

The U.S.' Political Challenges on China's National Security in the 21st Century's First Decade

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Abstract

The Sino-U.S. relations are vital bilateral ties in contemporary international relations. In the 21st century's first decade, China's booming economy and increasing military force caused high alert of the United States. Though it is compulsory of China's cooperation in international affairs after the 911 incident and the financial crisis, the United States still politically adopted positive measures to restrict China. Behind these measures, China's political security is facing the challenges from the United States. The United States' uncertain positioning on China caused her wavering policy on China. In the last decade, the United States designedly isolated China from ideology to politics. The United States also deployed "Double C-type Siege" to strategically contain China. China and the US national identity are constructed by international structure. Under contemporary international structure, it will be perpetuated of the US' challenges for China's national security.

Keywords: Double C-type siege, The Sino-US relations, Political security, Traditional security, National security

1. Introduction

It is hard to point who is China's best "friend" in the world, but it is out of question that the United States has been the biggest "enemy" of China after the Cold War. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the United States has always deeply impacted China's national security. The Sino-U.S. relations have experienced four phases. In first two decades of the People's Republic of China, affected by ideology and geopolitics, China implemented "one-sided" policy, namely pro-Soviet policy, as well as "the keynotes and topic of China's strategy on the United States was 'anti-U.S.'" (Chu, & Jin, 2008, pp.216-217). In order to prevent expanding of the socialist group's scope, the United States carried out very strict sanctions to those socialist states. The existence of the U.S.' force in East Asia threatened China's national security. In East Asia, the U.S. had taken a hostile attitude towards Beijing. These two states even fought in the Korean Peninsula in the initiate of the 1950s. In the second phase since the 1970s, with the breakdown of the Sino-Soviet relations, China had to gradually adjust her policy on the United States. "Unite with the United States" (Chu, & Jin, 2008, pp.216-217) became China's strategic measure to face the challenges from the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the United States also attached important to China as a key balancer in East Asia. In the initiate of the 1980s, the United States even exported much funds and technology, even advanced weapons to China. In the third phase, with the end of the Cold War, both China and the United States lost their common enemy – the Soviet Union. In the mind of the United States, China lost her strategic value and after all China is the unique Socialist great power in the world. Thus ideology came back and was instead of the honeymoon between these two great powers. The United States carried out the policy of containment to China. In this period, the United States mostly made use of political or economic measures to deal with China. Typically, from 1989 to 2001, the Occident headed by the United States had submitted anti-China motions to United Nations Commission on Human Rights for eleven times (Xinhua News Agent, 2004). At that time, the United States' national power was far beyond that of China. For a peaceful and steady external environment servicing for her national development, Beijing had to take the policy of "forbear with the United States". In 2001, the 911 terrorism is a symbol that the United States is declining after she had lorded in the single-pole world for around ten years. Later, the financial crisis swept the United States

and gave a powerfully hit to her economy. In 2002, China entered into Hu Jintao's age. With the thirty years national development, China becomes a great power with powerful national strength. The United States is still the strongest state in the world. She has still enough power to impact China's national security. This paper attempts to examine the United States' political challenges on China's national security in at least three aspects in the 21st century's first decade.

2. The United States' uncertain positioning on China caused her wavering policy on China

An interesting common ground on China's policy of the U.S.' successive post-Cold War cabinets is to always experience a pendulum effect: (1) Before the presidential election, the candidates always powerfully attacked current cabinet's warm policy on China and pledged to deal with China with a strict policy after he/she was selected. (2) After became a new president, the new cabinet indeed intended to implement a big stick policy to China. The Sino-U.S. relations turned to bad and it also caused regional unrest. (3) After some bouts, the President and his cabinet realized that China is after all a vital great power in the world. Thus, the American policy on China regressed to its normal warm status. (4) Later, the next presidential candidates also began to attack the current president and his cabinet's policy on China.

This circulation seems to be particularly obvious in the 21st century's first decade. In the later second tenure of Clinton, the United States and China confirmed the objective of "to build constructive strategic partnership" (Xinhua News Agent, 1997). President Clinton's policy on China was warm at this time. But in 2001, the next president George Walker Bush denied the previous cabinet definition on the Sino-U.S. relations and redefined as strategic competitor. The other dignitary of the Bush's cabinet also declared themselves. Later, a serial of political events had been bothering the Sino-U.S. relation, such as the mid-air collision incident, the United States sole \$5 billion advanced weapon to Taiwan, etc. The Sino-U.S. relations rapidly got worse. China broke off her strategic dialogue with the United States. After then, the Bush cabinet realized the indispensability of China's cooperation in international system. Especially after the 9.11 terrorism, anti-terrorism, instead of geopolitics, became the vital national interest of Washington. In addition, in the North Korean nuclear issue, the Iran issue and other important international events, the United States demanded China's cooperation. The Bush's cabinet had a deep understanding of the importance of the U.S.-Sino relations and redefined China as "a responsible stakeholder" (The White House, 2006, pp.41). The United States intended to make the acknowledgment for China's position in international system, so that China is led into the existing international society headed by Washington. The financial crisis began with 2007 heavy hit the United States' economy and later brought a serial of chain reaction in her industry and commerce. In this worldwide economic storm, depending on her particular economic system, vast domestic demand, and effective measure, China takes the lead in walking out the haze of economy. The United States more needs China's cooperation. In the late tenure of President Bush, at least ostensibly, the United States' policy on China was smooth and warm. The Ambassador to China Clark Randt nodded "strong ties with China ties were Bush's major foreign legacy" (Xiong Zhenyan, 2009). But a new president election was coming in the United States. The president candidate Senator Barack Obama, in his speech on the TV debate among the U.S. Democratic candidates on April, 2007, redefined the relations between the United States and China as "neither our enemy nor our friend, they are competitor". In the first year, the Obama's cabinet carried out relatively warm policy on China because the United States would demand the absolute necessary help and support from Beijing. But with the rising of her self-confidence, China obviously expanded her political scope in international system. By powerful economic strength, China tied her political relations with ASEAN, South Korea, Japan and even some European countries. In addition, China made close relation with European states via the way of economic aids or the purchase of national debts. China's overspread on her national strength seemed to touch the United States' strategic scope, thus the Obama's government redeployed her political resources to "warn" China. The first case is the South Korean Cheonan sinking event on March 26, 2010. Originally, China and the United States didn't involve in this event. But the United States advisedly enlarged a small event between the North Korea and the South Korea into a regional event in East Asia. The United States used it as an excuse to hold a military exercise namely aiming to North Korea. The military exercise is not a big problem, but the problem is the place of military exercise. The United States chose the sea area nearby China and her aircraft carrier would attend this military exercise. After a serial of very serious warns from Beijing, Washington still rejected backing from her stand. Obviously, in this military exercise, the object of Washington is clear not North Korea but China. The United States' purpose is to show her powerful muscle to China, as well as to remind other states that the U.S. is still the strongest state. The second case is the South China Sea issue. Before then, the United States had always trod lightly those cases concerning South China Sea. But in order to play Southeast states off against China, the United States attempted to internationalize the South China Sea issue. In July 2010, in Hanoi at the ASEAN meeting, U.S. Secretary State

Hillary Clinton declared that a peaceful resolution of territorial disputes over the South China Sea is in the "national interest" of the United States (Pomfret, 2010). Actually, it is just one step of Washington's "return Southeast Asia" policy. In addition, the United States declaredly supported Japan on the Diaoyutai Islands issue.

During Hu Jintao's period, the erratic Sino-U.S. relations confused other states and sometimes even made regional states at loose ends. Actually, the total strength of the United States is still stronger than that of China, so it has always been China who has passively dealt with the challenges from the United States. Consequently, the wave of the United States' policy on China seriously influenced China's national security.

3. The United States designedly isolated China

Collective identity has a close relation with collect security. "Collective identity takes the relationship between Self and Other to its logical conclusion, identification." (Wendt, 1999, pp.229) Wendt figured out that international structure constructs collective identity which constructs identification to others. This identification deeply impacts state's behavior towards others. The interactions among states will construct international structure. In order to realize her strategic objective, the United States designs three steps to deal with China. The first step is to dissimilate China. The second step is to demonize China. The third step is to isolate China.

Firstly, the purpose of to dissimilate China is to reduce other states' feeling of closeness towards China. The United States made the excuse of political system, cultural system, human rights or religion to put China in front of a jury for political ethic. In terms of the style of state, different tactics are employed for different states. For those states which are similar to the United States in political system or religion, such as the Occident, the United States put stress upon democracy, human right, and religion. Certainly, those Western states per se take the attitude of non-identification towards China. Thus, seriously criticism on China's human rights and religion has been put on a series of diplomatic summits or meetings by the Occident headed by the United States. For instance, almost on every G8 summits, China's human right or religion must be a strict topic which be discussed by those leaders of developed states. For those former socialist East European states, the United States emphasized China's political system. It could enkindle their memory about past communist governments. For those Asian states, especially East Asian states or Southeast Asian states, the United States made use of the disputed territory issues or historical issues between China and these states. When "China is very different than us" become a popular viewpoint among these states, the United States finished dissimilating China. It reduced the feeling of friend towards China, but the United States need the formation of disgust to China in the world. Thus the United States carried out her second step – to demonize China.

In order to demonize China, theoretically, the United States actively drummed for "China Threat Theory". Actually, "China Threat Theory" was born in the early of 1990s. In 1990, Japanese scholar Murai Tomohide released an article entitled On the Potential Threat of China (Ge, 1994). His ideas seldom caused effect in Japan but inspired those American scholars who regard China as the essential rival in the 21st century. In 1992, the concept of "China Threat Theory" was taken the lead in proposing by the U.S. Heritage Foundation on its journal entitled *Awakening Dragon: the Real Danger in Asia from China*. One of major viewpoints in this article is the rising China challenges the U.S. security in Asia (Qian, 2006). Later, many such articles were published on American journals and newspapers. The American Samuel P. Huntington published his article *Clash of Civilizations* in 1993 and wrote his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Rethinking of World Order* in 1996. Based the author's principle point of "the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics, the fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future" (Huntington, 1993), it seems to not be inevitable in future that the big flash between Chinese civilization and the Occident civilization (the United States). Huntington's ideas greatly impacted the political circles at Washington and actually his book provided a kind of particular theoretic tool on China Threat Theory for American politician. In 1997, another book entitled *the Coming Conflict with China* straightforwardly asserted that the Sino-U.S. conflicts would take place in a short future. His political logic is that China as a rising hegemony in Asia thirsts for replacing Washington's dominating position in Asia, thus China must not be a strategic friend of the United States but a perennial vital (Bernstein, & Munro, 1997). When those American scholars and media were busily discussing China Threat Theory, the range of politics also was noisy. The 1996 United States campaign finance controversy and the Lee Wen Ho case in 1999 (also called "Nuclear espionage scandal") were fully utilized by American rightist politician to make the point of "China Threat Theory".

Generally, in the end of the 1990s, with the decline of the Soviet Union, the United States owned absolute strategic advantage based on her incomparable national strength in a unipolar world. In some extents, the United States regarded China as a potential regional great power with particular actual strength and financial capacity. Thus at that time, to most extents, the United States maybe just treated China Threat Theory as a means of

striking China. As time goes on, the rapid rising of new-emerging countries is not only mapping international economic structure but also international political structure. In particular, China depends on her particular political and economic system to keep high GDP in the past 30 years. Her vast accumulated funds are effectively devoted to her nation-building. China plays more important role in East Asia, even in the world. In 2002, China entered into Hu Jintao's age. But looking back at the United States, the 911 incident in 2001 seems like a symbol foreshadowing that the unipolar structure is on decline. This terrorism rapidly modified Washington's agenda in international politics. Anti-terrorism became the United States' major task. Later Washington was distracted by the Iraqi War and the Afghanistan War. The United States needed China's urgent support and cooperation in a series of international affairs, such as anti-terrorism, North Korean unclear issue, and so on. At that time, China's new generation leadership headed by Hu Jintao also hoped to develop new stable Sino-US relations with cooperation and win-win. Thus Beijing also tried her best to work with Washington for international affairs excluding any issues concerning China's core interests. The White House also purposefully limited "China Threat Theory" from U.S. Military. It can be said that anti-terrorism temporarily masked China Threat Theory on Washington's agenda after the 911 incident.

Though anti-terrorism became the task number one, China Threat Theory was still developed under the cooperation between the U.S. official and their thinking tanks. Since 2000, the U.S. Pentagon submitted Annual Report on China's Military to U.S. Congress. The major object of these reports is to tout and advocate the threats from China. U.S. These reports reflect Washington's worry on China's military threat. Compares to the U.S. Official, the U.S. thinking tanks has always been more active on China's threats. As one of the most important conservative thinking tanks which have a lot of influence with U.S. government, the Heritage Foundation has always firmly advocated China's threat on the United States. Its researcher John J. Tkacik is a firm believer of China Threat Theory. During the past decade, Tkacik published some articles on China's political and military threats to the United States, such as *Needed: High Level Contacts between U. S. and Taiwan Military Commanders* (2004), *China's New Challenge to the U.S.-Japan Alliance* (2004), *America's "China Policy" Is in Urgent Need of Definition* (2005), *Don't Bow to Beijing's Pressure* (2005), *Hedging Against China* (2006), *China's Quest for a Superpower Military* (2007), etc.. Strategic Studies Institute of U.S. Army War College is another supreme research institution in the field of national security and military strategy. In this institution, many researchers and scholars with military background focused on military threats from China. In their minds, the current major tasks of the People's Liberation Army are two: to deal with the danger from the United States and to achieve great power status (Joffe, 2006). China's increasing military force is a potential danger to American interests in the West Pacific (Godwin, 2006). In addition, the U.S. thinking tanks and scholars also developed the scope of China Threat Theory. Except political threat and military threat from China, non-traditional threats from China were also found in their academic reports or articles. In May 2006, the Chief of the Asian Studies Centre of the Heritage Foundation Larry M. Wortzel (2006) indicated "in the international arena, China poses a challenge to the United States from a diplomatic, economic, and military standpoint". China makes use of her increasing powerful economic strength to influence the relationship between the United States and her allies in Asian-Pacific region. The researcher of Bureau of Intelligence and Research in U.S. Department of State Corazon Sandoval Foley figured that China regards Southeast Asia as her "strategic backyard" and China continuously strengthens her economic and trade relation with them for the purpose of expanding her scope and withering the security relation between the United States and Southeast Asian countries (Foley, 2005, pp.1-4). In recent years, American scholars have constantly offered new theories or viewpoints on China Threat Theory, such as China Food Threat Theory, China Energy Threat Theory, China Population Threat Theory, China Space Threat Theory, and so on. In the United States' political system provides an effective platform in which political circles and academic circles can bi-directionally exchange. In the United States, a presidential election often means some scholars will enter next cabinet and some current high official will return academic institutes. Consequently, China Threat Theory by American scholars deeply impacts American decision maker in the White House and the military.

In 2007, the American subprime crisis broke and gave a heavy blow to American financial foundation. In this critical time, it is just China which is the biggest holder of U.S. government debt. This crisis made the United States self-controlled on any issues concerning China. Thus, Other than previous presidents, President Barack H. Obama rarely carried out warm policy on China in the initiate of his presidential term. In order to obtain China's cooperation in international and domestic financial reform, the United States even said on the G20 summit in 2009, the U.S.-China relations in the 21st century are the most important bilateral relation in the world. It seems like coming of "G2". But in a hurry, the Obama Government was aware of a very dangerous trend – the viewpoint of the United States down and China up is accepted by the world. Shared ideas impact norms, and the transformation of norms impacts international structures. When the United States is too swamped to handle her

economy, on the west coast of the Pacific, regional integration is enthusiastically conducting. For example, in 2010, the building of the China-ASEAN Free Trades Area will further strengthen the political and economic relations between China and the Southeast Asian countries. China also strengthened her relations with Japan and South Korea. In addition, inside Japan and South Korea, there has been an increasingly louder call for getting U.S. troops out of their homelands. It is clear that this kind regional integration is conducive to expanding China's force. This time, the United States really felt the vast threats from China so that President Obama seriously figured on the speech of his first State of the Union Message, "I do not accept second place for the United States of America" (Woolley, & Peters, 2009).

Since the second half of 2009, it was obvious that Obama's Cabinet transformed its policy on China into keeping China down, especially in East Asian. Though its national strength is still far stronger than that of China, the United States still needed China's cooperation in international political and economic affairs. As a result, the United States chose China Threat Theory again to demonize China. This time, facing the increasing close relations between China and her neighbors, the United States directly "made" or participated in making evidences to support her strategic aim. The first is Southeast Asia. On July 2009, the United States declared to join the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. Later, on the 2010 ASEAN Summits, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton high-key announced the United States has her national interests in South China Sea. It means that Washington shifted from her usual refusal to get involved in this issue. South China Sea issue suddenly became noisier in 2009 and 2010. The relationship between China and some ASEAN countries became tension and delicate. On the surface, the United States seemed to dispense justice on South China Sea issue. Actually, the United States successfully aroused these countries' defense systems to China. In other word, the United States aroused a "fact" of China Threat Theory. The second is Northeast Asia. In geopolitics, the union among China, Japan and South Korea is not good for American interest in East Asia. The ROKS Cheonan Sinking event gave the United States a really outstanding chance to hit the relationship between China and South Korea. Actually, this case was only between North Korea and South Korea. But the United States made it as excuse to stir up South Korea to carry out the US-South Korean joint military exercises to the east coast of South Korea. Before then, previous military exercises were put to the east coast of South Korea. Much more than this, facing the violent opposition from China (China had protested it for several times), the United States advanced aircraft carrier, which radius of action can cover Beijing, also was sent to this sea area in this military exercise. Via this incident, the United States made more one proof on China Threat Theory. Just like it, the designed military exercise by Washington broke out the Sino-South Korean relationship of trust and strengthened the US-South Korean military alliance. Then like looking around Japan, during Junichiro Koizumi's cabinet (2001 - 2006), his extreme pro-American and anti-Chinese foreign policy had cooled and broken relations with China. After him, the succeeding Prime Ministers of Japan has adjusted Japanese foreign policy with China gradually. The Sino-Japanese relationship has been up rapidly. Especially, after American financial crisis, the two countries even began to economic strategic cooperation. On the other hand, in recent years, increasing voices to plead American forces in Japan and to recover the military command from the United States has perplexed Japanese authority which has always looked for the best point between normalizing Japan and keeping the Japanese-US alliance. In order to hit China and tie Japan, the United States made use of the disputed Diaoyutai Islands issue and the tense situation on the Korean Peninsula to remind China's threat is very near by Japan.

Besides the above cases, the United States also utilized the race riots in Xinjiang to provoke the relations between China and Islamic countries. Via these combo steps, the United States partly accomplished his strategic object of demonizing China. East Asian countries re-strengthened their fears from China and "the existence of the United States in East Asia is for balancing the dangerous China" seemed to become a common viewpoint of East Asian countries again. It can be said that the United States partly achieved her strategic object of the second step in three steps. It is without question that the United States would continue to make use of China Threat Theory to hit China's national security.

4. The United States constructs "Double C-type Siege" to strategically contain China

The "C-type Siege" to China is put forward by Chinese military scholar Dai Xu who is an air force colonel in the People's Liberation Army. In order to contain China, the United States constructed C-type siege which includes a sea chain and is constructing a land chain around China. Dai Xu (2010, pp.8-20) figured that the sea chain roughly includes the Aleutian Islands, the Japanese Islands, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and Singapore and Vietnam, and the land chain is from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, to central Asia. Along this C-type chain, a series of military bases and large forces are deployed to stand up for her national interests, to most extents also to China. Actually, the viewpoint of "C-type siege" can be deemed to the development of the viewpoint of "island chains" by John Foster Dulles in 1951. During Cold War, the United States constructed three island chains in

west of the Pacific to siege the Socialist group headed by the Soviet Union. It is without doubt that three island chains were mainly employed to deal with the Soviet Union. After the Cold War, with the decline of the Soviet Union, the United States gradually adjusted her major strategic object for three island chains from the Soviet Union to China. The first island chain begins in Japan, passes through the Ryukyu Islands to Taiwan, passed through the Philippines to the Kalimantan Island, than to Singapore (The Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2007, pp.16-17; You, 2002, pp.1; Dai, 2010, pp.8-20). The second island chain stretches from Japan's Ogasawara-gunto Islands to the Mariana Islands, then from the Guam Island to the Micronesia Islands and Palau (The Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2007, pp.16-17; You, 2002, pp.1; Dai, 2010, pp.8-20). The third island chain is based on the Hawaii Islands and aims to defense American homeland.

During the post Cold War, the transformation of international structure and the rapid grow of China led to the adjustment of the United States' three island chains. In fact, the C-type siege referenced by Dai Xu is in the rough the evolution and extension of the first island chain. In other word, C-type siege includes the first island chain and the land chain. In the U.S.' strategy on China, this C-type siege by the United States is expected to remain China's grand force in her own territory and China's navy near her continental shelf. In the 1990s, shocked by the U.S. forces' combined operation with high technology in the Gulf War, China renewed her military security concept. Since then on, China invested much fund in developing and purchasing high-level weaponry, especially in navy and air force. By Hu Jintao's age, her revolutionary development military force was beyond Washington's imagination. The most typical representative was that Japan and the United States didn't detect anything until China's submarine positively and publicly surfaced in the open sea with 18 sea miles to Japan on November 12th, 2003 (Tang, 2003). What it shows is that China has already had its military capability to break out the first island chain. In addition, with rapid demand on energy resources, the sea-route passed the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf became more strategic significant to China's national security. Consequently, the United States not only strengthened the first island chain, but also extended the second island chain. The existing second island chain is deployed to prevent China's navy away the Pacific. Compared to the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean has always been undervalued by the United States. In the new century, the United States began to value the Indian Ocean. Washington strengthened the military deployment on her unique military base in the Indian Ocean – Chagos Archipelago. At the same time, the United States has stationed in those Arabic countries across the Gulf Coast such as Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, and so on. These military deployments from the second island chain to the Indian Ocean shape a bigger C-type siege on the outside of the first C-type siege. Here they are titled as “Double C-type Siege to China”. Double C-type Siege just likes two big ropes which are used to tighten China. Now the United States is still constructing this Double C-type Siege which seriously threatens China's national security. Once the United States accomplished her strategic deployment through Double C-type siege to China, the United States would control China's sea life line and would also constrain China's development towards deep oceans.

5. Conclusion

In the 21st century's first decade, the world has experienced comprehensive and profound transformation after the Cold war. On the one hand, the emerging countries such as the BRICs are rapidly rising. They depended on their increasing national strength to pursue more discourse right in international affairs. On the other hand, the old developed countries' national strength, in particularly after the financial crisis in 2007, reduced greatly, though they still hold the vital discourse right in international society. The fact of that the shift in international political and economical power away from the old developed countries to emerging countries signaled a collapsing of the unipolar world dominated by the United States. This kind international structure constructs China and the United States' national identity and national interests. In international structure, the United States is the biggest developed country which is making effort to keep her supreme status and China is the biggest developing country which is catching up in a surprising rate of national growth. Thus it is inevitable of the strategic competition between Washington and Beijing. Meanwhile, under current international structure, the cooperation between these two most important great powers is a tough necessary requirement of resolving almost all of important international affairs. Whatever may happen, any of them has to keep a reasonable and controlled fluctuation for their bilateral relationship. Furthermore, neither in hard power nor in soft power, the United States' national strength is still far stronger than that of China. Thus strategically, the United States is still in the advantaged offensive position and China is still in the defensive position. Consequently, in the future international structure, the relations between the United States and China are still of “cooperation based on competition”. Because of the relations, the United States has still made her effort to challenge China's national security.

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