



LIBERAL ARTS
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

COMMUNICATION

Global Media Monitoring Project

Department of Communication at Texas A&M University

GEOPOLITICAL VISIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

Prepared by: Robert Hinck, Jacquelyn Manly, Randolph Kluver
Department of Communication
Texas A&M University

William J. Norris
Bush School of Government and Public Service
Texas A&M University

January, 2016

For further information or comments about this report, please contact
Randolph Kluver, rkluver@tamu.edu

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Executive Summary	5
Overview of Findings	7
Introduction	11
Methodological Approach	14
Study One: China’s coverage of important global and regional neighbors	16
Research Question 1: What regional countries matter most in Chinese foreign policy?.....	18
Research Question 2: How are regional neighbors described in relation to China’s Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence?	18
Key Term: “Threat”	19
Key Term: “Contain”	20
Key Term: “Provoke”	21
Key Term: “Aggression”	23
Key Terms: “Mutual equality” and “Co-existence”	24
Research Question 3: How do Chinese Media Outlets vary in their Portrayal of China’s Regional Neighbors?.....	26
Conclusions of Study 1: China’s Regional Neighbors	27
Study Two: Geopolitical implications of the China Dream Discourse	29
Research Question 1: What are media perceptions of the China Dream?.....	31
Economic Development	31
Return to Strength.....	32
Cultural Prestige.....	34
CCP Ideology	34
Who can participate in the China Dream and how does it create a narrative linking past and future?	35
What is the time frame of the China Dream?	36
Research Question 2: How does media ownership/control affect reporting of the China Dream?.....	38
Conclusions of Study 2: China Dream	39
Study Three: Chinese media on “News Style of Great Power Relations”	41
Research Question 1: New Style of Great Power Relations: Who counts as a “great power?”.....	43
Characteristics of the New Style of Great Power Relations in US-China relations.....	45
The “rhetorical trap” in the New Style discourse	48
Research Question 2: How do different media outlets cover the New Style of Great Power Relations?.....	51

Conclusions for the New Style of Great Power Relations..... 52
Conclusions and Recommendations 54
References 55

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by a Centers of Excellence Supplemental award from the Office of University Programs of the Science & Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security through 2012-ST-061-CS0001 with funding provided by the Strategic Multilayer Assessment office of the Department of Defense made to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The research was conducted using the Multi-Media Monitoring System provided by the Counter Terrorism Technology Support Office (CTTSO). The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the US Department of Homeland Security, the US Department of Defense, or START.

Authors

Robert Hinck is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University.

Jacquelyn Manly (Ph.D., Texas A&M University) is an independent researcher in Chicago, IL.

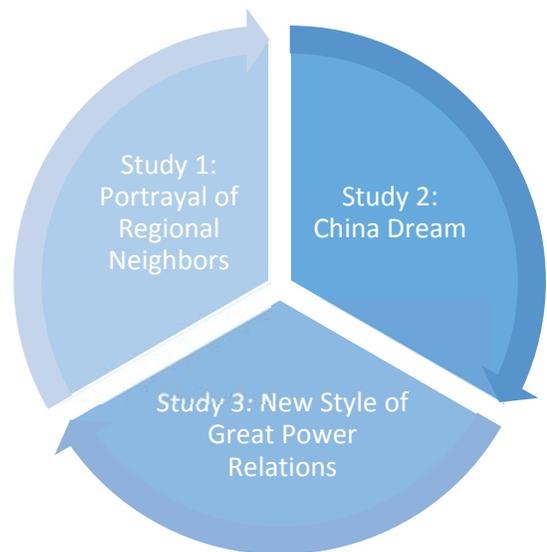
Randolph Kluver is an Associate Professor of Communication at Texas A&M University.

William Norris is an Associate Professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University.

Executive Summary

This study analyzed Chinese web media in an effort to uncover key frames and cultural scripts that are likely to shape potential geopolitical relationships in Asia. The team provided an overview of Chinese media and developed individual reports on cultural scripts in media coverage of three key issues: a) China's relationships with its regional neighbors, b) the geopolitical dimensions of the "China Dream" (中国梦), and c) Chinese discourse around the "New Style Great Power Relations" (新型大国关系). Data was collected from May to October 2014. Over 2,200 media articles were analyzed from 25 different Chinese media sources controlled for ownership, political slant, official versus, and popular media outlets.

While understanding today's news agenda will not predict China's policy over a two decade timeline, the news agenda and media coverage can help uncover deeper components of Chinese political culture, including the world views, assumptions, and geopolitical expectations of China's leaders. Daily media coverage enacts cultural scripts, and in the case of Chinese media in particular, reflect carefully crafted policy positions agreed upon by Chinese elites behind closed doors. While specific policies can change quite quickly, the underlying societal scripts and political culture are more enduring. Thus, media analysis can help unveil grand narratives of Chinese political visions and capture the underlying national mood which provides constraints to future behavior.



Key Findings

- Chinese foreign policy discourse portrays China as primarily responding to international provocation. While China seeks a stable international environment, it is portrayed as needing to respond to provocative actions committed by others.

- Far from being a threat to the existing geopolitical order, China’s economic and military rise provides opportunities for all nations to benefit.
- The US and its regional allies are portrayed as perpetuating a false China Threat thesis aimed at containing China. The US is seen as the primary enabler of aggressive policies committed by Japan and the Philippines.
- The Chinese media relies heavily on historical allusions to paint Japan as a militant country.
- The US is overwhelmingly the most important and frequently discussed country regarding China’s international relations.
- The China Dream constitutes a domestic and international vision describing China’s peaceful rise promising mutual benefit to all those willing to share in China’s rise.
- The China Dream promises economic prosperity, a return to military strength, emphasizes China’s cultural prestige, and legitimizes the Chinese Communist Parties role in reestablishing China’s greatness following its century of humiliation beginning with the Opium Wars in the 1840s.
- The New Style of Great Power Relations is China’s attempt to avoid the pathologies of historical Great Power conflict with the United States. The concept lays out significant areas for US-China economic and military cooperation, but challenges US policy in the Asia Pacific as failing to live up to the tacitly agreed upon principles of mutual respect and positive relations between the two nations.

Implications & Recommendations

- There is political room for collaboration. In the event that the United States seeks common ground from which to build more cooperative relations with China, this study found evidence suggesting that domestic Chinese media portrayals of some of the most prominent “guiding concepts” that have been articulated by Xi Jinping could provide opportunities that can be leveraged to foster a more cooperative tone in the military-diplomatic relationship.
- US agencies should leverage an understanding of Chinese frames to position US activities for maximum impact by identifying the dominant frames and themes in Chinese media. US engagement with China tends to focus on a

different set of frames (such as “responsible stakeholder” or “human rights”) that are at variance with Chinese frames, and thus, US concerns rarely enter Chinese consciousness or are seen as intrinsically oppositional to Chinese priorities. By more explicitly framing US policies within the frames and norms of Chinese media, it might be possible to articulate US concerns to a broader Chinese audience.

- Do not allow counter-productive narratives to go uncontested. US policies are often portrayed in Chinese media in a negative light (i.e., US actions undermine new style great power relations), and this portrayal is rarely countered in US discourse. By understanding how these frames are articulated, it is possible to advance US policies within a framework of collaborative, rather than competitive, ties.
- Proceed with caution and address differences frankly. Although there are areas that might be ripe for greater cooperation, the US would be well-advised to proceed cautiously and be aware of potential rhetorical traps. Specifically, we recommend that any engagement for cooperative purposes that seeks to leverage some of these dominant themes and concepts be proactively defined by the US. Areas of difference in interpretation or emphasis or specific meanings that China might have regarding some of these ambiguous and vague concepts should be directly and forthrightly addressed even as the US might seek to build a more cooperative footing based on some of these ideas.
- Any effort to proceed along a cooperative vector with China is likely going to need broader support beyond just a single US government agency. If the US is looking to actively seek out areas for regional cooperation, we find that there is sufficient material in the Chinese media discourse that can be used to bolster that effort. However, a successful cooperative engagement approach would necessitate a larger US interagency approach to China.

Overview of Findings

Study 1: Geopolitical themes in reference to China’s Regional Neighbors

- *China as victim.* Chinese media describe China as never taking the first step to provoke trouble. China has only been forced to respond to the provocative

actions by other parties. A growing China is not a threat to the world, but rather safeguards regional stability.

- *China's peaceful development.* China primarily seeks “equality” with other global powers in Asia. Chinese media never indicate that China seeks to dominate the region.
- *Threat of containment.* The US, in partnership with multiple regional partners, seeks to “contain” China through its economic and military dominance.
- *US Importance.* The United States is overwhelmingly the most important foreign policy interlocutor for China. The US figured in almost 50% of all foreign policy-related articles. Second was Japan, with Russia typically third. This suggests the US remains by far China’s most important relationship—notwithstanding current Western concerns that China and Russia are forming an anti-US bloc.

Study 2: China Dream

- *Promise of Economic Development.* China’s own economic growth not only provides prosperity for China’s citizens, but also provides a mechanism for bilateral trade ties, and provides a boost for developing countries as well.
- *China’s “return to strength”.* Without security, the economic dimensions of the China Dream cannot be fulfilled. Through CCP leadership, China’s past humiliations (the Opium Wars, Japanese aggression, etc.) are rectified, and China’s security forces put to rest any concerns about the nation’s ability to protect itself, especially when confronting challenges to its territorial integrity.
- *Cultural Prestige.* China’s cultural heritage operates as a sort of “soft power” dimension abroad and a form of soft nationalism at home. Emphasis on China’s traditional culture promotes domestic cohesion and strengthens its citizens’ sense of Chinese identity. This discourse focused on China’s cultural heritage, including its literature, art, philosophy, and historical achievements. Once China is able to successfully exploit its cultural heritage, it will acquire greater geopolitical prestige, which the nation deserves.

- *Justification of CCP ideology.* The China Dream provides an ideological legitimization of the CCP and the continuing relevance of its governing ideology. It stresses the necessity of maintaining the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. In other words, regardless of China’s economic growth, its growing military power, and its 5000 year cultural heritage, China must continue to adhere to the “core socialist principles” that provide the foundation for national growth.
- *The China Dream is one all countries can share.* The discourse stressed the value of the China Dream, not just for the Chinese nation, but also for the world. Developing nations in particular can turn to the China Dream and realize their own economic growth and prosperity by working with China in economic development projects and creating a stable international order. By following the “China Dream,” China’s two centenary objectives will ultimately be realized presenting itself as an “equal player” in global geopolitics.

Study 3: New Style of Great Power Relations

- *Alternative to Great Power Relations.* The NSGPR concept has been consistently offered as an alternative model for the rise of a great power, in which the pathologies of great power rise (i.e., conflict with existing powers) would be minimized. The Chinese goal has been to use a new style of cooperative, rather than competitive, relations, primarily with the United States.
- *The NSGPR as a means for collaboration and cooperation.* The greatest number of articles focused on defining NSGPR as a concept which would identify areas of collaboration and cooperation, focusing on international and regional issues, while enhancing economic and military ties. The most cited area for cooperation was in the economic realm, (e.g. increased trade, bilateral investment, and infrastructure). A second area identified as having great potential for collaboration was in military to military ties, especially in fighting terrorism and policy coordination. Other areas identified for collaboration also included in foreign policy issues (such as North Korea or Iran), environmental and energy issues, and finally, cultural exchanges.

- *US failure to reciprocate.* Much of the negative coverage focused on US failures to reciprocate China’s cooperative gestures. Negative coverage often focused on US hesitancy to embrace the concept, acting out of a “Cold War” mentality, or ignoring China’s legitimate national interests. Articles often highlighted US reconnaissance activity, arms sales to Taiwan, or the US position on the South China Sea island disputes as evidence for US unwillingness to engage China as an equal geopolitical power.
- *US as the only Great Power.* The US remained the overwhelming focus for discourse about NSGPR (the US was mentioned over 9600 times in our data set, compared to only 1163 mentions for the next most oft-cited power, Japan). Russia was mentioned third most often, with just over 700 mentions in our data set.
- *The NSGPR as rhetorical trap?* Discourse surrounding the NSGPR concept functions to shape the parameters of Great Power relations as regarding common interests and areas of collaboration. However, the articles would apply these parameters to US actions or challenge US intentions in a specific context. Finally, the articles would demonstrate how US actions undermine the parameters supposedly “agreed upon” in the first instance, and challenge the US to conform to the expectations outlined in the discourse.

Introduction

This study is designed to support the effort to understand the likely trajectory of political, economic, and military trends in the Asia Pacific region by closely examining a variety of sources in Chinese media to determine key geopolitical themes and narratives that guide Chinese policy-making, as well as the assumptions and arguments that are largely taken for granted by large segments of Chinese citizens. The analysis of media content is a recognized practice among numerous government agencies and private organizations for open source intelligence. This study sought to engage a variety of media to determine trends and patterns that might provide a better understanding of key geopolitical themes and provide potential recommendations for messaging that enhances US policy objectives.

Chinese media have long been understood to enforce political conformity and control in the People's Republic of China. Even in the midst of widespread media reform over the last two decades, it remains true that all media in China operate under political constraints, and so, come under government regulation/control. While there is variation in media content, newspapers do not divert very far from government positions when reporting on sensitive issues. According to Stockman and Gallagher (2011), "the Chinese media serve as a bridge connecting Chinese citizens to the state, a bridge that is even more important as other key institutions of social control and influence have weakened" (p. 442). They conclude that while marketization and diversification of Chinese media has opened the industry up to considerable change, the fundamental political role of the media has not changed. Similarly, Shen and Guo (2013) found that the Chinese media still functions to legitimize the party and consolidate national identity by sustaining core Party ideology due to its monopolistic power over framing key issues in the media. In this sense, China's media serves as a persuasive instrument by proactively framing issues.



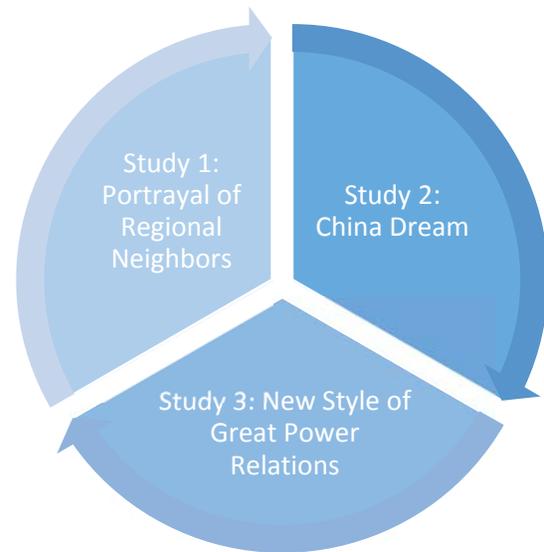
As China continues to modernize economically, new forces within China are emerging pressuring Chinese leaders to justify their policies and establish new national visions regarding where the country is headed. For instance, Johnston (2006) explains that Chinese leadership is increasingly sensitive to and constrained by the opinions of “attentive publics” such as urban, political, economic, and military elites. More recently, Chinese scholar Hao (2013) has noted that “Scholars have begun to recognize that Beijing’s leaders are under increasing social pressure when formulating their foreign policies” (p. 126). China’s media also has to compete with international media. In addition to the presence of some foreign news sources, the internet provides Chinese with wide access to information on current affairs, although websites are required to be registered under the state or party (Hu, 2003).

Close analysis of media coverage can uncover cultural scripts (assumptions about values, priorities, and expectations) that impact foreign affairs. Although “policies” can change quite quickly, cultural scripts and political culture are more enduring. These cultural scripts provide constraints on future behavior by reflecting and contextualizing current policy positioning. Finally, media expresses “grand narratives” that capture the Chinese national mood/vision. An accurate assessment of such sentiments can help inform both the content and the manner in which the United States engages with the region. Although understanding today’s news agenda will not predict China’s policy over a two decade timeline, media coverage, agendas, and priorities do reveal deeper components of Chinese political culture.

This study employed analysis of media content from a variety of media sources, from both commercial and governmental entities, collected using the Media Monitoring System (M3S). Although all of the content was obtained from the Internet, the sources represented a mix of traditional print and broadcast sources, as well as purely internet based media. China currently has almost 300 separate radio stations and over 300 television stations. CCTV (China Central Television) remains the dominant broadcasting voice, with 22 channels, supervised directly by the Propaganda Department. There are also a significant number of provincial channels, many with footprints beyond their provincial boundaries. The print sector also remains vibrant, with over 2200 newspapers and over 7000 magazines and journals. The largest are still government-owned, including People’s Daily, Enlightenment Daily, and Liberation Daily. Our studies included all of these sources, as well as Southern Weekend, based

in Guangzhou, and owned by Nanfang Media Group, which is well-known for testing the limits of investigative journalism and free speech in China.

Three studies were conducted to better understand potential drivers of conflict and cooperation in the Pacific. The first study looked at how Chinese media portrays its regional neighbors broadly. China’s growth, both economically and militarily, has led its regional neighbors to question the positive and negative impacts of Chinese power. While China has embarked on a “Charm offensive,” it also has been increasingly asserting itself on issues such as sovereignty regarding island chains in the South China Sea. The United States has multiple allies in the region and has tried to shore up ally support, most recently with the Obama administration’s pivot or rebalance to Asia. Thus, understanding what countries matter most to China and how it views its regional neighbors is important for US policy makers.



The second study examined how Chinese media discusses the “China Dream”. The Chinese Dream can be understood as both a domestic and international vision propagated by the Chinese government, establishing how China views its role as an emerging power. Components of the China Dream incorporate both a domestic vision for China’s future in addition to structuring appropriate international behavior for foreign countries in their conduct of foreign policy.

Finally, the third study analyzes how China describes its relationship with the United States. Focusing on Chinese media discourse on the New Style of Great Power Relations reveals how China understands its “most important bilateral relationships,” that with the United States. Undergirding this media narrative are expectations regarding how great powers should act and what pit falls to avoid given the historical tendency of rising powers to clash with established powers. Taken together, these three studies help highlight cultural scripts and expectations regarding who China is, what relationships it has with foreign countries, and how it plans on managing its relationship with the United States.

Methodological Approach

A qualitative analysis of various Chinese media sources was conducted using the Multi-media Monitoring System (M3S) at Texas A&M University. The M3S captures and translates broadcast and web stories into a searchable database. Researchers are able to parse through stories using search terms either in English or the native language of the media source.

Texts for analysis are selected using the key terms to narrow the data set.

Researchers are then able to categorically or thematically examine the data to the specific study's research questions.

Because the M3S uses machine generated translation, we have, when possible, checked awkward or unclear translations with native speakers. In the examples that follow in this report, we have left awkward translations intact, as long as the meaning was not in doubt. Where the meaning was in doubt, we provided a better human translation.

The M3S dataset contained news articles from 25 different Chinese media outlets. The media outlets were divided into four categories based on ownership, political slant, official versus non-official outlets, and popular media outlets. Two coders qualitatively analyzed the data with the help of KH coder (See table one for categorization of media sources).

The first study looked at China's discussion of its regional neighbors in relations to its foreign policy. Articles for analysis were identified by searching for terms based on China's five principles of peaceful coexistence in addition to key words known for framing countries in positive and negative lights within Chinese diplomatic

TABLE 1. MEDIA SOURCES

GOVERNMENT OWNED (POPULAR)	<i>China News Service</i>
	<i>CNTV</i>
	<i>China Org</i>
	<i>China Radio International</i>
	<i>Global Times</i>
	<i>Qianlong News</i>
	<i>Xinhua</i>
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY/GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OUTLETS	<i>Cankao Xiaoxi</i>
	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>
	<i>Ministry of Defense</i>
	<i>Taiwan Affairs Office</i>
	<i>CCP Website</i>
	<i>China Law</i>
	<i>Central People's Government</i> <i>ChinaMil</i>
LIBERAL/ECONOMIC MEDIA	<i>Tiexue</i>
	<i>China Elections</i>
	<i>Nanfang Daily</i>
	<i>China Economic Net</i>
	<i>Enlightenment Daily</i>
	<i>Caixin</i>
	<i>Ifeng</i>
COMMERCIALY OWNED (POPULAR)	<i>News 163</i>
	<i>Sina</i>
	<i>Sohu</i>
	<i>QQ News</i>

discourse: i.e. “threat,” “containing,” “provoke,” “aggressive,” “mutual equality,” and “coexistence” . Countries mentioned (in order of frequency-high to low) included Laos, Brunei, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, Australia, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, India, Taiwan, Vietnam, North Korea, Russia, Philippines, Japan, and the United States. Over 870 articles were analyzed from a corpus of 13,500 news articles collected from May 1st to July 31st, 2014.

The second study sought to identify the meaning and implications of the China Dream. Researchers identified 885 articles for analysis. Stories were collected during a three month period during May 15- August 15, 2014. Using Chinese characters, researchers searched for every occurrence of the phrase “中国梦” , which translates as “China Dream”. The goal of the project was to ensure a complete collection of hits referencing “The China Dream.” As a result, we had a subset of articles with English translations of “China’s Dream,” “Chinese Dream” and “China Dream”.

Finally, the third study sought to analyze the discourse surrounding China’s “New Style of Great Power Relations” concept. Researchers identified 541 articles from 25 different media sources using the Chinese phrase “新型大国关系”. Stories were collected during a three month period during August 15- October 10, 2014 in two rounds of data collection.

Study One: China's coverage of important global and regional neighbors

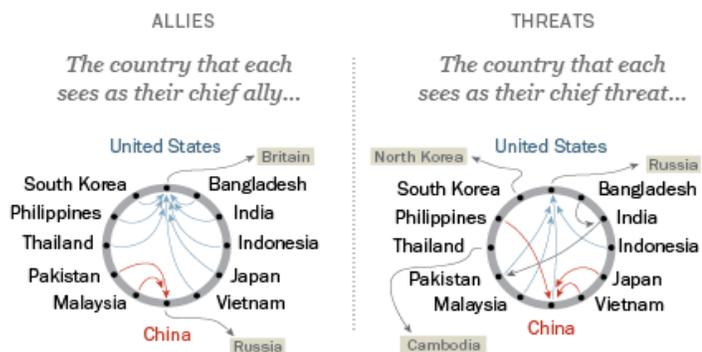
Overview of Findings

The role of media and its influence on foreign policy has been widely studied within the West. Within this tradition, the importance of agenda setting has been well documented. Media and the topics covered both reflects geopolitical tensions and influences them. Thus, analysis of what countries are discussed most frequently and the framing of countries significantly influences how publics come to understand countries beyond their direct experience. China has 14 countries directly bordering it and numerous regional nations playing into important consideration to its future security considerations. China has recently launched a “Charm offensive” to assuage concerns of its rising geopolitical power in addition to, at times, presenting more aggressive and assertive policies in the South China Sea over disputed island chains. As a recent Pew Study indicates, China views certain neighbors as allies and threats. In this initial study, we sought to identify how Chinese media depicts its regional

neighbors to better understand how exactly the Chinese media frames these relations. Our analysis of China's foreign policy discourse discussing its regional relationships produced the following themes:

- *China as victim.* China has never taken the first step to provoke trouble. China has only been forced to respond to the provocative actions by other parties. A growing China is not a threat to the world, but rather safeguards regional stability.
- *China's peaceful development.* China primarily seeks “equality” with other global powers in Asia. The media never indicate that China seeks to dominate the region.

Which Country Is Greatest Ally/Threat?



Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey. Q96a_1 & Q96b_1.
Hand symbol by Nicholas Menghini from The Noun Project.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- *Threat of containment.* The US, in partnership with multiple regional partners, seeks to “contain” China through its economic and military dominance.
- *US Importance.* The United States is overwhelmingly the most important foreign policy interlocutor for China. The US figured in almost 50% of all foreign policy-related articles. Second was Japan, with Russia typically third. This suggests the US remains by far China’s most important relationship— notwithstanding current Western concerns that China and Russia are forming an anti-US bloc.

In analyzing China’s media portrayal of its regional relationships, we generated a corpus of 13,500 articles mentioning China’s regional neighbors. From this data set we analyzed over 870 articles discussing China’s regional neighbors in conjunction with key words regarding China’s five principles of peaceful coexistence and descriptions of countries as threatening, aggressive, assertive or containing China. Chinese political discourse has long relied on linguistic formulas including various political slogans such as the “Three Principles of the People,” the “Two Whatever’s,” “the Three Represents,” etc. These slogans often change based on China’s historical and cultural situations. Some however, are more enduring.

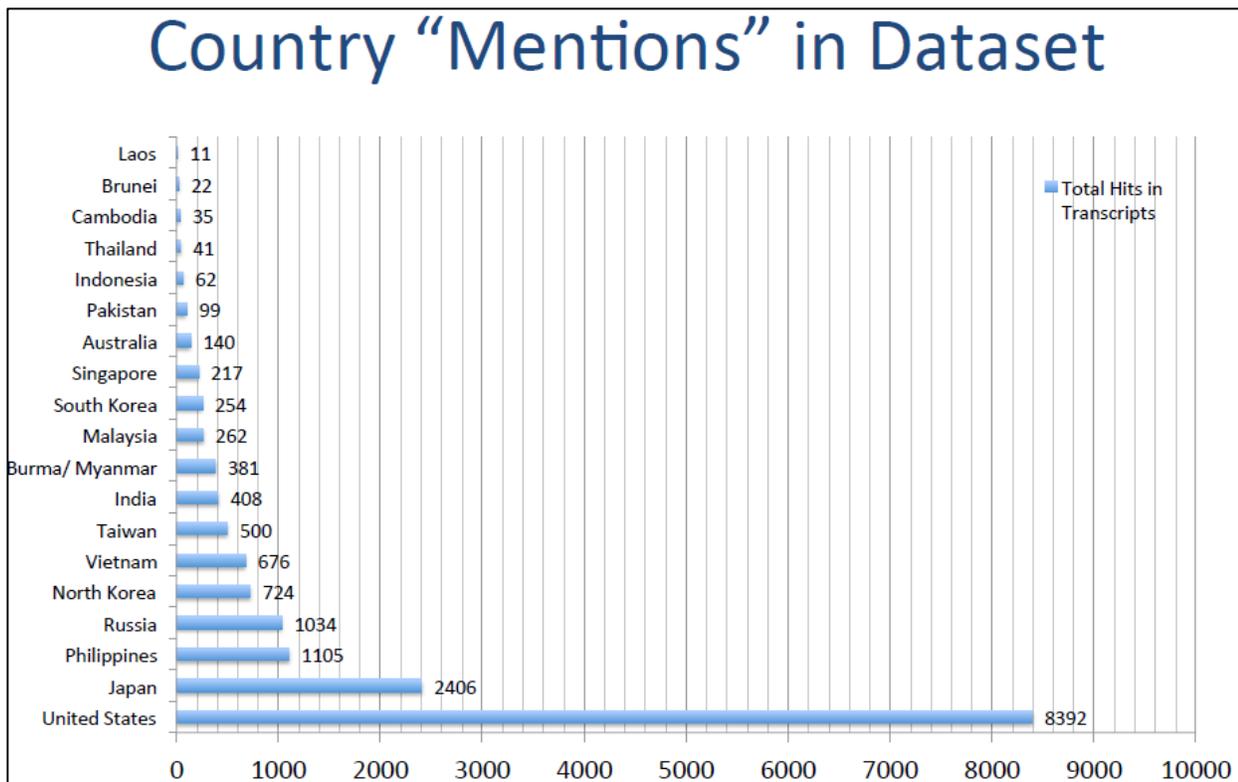
In our analysis of China’s regional relationships we relied on China’s five principles of peaceful coexistence. The term was first articulated by Zhou Enlai in the 1950s as the bedrock of China’s relations with India, but evolved to include China’s foreign relations with other countries. The five principles of peaceful coexistence is viewed as the basis of the PRC’s foreign policy, and include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in others’ internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. In China, political slogans such as the five principles of peaceful co-existence provide ideological cover while granting outsiders a lens to better understand widely held Chinese perceptions of appropriate international behavior. Analysis of Chinese media discourse of its foreign relations suggested words such as threats, contain, and mutual are also important in understanding how China frames other countries as behaving in line or opposed to its foreign policy principles.

These themes show up in a variety of media sources and contexts. We first identified what countries mattered to China, evident by the number of articles mentioning other countries. After establishing what countries matter most, we sought

to understand how these nations were discussed, specifically how were they framed in Chinese media.

Research Question 1: What regional countries matter most in Chinese foreign policy?

The United States was by far the most prevalent country discussed in Chinese media, with over 8000 mentions within the sample of analyzed articles. Following the United States was Japan, with 2406 mentions. Following these were the Philippines with 1105 (primarily due to the South China Sea Conflict), Russia with 1034, North Korea with 724, Vietnam with 676, Taiwan with 500, India with 408, and Burma/Myanmar with 381. Understanding the frequency of countries mentioned can help policy makers understand how China views what countries are most important to its foreign policy, and reveals an overwhelming emphasis on the United States.



Research Question 2: How are regional neighbors described in relation to China’s Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence?

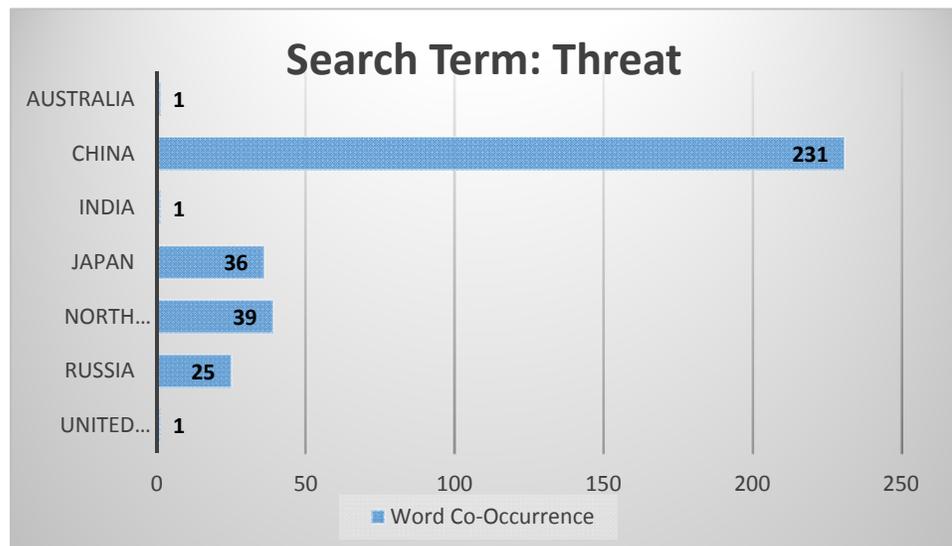
After identifying what regional countries were most prevalent in Chinese media portrayals of foreign nations, we conducted a key word co-occurrences using KH coder

to isolate how countries were specifically describe within China’s media discourse. The graph below depicts what countries are viewed as a threat.

Key Term: “Threat”

When analyzing Chinese foreign policy discourse surrounding the term “threat,” two themes emerge: China as a threat to other countries and other countries as a threat to China. The predominant coupling of threat with countries mentioned within Chinese discourse is that of the “China threat,” with 116 directs hits from our data. In this instance, Chinese media spends considerable space attempting to disprove other countries which

view China’s rise as a threat to their security interests. According to Chinese media, China’s rivals put forward the “China Threat” thesis as a



bogeyman argument suggesting China’s rise will have adverse effects on other nations. The United States, and to a lesser extent Japan, are portrayed as the two countries most prominently perpetuating the “China Threat” thesis.

Chinese media comment on these descriptions of China by trying to disprove these accusations. Typically Chinese media argue that foreign countries fail to provide specific examples of how China threatens other countries, stating that the United States and Japan apply double standards when criticizing China, or argue that Japan is real threat to security in the Pacific due to its historical militarism. For instance, one article from the *China News Service* on May 20, 2014, stated, the “United States military[‘s] typical pattern of behavior is unfounded accusations. The US merely talking about the threat from China in the increase, but could provide any evidence”.

The second theme regarding Chinese discourse surrounding the term “Threat” highlights threats to its own security. These threats include US efforts to contain China, the Japanese military and its past militarism, threats from separatists and

Asian security cooperation, and North Korea with its nuclear ambitions. Historical allusions are prominently featured, especially those labeling Japan as a major concern to Chinese interests. Interestingly, North Korea's nuclear ambitions are described not as a true threat to China's security, but rather, indirectly, due to the United States, Japan, and South Korea focusing on North Korea as a security risk, thus providing a pretext for greater cooperation against China, not North Korea. In this sense, the primary linguistic formula surrounding North Korean nuclear weapons functions as a pretense for US regional alliances on China's borders "falsely" justifying US military cooperation with countries close to China's borders through military exercises and establishments of anti-ballistic missile systems surrounding China. As *Sina* on June 3, 2014, reported, "In fact the world knows that the new missile defense system is mainly directed against China. It can be said that the Asia Pacific region all the ABM system is used to contain China. The United States and South Korea in Seoul deployed missile defense system in negotiating difficulties and the fact that the United States is in the DPRK "threat" as an excuse." While the United States is implicated in perpetuating China as a threat, the United States itself was not portrayed as a direct threat to Chinese interests.

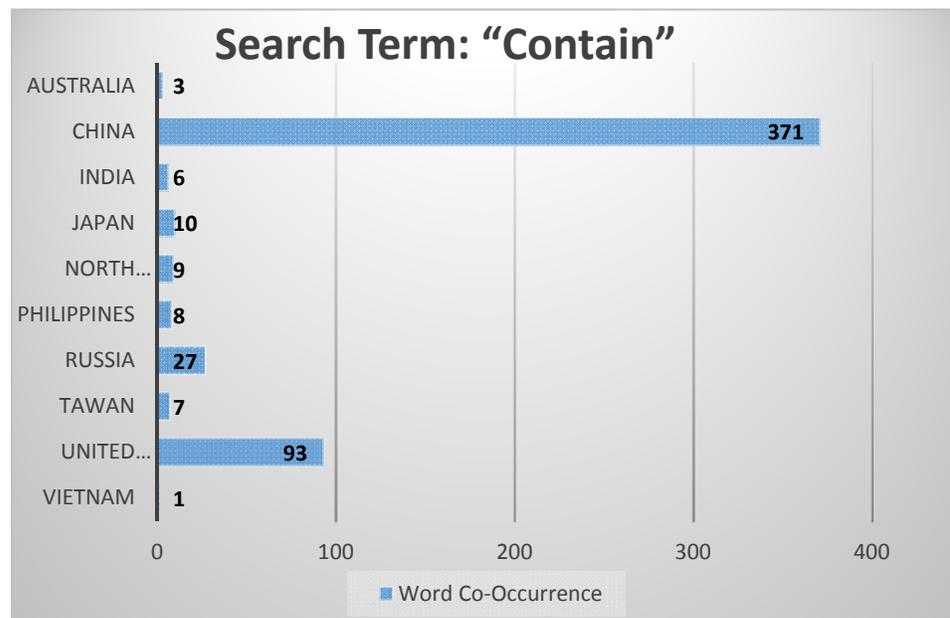
Key Term: "Contain"

Turning to what countries are most frequently in occurrence with the term "Contain", the data again, shows China the victim. The two countries most frequently mentioned are China with 371 hits, and the United States with 93; Russia is distant third with 27. Two themes emerge within Chinese media discourse surrounding this term. First, in accordance with the "China threat" thesis mentioned previously, China sees multiple countries, primarily led by the United States, collaborating to contain China's rise. Our data shows that the Obama administration's pivot to Asia is primarily understood within Chinese media as a strategy to justify its containment of China. Countries such as Japan and the Philippines are viewed as working with the United States to limit China's rise. While *Sina* reported on May 11, 2014, that "Obama said that "our aim is not to...contain China our aim is to ensure that international rules and standards are respected, including the international disputes" an article published on *China Elections* on May 17, 2014, stated "domestic public opinion [is] of the view...that the United States has been to China to contain". However, Obama's containment of China is not wholly viewed as negative. Chinese media reports

Obama’s engagement of China as both negative and positive, depending on the context. At times Chinese officials use the White House’s statements as a means to build common ground by emphasizing the positive elements while at other times as a means to point out US hypocrisy by stressing its military posturing. Our data suggests that attempts by Japan and Australia to contain China is of little concern with only three mentions of Australia coupling with Japan to contain China.

The second theme emerging out of the “contain” discourse draws on historical allusions to describe US policy towards Russia. Articles show how the United States implemented a policy of containment against the Soviet Union during the Cold War, suggesting this

policy might also be in effect with US relations towards China. Current US policy towards Russia is also viewed as one of containment whereby the United States is described as

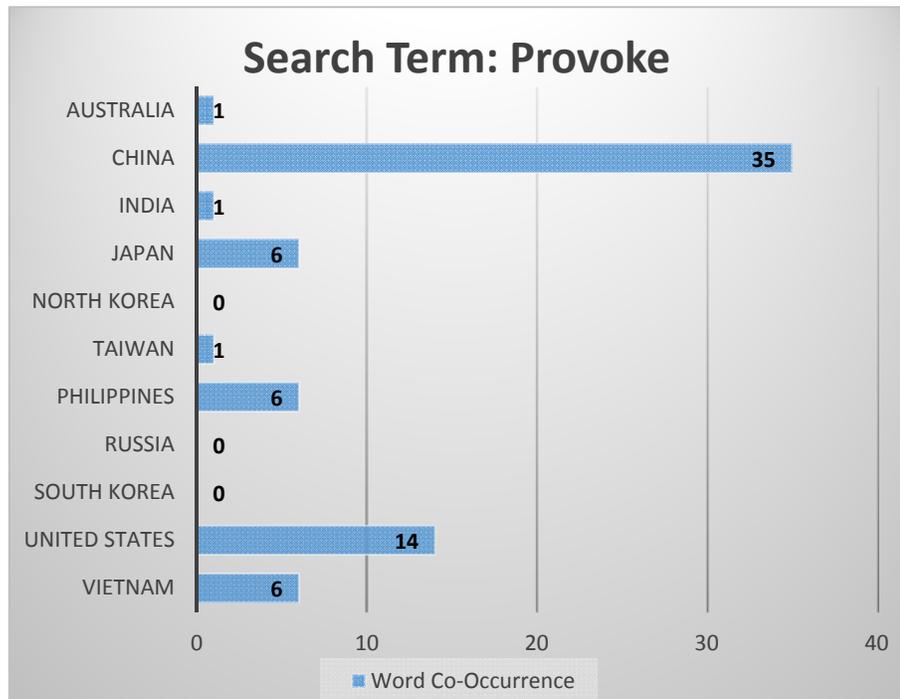


trying to weaken Russia through sanctions. However, the Chinese media opines that the United States will likely be unsuccessful in its attempts, perhaps providing a foil for US containment policy towards China, similarly suggesting that US containment policy of China will also be likely to fail.

Key Term: “Provoke”

Analysis of the search term “provoke” again highlights how China is on the receiving end of other countries initiating certain policies meant to negatively impact China’s security, providing further support to the findings of threat and contain. The word co-occurrences of the term “provoke” show that China is most frequently cited with 35 hits, with the United States placing second with 14, and Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam tied for third with six hits each. While “China” and “provoke”

occur most frequently together, this does not mean that China is provoking other countries, but rather other countries are provoking China. The United States and Japan are the two countries most commonly cited for provocation. Japanese provocation comes primarily from history and supported by its current actions. Chinese media consistently reports on Japan as having a track record of provoking other nations including its support for the Yazukuni Shrine honoring World War II leaders in addition to more recent actions in the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. Chinese actions in the South China Sea are justified by being viewed as necessary due to countries such as Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam portrayed as forcing China to respond to attacks to its perceived sovereignty over disputed island

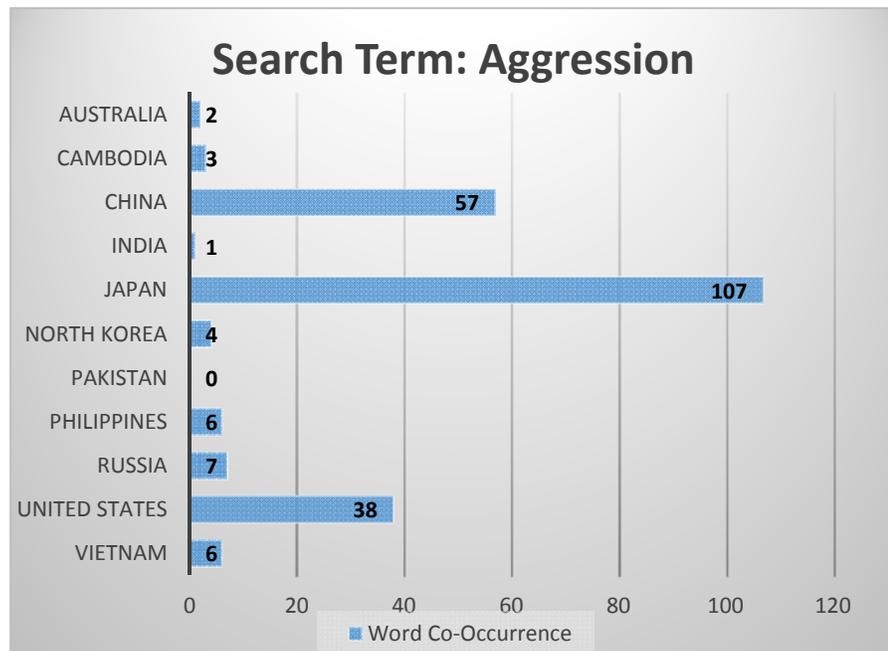


chains. For instance, *China Elections* reported on June 24, 2014, that “China is maintaining its own in the South China Sea’s sovereignty, which [it is] provoked [by] the Philippines and Vietnam”. The United States is described as a regional provocateur supporting countries such as Japan and the Philippines in their actions shoring up control over disputed islands. However, US power is also doubted. Chinese media suggests the United States might not have the “energy” to maintain its regional influence, suggesting the United States might not be a long term ally for those in the Pacific. As *China Org* reported on June 7, 2014, “Obama’s goal “in the South Asia region is to stabilize. Not provoke violent incidents, because he had no more energy to deal with”.

Key Term: “Aggression”

When looking at what countries most frequently co-occur with the term “aggression,” Japan tops this list with 107 hits followed by China with 57 and the United States with 38. Within this discourse two themes emerge: China frames other countries actions within the context of historical aggression while China, unlike other nations, is committed to non-aggression. First, as noted by the large number of co-

occurrences between Japan and the term “aggression,” Chinese media views Japan as the primary regional aggressor. Japanese actions in the South China Sea in particular are viewed as aggressive, but rather than just simply citing specific Japanese actions in



the area as aggressive, Chinese media stresses Japan’s history in WWII as a way to understand Japan’s current actions. Thus, Japan is seen as re-asserting itself in the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands in line with its historical militant culture. For example, an article published by China’s *Taiwan Affairs Office* on May 8, 2014, stated, “History will never forget December 1937 Japanese aggression in the armed forces the Nanjin in the brutal mass killings, looting, rape and other war crimes, but sadly, 75 years [later] some Japanese right wing elements have...denied irrefutable evidence for the aggression history.” Thus, Japan is viewed as the primary aggressor. While the United States is also frequently mentioned with the term “aggression,” it is not directly labeled as an aggressor, but rather depicted as facilitating Japanese aggression through joint military exercises and the Obama administration’s pivot to Asia.

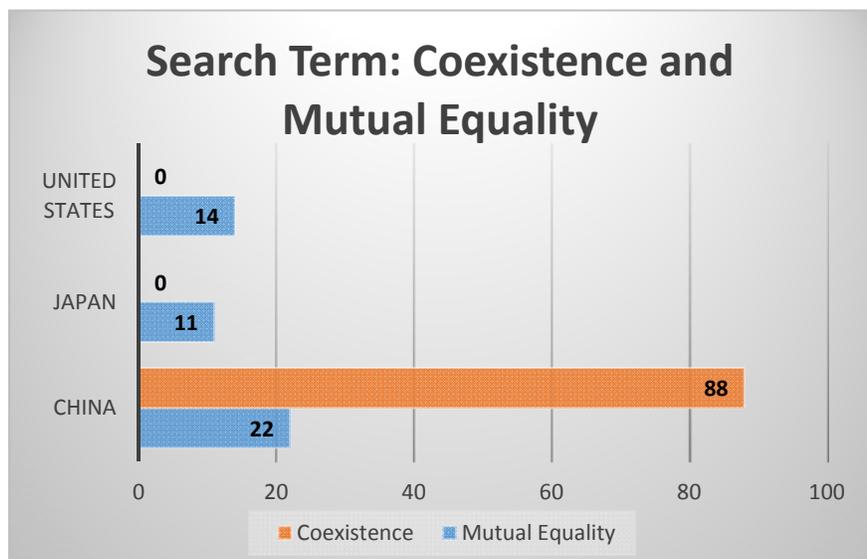
The second theme emerging from the data on “aggression” revolves around China portraying itself as committed to non-aggression. In conjunction with China’s five principles of peaceful coexistence, China asserts that is committed to peacefully

resolving issues in region. Chinese media frequently combats US descriptions of China as an aggressor in the region by calling US claims as unfounded, noting “throughout Chinese history...there is no external aggression, there is no imperialism”. “China’s peaceful rise speaks for itself” (*China Org, June 5, 2014*). The emphasis on history is again present in China’s defense of itself as a non-aggressive, peaceful loving country.

Key Terms: “Mutual equality” and “Co-existence”

Turning to the final search terms, “mutual equality” and “co-existence”, our data reveals that only China co-occurs with the term “co-existence” while the US, Japan, and China most frequently co-occur with “mutual equality”. Closer qualitative examination of term coexistence reveals that the term is used in conjunction with China’s five principles of peaceful coexistence while mutual equality is predominantly used to describe China’s idealized relations with the United States and Japan.

The term mutual equality is used to describe China’s relations with foreign countries as embedded in a harmonious and ethical world view whereby Chinese foreign policy makers promote world peace and stable relationships. Mutual equality is used to create spaces for building common ground. Chinese media explains that the



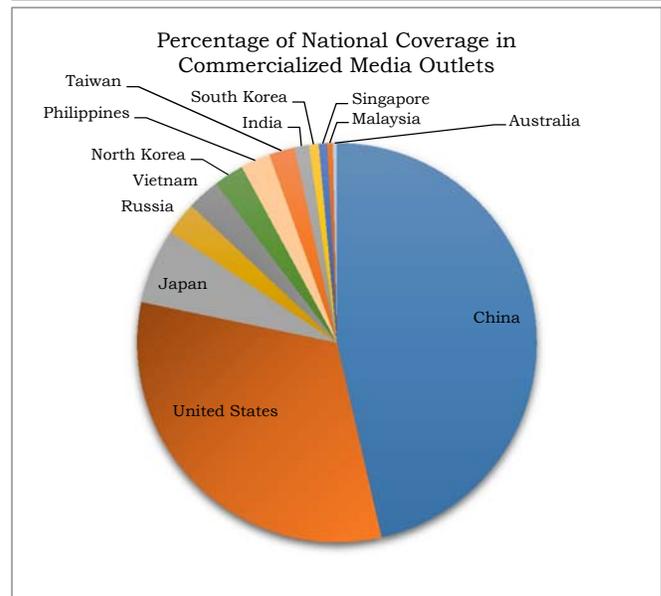
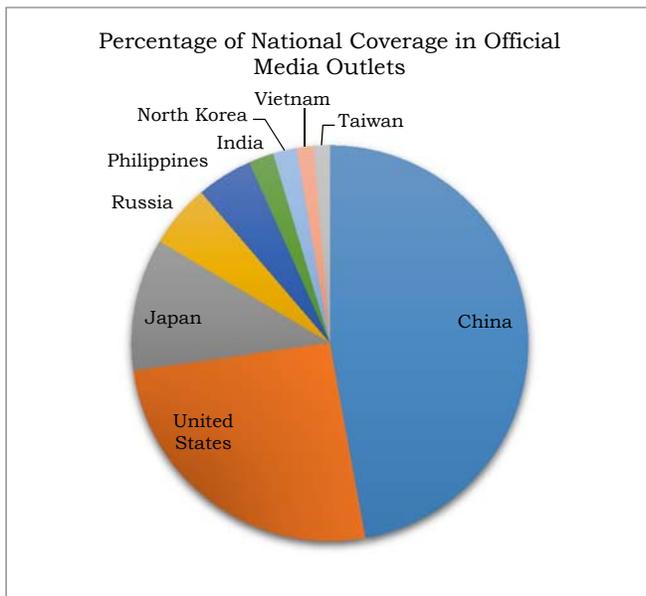
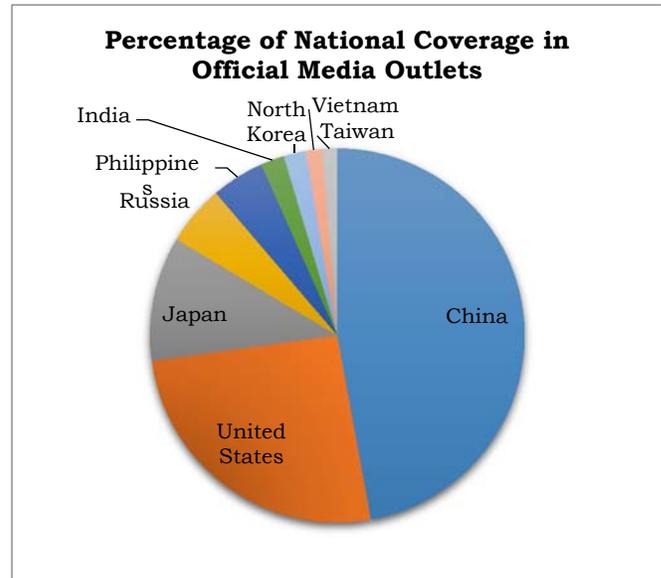
Chinese Communist Party is responsible for creating a “new China” whereby the nation is treated with mutual equality and respect from other nations, unlike what happened during the Opium War and the Chinese civil war. Thus, China will not be taken advantage of, and yet, is willing to treat other countries equally with respect. The term mutual equality thus describes China’s positive relationships with the world including its policies in Western Africa and commitment to work with the United States as equals in advancing mutual benefits for both countries. For instance, the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* on May 10, 2014, stated, “In the economy, China will

continue to provide a number of developing countries assistance, in accordance with equality and mutual benefit”. Another article by the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* on May 10, 2014, explains how mutual equality implicates US-Chinese relations: “China has no intention [to] change America, the United States will not change China. The United States will have to achieve harmony, only [via] the principles of mutual respect [and] mutual equality of the basic principles. Although the United States intelligence vary greatly, has been going on roads are different, ‘China Dream’ and ‘American dream’ are interlinked. The two sides can seek common ground, and can learn from each other”. Overall the rhetorical mechanisms Chinese media uses to portray its principles of “mutual equality” are through historical backgrounds citing China’s peaceful relations with countries in the past and claims of harmonious relationships that can benefit all countries.

When analyzing the findings for the term “coexistence” 77 of the 88 hits describe the term aligning with China’s principle of peaceful coexistence. The idea of peaceful coexistence is used to support China’s vision of its relationships with other countries in support of a positive world order. For instance, one article stated “Peaceful coexistence has gradually become a guiding international relations...for world peace and stability”. China characterizes coexistence with Russia and the United States as promoting Chinese-Russian cooperation, while it uses the term to elevate China as protector of the third world. For China, “the social order, the ritual music harmony, the governance of the country, and of learning, the international coexistence...in short, it is necessary. Again, China relies on its history as proof that harmonious and ethically correct actions can help safeguard the international system.

Research Question 3: How do Chinese Media Outlets vary in their Portrayal of China’s Regional Neighbors?

When turning to how different media categories discuss the themes outlined above we find similar percentages of mentions for each nation. Overall our analysis shows that Chinese media outlets demonstrate significant convergence in the thematic coverage of China’s regional neighbors. However, one difference emerges; Liberal media outlets do show evidence of a greater diversity in coverage of these themes with a larger number of countries. This could indicate that though some outlets are more loosely controlled by the government, there is still significant similarity of media agendas across outlets.



Conclusions of Study 1: China's Regional Neighbors

Using authentic Chinese source data provides us up-to-date insights of how US actions are perceived by the Chinese media. Understanding Chinese political discourse also allows us to anticipate Chinese reactions to our actions: through historical analogies and most likely frames for US military actions. Understanding Chinese political discourse creates openings by reframing Chinese and US actions in light of the key terms, highlighting Chinese intrusions on their own principles, and reframing these actions in accepted terms in Chinese media.

Openings:

- Risks: maritime/territorial issues will always be portrayed as about “sovereignty” rather than resources.
- US justifications of its “referee” or regional honest broker status is rejected, while US alliances are likely to be seen as “containment” rather than “partnerships”.
- US Statements on “responsible stakeholder” are seen as disingenuous, designed to weaken China’s global standing.

Opportunities:

- Affirm Chinese sovereignty, but affirm that other nations have the same right.
- Highlight incongruity/double standards of Chinese policies within their five principles.
- Refrain from affirming “containment” suspicious and actively refute Chinese accusations (e.g. “If the US really wanted to contain China, what we are doing in the region is an awful execution of such a strategy”).
- Stress that US “pivot to Asia” is about economic and political collaboration, rather than containment of Chinese regional ambition.
- Highlight the US historical commitment to China, and key moments of partnership.

Final recommendations:

- Monitor, track, and trace how USG messaging and actions are interpreted in the region (not just the intention).
 - Understanding importance of “god-terms” or terms that dominate discussions.
 - Anticipating negative portrayals, make it difficult for them to stick

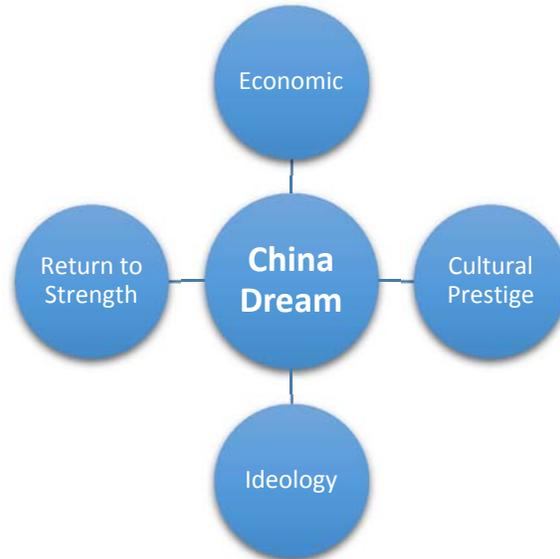
- Use China’s pre-occupation with the US to reframe the terminology of our interactions.
 - Highlight moments of US/Chinese collaboration.
 - Seek moments to highlight “equality” without stepping down from key role.
- Confirm Chinese rights (particularly as this is likely to gain significant capital in the US-China relationship), but at the same time highlight the equal rights of China’s neighbors.
 - Use language of “fairness” and “sovereignty” not “rights”.
- Frame US alliances as convergent with long term Chinese political and economic goals, as well as the five principles.

Study Two: Geopolitical implications of the China Dream Discourse

Overview of Findings

This study explored the ways in which the “China Dream” (中国梦) figures in geopolitical themes in Chinese media. Like his previous successors who articulated their own guiding principles to describe their policy orientations, the China Dream is Xi Jinping’s guiding concept, and is likely to implicate Chinese policy for rest of his tenure. The China Dream typically refers two goals regarding China’s future growth: first, to achieve a “moderately prosperous” society by 2021; and second, to regain regional primacy by 2049. This concept is still relatively new, providing room for Chinese elites to shape and reinterpret the concept in different ways for various stakeholders. The government has pushed the discourse widely, and has encouraged individual and collective responses (although within constraints) of the concept from a wide section of the nation. In comparison to previous Chinese leaders, Xi Jinping’s China Dream has been described as more populist and having a broader policy reach encompassing both foreign and domestic policy.

We examined 885 articles from 19 news sources, and found marked consistency in the themes about the China Dream. Four primary themes emerged, including economic development, a “return to strength”, cultural prestige, and ideological unity. The most important of these themes is that of economic development, in which China’s own economic growth not only provides prosperity for China’s citizens, but also provides a mechanism for bilateral trade ties, and provides a boost for developing countries as well. Analysis of the China Dream can help US policy makers better understand how the Chinese perceive their geopolitical reality today while also providing insight into potential future actions, motives, and expectations.



- *Promise of Economic Development.* China's own economic growth not only provides prosperity for China's citizens, but also provides a mechanism for bilateral trade ties, and provides a boost for developing countries as well.
- *China's "return to strength".* Without security, the economic dimensions of the China Dream cannot be fulfilled. Through CCP leadership, China's past humiliations (the Opium Wars, Japanese aggression, etc.) are rectified, and China's security forces put to rest any concerns about the nation's ability to protect itself, especially when confronting challenges to its territorial integrity.
- *Cultural Prestige.* China's cultural heritage operates as a sort of "soft power" dimension abroad and a form of soft nationalism at home. Emphasis on China's traditional culture promotes domestic cohesion and strengthens its citizens' sense of Chinese identity. This discourse focused on China's cultural heritage, including its literature, art, philosophy, and historical achievements. Once China is able to successfully exploit its cultural heritage, it will acquire greater geopolitical prestige, which the nation deserves.
- *Justification of CCP ideology.* The China Dream provides an ideological legitimization of the CCP and the continuing relevance of its governing ideology. It stresses the necessity of maintaining the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. In other words, regardless of China's economic growth, its growing military power, and its 5000 year cultural heritage, China must continue to adhere to the "core socialist principles" that provide the foundation for national growth.
- *The China Dream is one all countries can share.* The discourse stressed the value of the China Dream, not just for the Chinese nation, but also for the world. Developing nations in particular can turn to the China Dream and realize their own economic growth and prosperity by working with China in economic development projects and creating a stable international order. By following the "China Dream," China's two centenary objectives will ultimately be realized presenting itself as an "equal player" in global geopolitics.

Research Question 1: What are media perceptions of the China Dream?

Our data suggests that the China Dream is a popular concept and CCP slogan with four dimensions: economic, a return to strength, cultural prestige, and CCP ideology. Most generally, the China Dream is a popular concept describing “our China dream about China’s story”. It is a story helping Chinese understand where China was and where it can be. In achieving the China Dream, the Chinese people will have to struggle against corruption and economic setbacks. According to its narrative logic, from this struggle, the people need to support the CCP who will redouble their efforts and enhance their political control in order to help China achieve its future prosperity and power. Internationally, China will have to struggle against foreign aggression. For, in order to face this struggle China must return to its historical military strength as a regional power to prevent other countries encroaching on Chinese territory. To understand how China plans on achieving its dream, the section will address the four thematic components: economic development, return to strength, cultural prestige, and ideology.

Economic Development

The major theme of the China Dream is that of economic development. Within this discussion includes an emphasis on how achievement of the China Dream promises both domestic Chinese economic development, but also international economic development. The idea of domestic economic development is couched in historical terms, helping the Chinese people understand where China was back in the 1940s and how the CCP helped lead and raise the Chinese people from poverty to economic prosperity. As an op-ed from China Radio on June 7, 2014, stated “People for a better life of the aspirations of our goals”. In the years of revolutionary war and peace building period, the Communist Party of China all mission and responsibility is to achieve the broad masses of the fundamental interests. The people of consistency, at this stage performance in order to build a prosperous society, efforts to achieve the “China Dream.” Furthermore, the domestic economic components of the China Dream is rooted in China’s century long goals of modernization. According to the Politburo, development is the primary component of achieving the China Dream. This includes achieving China’s two 100 Year Goals—the anniversary of the founding of CCP and the PRC, which are part of the “great national rejuvenation of China’s Dream”. For instance, in a report from the Ministry of National Defense on July 31, 2014 regarding

Xi Jinping's speech to the CPC Central Committee forum, Xi is quoted as saying "The achievement China great national rejuvenation of China's dream, we must uphold economic construction, and firmly promote the sustained and healthy economic development".

The China Dream is not singularly about domestic Chinese growth, but also encompasses international economic growth. Xi Jinping's articulation of the China Dream is a dream that all countries can share in. For instance, according to a report by *China News Service*, on June 28, 2014, Xi Jinping is quoted as saying, "China is willing to work with all countries, especially neighboring countries common development and common prosperity. Chinese dream is applicable to everyone and neighboring countries". Developing countries in particular are those that China believes will want to participate in China's economic dream. China also reports that it attempts to help other countries share in this dream through their bilateral trade ties and through the promotion of the twenty-first century Silk Road. Ultimately, according to Chinese media, foreign countries should come to understand the China Dream as means for peaceful world development, not as a threat to the current economic world order. Specifically, the China Dream is not attempting to monopolize the global economy or monopolize world energy resources. Instead, it is about "the inherent attributes of...peace, development, and cooperation" (Liu Xiaoming, China's Ambassador to Great Britain, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, May 24, 2014).

Return to Strength

In addition to economic aspects of the China Dream is a theme of China's return to strength. Chinese media explains that China needs to rejuvenate is power, rhetorically stressing the historical strength China once enjoyed. As such, past grievances such as the Opium War and Japanese aggression during WWII are highlighted. For instance, an op-ed published by *China Org* on July 25, 2014, stated:

"120 years ago China was humiliated ... but we have a profound understanding of historical lessons based on high alert. After all, in the world today peace does not prevail, but hegemonism and power politics ... the actual and potential threats of war still exists. We need to look around the world's strategic thinking, be vigilant in our peace time strategy. Clearly ... the Chinese Communist Party leadership, along with the road of Chinese socialism and

realistic, steady progress demonstrates the cohesion of several generations of Chinese people and the cherished dream of China.”

Thus, these themes are brought to the fore when explaining that in order for China to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity, China must grow militarily to safeguard its Dream. The need for military strength to protect Chinese interests today are evident in an op-ed from *China Elections* on July 24, 2014: “While they are seeking peace and development, China must “firmly safeguard” sovereignty and territorial integrity otherwise the “China Dream will become a dream”. Again, the importance of military strength in conjunction with the Chinese Dream is evident in a report by *Qianlong* on August 1, 2014, stating “The Dream of the most powerful, but also of the armed forces. Without a solid national defense, and there is no strong armed forces and achieve China's dream is not guaranteed”. Thus, an important component of Xi Jinping’s China Dream requires and legitimizes greater funding of China’s military forces.

Along with China’s return to military strength is an emphasis on China’s return to economic strength. In order for China to develop into an economic power, Chinese media emphasizes the importance of a stable international security environment. As Xi Jinping stated on July 18, 2014, “In order to achieve the China dream, more than ever before, we need a peaceful and stable external environment”. The China Dream works to promote international stability and world peace by aiming to develop mutually beneficial ties with other countries. Thus, to achieve the China Dream, Asian security is important, with relations with its regional partners needing to focus on cooperation. Chinese media stress that individual states should not safeguard their security at the expense of another because cooperative security is an important component of achieving the China Dream. However, this becomes difficult when other countries behave aggressively in the Asia Pacific, eschewing peaceful development. Ultimately, the Chinese media explains that the China Dream requires military modernization. China’s return to economic strength cannot be separated from the military dimension, as an article from the *Ministry of National Defense* summarizes on July 31, 2014: “Defense Officials warn: achievement of China’s dream “cannot be separated from the side of the security and stability”.

Cultural Prestige

The third element of the China Dream revolves around China's cultural prestige. For China, cultural prestige operates as soft power abroad and a form of soft nationalism at home. Abroad, Xi Jinping has stated that "the enhancement of national cultural soft power, to show Chinese culture[s] unique charm" (*China Elections*, May 31, 2014). Thus, cultural greatness is emphasized by focusing on China's "more than 5000 years of civilization" (ibid). This historical sense of China's greatness is used to identify with other countries sharing strong historical cultures such as in the Middle East and the ancient Persian culture, Latin American culture, and even French culture. The Chinese Dream has a strong cultural foundation as *China News Service* on May 31, 2014 reported, "China's dream to have a cultural foundation and worth supporting. He said that the core values of the building of a country are very important, in fostering and promoting socialist core values the excellent Chinese traditional culture". Chinese cultural prestige also acts as a form of soft nationalism. In establishing Xi Jinping's China Dream concept, the government supported and the Chinese media widely reported on the China Dream being expressed through domestic art competitions, reaffirmation of China's long history and historical achievements, and reestablishing China's cultural heritage as a key component of uniting all Chinese through this common shared history.

CCP Ideology

Finally, the China Dream plays an important role in reaffirming the Chinese Communist Party as the primary actor by which all of China can re-obtain its past economic and military glory. As mentioned above, Chinese political discourse relies on key slogans to justify its policies and signal the goals of China's government. As such, the China Dream is frequently described as consistent with other slogans such as the CCP's core socialist principles. For instance, *China Radio International* reported on June 7, 2014, that:

"At the end 1941, Mao Zedong made a clear direction, the Central Party School of the training school should be 'seeking truth from facts, not rhetoric', In this spirit, and to pursue national independence and liberation of the People's dream is realized; Comrade Deng Xiaoping in the reform and opening up warned the whole party and the world...Since then, the country is strong and the people prosperous, making the dream become reality. The Communist Party

of China has a pragmatic style of work, and step by step the CCP helped China realize its dream.”

Chinese media stresses that the China Dream is the most recent ideological concept calling for continued commitment to domestic economic reforms and tied to China two centenary anniversaries: the 2021 centenary of the founding of the CCP and the 2049 centenary of the founding of the PRC. The China Dream is viewed as integrating previous CCP slogans to provide a sense of political continuity and justifies further support of the CCP leadership. The Party is considered the primary vehicle through which the Dream will be realized. Evidence for this is apparent by describing how during CCP rule, China has emerged from its century of humiliation and rose to its current economic position. Despite this previous track record of success, future obstacles exist threatening China’s ability to achieve the China Dream. Example of these include corruption, separatist forces inside and outside China, terrorists, and religious extremists. Therefore, given the CCP’s history of success and the ever present threats lurking to inhibit Chinese national rejuvenation, Chinese media suggest that China must uphold the Party and support it in its endeavors to fight corruption. As *China Economic Net* on June 17, 2014 reported, “Rejuvenation of China Dream is struggling with the internal and external environment in China undergoing extensive and profound changes.” Under these profound changes, China must continue to support and reaffirm CCP leadership in order to achieve the China Dream.

[Who can participate in the China Dream and how does it create a narrative linking past and future?](#)

Regardless of whether they were domestic or part of the Chinese expatriate community, all Chinese are included in China Dream discourse. Within domestic audiences, there was a particular emphasis on children and individuals, as children were the particular members of society who could continue advancements made by previous generations of Chinese who struggled significantly to bring China to its current state. Within the expatriate community, all members of the Chinese diaspora were included, even Taiwanese citizens. The strength of the China Dream was found through the unity of all Chinese to achieve it. The goal was for “the reunification of the motherland, to unite the sons and daughters...in cohesion in order to achieve national rejuvenation of the "China Dream" and do solid work.” (China News Service, 2014b). The China Dream was also framed as not just a dream for China, but one that is universal. The dream was not just about progress for China, but for the entire human

race. Thus, bilateral relationships were emphasized consistently with a number of disparate states, including Great Britain, Venezuela, Portugal and Ghana. The China Dream is envisioned in this data set as a sort of universal aspiration, one which would resonate across national and cultural boundaries. Finally, the other key actor mentioned in CD discourse was the CCP, who is consistently framed as responsible for China’s current achievements. The CCP was framed as the political actor responsible for leading China to its current level of prosperity. Party rhetoric was consistently quoted, framing “party members...always stand[ing] in the forefront, led by 1,000,000,000,000 people to realize the China Dream” (China Radio International, 2014).

What is the time frame of the China Dream?

A key component of narrative logics is the power to help individuals understand the world they live in by placing them temporally in a cause and effect trajectory (Kluver, 2002). The fundamental historical components of how the China

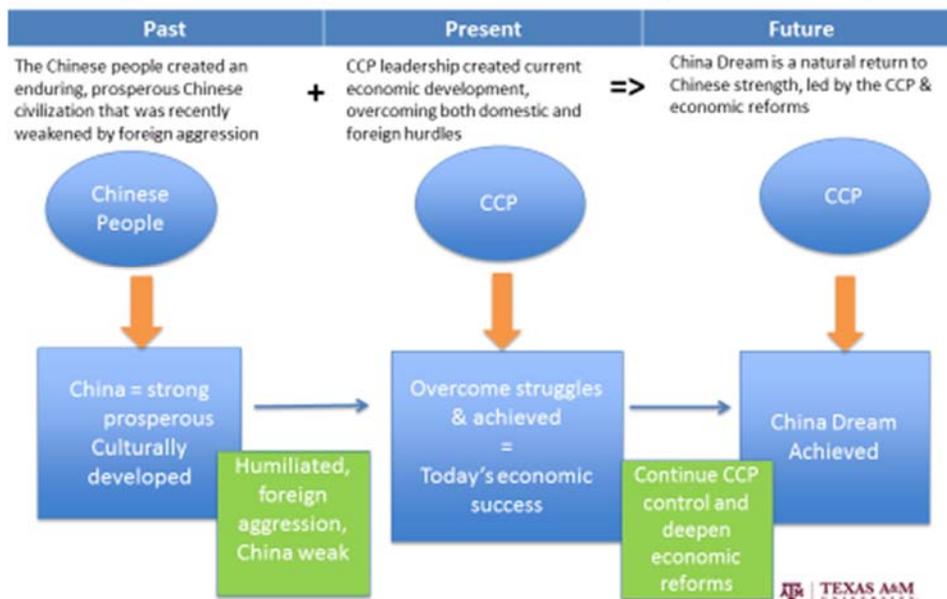
Past	Present	Future
<p>History 5,000 years of civilization Historical achievements</p> <p>Rich culture Literature, calligraphy agriculture, Tai chi, music</p> <p>Military strength vis-à-vis neighbors</p> <p>Prestige/ confidence Middle Kingdom Center of the political world</p>	<p>Internal struggles Corruption Environment</p> <p>Economics Bilateral trade agreements GDP growth Maintaining reforms</p> <p>Security concerns Terrorism Separatist forces Territorial encroachment Perception of China as a threat</p>	<p>National rejuvenation Hundredth Anniversary of PRC Founding in 2049 Hundredth Anniversary of CCP Founding in 2021</p> <p>Prosperous Chinese society</p> <p>Peaceful coexistence with neighbors</p> <p>Construction of a better society and military strengthening</p>

Dream narrative was constructed are drawn upon a collective past, present and future. The past is grounded in the rich economic, cultural and military history of China, which includes 5,000 years of civilization and myriad historical achievements. Culturally, items such as literature, calligraphy, agriculture, Tai chi and music were all celebrated as part of China’s past that is being rejuvenated.

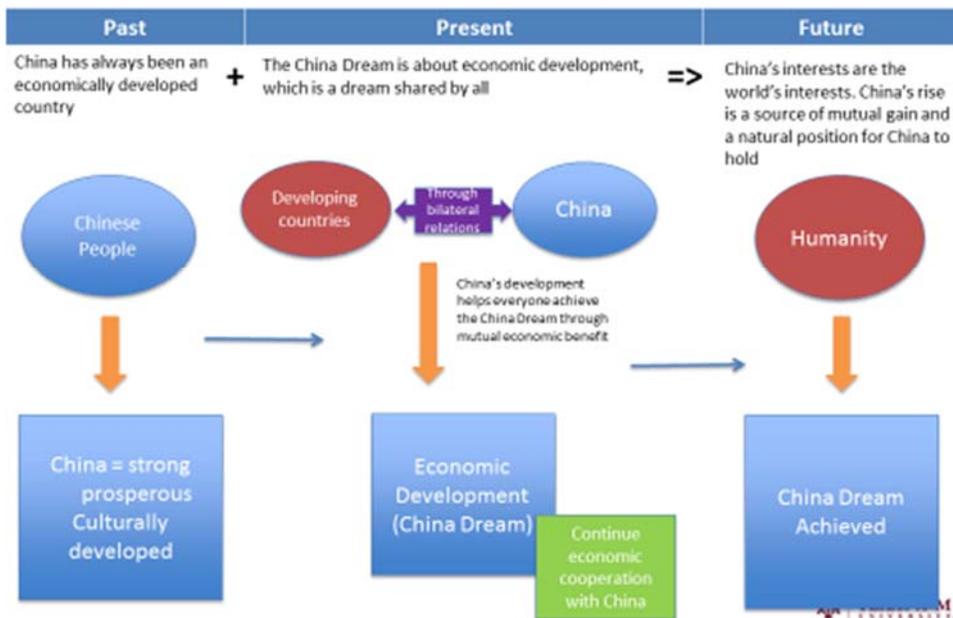
However, due to foreign aggression, China was subject to a long period of humiliation, which they are only recently emerging, primarily because of adherence to CCP principles and policies such as the China Dream. But there are a number of other,

domestic hindrances China seeks to overcome. Chinese media discussed difficulties such as corruption and environmental imbalances as struggles internal to China needing to be overcome. Other present concerns tended to be oriented around security, such as terrorism within China (and internationally), separatist forces within the country, territorial encroachment on the part of Japan and the perception by Western powers (primarily the United States) that China's rise is a threatening rise. The economic situation of the present is depicted in the most positive terms, with media outlets consistently emphasizing bilateral trade agreements with strategic partners, GDP growth within China and the positive effects economic reforms are having on China's financial state. The vision of the future includes the rejuvenation of Chinese prominence. The two figures below depict the logics of the China Dream in domestic and international terms.

Logics of the China Dream (Domestic)



Logics of the China Dream (International)



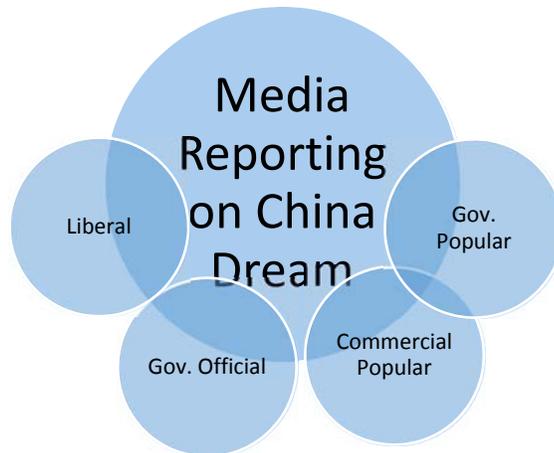
Research Question 2: How does media ownership/control affect reporting of the China Dream?

In order to determine whether or not these factors might influence how the China Dream is reported. Our data indicate no significant differences in the fundamental construction of the narrative across the various media groupings. Each group consistently invoked China's prosperous past, emphasized economic development and call for continuation of current CCP policy to realize previous historical successes. However, there were differences in emphasis. The various dimensions were emphasized differentially depending on the particular outlet in question. For example, articles in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs primarily emphasized the economic dimensions of the CD over the security or ideological dimensions. Government outlets had varying points of emphasis of the China Dream. The Ministry of National Defense primarily emphasized the security dimensions of the China Dream, including both cooperative security as well as numerous assertions of a necessary return to strength for China. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs primarily emphasized the economic dimensions of the China Dream via cooperative development with strategic actors. Popular media outlets directly owned by the CCP tended to

spend more time linking the China Dream to previous CCP political slogans, in particular, the core socialist principles guiding the CCP's vision.

In addition to a reaffirmation of CCP principles, government sources had a greater number of domestic stories reporting on festivities promoting Chinese culture and the China Dream. Popular

media outlets that were commercially owned included a wider range of government officials and prominent Chinese discussing the China Dream. Officials including Wang Qishan, Zhang Dejian, Wang Jianlin, Cao Jianming and others coupled the China Dream with their respective spheres of influence in government and business.



Finally, liberal outlets stayed primarily within the CD narrative framework with the exception of China Elections. Several articles in the outlet critiqued the CCP commitment to the CD by citing recent incidents of corruption within the party as evidence the commitment was not strong.

Conclusions of Study 2: China Dream

Economic Dimension:

- The US can consistently affirm the China Dream economic discourse within the context of prosperity for the entire region.
- The United States' activities provide regional security so that trade and economic growth is not disrupted.

Cultural Prestige:

- Create opportunities to showcase/highlight US interest in China's cultural heritage.
- Cast US government efforts and concerns in a collaborative vs. combative frame.

Ideology:

- The US can affirm the importance of good governance, consistency in policy and predictability of governmental policy.
- Find linkages between the American Dream and the China Dream.

Return to Strength:

- Emphasize stronger mil-to-mil collaboration, as regional security benefits all.
- Capitalize on the emphasis on cooperative regional security in the China Dream.

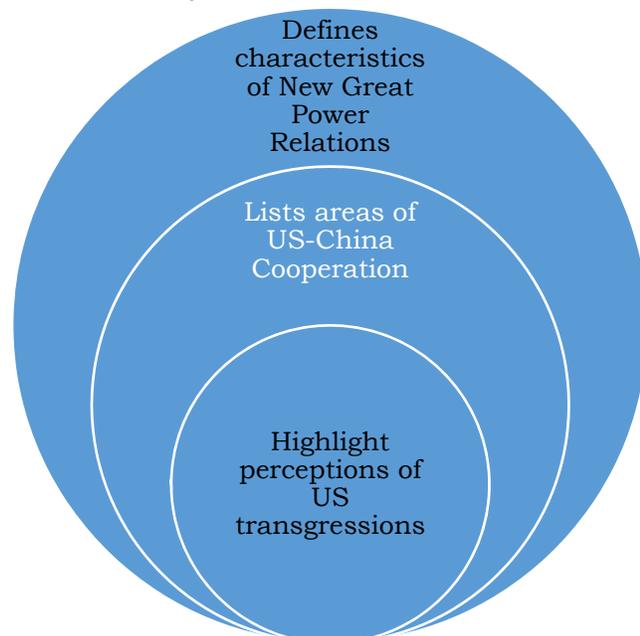
Study Three: Chinese media on “News Style of Great Power Relations”

Overview of Findings

Our final study focused on how Chinese media portrayed the concept of the “new style of great power relations” (新型大国关系). This concept has been consistently offered as an alternative model for the rise of a great power, in which the pathologies of great power rise (i.e., conflict with existing powers) would be minimized. The Chinese goal has been to use a new style of cooperative, rather than competitive, relations, primarily with the United States. For this study, we analyzed 541 articles from 21 different media sources. The phrase “New Style of Great Power Relations” is most closely associated with China’s current president, Xi Jinping. For instance, during the fall 2014 Sunnylands summit, Xi discussed the concept with US President Barack Obama; however, Obama received it with little enthusiasm. US policy makers have so far resisted using the phrase or publicly commenting on it, most likely because they are concerned about the unknown implications of accepting the idea (Perlez, 2014).

The basis of the doctrine, as articulated by Xi, is that China will emerge to a position of equal prominence and strength as other great powers (specifically the United States), without the conflict over resources or influence that has typically accompanied such transitions in great power relations. The concept presumes that China will not openly challenge the United States, while the United States will allow China to achieve regional influence that heretofore rested primarily with the United States. Finally, the concept suggests both countries would mutually respect each other’s core interests, thus undermining any rationale for open conflict between the two nations.

Although the tensions associated with China’s rise are acknowledged globally, it is the concern of the United States that seems to be most sensitive to it. Both US and



Chinese leaders appear to agree on the need for the two countries to avoid the frictions that status quo and rising powers have historically faced, and both countries have advanced various linguistic formulations attempting to articulate the reality of China's rise to lower the potential for conflict. For instance, US discourse has focused on China's duty as a "responsible stakeholder" in global politics and economics in order to pressure China to conform to international norms and law (Christensen, 2015).

However, within China, the discourse about China's "responsibility" is typically dismissed as disingenuous. Chinese view US messaging as either a thinly veiled attempt to "contain" or "suppress" China or aiming to slow down China's ascension to global prominence. The Pew Global Attitudes Survey recently found that more than half of Chinese citizens believe that the United States is trying to prevent China from becoming an equal power, and barely over a quarter believe that the United States will eventually accept China's new prominence (Wike, Stokes, & Poushter, 2015). Thus, the discourses that attempt to legitimate China's rise, particularly within and among its citizens, are worthy of study.

- *Alternative to Great Power Relations.* The NSGPR concept has been consistently offered as an alternative model for the rise of a great power, in which the pathologies of great power rise (i.e., conflict with existing powers) would be minimized. The Chinese goal has been to use a new style of cooperative, rather than competitive, relations, primarily with the United States.
- *The NSGPR as a means for collaboration and cooperation.* The greatest number of articles focused on defining NSGPR as a concept which would identify areas of collaboration and cooperation, focusing on international and regional issues, while enhancing economic and military ties. The most cited area for cooperation was in the economic realm, (e.g. increased trade, bilateral investment, and infrastructure). A second area identified as having great potential for collaboration was in military to military ties, especially in fighting terrorism and policy coordination. Other areas identified for collaboration also included in foreign policy issues (such as North Korea or Iran), environmental and energy issues, and finally, cultural exchanges.
- *US failure to reciprocate.* Much of the negative coverage focused on US failures to reciprocate China's gestures. Negative coverage often focused on

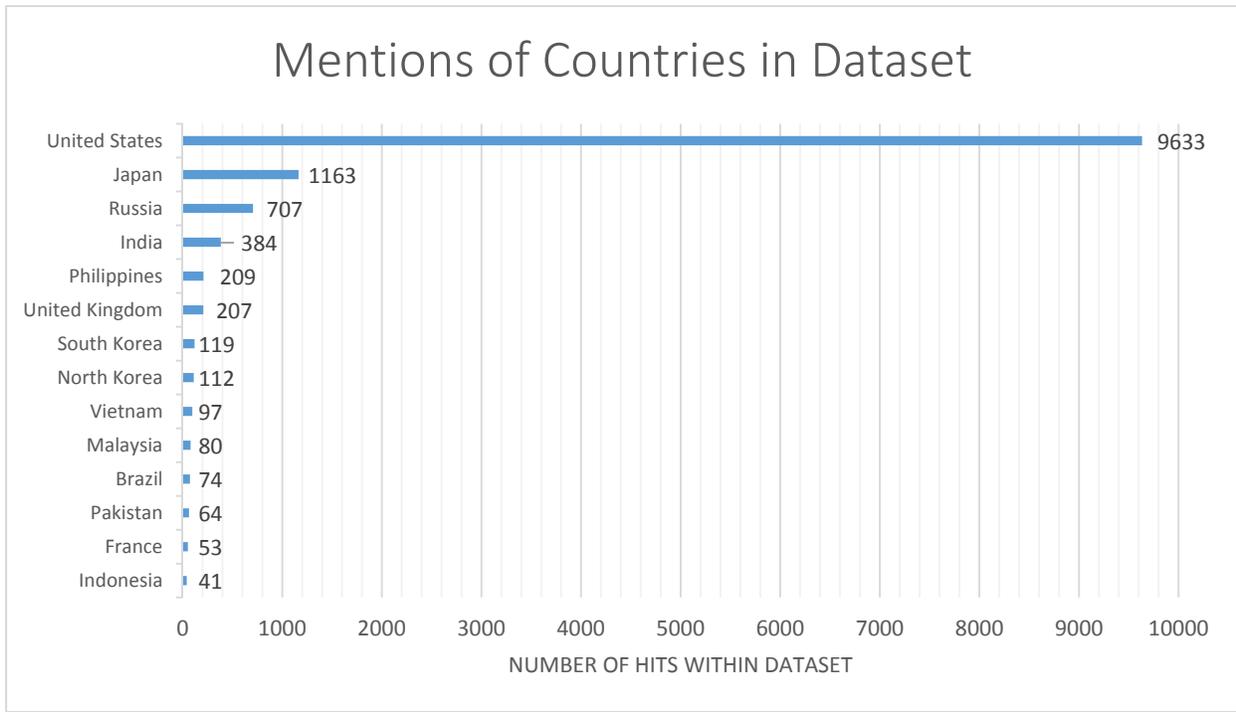
US hesitancy to embrace the concept, acting out of a “Cold War” mentality, or ignoring China’s legitimate national interests. Articles often highlighted US reconnaissance activity, arms sales to Taiwan, or the US position on the South China Sea island disputes as evidence for US unwillingness to engage China as an equal geopolitical power.

- *US as the only Great Power.* The US remained the overwhelming focus for NSGPR (the US was mentioned over 9600 times in our data set, compared to only 1163 mentions for the next most oft-cited power, Japan). Russia was mentioned third most often, with just over 700 mentions in our data set.
- *The NSGPR as rhetorical trap?* Discourse surrounding the NSGPR concept functions to shape the parameters of Great Power relations as regarding common interests and areas of collaboration. However, the articles would apply these parameters to US actions or challenge US intentions in a specific context. Finally, the articles would demonstrate how US actions undermine the parameters supposedly “agreed upon” in the first instance, and challenge the US to conform to the expectations outlined in the discourse.

Research Question 1: New Style of Great Power Relations: Who counts as a “great power?”

In China’s media discussing the “new style” discourse, the United States dominates the conversation, with little discussion of other regional or global powers. This finding supports Chinese leaders’ use of the term with US officials, for example at the Sunnylands Summit, as well as confirms previous studies’ findings regarding the centrality of the United States in Chinese foreign policy. Within the stories mentioning the “new style”, the United States is cited approximately eight times more frequently than the second most frequently mentioned country, Japan, with 9,633 and 1,163 mentions respectively. Further down the list, the number of times other countries are mentioned drops precipitously, with Russia ranking third with 707 hits, and India placing fourth with 384. The figure below shows the total number of times China’s regional neighbors are mentioned. These numbers suggests that the “new style” is primarily a discussion uniquely about the United States and China, rather than any other global power. When Japan is mentioned in the dataset, it frequently appears in conjunction with US actions or policies rather than in the context of Japan being a

great power itself. Other nations, like the Philippines and Vietnam, are likewise mentioned similarly, in the context of US policies, rather than in the paragraphs discussing “great powers.”



For instance, the coverage of Japan, which is often discussed in light of US policies, focused on Japanese historical militarism while neglecting discussion of potential military cooperation and portrayed a mixed assessment regarding potential areas for China-Japanese economic cooperation. Further, Indonesia is defined as a “strategic partner,” but is omitted from any reference within the “new style” discourse; unlike the United States, China does not lay out specific areas for cooperation within the economic and military realm with Indonesia.

One of the most interesting findings from this data are the way in which Chinese media treats Russia. Discussion of Russia within the corpus is distinct for two reasons. First, within the “new style” discourse, Russia is used as a frame to understand great power relations because of its Cold War relationship with the United States. The Chinese media use the Cold War as example of why a “new style” of relations is needed between great powers and what went wrong in the Cold War. Second, Russia appears to be the closest country behind the United States as qualifying for a “new style” relationship with China. Discussion of China-Russian cooperation covers both economic and military dimensions. However, whether Russia

truly counts as a great power appears unclear and never explicitly stated. Turning to the coverage of China-Russia cooperation we can see why Russia might not quite qualify. While cooperation in both the military and economic dimensions are discussed, a sampling of Chinese media filtered for the occurrence of the term NSGPR reveals that although Russia appears relatively frequently, far fewer policies are actually specified in comparison to the United States when it is discussed.

Overall, the media coverage of the “new style” shows the concept is currently being employed almost exclusively to discuss the US-China bilateral relationship. Two dimensions appear to be central in qualifying for “great power” relations: the need and capacity for both significant economic and military cooperation. While other countries such as Russia may enter the discussion of the “new style”, as of now only the United States and China have large enough economic and military interests calling for the “new style” of great power relations. As such, the primary discussion of the new style takes place in describing US-China relations.

Characteristics of the New Style of Great Power Relations in US-China relations

Within the discourse about the “new style” were four subthemes. First, the United States and China are entering a period of cooperation unlike before—that is, currently the relationship is qualitatively different from the past. Second, the “new type” of relationship is couched in historical allusions to demonstrate why a new model of relations is necessary and possible. Third, China and the United States are committed to cooperation with each other. And fourth, this relationship is founded in mutual respect and equality. These four subthemes, taken together, justify greater commitment and cooperation to avoid the pathologies of conflict historically seen by rising powers and status quo powers, while highlighting the multiple issue areas in which the United States and China can cooperate. However, within these articles advocating for ostensibly stronger, more constructive relations with the United States are a smaller subset challenging specific US policies and actions. These policies are held up to the standards or spirit of the “new style” of relations to question US sincerity regarding its commitment towards positive relations with China.

First, Chinese media emphasize the “newness” of the relationship. In this sense, the “new style” entails a US-China relationship which takes into account China’s rising power capabilities, which in turn provides a greater scope of potential areas of cooperation. For instance, according to an article from the *Chinese*

Communist Party website on September 8, 2014, “The new relations are different from the past; more mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit between the countries...to promote new forms of cooperation [with the] United States.” These new relations are needed because, according to an article from *Tiexue*, on September 10, 2014, the old “general approach would not work” due to China’s rising power, which requires the United States to “recognize China’s strength, and Chin[ese] shared interests’ as part of building these new relations between big powers.” Furthermore, according to an article published on *Sohu News*’ website on August 22, 2014, “The two sides should, in the new relations between the United States [and China] ... adhere to is not in [sic] conflict, not confrontation, [but] cooperation.” President Xi Jinping and Obama are frequently quoted in support of this new relationship with current cooperation building, according to *Ifeng News* on September 9, 2014, “good development momentum” and reaching “a new important consensus between the two countries’ relations enter[ing] a new historical stage.”

Second, the Chinese media state that not only is a “new style” needed, but also possible, evident by world history and previous US-China cooperation. Commonly mentioned are historical allusions to great power conflict in Europe and between the United States and the former Soviet Union. For instance, the causes of two world wars and the Cold War are invoked as reasons for a “new type” of relations between the United States and China. An article posted on the *Chinese Communist Party* website notes that in the twentieth century, the international community experienced the “bitter lessons of the two world wars in Europe” which shows a “profound” lesson that all countries fail when a war breaks out. Therefore, US and Chinese leaders clearly need to use “political wisdom” and move forward in establishing “new relations [with] the United States” (*Chinese Communist Party, August 22, 2014*). With regards to the Cold War, the conflict between the United States and Soviet Union is depicted as occurring because of ideological conflict and a lack of trade.

History is also used to positively frame US-China cooperation. Multiple articles cite and celebrate the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations in their promotion of US-China trade and expanding of relations. Taken together, the use of historical allusions in the Chinese media provide both a warning of what could happen if the United States and China do not treat each other differently from previous great power

conflicts while also providing an optimistic view of increased trade and political cooperation between the United States and China as not only ideal, but possible. Third, the Chinese media report the United States and China are both committed to building new relations. Throughout the sample are statements by US and Chinese diplomats, local and national government officials, and various trade, cultural, and academic organizations in favor of new, cooperative US-China relationship. For instance, in an article from *News163* on September 9, 2014, US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice is quoted as saying “the US side will give priority to the bilateral relation[ship], and hopes China will continue to maintain a high level dialogue on bilateral, regional and [a] global range of issues...and work together to build new relations.” Even the US National Geographic Society is quoted as stating the “United States is committed to build[ing] new relations of mutual understanding between the people [as] an important basis for new relations” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 11, 2014).

Likewise, Chinese officials repeatedly state the importance of US-China relations in the twenty-first century. Multiple outlets and news stories quote Xi Jinping stressing that China “and the United States share extensive common interests [in] the world and regional peace, stability and prosperity [and] both shoulder important responsibility.” China’s *Xinhua* news agency cites Jia Qingguo, professor from Peking University’s School of International Studies as stating, “China’s peaceful rise... and build[ing] new relations between big powers is a reality,” while going on to state that China will not challenge the existing international order, including such global institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, among others. Fourth, within the Chinese media, the “new style” is portrayed as anchored in the principles of mutual respect and equality. Mutual respect and equality are viewed as the building blocks of the new relations. For instance, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 13, 2014, posted an article stating that the Chinese consulate expects to “work together to promote bilateral relations and trade exchanges, and to build mutual respect, mutual benefit” with the “new relations [as] the building blocks.” The emphasis is on both countries’ recognizing each other’s interests in order to further trust and cooperation on a multitude of areas. The ideas of mutual respect and equality are at the forefront of confronting conflict between the United States and China, especially regarding security issues in the Asia Pacific. As an article from

Zhongguo Qingnian Bao on October 1, 2014, explained citing China’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, in developing new relations the United States “should first establish mutual trust, [and] eliminate strategic concerns, preventing the misjudgment of integration in the interests of both sides of the Asia Pacific region.”

Geared toward the United States, the new style of relations discourse advances a rhetoric affirming the primacy of the US-China relationship. It portrays a joint affirmation by US and Chinese leaders that the two countries are committed to cooperating on multiple fronts to overcome historical great power conflict. However, it is also based on China’s principles of mutual equality and respect and signals a new phase of US-China cooperation. While this describes what makes-up the concept, the next section explains how it creates a rhetorical trap for the United States.

The “rhetorical trap” in the New Style discourse

Although much of the reporting on the “new style” doctrine confirms the commitment of the United States to building strong ties with China, this analysis also unveils a “trap,” as it were, that demonstrates that the United States is acting in bad faith in regards to the spirit of the “new style” concept. While the dominant theme placed an emphasis on the cooperative aspects of US-China relations, a more nuanced pattern of discourse emerged from our analysis whereby Chinese policy was framed as being more in line with the principles of the “new style” while much US policy, most notably its reconnaissance missions, are portrayed as inconsistent with the concept.

In this light, US actions are critiqued as sowing distrust, creating conflict, and acting against the spirit of the “new style” of relations. Thus, the United States is left with two options: either reject the “new style” concept and be seen as having foregone a genuine offer to reconstitute the structural dilemma posed by a rising power (the so called “Thucydides trap”) or sign on to the “new style” concept only having to then face criticism for not living up to the spirit of “new style” as the Chinese narrative characterizes it. So where are productive areas for promoting US-Chinese cooperation and where are the areas of frictions?

Areas for US-China cooperation

Nearly three-quarters of news stories analyzed featured the positive areas for US-China cooperation. By far the most prevalent areas for cooperation were economic issues such as trade, bilateral investment, infrastructure and construction. Across outlets we observed a pattern of listing large swaths of policy issues in which US

cooperation advances both Chinese and American interests. One article posted on *News 163* on September 12, 2014, approvingly noted, “The two countries highlight economic complementarity and common interests [rather] than differences, strengthen cooperation in trade and investment, energy, environment and climate in areas of cooperation and promote bilateral investment.” These areas of economic gain repeatedly stressed the importance of the United States for China’s continued economic development as well as the benefits accruing to the United States and the international community.

The most cited topic for cooperation was in military relations, including both greater military-to-military relations and cooperation against terrorism and piracy. For instance, *ChinaMil* on August 30, 2014, published an article where Ministry of Defense spokesperson Yang Yujun stated, “China has always attached importance to developing relations between the two armed forces” and that “the US side should also build new relations.” Specific foreign policy issues like Iran, issues on the Korean Peninsula, Afghanistan, and terrorist threats were mentioned, but more sporadically covered. Finally issues on the environment and energy, including issues such as global warming and disaster response in addition to cultural exchanges were discussed. For instance an article by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August, 25, 2014, explained that the new relations would “encourage the business community to actively participate in cultural circles, and support the American cultural exchange.” Taken together, the United States and China have numerous areas of overlapping interests summed up in a statement by Xi Jinping: “The two countries...share extensive common interests [in] the world and regional peace, stability and prosperity in both shoulder[ing] important responsibility” (*Enlightenment Daily*, September 10, 2014).

Is the United States a faithful partner?

Despite the widespread emphasis on US-China cooperation, among the articles mentioning positive aspects of US-China collaboration, approximately one-quarter also contained passages challenging US support for the principles of the “new style” of relations. For instance, an article posted on *Sohu News* August, 27, 2014, reported that while “the United States have reached a consensus to build new relations of mutual respect...the United States frequently send[s] military reconnaissance plane[s] [on] reconnaissance activities close to China.” Specific US actions were repeatedly

mentioned as examples of US behavior not embracing new, cooperative relations, but breeding distrust. Instead of ushering in a new relationship, the United States was accused of possessing a “Cold War Mentality”. As an article published by *Xinhua* on September 13, 2014, stated, “The restricted areas in the normal exchanges between the US armed forces, is a discriminatory act, a product of the cold war mentality, contrary to [the] ‘respect, mutual trust, equal and reciprocal’ principle and peace.” Moreover, US policies in the Pacific are portrayed as intended to “contain” China, according to a “China Threat Theory”. Issues such as US arms sales to Taiwan, China’s island disputes with its neighbors, and US rejection of China’s Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) were all cited as examples of the United States not respecting China’s interests and failing to follow the principles of a “new style” of



relations. One article even suggested that the United States was “too busy” to establish these new relations (*Chinese Communist Party*, September 9, 2014).

However, the most frequently cited transgression on China was US reconnaissance activities. As an article on the Chinese Communist Party webpage on August 30, 2014, stated, “The US reconnaissance activities close to China...undermine mutual trust...and [in doing so] the United States does not comply with the construction of new relations.” Challenges to US actions went beyond being in conflict with the “new style” by charging the US as inconsistent with international law and even promoting conflict. For instance, an article on *Sina* on August, 26, 2014, stated: We urge the US side to abide by the international law and practice in respect of the coastal State security concerns [sic], and properly handle the military security on the differences between them. The US side should proceed...[with] the construction of new

relations...and take effective measures to reduce [and] stop reconnaissance activities near China, for the development of relations between the two armed forces.

The overall pattern emerging from articles questioning US intentions in reference to the “new style” was the portrayal of US actions as disrespecting China’s interests, and consequently, failing to embody the spirit of the “new style” of relations. As one article summarized, the “New relationship is good, but also requires both sides to take initiative, compromise, and [take] care of each other” (*Chinese Communist Party*, August, 22, 2014).

Research Question 2: How do different media outlets cover the New Style of Great Power Relations?

This study examined 25 different Chinese media outlets for references to the “new style” doctrine. Overall, Chinese media outlets consistently explained the doctrine, albeit placing slightly different emphases on areas for cooperation or contention in relation to the outlets’ intended audience (i.e. economic or military affairs). Common characteristics of the media outlets’ reporting on the “new style” were: a) affirming the centrality of the US-China relationship for China’s continued growth and stability; b) describing China as committed to building greater cooperation with the United States; and c) emphasising larger areas for mutual engagement even if some US policies were framed as being inconsistent with the principles of the “new style” concept.

While the majority of outlets followed a distinct pattern in reporting the concept, certain media outlets in the sample deviated slightly from that general pattern. First, the Ministry of National Defence placed primary emphasis on the security dimensions of the concept. While areas of cooperation were listed, more space was spent specifying areas of mistrust between the US and Chinese military. Second, articles posted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed cultural and economic dimensions of cooperation, suggesting a much larger variety of cooperative aspects in comparison to other sources. Third, the *Xinhua News Agency*’s articles tended to use an equal amount of space describing commonalities between the United States and China in developing new relations and reprimanding the United States for military actions hindering the development of greater trust. This seemingly neutral treatment effectively provided greater space dedicated to negative elements in comparison to other sources in our sample. Fourth, the majority of articles collected

from *Cankao Xiaoxi* questioned the possibility of true collaboration between the United States and China, enumerating mutual suspicions between the two, but placing the primary blame on the United States. Fifth, the economic journal *Caixin* tended to more positively report on US-Chinese cooperation with a stronger focus on economic issues and fewer military/security issues. Finally, articles from *Tiexue*, a well-known nationalistic forum, challenged US intentions and raised slightly more doubt about US actions while still maintaining a considerably positive view of US-China relations in areas ripe for mutual cooperation in both the military and economic dimensions. Finally, a few outlets recognized as more liberal-leaning failed to mention the “new style” altogether. For instance, our search of *Jingji Cankao Bao*, *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, *Southern Weekly*, and *Qingdao News* did not produce any hits at all for the phrase “新型大国关系.” While this could have resulted from a technical issues in our data pulling, it might also suggest that either these outlets were more independent of Chinese leaders’ propagation of the “new style” concept or the editorial staff felt their audiences were less interested in coverage of this issue. Either way, further research would have to confirm these results.

Overall, these findings suggest that economic stories, or media outlets dedicated to covering economic issues over others, are slightly more likely to depict US-China relations more positively by proposing areas where the two countries can constructively support and further each other’s interests. However, outlets covering more security or military issues would present a mixed picture of US-China relations; one in which the United States and China need to cooperate to avoid conflict that is viewed as detrimental to both sides. At the same time that these outlets supported the “new style” they also cast doubt on US sincerity and challenged some of its foreign policy actions.

Conclusions for the New Style of Great Power Relations

- Chinese media convey the NSGPR as both an extended olive branch and a means to define the boundaries of the relationship between the US and China; there are several entry points for the US to engage this policy and actively shape the relationship.
 - For the Chinese, the NSGPR is a guiding principle to shape China-US relations which represents a foundation to build relations in the

region over the next 5-25 years; however, the US has been unsure and reluctant whether to acknowledge.

- US silence over the NSGPR has consequences for US-China cooperation and future relations.
- China is currently advancing a cooperative view of US-China relations demanding some US response.
 - The US should continue to emphasize areas of agreement.
 - But the NSGPR also poses some risks to the United States: narrative logic provides a means to reprimand the United States.
 - Military issues (i.e. reconnaissance, ADIZ), recognition of China's core interests, and regional security.
- Without some US commentary, Chinese government is able to define the relationship to domestic and global audiences.
 - However, opportunities for US to concurrently engage in conflict boundary shaping.
 - Just as the Chinese are defining parameters of relations within this new context, the US military and policy community can also shape the boundaries of conflict with China.
 - Provides opportunities for the US to articulate areas that US finds unacceptable.

Conclusions and Recommendations

These three studies have explored important geopolitical themes inherent in Chinese media that could potentially have value in the development and articulation of US policy. We found a remarkable consistency across media sources in their treatment of these themes, although there was clearly variance in how different media outlets would focus on certain themes. For example, economic media tended to focus on economic issues, while military outlets focused more on military or security dimensions. But we found very little variance in the basic principles or themes in these three studies, and we found little wandering away from the parameters of the basic themes as laid out by the government. Even among the most liberal outlets, there was little deviation from the basic principles established by the government. There are several important findings that emerge. First, the US is overwhelmingly the key focus for Chinese discourse about international relations. Although regional disputes and neighbors matter, they matter far less than the relationship with the United States, and most geopolitical discussions center around its impact on relations with the US. Second, Chinese thinking about geopolitical relationships remains tightly oriented to official discourse, which has proved flexible enough to accommodate numerous new issues. The basic parameters of Chinese thinking reflect China's rise to geopolitical prominence, but without the necessity of conflict with existing powers (again, primarily the US). All of these studies demonstrate that Chinese media adhere closely to governmental discourse. We have been unable to identify areas where any type of Chinese media doesn't reflect and reify governmental discourse about China's geopolitical relationship. Chinese media, even that which is considered most liberal in domestic policy, adhere closely to governmental norms in geopolitical coverage.

There are also at least five important policy implications from this analysis:

1. **Leverage an understanding of Chinese frames to position US activities for maximum impact** By identifying the dominant frames and themes in Chinese media, it is possible to begin to articulate US policy priorities within those frames. US engagement with China tends to focus on a different set of frames (such as "responsible stakeholder" or "human rights") that are at variance with Chinese frames, and thus, tends to not enter Chinese consciousness or are seen as intrinsically oppositional to Chinese priorities. By more explicitly framing US policies within the frames and norms of

Chinese media, it might be possible to articulate those concerns to a broader Chinese audience.

2. **Do not allow counter-productive narratives to go uncontested** US policies are often portrayed in Chinese media in a negative light (i.e., undermining new style great power relations), and this portrayal is rarely countered in US discourse. By understanding how these frames are articulated, it is possible to advance US policies within a framework of collaborative, rather than competitive, ties.
3. **There is political room for collaboration** In the event that the US seeks common ground from which to build more cooperative relations with China, this study found evidence suggesting that domestic Chinese media portrayals of some of the most prominent “guiding concepts” that have been articulated by Xi Jinping could provide entrees that can be leveraged to foster a more cooperative tone in the military-diplomatic relationship.
4. **Proceed with caution and address differences frankly** Although there are areas that might be ripe for greater cooperation, US governmental leadership would be well-advised to proceed cautiously and be aware of potential rhetorical traps. Specifically, we recommend that any engagement for cooperative purposes that seeks to leverage some of these dominant themes and concepts be proactively defined by the US. Areas of difference in interpretation or emphasis or specific meanings that China might have regarding some of these ambiguous and vague concepts should be directly and forthrightly addressed even as US government leadership might seek to build a more cooperative footing based on some of these ideas.
5. **Need for interagency coordination** Any effort to proceed along a cooperative vector with China is likely going to need broader support beyond just a single government agency. We find that there is rhetorical material in the Chinese media discourse that can be used to support that effort. However, a successful cooperative engagement approach would be reliant on being enmeshed in a larger US interagency approach to China.

References

Christensen, T. J. (2015). *The China challenge: Shaping the choices of a rising power*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Hao, Y. (2013). Domestic Chinese influences on US-China relations. In D. Shambaugh (Eds.), *Tangled titans* (pp. 125–148). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Hu, Z. (2003). The post-WTO restructuring of the Chinese media industries and the consequences of capitalization. *Javnost – The Public*, 10(4), 19–36.
doi:10.1177/0196859911399903

Johnston, A. I. (2006). The correlates of Beijing public opinion toward the United States, 1998–2004. In A. I. Johnston, & R. S. Ross (Eds.), *New directions in the study of China's foreign policy* (pp. 340–377). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Kluver, A. R. (2002). The logic of new media in international affairs. *New Media & Society*, 4(4), 499–517. doi: 10.1177/146144402321466787

Perlez, J. (2014, November 9). China's 'New Type' of ties fails to sway Obama. *New York Times*. Retrieved from
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/10/world/asia/chinas-new-type-of-ties-failsto-sway-obama.html>

Shen, F., & Guo, Z. S. (2013). The last refuge of media persuasion: News use, national pride and political trust in China. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 23(2), 135–151.
doi:10.1080/01292986.2012.725173

Stockmann, D., & Gallagher, M. E. (2011). Remote control: How the media sustain authoritarian rule in China. *Comparative Political Studies*, 44(4), 436–467.
doi:10.1177/0010414010394773

Wike, R., Stokes, B., & Poushter, J. (2015). Chapter 2. Views of China and the global balance of power. Pew Research Center: Global publics back US on fighting ISIS, but are critical of the post-9/11 torture. Retrieved from
<http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2015/06/Balance-of-PowerReport-FINAL-June-23-20151.pdf>