to lower their debt ceiling and manage annual budgets. Once the Chinese economy is crippled from a lack of trade with the U.S., China's influence as a superpower reduces rapidly. Monetary loss will force the regime to decrease or halt military armed personnel and weapon advancements and create internal struggles among citizens and external issues with allies relying on the Chinese economy.

Another American option to cripple China is to covertly operate within the borders of their allies. In North Korea, Jong-un's regime power remains highly fragile within North Korea's borders as he has increased modernized materials in daily life and lifestyle changes for the elite while failing to reform lower-class living conditions. North Korea and China remain interconnected through military and economic facets. Toppling the North Korean regime would undermine the Chinese economy and limit their military numbers and allies and reduce their influence in Asia. Meeting directly with Putin allows America to influence the relationship between Russia and China. The United States can utilize the tensions between China and Russia as an advantage, aiding Russia in technological developments over China. A main concern for Russia is paralleling China's power to preserve their influence in Asia and to overcome the reputation of a fallen Soviet Union. America's alliance with Russia aids Russia's global influence and provides materials to combat China's advancements. The Russian government remains uneasy about being overpowered by China due to their rapid economic and military growth; America could augment this fear by providing intelligence to Russia that details China's weapon systems and military potential. The U.S. could also assuage Russia's fears by providing global support for Russia while undermining Jong-un's regime and China's global power. Weakening China's Asian alliances requires focus on North Korean and Russian vulnerabilities; for North Korea the vulnerability lies in the fragile power wielded by Jong-un, and for Russia the vulnerability rests in the fear of China's advancements overriding Russian power.

National concerns involving China remain the same as in 2007, magnified over time. China's economic growth, military buildup, and diplomatic alliances strengthen China as an international player. This strengthened power remains rooted in China's national strategy, illuminating their desire to assert themselves as a global superpower and to undermine American forces. The Chinese government views U.S. authority as unparalleled, and by default, providing America with international authority and influence. China strives to develop its economy, military, and alliances to combat the United States authority on an international scale. Unrest within China's borders but a lack of insurgencies displays the underlining brutality of the Communist Party to maintain their authority. They refer to their actions within national and international realms as capitalizing on an available opportunity. This view is reflected in their economic growth through exports and imports, utilizing cheap labor which encourages countries to build their companies in China and complete projects and export outward from China's soil. This growth caused the Chinese economy to explode, creating new opportunities for China to interlink with the largest economy in the world by buying their federal debt. This interconnection between America's and China's economies can be downgraded only through the American government analyzing their spending techniques, lowering their debt ceiling, and slowly transitioning away from trade with China. Military and weapon advancements in China cause tension between Russia and China as well as other international countries. This concern stems

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from the PLA's secrecy involving military strategies and purposes. While China claims a peaceful rise to power, questions cultivate from China's attempts to parallel American forces. While China's key allies of North Korea and Russia remain on fragile negotiations, treaties and collaboration between the three countries spurn international concerns due to the combined nuclear, biological, and chemical weapon capabilities and their common global enemy, the United States. Fortunately, the American government understands the vulnerabilities of each country and can employ their weaknesses to severely limit their economies, authoritative regimes, and global influence. However, until America learns to properly combat China's advancements in ways that hinder only China's economy and lifestyle, China will continue to persist as a national security concern due to their economic growth, military advances, and regional relationships focusing on a common enemy.

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