



In This Issue:

IN A FORTNIGHT
By Peter Mattis.....1

BEIJING PLAYS UP THE CARROT WHILE STILL WIELDING THE STICK
By Willy Lam.....3

THE SOAPBOX AND THE TRUNCHEON: HU JINTAO'S AMORPHOUS POWER
By Kerry Brown.....5

UZBEKISTAN'S BALANCING ACT WITH CHINA: A VIEW FROM THE GROUND
By Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen.....7

POLAR STAKES: CHINA'S POLAR ACTIVITIES AS A BENCHMARK FOR INTENTIONS
By Anne-Marie Brady.....11



China's Icebreaker, Snow Dragon
(Xuelong)

China Brief is a bi-weekly journal of information and analysis covering Greater China in Eurasia.

China Brief is a publication of The Jamestown Foundation, a private non-profit organization based in Washington D.C. and is edited by Peter Mattis.

The opinions expressed in China Brief are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Jamestown Foundation.



For comments or questions about China Brief, please contact us at mattis@jamestown.org

1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 483-8888
Fax: (202) 483-8337

Copyright © 2011

In a Fortnight

By Peter Mattis

SHORING UP PLA “MILITARY CULTURAL SECURITY” TO ENSURE STABILITY

As the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) careens toward the 18th Party Congress and a generational leadership transition, Beijing seems concerned with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and where it stands politically. CCP and PLA press have expressed these concerns in a variety of ways, whether dismissing changes to the party-army relations or opining on the need for greater officer loyalty (*PLA Daily*, June 17, May 15; *People’s Daily*, June 15). The latest expression is “military cultural security” (*junshi wenhua anquan*). The concern with “military cultural security” probably is not a backhanded criticism of President Hu Jintao, who has been unable to reform China’s cultural apparatus despite the emphasis he has put on it (*People’s Daily*, July 9; *Qiusbi*, January 1). Rather, the concept seems to embody a coherent way of developing a loyal, motivated and innovative PLA with a clear vision of its role within the party-state.

The PLA has discussed “military cultural security” as an important idea, because of its relationship to fighting power and the role of the PLA—a kind of security counterpart to the motivational work of political commissars. As an overarching concept that needs to be protected, culture acts as a “guide for thinking,” “a conceptual pilot” and “the lifeblood of the nation (*minzu*)” (*People’s Daily*, June 15). This concept suggests three concrete implications of healthy military culture. First, the Clausewitzian and Napoleonic view that the moral and spiritual dimensions of

war outweigh the physical is used to underpin the view that PLA culture is both an engine and a booster for the military's fighting capability (*PLA Daily*, July 2; *People's Daily*, June 15). As Mao Zedong said, "an uncultured army is stupid and a stupid army cannot defeat an enemy" (*PLA Daily*, June 20). Second, a healthy military culture supports the preservation of the CCP and appropriate civil-military relations (*PLA Daily*, June 15; *Red Flag*, May 24). Finally, the development of advanced military culture and military cohesion are necessary for the PLA to take advantage of this peaceful period for army construction (*Shanxi Daily*, July 18).

The PLA's concern with "cultural security" probably is the military reflection of Beijing's fear of cultural infiltration, which Hu described as a war after the party plenum last year (*Qiushi*, January 1). As the military press characterized the issue, "If economic globalization has brought more opportunities than challenges, then cultural globalization has brought more challenges than opportunities" (*PLA Daily*, July 2). With the fall of the Soviet Union and the survival of the Chinese communist party-state, the West allegedly turned its cultural propaganda on China, exploiting new platforms like the Internet to reach Chinese audiences and undermine their faith in the party. Moreover, ideological alternatives has become more varied, making it easier for "Western hostile forces" to exploit confusion surrounding the values of the CCP (*Party Building*, July 5; *Red Flag*, May 24). The problem, as propaganda czar Li Changchun put it, is how to reach people in order to spread the CCP message and make it competitive with all of the other competing modes of thought (Xinhua, June 29).

The military is not immune to these broader propaganda challenges as a leading party journal noted the "military cultural security" system was not well-developed or comprehensive (*Red Flag*, May 24). How the PLA intends to bolster this system, however, remains unclear, because it involves "creating a strong [ideational] line of defense resistant to corruption" (*PLA Daily*, July 2). At a minimum, it includes preventing ideological sabotage made possible by foreigners exploiting China's growing pluralization. The most notable example is preventing the spread of three mistaken ideas about the PLA's role in China, including the military's nationalization, de-politicization and removing the party's direct role in the PLA (*Shanxi Daily*, July 18; *Red Flag*, May 24). The second,

more positive, element is to create an environment within the PLA to foster advanced military culture, which, in addition to loyalty, allows for strategic thinking and military innovation (*PLA Daily*, July 2).

The Chinese military's complementary efforts to improve information security and political work may have created the conditions to meet the first demand of "military culture security." Last year, Beijing started cracking down on violators of military policy on personal electronics in an effort to restrict the ability of PLA information to flow to the outside world (Hebei.com.cn, April 28, 2011; Xinhua, April 1, 2011). Moreover, the PLA General Political Department already has started to develop new tools more suited to the Information Age to indoctrinate soldiers through microblogs, new websites and even smart phone apps. The idea behind these initiatives is to inject PLA political work into soldiers' social space so that propaganda materials can compete more effectively with other online information and entertainment ("PLA Puts Political Work Online," *China Brief*, February 3). By restricting PLA personnel's ability to communicate with the outside world and making propaganda more accessible, the new policies should improve "military cultural security" even if that was not the original intent.

The most likely reason for Beijing's concern with PLA culture and loyalty probably relates to the challenges of the leadership transition. There is always anxiousness in China when difficult politicking is underway. The more open and pluralistic society, the generational leadership transition, and the ongoing discussions of reform, however, make this year's sensitivity particularly acute. Given the repeated emphasis in the official press about the importance of PLA for China's national security—both its domestic and international components—analysts should not be surprised by the repeated exhortations for the PLA to be loyal (Xinhua, July 17; *PLA Daily*, July 2, June 26, June 17, April 6, March 19). The 1.8 million party members in China's military and paramilitary forces may not be expected to lead reform or choose the next leaders, but their adherence to the CCP's leading role is a prerequisite for any major adjustment to the status quo.

Peter Mattis is Editor of China Brief at The Jamestown Foundation.

Beijing Plays Up the Carrot While Still Wielding the Stick

By Willy Lam

The relatively swift resolution of the protests in Shifang in southwestern Sichuan Province could mark a turning point in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) administration's handling of the estimated 150,000 or so cases of mass incidents that erupt every year. While continuing to boost its formidable "preserving stability" (*weiwen*) apparatus, Beijing appears to be putting at least as much emphasis on conciliatory gestures in tackling very public and large-scale disturbances. No change, however, is expected in the CCP leadership's draconian measures to stamp out frontal challenges to its one-party rule, including those posed by dissidents and human rights activists such as Liu Xiaobo, Gao Zhisheng and Ai Weiwei.

On July 1, several thousand residents—including scores of high-school students—in Shifang, a county-level city in Sichuan, held a rally to voice their opposition to the planned construction of a \$1.6 billion molybdenum copper plant. Municipal officials immediately deployed anti-riot police against the protestors, many of whom had surrounded party and government buildings. Tear gas was fired at the demonstrators of whom 27 were arrested (*Ming Pao* [Hong Kong] July 2). It was soon apparent that authorities not only in the provincial capital of Chengdu but also in Beijing decided to adopt a softer and more flexible approach to quickly defuse this largely environmentally-based protest. Barely two days later, Shifang cadres buckled under pressure and indicated they had scrapped plans for the plant, which the officials had claimed earlier would help revive the economy by bringing in huge employment opportunities. Beijing-based national newspapers began berating Shifang officials for their failure to make proper consultation with its people, most of whom were scared of the pollution that the factory might generate. On July 5, Chengdu dispatched the Zuo Zheng, Vice Mayor of Deyang City, which has jurisdiction over Shifang, to "supervise" local Party Secretary Li Chengjin in handling the aftermath of the incident (CNN, July 6; China News Service, July 5).

It is probably not a coincidence that the same week, the CCP Central Political-Legal Commission, which is

in charge of the nation's police, domestic intelligence, prosecutors' offices and courts, laid down instructions on so-called "innovation in preserving stability [methods]" (*chuangxin weiwen*). While the leadership has yet to spell out details of *chuangxin weiwen*, Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang, who heads the Central Political-Legal Commission, asked law enforcement cadres to emulate the so-called "Wukan Village Model" (CNTV.cn, July 4). This was a reference to Guangdong authorities' placatory treatment of "rebel peasants" in Wukan Village in southern Guangdong. Late last year, residents there threw out local officials who were accused of illegally confiscating the household family plots of peasants and then selling them to developers at huge profits. Fresh elections at Wukan were held in January and a few of the protest organizers were elected as the village's new administrators ("The Grim Future of the Wukan Model for Managing Dissent," *China Brief*, January 6). After discussions with Guangdong Deputy Party Secretary Zhu Mingguo, who personally negotiated with the Wukan rebels, Zhou praised Zhu and his colleagues for their "bold exploration" in political-legal work. "I hope Guangdong will continue to establish path-breaking experience in *chuangxin weiwen*," Zhou said. How to use the "Wukan Model" to handle confrontation between police and citizens was also featured in a training camp for 1,400 newly appointed municipal- and county-level police chiefs (*Southern Daily*, July 6; China News Service, July 6).

There are other examples of Beijing's new-found readiness to enforce an "innovative" style in upholding stability. Feng Jianmei, the woman from rural Shaanxi Province who was forced to undergo a late-term abortion was last week promised an unprecedented compensation of \$11,000. The grisly picture of her killed fetus was widely circulated in China's Cyberspace as well as in the foreign media. Two local officials were sacked and five others penalized for their overzealous – and illegal – methods in enforcing China's stern one-child policy (Sina.com, July 12; *Global Times*, June 27; *The Guardian*, June 26).

If it is indeed true that part of the spirit of *chuangxin weiwen* includes a more placatory way to deal with protests, what are the factors behind this turn of events? Apart from an obvious desire to stop the number and intensity of anti-government mass incidents from increasing, a key consideration could be the enhanced

activism of the so-called post-80 and, in particular, the post-90 generations—references to Chinese born after 1980 and 1990, respectively. While the participation of the post-90 generation was already evident in the Wukan insurrection in Guangdong, this phenomenon first attracted nationwide attention during the Shifang incident. Particularly noticeable was the unusually enthusiastic involvement of several dozens of students from Shifang Middle School. The slogan of these teenagers resonated among the tens of millions of the country's post-80 and post-90 Netizens: “We are not afraid of making a sacrifice; we're of the post-90 generation!” (*Hong Kong Economic Times*, July 5).

That the authorities are nervous about the political awakening of the post-90 generation was evidenced by the speed with which the CCP propaganda machinery swung into action. The popular *Global Times* ran an editorial entitled “We should not encourage high school students to show up at the frontline of [social] conflicts.” The official paper warned different social sectors “not to unreservedly praise the [political] participation of high school students.” The paper went further, noting “Nobody should encourage high school students to plunge into different types of mass incidents, not to mention going to the frontline of political confrontation...It is immoral for adults to make use of youths to attain their political goals” (*Global Times*, July 6; *Ming Pao*, July 6).

The party leadership has good reasons to be disturbed by the destabilizing potentials of politicized youths. During the Cultural Revolution, teenage high school students as well as college students in their early 20s figured prominently in some of the bloodiest “armed struggles” among rival Red Guard factions. The post-90 generation's eagerness about “rights protection” (*weiquan*) and defending the rights of the underprivileged has demonstrated that “patriotic education” about the party's supposedly glorious achievements is not working well. More significantly, even compared to their post-80 forebears, members of the post-90 generation seem to have less economic and political baggage. They do not yet need to worry about jobs and saving enough money to pay for their first mortgages. Most importantly, the Internet—especially social media platforms such as the Chinese versions of Twitter and Facebook—has more influence on their way of thinking than government propaganda. As famed writer and blogger Han Han

wrote of the post-90 youths who starred in the Shifang demonstrations: “It's wrong to call them future leaders of the country; they are already today's movers and shakers” (*Apple Daily* [Hong Kong] July 11; Han Han Blog, July 5).

Shifang also marked one of most obvious instances of the CCP Propaganda Department's inability to contain public discourse critical of the government in cyberspace, where more than 500 million Chinese Internet users congregate virtually. More than 200 nationally known bloggers and Internet-based social critics defied orders from the authorities by penning pungent commentaries on how cadres' arrogance and insensitivity had contributed to the Shifang mishap. Han Han and popular commentator Li Chengpeng also praised the increasing maturity of young protestors nationwide. Beijing's apparent inability to control Internet-based opinion leaders also may have prompted central and provincial authorities to take quick action to mollify Shifang residents (*Tianya.cn* [Beijing], July 7; *Sina.com*, July 6).

There is little evidence, however, that the political-legal apparatus will contemplate more enlightened methods in dealing with dissidents who are deemed to pose the most serious threat to CCP authoritarianism. Dissidents, such as human rights activist Hu Jia and avant garde artist Ai Weiwei, are still placed under 24-hour surveillance. This is despite the fact that Chinese courts have not convicted them of any offenses. Even though blind lawyer Chen Guangcheng left China two months ago, his nephew Chen Kegui is still held by police in Shandong Province. Attorney Song Ze, one of dozens of human rights lawyers who have helped the Chen family, has lost contact with his family members or associates. International human rights watchdogs believe, like famed lawyer Gao Zhisheng, Song has “disappeared” and is believed to be held in an undisclosed location somewhere in China (*Amnesty International*, July 6; *China Human Rights Defenders*, July 6).

Beijing's decision not to yield an inch regarding widespread demands that party authorities pay hefty compensation to victims of the Tiananmen Square crackdown, let alone overturn the official verdict on the June 4 “counter-revolutionary turmoil,” is also telling. A case in point is the mysterious death of Hunan Province labor activist Li Wangyang, who was imprisoned for 22 years because of his role in the 1989 democracy movement. Li was detained

again in late May shortly after he had given an interview to a Hong Kong television station. On June 6, authorities claimed he had committed suicide. The 62-year-old's body was incinerated immediately despite queries and protests lodged by relatives and lawyers about the circumstances of his demise. Last week, Hunan authorities released a report confirming that Li had taken his own life. Li's closest kin—his sister and brother-in-law—were kept under house arrest in an apparent attempt by the police to prevent them from talking to foreign media (*New York Times*, July 13; BBC News, July 13).

Chairman Mao Zedong said it all with this telling remark about the incendiary nature of popular protest: “A spark from the heavens can set the whole grassland on fire.” While party authorities might have been forced into using relatively rational and placatory *weiwen* tactics in the wake of the Wukan and Shifang incidents, there is slim evidence that the leadership under outgoing President Hu Jintao is ready to introduce radical measures to promote social justice and ensure ordinary citizens' rights in political participation. The world—and the increasingly politicized post-80 and post-90 generation in China—waits with impatience for signs that the new leadership to be endorsed at the 18th Party Congress this autumn may bring real reformist zeal to repairing the party's sorely strained relationship with the citizenry.

Willy Wo-Lap Lam, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow at The Jamestown Foundation. He has worked in senior editorial positions in international media including Asiaweek newsmagazine, South China Morning Post and the Asia-Pacific Headquarters of CNN. He is the author of five books on China, including the recently published “Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges.” Lam is an Adjunct Professor of China studies at Akita International University, Japan, and at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The Soapbox and the Truncheon: Hu Jintao's Amorphous Power

By Kerry Brown

The last ten years in China have been difficult ones, filled with tremendous opportunities and challenges as China has deepened the reform and opening policies of Deng Xiaoping—or so the official press now proclaims (*People's Daily*, July 11, July 9). These editorials did not name names, seemingly reflecting one of the remarkable characteristics of Hu Jintao's ten-year tenure as general secretary: his coyness when big events occur. During the crises of this spring, Hu's coyness was very much in evidence. Following the fleeing to the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu of Wang Lijun—a key ally of the deposed Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai—in February, Hu has been reported only as making one direct remark on the whole affair, branding Wang “a traitor” at an internal meeting in early March (*South China Morning Post*, March 6). Hu so far has made no direct comment on the Bo case itself and avoided the case of blind human rights activist Chen Guangcheng fleeing to the U.S. Embassy in late April and early May. For that matter, Hu never made any direct statement on the award of the Nobel Prize to Liu Xiaobo in 2010, nor, at the time, did he remark directly on the uprisings in Tibet in early 2008 or Xinjiang in 2009 and Inner Mongolia in 2010. He left the first two of these high-level meetings in Beijing in 2010 to opine in the abstract, non-committal language that Hu always uses. This raises the question of just how strong a leader is Hu, and to what extent is he really in charge? Is his ambiguous silence a sign of a profoundly calculating, brilliant politician, or someone who simply lacks the capital to speak out front?

President Hu has a long history of reticence. Willy Lam reports that, in 1989, while Party boss of Tibet, Hu mysteriously went missing before the decision had to be taken by the local police chief to send in troops against protestors [1]. “Delegating” the decision in this way, Hu would have avoided direct censure had anything gone wrong. As it was, all was well and his promotion followed two years later. In his handling of the uprising in Tibet and Xinjiang in 2008 and 2009 respectively, and in the removal of Shanghai Party Secretary and Politburo member Chen Liangyu in 2006, analysts can find some insights into how Hu wields power as the general secretary. Chen's fall, in fact, gives us some of

the most relevant information. The official statement of Chen's removal on September 25, 2006, was conveyed in language that stressed the importance of institutional sanctions rather than any direct intervention by Hu: "The [Chinese Communist Party (CCP)] Central Committee said it believed corruption would be curbed under the leadership of Hu Jintao as general secretary and with joint efforts of all Party members and the public." The statement added "Whoever it is, no matter how high their positions are, anyone who violates party rules or national law will be severely investigated and punished" (Xinhua, September 25, 2006). This language would be duplicated six years later with Bo Xilai.

There are three issues here. The first is whether or not Hu's leadership is—in the words of one internal critic—built on "empty rhetoric," which has made an increasingly comfortable accommodation with state-sanctioned violence to deal with social issues in Chinese society as it has become more conflict prone in the last decade. Referring to one of Hu's annual talks to the Central Discipline and Inspection Commission in 2010, academic Liang Jing (a pen name) complained "Hu has realized that he cannot carry on ruling by empty rhetoric to the end of his term, and believes only by applying naked secret police methods can be reign in high Party officials" (*New Century News*, January 26, 2010). The major issues here are how to deal with the rise of social media and the connectivity it brings in Chinese society, the growth of vested interests alongside the immense wealth creation of the last decade and, finally, the swathe of rights-conscious protests that have risen. Hu's strategy appears to be to say one thing (e.g. observe rule of law) and do another (e.g. repress as and when it suits Beijing).

This connects to the second issue. Everything since the Wang Lijun incident shows the ambiguities of Hu's era in power. On the one hand, there was the powerful editorial that declared "China is a socialist country under the rule of law. The dignity and authority of the law should not be trumped. No matter who is involved, if he is against the law, he shall be punished in accordance with law without fail." The editorial continued that in this strategy the CCP has the support of "the people of the whole country. It has forged a powerful force for reform, development and stability" (*People's Daily*, April 11). Zhou Yongkang, the Standing Committee member in charge of the legal, made similar remarks while visiting Wuhan in late April,

stating the key aim was "to safeguard people's lawful rights and interests to uphold social justice and maintain social stability" (Xinhua, April 22). Such comments from a suspected patron of the felled Bo underlined the re-emergence of consensus in the Hu-ist collective leadership. The problem here—as Qiao Mu, an academic in the Beijing Foreign Studies University stated two weeks later—was that after the *People's Daily* previously enthusiastically praised Bo Xilai's "Chongqing Model," "How can we expect the public to trust and relate to such a media outlet?" (*South China Morning Post*, April 28). The case of Chen Guangcheng with the multiple claims of illegality in his detention over the last year highlights all too starkly how, contrary to what Hu says, all too often there is no rule of law. As one of the local officials stated to Chen, according to his recorded testimony released on the April 29, "There is no law. We make the law."

The third issue is the issue of the highly-restricted space that Hu has inherited. The *People's Daily* editorials quoted above underline this, issuing their proclamations with Hu stated as "the Party Secretary of the CCP Central Committee" (*People's Daily*, April 11). Hu might be talked of as core of the fourth generation leadership, but that is outside of China. Inside China, he is not even accorded the rank Jiang Zemin had in the 1990s, when he was marked in official discourse as "core of the third generation." This raises questions about Hu's authority and the legitimacy given him within the party.

On top of these are problems of understanding the structures by which Hu wields power as part of this collective leadership. Reports suggest Bo's fall only received sanction after a meeting of the Politburo a day after the National People's Congress closed on March 20. Time and again, decisions are held up until the Politburo can meet—from issuing a collective line on the unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang to sanctioning the response on Liu Xiaobo's Nobel Prize. One sees since 2002 an enhanced role for the leading small groups as final decision-making entities—probably granting relative autonomy for the group chair—but from time to time evidence suggests, on critical issues like Tibet, in Xinjiang and North Korea, Hu has to sign off. He reportedly needed to leave the G8 meetings in Rome in July 2009, because he needed to be back in the country to authorize the deployment of security forces after the eruptions of unrest in Xinjiang [2]. There is a tension in the current leadership over being

transparent (even to the limited extent of intra-party democracy) and yet still maintaining enough opacity to keep tension in the system. Only the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group has ever been acknowledged in the official press, but under Hu, for the first time, some reports of Politburo meetings have been issued.

Perhaps to make sense of Hu's role in decision making, we need to be clear about two things that have come out in the last months of ongoing crisis. On the one hand, the keywords remain: "reform," "development" and "stability" (*People's Daily*, July 11). Hu's macroeconomic policy must deliver these. They were used densely in his report to the 17th Party Congress in 2007, and they keep appearing in the *People's Daily*, such as the April 12 and early July editorials. The logic is that without these three, then all other policy aims fall by the wayside. In an era of economic and social transition and while China remains a developing country where rule of law is an aspiration, there are times when it cannot deliver what is expected and more primitive methods kick in.

The second is that Hu has had to try to maintain the strategy of institutionalizing the party's governance structures, so that the kinds of strong man politics under Mao Zedong—and to a lesser extent Deng—are avoided. The strong distaste for charismatic leadership has a deeper influence on modern Chinese politics than many suspect, and may well lie at the heart of Bo's own fall. Hu, however, also needs a more institutionalized policymaking process to exercise what influence he has without the legitimacy of being the "core of the fourth generation." Hu's challenge has been to do this as the CCP and society have become more pluralistic and increasingly fragmented. Trying to achieve a seamless leadership transition in these circumstances was always going to be tough.

To say that Hu has no power would be senseless. To say that he has had to exercise what power he has in a dynamic, changing context, with wholly different levers that his predecessors comes nearer the mark. Hu's objectives have been to deliver growth through stability and reform through a consensus-led, unified leadership without the kind of party-wide strong arm politics of the past. He has had to do this often with the deployment of some unpleasant repressive measures to deal with internal party and national challenges.

Hu may have been able to purge Chen Liangyu and Bo Xilai, but his ability to remove the former's challenge did not allow him to place his people at the 17th Party Congress. How Bo's purge affected the power dynamics in the next leadership selection remains to be seen. If anything, these leadership crises have shown Hu by himself is able to operate at the extremes, exhorting rhetorically across the system or picking off individual challengers—broad but ineffectual, narrow but powerful. More institutionalized policymaking may have offered Hu a way to guide policy without being a strong man, but this process also gave his opponents more opportunities to obstruct him. Only time will tell, however, whether the growing stagnancy in the Chinese political system happened because of or in spite of Hu Jintao.

Kerry Brown is the Director of the China Studies Centre and Professor of Chinese Politics at the University of Sydney. He is the author of Hu Jintao: China's Silent Ruler published earlier this year by World Scientific Publishing.

Notes:

1. Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006, pp. 8–9.
2. Private Communication, Beijing, 2009.

Uzbekistan's Balancing Act With China: A View From the Ground

By Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen

The exact reasons for Uzbekistan's decision to withdraw from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) at the end of June remain unclear (Xinhua, June, 29; *Russia Today*, June 28, 2012). However, while Tashkent seems to have soured on the Russian-led regional organization, President Islam Karimov took time in June to pay a state visit to Beijing that included attending the Chinese instigated Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In addition to attending the SCO Summit, President Karimov held separate bilateral meetings with President Hu Jintao, signed a strategic partnership agreement and approved a raft of new

measures to strengthen Sino-Uzbek relations (Gov.uz, June 8; Xinhua, June 7). At this high level, relations are clearly moving in a positive direction. The view from the ground, however, is far more complex with Uzbekistan's traditional vision of itself as a regional powerhouse and industrial power potentially at odds with China's growing influence in Central Asia.

A Strategic Partner

The main public take-away from the June 2012 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Beijing was the organization's decision to admit Afghanistan as "observer" member and Turkey as "dialogue partner" (Xinhua, June 7). When taken alongside the news that China and Afghanistan were to upgrade relations to a strategic partnership, the main international focus was on what this might mean for China's future involvement in the war-torn country. This news story somewhat overshadowed the other big announcement to emerge on the fringes of the SCO Summit, the bilateral meeting between President Islam Karimov and President Hu Jintao during which the leaders signed a "Joint Declaration on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership Relations" (Xinhua, June 8). This came in the wake of a visit to Tashkent by General Chen Bingde, Chief of People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Staff, who paid a bilateral visit to the capital during a regional trip that culminated in a pre-Summit meeting of military heads to plan future joint military exercises (Xinhua, June 4; *PLA Daily*, June 4). Although these sorts of regional summits and meetings are often more notable for the empty statements that are produced, the signals sent are loud and clear when read within the context of Uzbekistan's regional diplomacy.

Karimov's very presence at the summit was important, given that he makes a point of not attending similar Russian-sponsored summits or other multilateral get-togethers. Tashkent's foreign policy is fiercely independent—something emphasized in the decision to withdraw from the CSTO, where Uzbekistan had long resisted a number of the largely Russian instigated efforts to deepen integration. Consequently, the combination of President Karimov's attendance at the SCO summit, the military meetings prior and the signing of a formal strategic partnership most likely signals genuine intent. While the strategic partnership agreement itself covers areas from military exchanges

to tourism programs, it is Uzbekistan's willingness to allow China more access to its economy that stands out most. Plans call for the development of joint special economic zones and greater Chinese involvement in the natural resource extraction, aviation and transportation sectors (Xinhua, June 3; September 23, 2011).

Even within the SCO, while Uzbekistan is resistant to get too involved at a military level, it still has permitted the establishment of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) in the capital Tashkent. Opened on January 1, 2004 and headed by an Uzbek Major General, RATS has an executive committee of officials drawn from each member state's Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior Affairs or State Security (RATS SCO, November 30, 2004) [1]. While it is hard to discern how active the institution is, local analysts highlight its presence as significant within the context of Uzbekistan's independent streak [2]. This is not to overplay Uzbekistan's involvement of course—Tashkent has so far refused to participate in anything but an observer role in the biannual "Peace Mission" joint exercises (*Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 19).

Beyond the SCO there are further tensions visible between China and Uzbekistan on security affairs. According to Tashkent-based analysts, the Uzbek government does not always feel that Beijing shares its concerns about international terrorism. The implication is that, while Uzbekistan views terrorism as a potentially existential threat, China considers it a secondary concern [3]. Furthermore, when focusing on Afghanistan, the main regional security challenge, Uzbekistan prefers to focus its relations and efforts at a bilateral level. This allows the country to concentrate its efforts through preferred local partners, such as Uzbek-Afghan general Rashid Dostum, rather than work at a government level. Relations between Kabul and Tashkent are currently on an awkward footing—something explained to the authors as the consequence of a high-level spat between leaders [4].

Investment at Arms Length

Tensions between China and Uzbekistan are also visible at a bilateral investment level. Uzbekistan boasts the only real manufacturing base in Central Asia and is protective of its factories and labor force. According to several local businessmen who worked both with China and other

countries, high tariffs are levied against many imported consumer goods with Chinese goods often targeted in particular [5]. Mid-level entrepreneurs interviewed and seen in Tashkent seemed to be doing a brisk trade in Chinese-made products that were modified or assembled in Uzbekistan to mask their origin. In contrast, large-scale Chinese imports or rentals of equipment—such as heavy machinery, agricultural and transport equipment—are encouraged as a way to boost Uzbekistan's production [6].

Recent high-level meetings also have focused on Tashkent's plans to reroute more of its natural gas, traditionally exported through Russia, into the China-Central Asia pipeline. During the recent meeting in Beijing, the two sides were reportedly "energetic and enthusiastic about the project," though foreign observers have questioned the viability of some of the numbers being spoken about (Gov.uz, June 8) [7]. In particular, it is not entirely clear how they will achieve exports of 10 billion cubic meters to China in 2013 without missing quotas for export elsewhere or domestic demand (Reuters, May 17). One possible alternative being explored is the deepening of bilateral cooperation between China and Uzbekistan on solar energy and solar furnaces. Reportedly, the two sides have signed a bilateral memorandum of understanding to go into joint production [8]. In August 2011, the Xinjiang Garson Sun Wind Power Technology Company opened an office in Uzbekistan, part of a larger regional push (*China Daily*, August 16, 2011). A Chinese firm, the Holley Group, also have agreed to work with Uzbek partners to upgrade the Uzbek metering system (MeteringChina.com, June 14). Beyond energy, China has provided some infrastructure development in Uzbekistan, with China Road and Bridge Company (CRBC) participating in road projects alongside South Korean firm Posco (UzDaily.com, April 9).

Although this paints a picture of enhanced cooperation—and one that is seemingly deepening in the wake of the recent bilateral meetings between President Hu and President Karimov—there is an undercurrent of uncertainty. Chinese firms, while clearly present in Uzbekistan, have a relatively low visibility and encounter the same difficulties getting profits out of the country as other foreign firms. One way around this is to reinvest the profits generated from selling back office technology into the country, something that Huawei and ZTE—two

of China's largest telecommunications companies—currently are doing to make handsets in Uzbekistan.

From an Uzbek perspective, the priority is clearly to maintain a manufacturing base while living close to the world's factory, China. Uzbeks have watched as neighboring states Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan slowly have found themselves overly dependent on China and are wary of falling into a similar position [9]. There is some evidence of this already taking place in Uzbekistan. One example given to the authors was that cotton packaging had been altered to meet Chinese demands specifically—something Beijing was able to impose because they are the largest consumers of Uzbek cotton [10]. Some in the country, however, have highlighted the potential for the state to profit from China's increasing labor costs. Uzbekistan's relatively developed manufacturing base, educated workforce and good infrastructure offer themselves as good alternatives. During a speech in Tashkent July 2011, World Bank Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Justin Yifu Lin spoke of Uzbekistan being in an excellent position to profit from the fact that countries like China, India and Brazil were slowly moving up the value chain (Blogs.worldbank.org, July 13, 2011). Foreign diplomats interviewed mentioned how they were taking business delegations around the country and at least one textile firm apparently was considering moving its manufacturing from China to Uzbekistan [11].

East Asian Balancing

Uzbekistan's most prominent East Asian investment partner, however, is not China but South Korea. With over \$10 billion in total direct investment (as opposed to just over \$5 billion from China), South Korea may not have the same geopolitical clout as China, but the relationship allows Tashkent to avoid relying too much on China and Russia (*Korea Times*, June 6). The partnership began just after independence with familial and small business links between the Soviet Koreans of Uzbekistan and their counterparts on the Korean peninsula. It further blossomed into high-level investment partnerships and close personal ties between President Karimov and a succession of South Korean presidents. It is not uncommon for Uzbeks who emigrate to find jobs and business opportunities in South Korea and the government in Seoul has provided direct aid—often linked to investment projects—to Uzbekistan (*Korea*

Times, February 10, 2010). When driving through Navoiy Province in southern Uzbekistan, newly paved roads lead to a prominent cargo airport and to new factories and office buildings of the sprawling special economic zone developed by Korean companies as part of a Korean-Uzbek partnership.

Uzbek analysts and officials openly say that Karimov views South Korea and other Asian Tigers, such as Malaysia, as models for Uzbekistan's development [12]. In doing so, he is not only crafting an economically positive narrative for the country's future, but he also is balancing against China conceptually. Aware of the difficulties in using China's growth pattern as a model to emulate, Uzbekistan sees countries like South Korea as a more sound model to follow. The Asian Tigers are nearer in size to Uzbekistan and have managed the shift from a closed economy with authoritarian government to a more liberalized market economy well-integrated into the global economy. In keeping Uzbekistan's economy relatively closed, Tashkent is not only maintaining a tight control over its economy, but it is also trying to forge a relationship with China that is not overly dependant with the giant to the east. So far, cautious diplomacy, protectionist economic measures and strategic diversification have allowed Uzbekistan to be the master of its own destiny without overly antagonizing any of its regional partners.

Conclusion

Unlike in other countries in Central Asia visited by the authors, the general perception of China in Uzbekistan is far more positive [13]. When asking generally about the Chinese presence in the country, Uzbeks are curious and positive with none of the vicious rumors heard in neighboring countries—such as Tajik rumors that the work crews sent to work on construction sites are prisoners and that Chinese men are marrying local women. In part, this is likely due to the absence of a direct border with China, meaning the fears of annexation and mass Chinese immigration are less. Uzbeks spoken to at Beijing-sponsored Confucius Institutes or those learning Chinese at local universities were learning about China and its language out of curiosity, a desire for work or an eagerness to travel. Chinese businessmen reported finding success and establishing roots. At the same time, however, Chinese firms have the same problems faced by other foreign firms in Uzbekistan, including difficulties

with getting profits out of the country and an awkward local bureaucracy. Uzbekistan is not instinctively hostile toward China, but rather is quite closed to the outside world more generally.

What is interesting to note is the gradual geopolitical alignment that is increasingly visible between China and Uzbekistan, though it is one that from the outside seems more balanced toward trade than security matters. While clearly part of a larger Uzbek balancing strategy; from a Chinese perspective, the result is a net positive one that accords with a vision that has its eye on the longer-term. For Beijing, a stable and prosperous Central Asia is the goal, allowing for trade as well as providing China with natural resources. To achieve this, China is willing to play whatever game is required. Beijing is able to accommodate Uzbekistan's tendency to behave as a cautious actor, investing and forging a relationship with the country at a pace that fits with Uzbek concerns and that looks beyond artificial deadlines. In this way, China is able to offer Uzbekistan a partnership that stands in contrast to the fickle Western approach that oscillates between friendship and condemnation, something that helps belie underlying Uzbek concerns of competition from the rising Asian giant. Hardly a partnership of equals, Beijing's approach has ensured that it has continued to be able to focus relations with Tashkent on its interests in the country.

Raffaello Pantucci is a Visiting Scholar at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and Alexandros Petersen is the author of [The World Island: Eurasian Geopolitics and the Fate of the West](#). Their joint research can be found at www.chinaincentralasia.com.

Notes:

1. Author Interview, RATS Headquarters, Tashkent, May 10, 2012.
2. Author Interview with Uzbek Official at a Foreign Organization, Tashkent, May 8, 2012.
3. Author Interview with Foreign Observer, Tashkent, May 11, 2012.
4. Author Interview with Uzbek Analysts, Tashkent, May 10–11, 2012; Author Interviews, Kabul April 30, 2012. Direct flights between Kabul and Tashkent are impossible and flights pass through Dubai or elsewhere. The authors flew Kabul-

Dushanbe and then drove through Oybek border post to Tashkent.

5. Author Interviews with Local Businessmen, Tashkent, May 2012.
6. Author Interviews, Tashkent, May 9, 2012. The authors also saw numerous large Chinese-made trucks and other mobile machines at various locations in Tashkent and Samarkand.
7. Author Interview with Foreign Official, Tashkent, May 10, 2012.
8. Author Interview with Local Analyst, Tashkent, May 7, 2012.
9. Author Interview with Local Analyst, Tashkent, May 8, 2012.
10. Author Interview with Uzbek Analyst, Tashkent, May 7, 2012.
11. Author Interview Tashkent, May 11, 2012.
12. Author Interview Tashkent, May 10, 2012.
13. In conducting research on China and Central Asia, the authors have visited Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Tajikistan](#) and Uzbekistan.

Polar Stakes: China's Polar Activities as a Benchmark for Intentions

By Anne-Marie Brady

On July 2, China's polar icebreaker Xuelong set off on its fifth Arctic expedition. On board were scientists from Denmark, France, Iceland, Taiwan and the United States in addition to Chinese scientists, support staff and a team of journalists. During the 90-day voyage, Xuelong will make China's first ever traverse of the strategically important Northeast Arctic shipping route (Xinhua, July 18, July 2). The trip highlights many states renewed interests in the polar regions, because of climate change, the shifting global balance of power and declining global oil stocks.

In the last eighteen months, three new nations have signed up to the Antarctic Treaty, the international regime which governs Antarctica. Meanwhile, in the Arctic, a host of non-Arctic states are petitioning to become permanent

observers on the Arctic Council, the key forum for international cooperation on Arctic-related issues.

As one of those concerned states, China has interests in both the Arctic and the Antarctic. Beijing's annual spending on polar expeditions has trebled in the last ten years and it is making a massive investment in polar-related infrastructure. Last summer, the Deputy Head of the China Arctic and Antarctic Administration Chen Lianzeng stated that the overall goal of China's current five year polar plan was to increase China's "status and influence" in polar affairs to better protect its "polar rights" (Xinhua, June 21, 2011).

Many observers speculate China's increased polar activities may challenge the interests of other polar states. These concerns are linked to a wider debate about China's international behavior around questions such as whether China is a "reluctant stakeholder" in the international system and whether China will continue to support current international norms as it becomes more dominant. China's polar engagement is a helpful case study toward better understanding Beijing's global behavior and foreign policy.

China's Polar Interests

China's Arctic interests are attracting a lot of attention, due to the rapidly changing physical and geopolitical environment in the Arctic. China wants to be involved in any new norm-setting, which will develop as the melting ice leads to more opportunities for shipping, mining and fishing. A lot of other countries share those interests. Yet for all the attention it receives, China is not putting a lot of money into its Arctic program—about 20 percent of its polar program goes on the Arctic (the rest on the Antarctic). Compared to China's budgeting elsewhere, the polar budget receives very little funding. On the Arctic, Beijing produces a lot of smoke, mirrors and big talk, which disguises their small investment.

Stymied by the one-China issue, China was a late joiner to the Antarctic Treaty (1959). Beijing acceded to the Treaty in 1983, launched the first Chinese expedition to the Antarctic continent in 1984 and rapidly built two bases, first Changcheng Station on the Antarctic Peninsula (1985), then Zhongshan Station (1989) on the Australian Antarctic claim. All along China's engagement

in Antarctica has focused on establishing a significance presence, which would enable it to assert rights to be involved in decision-making.

China's polar presence has undergone a "great leap" in the last ten years. In 2004, China built the tiny Huanghe Station on the Svarlbard Archipelago. In recent years many non-Arctic states who wish to engage in Arctic research have set up research stations at Ny-Ålesund on Svarlbard Island under the 1920 Spitsbergen Treaty [1]. Currently, China is negotiating setting up a second Arctic research base in Iceland [2].

In 2008, China built Kunlun Station at Dome A—a location so remote it takes two weeks to get there. Chinese scientists can only work there for two weeks a year but the station's strategically-important location may eventually be worth it. There is talk of China establishing a fourth Antarctic base. At Dome A, China hopes to succeed in collecting the world's deepest ice core, which could help reconstruct the climate record as far back as 1.3 million years (*Nature*, January 6, 2009). Such groundbreaking work is one of the key measures of influence in Antarctic science.

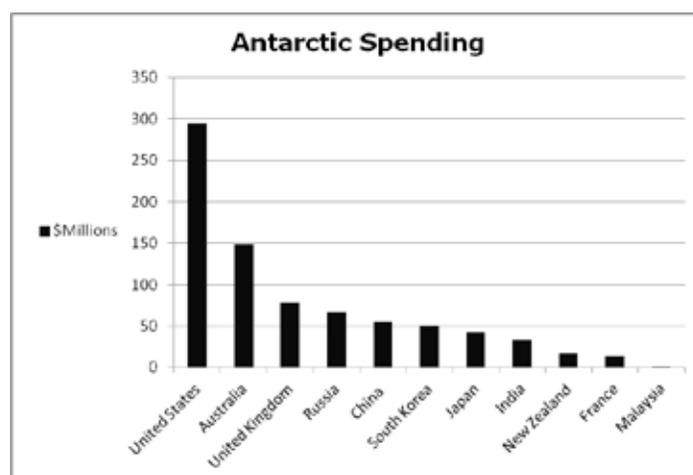
Dome A also has telescopes for deep space research. The project is a result of collaboration between Australian, Chinese and U.S. scientists, but in Chinese-language reports only China's involvement is highlighted. Chinese scientists hope the research done here may lead to China's first Nobel Prize for science (*Qingdao Morning Post*, July 2; State Oceanic Administration, November 2, 2011).

The new base at Dome A is part of a rush of new infrastructure investments, which will further boost China's physical presence on the ice. Beijing spends considerably less funds on scientific research—officially the only legitimate activity for countries to be engaged in Antarctica. Unlike most Antarctic countries, China currently has no dedicated fund for Antarctic or even Arctic science, and scientists must compete for funds for their polar projects along with other scientific projects.

China spends around \$15 million on annual expeditions to the Antarctic and Arctic. The cost of base maintenance and running the Polar Research Institute of China and the China Arctic and Antarctic Administration bring Beijing's annual spending on polar affairs to around \$60 million,

roughly equivalent to what South Korea now spends in the polar regions.

Both Korea and China have made massive investments in polar hardware in the last five years, and this is what marks both of them as different from more established players, such as the United States, which capped polar spending in 2008 and is desperately in need of a new ice breaker. By contrast, Beijing recently spent \$60 million to refurbish its Antarctic research bases and upgrade its national polar facilities in Shanghai. It also found \$300 million for a new ice breaker and plans a new ice-capable plane, a new polar campus in Shanghai and a rapid expansion of the numbers of Chinese polar scientists from 200 to up to 1,000.



With the successful completion of the current five-year plan's objectives in 2015, China will have caught up with most of the developed states' Antarctic operational capabilities with two ice-fitted ships operational, ice-suitable long-range aircraft, and state-of-the-art facilities at its polar bases. Beijing will not be spending as much, because it simply does not engage in as much science. In the 2011-2012 austral summer, China sent only 17 scientists to work at Changcheng Station while a mere six scientists worked at Zhongshan Station that year [3]. In the Arctic, China is even more of a bit-player when it comes to science, but any activities there are promoted heavily in Chinese media reports targeted at both domestic and foreign audiences.

Chinese Perspectives on Antarctic Governance

Some Chinese polar scholars refer to the Antarctic Treaty

as a “rich man’s club” (*furen de julebu*) or a zone for “collective hegemony” (*jiti baquan*), and assert that China has been a “second class citizen” (*er deng gongmin*) within the Treaty [4]. In theory, Antarctica is owned by no one and open to all nations. Economic limitations, however, effectively exclude most of the developing world and many middle-income countries from developing Antarctic science programs. Moreover, the best locations for research bases and resource exploitation were taken long ago by earlier Antarctic players.

China’s central critique of the Antarctica Treaty System (ATS) revolves around the issue of the distribution of resources. Deciding who can control polar resources is a matter of global political and economic importance. As an energy-hungry nation, China is extremely interested in the resources of Antarctica (and the Arctic) and any possibilities for their exploitation. Chinese-language polar social science discussions are dominated by debates about Antarctic resources and how China might gain its share—mostly referring to access to mineral resources. Such discussions are virtually taboo in the scholarly research of more-established Antarctic powers. Nowadays (it was not always the case), scholars in those countries tend to focus on preserving the environmental heritage of Antarctica and the Southern Oceans. In Chinese-language debates, social and hard science scholars, government officials and journalistic commentators all appear to agree that the exploitation of Antarctica is only a matter of time and that China should prepare itself.

Chinese Perspectives on Arctic Governance

In a recent international presentation, two analysts at the Polar Research Institute of China described the country as being a “near Arctic” state [5]. This new phraseology is meant to underline China’s legitimate interests in the region. China would like to have a say in the governance measures adopted to deal with the changing Arctic environment, but the current institutional arrangements shut it out. In August 2011 an anonymous *Beijing Review* article—which also was reproduced on the website of the State Council Information Office also known as the party’s Office for Foreign Propaganda—adopted a belligerent tone on the issue of the most recent rejection of China’s application to be a permanent observer on the Arctic Council. The article asserted “By restricting

observers’ rights and modifying observer application procedures, the Arctic Council has raised the political threshold for non-Arctic states to participate in Arctic governance,” and urged that “an end to the Arctic states’ monopoly of Arctic affairs is now imperative” (*Beijing Review*, August 30, 2011). The article noted India, Japan, South Korea and the EU also had made strong appeals for participation in Arctic affairs and China now will be working closely on Arctic issues with Iceland, Sweden and Norway. All three states have signalled their support for China’s greater involvement in the Arctic. Both Iceland and Norway have set up Arctic cooperation projects with China (*China Daily*, April 21; Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 30, 2010). Beijing hopes in a fairly short time period Chinese expeditions and international linkages will be sufficient to justify its participation in decision making on Arctic matters.

Polar Behavior as an Indicator for Chinese Foreign Policy

China’s behavior in polar affairs provides us with many clues to better understand Beijing’s attitude toward the international system. Principally, this behavior helps answer the debates over whether Beijing is a “reluctant stakeholder” in current international arrangements and whether they will continue to support current international norms and institutions as they become more dominant. Below I have summarized what China’s polar behavior reveals to us about current Chinese foreign policy.

- *Disjunction between Internal Debates and Official Behavior*

In China’s Antarctic affairs, there is a clear disjunction between official statements and policy debates in Chinese. Although Chinese officials may be unhappy with the status quo in Antarctica, the requirements of governance necessitate that Beijing work within the existing structures and follow the current ATS policies. The only alternative to this behavior would be leaving the Antarctic Treaty—a step China is unlikely to take at present. These policy debates however should not be ignored. They reflect the fact that China wants change in some aspect of the international order and it is exploring its options. Situations with this kind of disjunction should be regarded as “watch this space.”

- *Where China Cannot Affect Change, It Makes the Best Out of the Current Order and Quietly Pursues Own Interests*

Despite the carping about the Antarctic Treaty in Chinese-language debates, China also benefits from the way that Antarctic governance currently is managed. There is very little oversight of states' behavior there (technically, any state can inspect other countries' Antarctic bases but few devote the resources to do this with any seriousness); moreover, most states ignore the legal requirement to make public their activities there. This non-accountable, non-transparent governance environment is as amenable to China's interests in Antarctica as it is to the other major players there who set these norms. This situation is no doubt an important factor why—in a situation where there is at present no possibility of changing the international governance arrangements—China publicly is accepting of them while still continuing to pursue their own interests. Beijing's current behavior at the various forums of the ATS is similar to its behavior in many other multilateral organizations. China may not like certain aspects of the current order but it takes such benefits as it can.

- *Where the Possibility of Creating New Norms Exists, Beijing Acts Assertively*

When it comes to Arctic affairs, China's official statements aimed at foreign audiences now appear to match the stridency of the earlier Chinese-language policy debates among scholars. In recent years, China has shown a preference for action, rather than talk, in its international behavior (*zuo er bu shuo*). Yet in the Arctic, where China is a relatively weak player, Beijing is limited even in terms of the scientific projects it could engage in there. The climatic and political environment is changing fast in the Arctic—faster than China can step up its polar capabilities. Beijing consequently is signalling its interests now, adopting a strident tone and asserting its right to have a say in future governance arrangements. This is a new trend that should be closely watched here and elsewhere.

- *Determination to Restore and Demonstrate China's International Status*

China is a rising power and seeks vehicles to demonstrate

that power. Beijing is determined to restore China's international status. The polar regions, as well as Outer Space, are convenient locations to demonstrate this new status.

- *Talking Up China's Achievements to Domestic and International Audiences*

The Chinese media has been instructed to “talk up” China's polar achievements for domestic political reasons. This media campaign, however, also can help to build China's case that it has extensive and legitimate interest in the Arctic region, and should thus be given a say in Arctic governance. China has made a major investment in upgrading its foreign propaganda (*waixuan*) operations in recent years. The objective of this is to boost China's soft power and to help mould international public opinion to adopt a more positive view of China [6].

- *Willingness to Forge Unlikely Partnerships to Achieve Particular Goals*

China has stated it wants a say in Arctic governance and does not like the current order. China wants to be a part of norm-setting there; norms that will help protect its own national interests. It is not yet powerful enough to go it alone in challenging this order, so the government has identified and enlisted a number of key Arctic states that it is working with to become a permanent observer in the Arctic Council. Here China is forming a mini bloc, one formed not through any ideological common ground but through strategic interests. A similar situation could occur in the Antarctic through the Asian Forum for Polar Science—a body founded in 2003 including China, India, Japan, Malaysia and South Korea.

- *China's Economic Might is Helping It to Buy Friends or Quiet Rivals*

China is offering financial investment to three Arctic states to encourage their support for a more permanent role for China at the Arctic Council. China's rapid expansion in Antarctic affairs—all of it on the Australian Antarctic claim—is causing alarm in some quarters in Australia [9]. Beijing seems to be succeeding in appeasing some of the concerns by offering generous research and funding opportunities to Australian scientists. In Australia, as with all the other developed states in Antarctica, since the

global economic crisis begun in 2008, Antarctic spending has barely increased to keep pace with inflation. Only China, India and South Korea are significantly increasing their Antarctic budgets at present [7]

- *Resources are a Major Driver of China's Foreign Policy*

In the polar regions, China, as elsewhere, appears to be fixated on potential resource-acquisition—a major driver in China's current foreign policy. A second related issue is China's attitude to the environment. In the polar regions, as elsewhere, China prioritizes development first and protection of the environment second.

Conclusion

It appears that in polar affairs at least, China achieves many gains out of the current international order, so to classify it as a “reluctant stakeholder” there would be a slight exaggeration. There are clearly areas where China would like to shape international governance to better suit its own national interests. China's ever-growing economic power—at a time when Western governments are under massive financial pressure—is enabling it to strengthen its global influence, in the polar regions as elsewhere. Where new norms are being forged, as in the Arctic and possibly in time in the Antarctic; observers can expect Beijing to be assertive in demanding a right to have a say given its investment .

Anne-Marie Brady is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. She is the Editor of The Polar Journal and, most recently, the author of China's Thought Management (2011) and Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China (2009).

Notes:

1. Treaty Concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen (Paris, February 9, 1920) <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1925/10.html>. This Treaty granted sovereignty over the Svalbard (formerly known as Spitsbergen) archipelago to Norway, while permitting all signatories to the treaty equal rights to Svalbard resource exploitation or trade. There are currently over 40 signatories to this Treaty. In 1925, the then-

Republic of China signed the Spitsbergen Treaty. In recent years many non-Arctic states who wish to engage in Arctic research have set up research stations at Ny-Ålesund on Svalbard Island.

2. Author's Interviews, Chinese and Icelandic Polar Specialists, 2012.
3. See Anne-Marie Brady, “China's Antarctic Interests,” in Brady, ed., *The Emerging Politics of Antarctica*, Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012.
4. Jingfang, Tu (Polar Research Institute of China [PRIC], China) and Xia, Zhang (PRIC), “Foundations and Prospects for China as a Near-Arctic State Participate (sic) in Peaceful Use of Arctic,” International Association of Arctic Social Sciences Association Conference, Akureyri, Iceland, June 2011.
5. Ellie Fogarty, “Antarctica: Assessing and Protecting Australia's Interest,” *Lowy Institute Policy Brief*, August 3, 2011, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/antarctica-assessing-and-protecting-australias-national-interests>.
6. See Anne-Marie Brady, “The Beijing Olympics as a Campaign of Mass Distraction,” in Anne-Marie Brady, ed. *China's Thought Management*, London: Routledge, 2011.
7. See Anne-Marie Brady, “Conflict or Cooperation? The Emerging Politics of Antarctica,” in Brady, ed., *The Emerging Politics of Antarctica*.
