

The PRC Foreign Policy in Transition – with a focus on East Asia Jing Zhao¹

It is hazardous duty to write about People's Republic China (PRC)'s current foreign policy at this time. However, the usual discussions in Chinese, English, or Japanese language, dissatisfy me, and some things must be done simply because they are so important. That said, in no way do I mean to negate the tremendous work of others. In fact, by training, I am not an international politics analyst, and I learned greatly from various sources. My dissatisfaction is that most serious writings on the subject of PRC foreign policy, either published in scholarly magazines or printed from research institutes (think tanks), are government sanctioned power theory and reflect corporate dominated profit values. With a focus on democracy, human rights, and people's security issues, this commentary is an attempt to treat the recent changes of PRC's foreign policy since 1989 differently. How and why the PRC foreign policy is transformed? Is the current policy transition advancing people's security, social justice, political freedom, and economic equality for China and the world? I will assess these critical inquiries from people's perspective,² with a focus on East Asia. Hopefully, the perspective here will contribute to rethink the conventional wisdom.

The Background Before the Recent Transition

The PRC foreign policy has undergone several grand transitions since the PRC foundation in 1949. The fortunate thing for the Chinese people is that the greatest transition was initiated directly by their founding fathers. During the international Cold War context, although the US reasonably counted China only as a vital "card" for the US interest against the USSR to win the Cold War, the PRC/Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership nonetheless at their final life stage could rationally calculate that they had also placed China into a proper position within the "Three Worlds" division frame,³ or later, the "world triangle frame."⁴ Struggling to correct the crucial mistake of relying on the USSR and to break through the international isolation, the CCP leadership under Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai laid a foundation for China to have a peaceful international environment to develop.

¹ Jing Zhao is President of US-Japan-China Comparative Policy Research Institute, San Jose, USA. <http://cpri.tripod.com> or jzhao@mail.h-net.msu.edu.

² Some may find my anarchist tendency from my various writings dealing with international politics, especially on Japan's foreign policy. However, the word "anarchism" per se does not provide much guidance to political analysis. So I avoid using this word in this essay. The concept "people's perspective" is close to other terms such as "global humanism" with an emphasis on every global citizen's equal rights regardless his/her living boundaries.

³ Although Mao Zedong made a modest remark claiming China not the leader of the third world, with the US and the USSR (the first world), Japan, Western and Eastern Europe (the second world) excluded, no other country could compete with China to "lead" the third world. Deng Xiaoping discarded Mao's world division and began to use the "triangle frame" to emphasize China's importance and independence in international politics.

⁴ Although the US and the USSR did not look international politics within a "triangle frame," it did not matter for the PRC leadership to base PRC's foreign policy on it.

It is still early to make a comprehensive judgment on the PRC foreign policy under Mao and Zhou. After all, foreign policy is only one field of the PRC politics and history, and it is deeply dependent on domestic politics and China's future. If China would eventually develop into a strong, stable as well as democratic society with a nonetheless socialist characteristic, Mao's "zili gengsheng (self-reliance)" policy of enforcement of Chinese people's tremendous civilian sacrifices under the international Cold War context deserves appreciation and praise. Otherwise, a deteriorated PRC regime would make the Chinese people regard Mao and Zhou's foreign policy either unnecessary (against both the US imperialism and the USSR revisionism) or a grand betrayal (such as in the case of giving up war reparations from Japan). The reality, however, is that the PRC had only limited options in foreign policy and the selection became a highly contrary maneuver.

The establishment of Sino-American relations in 1979 accomplished the biggest PRC foreign policy transition from an ideology-based revolutionary policy to interest-based diplomatic relations.⁵ This policy change also naturally paved the way to normalize PRC's relations with the USSR when Mikhail Gorbachev visited Beijing in June 1989. Internationally, China's foreign policy shift created victims and losers. The former includes the Japanese Communist Party which waned and split among pro-USSR, pro-PRC or independence lines in the 1950s, Cuba Revolution's Che Guevara when China split from the USSR in the 1960s, the Vietnam liberation and unification war when China began some kind of cooperation with the US in the 1970s, and the Southeast Asian communist movement when China established diplomatic ties with their governments in the 1980s. The worldwide revolutionary movement (some are called "Maoists") associated with military struggle strategy rationally regarded PRC's policy change a betrayal to the worldwide revolution. However, this kind of foreign policy change is unavoidable for any revolutionary regimes to transfer their states to normal countries, and it is generally supported by their own people. If we compare the process of PRC's foreign policy change with that of the USSR,⁶ we have to conclude that PRC's peaceful change greatly benefited the majority Chinese people. The PRC foreign policy concluded its greatest transition under its "chief designer" Deng Xiaoping with his meeting of Gorbachev, and it seemed that the PRC foreign policy needed no more substantial change-provided the Tiananmen Incident had not happened.

The 1989 Tiananmen Incident ended the Cold War in East Asia with a very characteristic beginning: the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), the main instrument of the Chinese Revolution, was mobilized to crack down PRC's own civilian people in the heart of PRC public politics. This affected the process of the post-Cold War political transformation in East Asia and the world, which in turn, forced China to adjust its foreign policy to cope with the consequences following the incident. Especially in the two priority fields, China's relations with the US and Japan, the PRC foreign policy has been forced to undergo unexpected, unintended and undesired transformation in the post-Cold War frame.

⁵ This is finalized as the so-called "five principles of peaceful co-existence."

⁶ One vital factor for Trotsky's failure is that his "Continuous Revolution" theory requires the USSR people to continue the hardship for the cause of the world revolution after decade-long war turbulence. For example, it was reported that sometime in the 1920s Petrograd's Party members were forced to pay large amount of dues to support the CCP. It is understandable that the majority of the Soviet people did not support Trotsky's foreign policy.

The Tiananmen Incident Factor in Sino-American Relations

Throughout its whole history, ruthlessly suppressing its dissents becomes one vital element for the Bolshevik's victory to take power and also the USSR's final dissolution. Although to a great degree the Stalin regime was just a continuation and extension from Lenin's harsh policy,⁷ people could hardly accept the legitimacy of any suppression policy after the regime had firmly controlled the country. Under an authoritative regime, those with either orthodoxy principles or reform orientation would be expelled, and those without any principle but only personal purposes could remain in or rise up to power. The death of the USSR under its new generation leaders is unavoidable. While by no mean I intend to underestimate the severity,⁸ the PRC regime is much softer than the USSR in this regard. The political freedom became much larger in the 1980s since virtually all core members in the second generation of the CCP leadership, such as the top three party veterans, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun and Peng Zhen, were victims of Mao Zedong's dictatorship.⁹ They had learned enough lessons from their own bitter experience of inner party struggles. It seems that China is exempt from troubling issues, such as democracy and human rights, in PRC's foreign policy. These issues had hindered USSR-American relations.¹⁰

Besides, rather than challenging the US worldwide hegemony, China desperately needed America's help in developing its economy, which had been the top priority of China's "Reform and Openness" policy. Under such a political circumstance, human rights could hardly become an issue of Sino-American relations.¹¹ The US government was still supporting a dictatorial regime in

⁷ See, for example, Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics, Conversations with Felix Chuev. English translation by Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993, p.107. "Who was more severe, Lenin or Stalin?" "Lenin, of course. He was severe. In some cases he was harsher than Stalin. Read his messages to Dzerzhinsky. He often resorted to extreme measures when necessary. He ordered the suppression of the Tambov uprising, that everything be burned to the ground. I was present at the discussion. He would not have tolerated any opposition, even had it appeared. I recall how he reproached Stalin for his softness and liberalism. 'What kind of a dictatorship do we have? We have a milk-and-honey power, and not a dictatorship!' " However, there is a distinction (or disillusionment): Lenin destroyed "enemies" but Stalin executed "comrades," so Lenin is not regarded harsh towards its own people.

⁸ The writer himself was deprived his PRC passport for his dissident opinion since the Tiananmen Incident.

⁹ Mao himself was a loser of the inner party struggle before he finally established himself in the famous Zunyi Meeting during the Long March in 1935, and he was much softer than Lenin and Stalin. Except the few senior CCP leaders who directly challenged Mao's status at his late age, almost all victims survived so they had a second or third chance to come to power again. Assassination or execution in party line struggles is strictly prohibited.

¹⁰ China has not a Jewish problem with the US either.

¹¹ There were political prisons in Chinese jails or labor camps, and human rights advocates such as Amnesty International or President Carter did not forget them. However, as long as China would not make explicit public mistakes, human rights would not become an issue relevant to America's "national interest".

Taiwan and the exiling Dalai Lama in India, but without the issue of democracy and human rights in the mainland China, it was widely expected that the Taiwan problem would be resolved under the similar result of the South Vietnam regime, or the much better fate of Hong Kong, and the Tibet problem was merely a question of how long the current Dalai Lama would physically live in this world. The mainstream American politics and media would have no interest to contain or “engage” China without much material for agitating the general public.

However, the Tiananmen Incident showed the world how brutal, ruthless, and unpopular the Beijing regime was, and how weak the PRC foundation was. It created public enemies all over the world. Human rights became a hot issue of Sino-American relations, and virtually all other important disputes (security, trade, IPR, and so on) were linked to PRC’s democracy and human rights condition because China has been judged standing in the wrong side in this issue. The CCP leadership was denounced in the world. The PRC foreign policy was caught.

Although good people all over the world wished to improve Sino-American relations by removing this headache element of Tiananmen Incident, the PRC foreign policy could not make this happen simply because the new regime in Beijing under Jiang Zemin would lose legitimacy if they admitted wrong doing. Instead of correcting the mistake, the Jiang regime made compromises in almost every other fields at the cost of sacrificing China’s national interest for the purpose to maintain their power stability. Understandably, they have to sell out the remaining results of the Chinese Revolution.¹²

The Jiang regime was indeed fortunate enough. In the first years soon after the Tiananmen Incident, the USSR was still there; and as long as it existed, the USSR was the number one enemy of the US. Even after the dissolution of the USSR, the US needed years to consolidate its Cold War victory in Europe, following the unification of German and the enlargement of the NATO to Eastern Europe. The US could not mobilize its might to contain China. Coincidentally, Iraq’s Saddam Hussein helped China shaking off the Western sanctions completely and extricating China from international isolation since the Tiananmen Incident.¹³ For the mere goal to

¹² The most explicit case is the WTO deal with the US, in which not only China’s economic interest but also the PRC political sovereignty, including its Constitution, were placed subordinate to a treaty with an foreign organization. If readers are not familiar with the contents, they can understand the essence of the deal from the process. This is not a “win/win” game, as claimed by both sides. This is not even a negotiation. The US delegation was headed by the cannot-make-decision Trade Representative while her boss, the US President, was far away from his White House office. She came to Beijing in November 1999 only for the final signature to subjugate China. There was no place to negotiate for the US conditions, and they had prepared to leave for the US on the third day. This reminds us the US diplomacy during the Rambouillet “negotiation” the same year, just before the US-led NATO’s bombing campaign against Yugoslavia (and also China’s Embassy there).

¹³ In 1990, in the run-up to the planned Desert Storm military action, the US under President George Bush bribed poor countries with cheap Saudi oil, and dangled new arms packages before governments such as Ethiopia and Colombia whose access to US military support had been cut because of wars and human rights violations. The US also threatened and punished virtually every country on the Security Council to force them to vote to authorize the US war.

maintain the regime's power stability and to cast off the shadow of economic sanctions, and to avoid a similar fate of the USSR, the PRC foreign policy was a success. This transformed the PRC foreign policy with more distinct characteristics: putting the regime above the people, whoever serves or is useful to the regime receives service.¹⁴

Internationally, Beijing has been in most cases staying with the US in the UN Security Council over controversial cases. Except in the situations relevant to Taiwan, the PRC disappeared from international politics arena in a turbulent time when the people in weak and poor countries desperately need a voice for people's security, peace, social justice and economical development. The world needs the People's Republic but the PRC is not accountable any more.

Let's take the Iraq case and the UN function in this regard. Never before has the US officially claimed or approve the right to launch a preemptive strike; never before has the US openly threatened to unilaterally invade another country in the name of enforcing UN resolutions even if the UN explicitly disavowed such a military attack. The option of a clear "no" position, rejecting the US consensus, standing publicly against such a catastrophic war, and trying to prevent the war or at least distinguishing one's own country from such global folly, does not yet appear on PRC's agenda, when yet exactly that position is urgently required. While France and Russia threatened to veto the US (and its junior partner the UK) new resolution to bargain for a bigger share, the PRC keeps silence publicly.¹⁵ As one of the five permanent Council members, the PRC even cannot prevent the US from violating the UN Charter, which prohibits the use of force unless all possible non-military options have been exhausted. Progressive forces all over the world have reason to believe that they are betrayed from the PRC foreign policy expectation. Should the Tiananmen Incident not happened thirteen years ago, and the PRC be not afraid to be connected with same problems of Iraq (dictatorship, human rights violation, and so on), would China act differently?

With the victory confirmed in Europe, the Clinton Administration turned eyes to East Asia, the world dynamic economic growth center. Now the Jiang regime had consolidated their power base and the PRC has restored its normal relations with the world. In 1995, the Clinton Administration had to unlink the annual renew condition of China's most-favorite-nation (MFN) status from human rights condition. The Taiwan problem had become the explicit "core issue"¹⁶ in Sino-American relations. How to use the Taiwan card to "engage" (contain) China? The Clinton

And, certainly, as one of the Security Council's veto-capable permanent members, China's veto would make the US military action impossible. The US diplomats went to China and said "name your price" to avert a veto and fulfilled Beijing's wish list for post-Tiananmen Incident diplomatic rehabilitation.

¹⁴ It can be argued that this is always true under any regime. However, it was not so distinctive of the difference and conflict between the government and the people under Mao. Today, you can easily identify that foreign capitalists, officials or "scholars" are VIP guests of PRC consulates while ordinary PRC citizens are bitterly treated.

¹⁵ Privately, or domestically, the PRC makes the US know that it is against the US war plan.

¹⁶ In fact, from the view of China, it has been always the most important issue between China and the US since the foundation of the PRC. However, it was not the priority issue for more than two decades in the late Cold War period.

Administration turned to the almost forgotten “oxygen”:¹⁷ the US-Japan military alliance.

The Transformation of PRC’s Japan Policy after the Tiananmen Incident

Since the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), Japan has been China’s first (1894-1945), third (1945-1972), or second (1972-) important foreign country in the world to influence (and in some degree, to determine) China’s survival or development. Today Japan is still the second largest world economy, and is the dominant economy and financial center in Asia. In 2001, Japan also became China’s first trade partner, and China became Japan’s second trade partner, with the trade between them amounted \$90 billion. A right and appropriate Japan policy is vital for China’s development.

Since Japan’s rising to world power was the same process of China’s declining at the cost of China’s bankruptcy,¹⁸ some observers see Sino-Japanese interactive as a “zero-sum” game. They see China’s emergence as a political, economic and even a financial powerhouse in the region inevitably exacerbates Japan’s economic troubles (such as deflation and hollowing industries). We have to admit that along with the economic ties being enlarged, the political relations between China and Japan have become tense after the end of the Cold War, and PRC’s Japan policy has reached its limitation under current circumstance. However, there is no solid reason to be so pessimistic about Sino-Japanese relations, because there exists no vital interest conflict to both countries and China still holds the initiative. The questions are: what is the source of the troubles and how to improve the Sino-Japanese relations? We need to look at the structural change of the Japanese politics after the Tiananmen Incident.

The Japanese political regime fully utilized the international Cold War context to achieve its national goal of economic growth. In a relatively healthy post-war democratic system, the pro-America ruling LDP knew what Japan should do and what Japan could not do. The so-called LDP conservative mainstream (hoshu honryu), from the former Prime Minister Yoshida soon after the war until the former Prime Minister Miyazawa (Yoshida’s former English secretary) in 1993, had stick with the “Yoshida Doctrine” restricting Japan from rearmament. Although the Japanese government was caught by the America-seeded “Northern Territories” problem and could not make a peace treaty with the USSR until today,¹⁹ it successfully utilized America’s fear

¹⁷ This was coined by Joseph Nye, Clinton’s Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and a point man on Asia policy. He said when the Defense Department announced a floor of 100,000 troops in East Asia: “While we are indeed stressing the increased importance of multilateral institutions, it’s not at the cost of our primary attention to reinforcing the traditional security alliances we have in the region.” (Washington Post, February 28, 1995)

¹⁸ Besides the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, if you have a chance to visit rural Japanese villages, you will easily find memorials devoted to every Japan-engaged war. The Japanese policy was through “kyohei” (strong army) to “fukoku” (wealthy state), and Japan’s advanced education system, which was greatly financed by war gains, became the base for the Japanese miracle decades later even without a strong army.

¹⁹ For this Russo-Japanese territory dispute, see (in Japanese) Takahashi Yoshikazu, “Against Japan’s imperialist territory request, strengthen internationalism”. Kakehashi Weekly, June 8,

of Japan's potentiality of political neutrality to force the US to provide capital, technology and market for Japan's economic growth. Tanaka Kakuei even established diplomatic relations with China without America's approval.²⁰

In the international Cold War context, virtually all opposition parties, including the second largest opposition party Komei Party (translated in English as Clean Government Party), were socialist oriented. It is not an exaggeration to say that without the opposition Japan would become the similar dictatorial regimes as South Korea, South Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia. And the progressive pro-China opposition also played an indispensable role for Japan's national interest. China "enjoyed" popular support or sympathy from almost all Japanese, even inside the LDP. When Zhou Enlai stated that the PRC would not deal with a Japanese government under Sato, Sato's cabinet collapsed and was replaced by Tanaka who stated his willingness to go Beijing. Thus it is easy to understand how deeply the Japanese were shocked by the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 and how the incident would affect the Japanese political structure: the opposition parties either collapsed (the Socialist Party), or turned round to the ruling party (Komei Party), or shifted to nationalistic line (Communist Party),²¹ or simply disappeared without any reason to exist (Democratic Socialist Party and Social Democratic Alliance).

The Socialist Party (JSP) was the largest opposition party and the only party in Japan to keep an official friendship with the CCP based on their similar socialist ideology. In 1947 a socialist Katayama even became Japan's Prime Minister. In 1959 the JSP central committee chairman Asanuma declared in Beijing that the American Imperialism was the common enemy of the Japanese and Chinese peoples. Its close ties with the CCP (hence the PRC government) greatly enforced its bargain power within Japanese politics. For example, in the 1980s, the JSP provided information of Japan's textbook censorship by the Japanese Education Ministry to the PRC and requested the PRC to respond. After the PRC statement criticizing Japan's denial of its past war atrocities,²² the JSP could raise this issue in Japan's Diet to blame the ruling LDP. The Japanese government hated JSP's "betrayal" and its Embassy in Beijing was always busy to collect JSP's China visit information. However, the LDP could not curse more the JSP because they themselves were more corrupt under the US direct control.²³ The very existence of the JSP, a

1998. Tokyo: New Time Press; (in Chinese) Jing Zhao, "The so-called Northern Territories problem". October Review, 1998, No. 4, Hong Kong.

²⁰ He was eventually punished, though. The US declassified a Senate hearing indicating Tanaka took 500 million yen bribes from Lockheed for the Japanese government to purchase its airplanes. Humiliated and convicted guilty, Tanaka was forced to hand over LDP's largest faction to Takeshita and leave the Japanese politics. Not coincidentally, his daughter was also fired from her popular Japanese Foreign Minister position by Prime Minister Koizumi in April 2002, partly because of her critical remarks of the new US President Bush.

²¹ The small but strong Japanese Communist Party was once declared by the CCP as one of its four enemies in Japan, along with the American Imperialists. For the transformation of the Japanese Communist Party after the Tiananmen Incident, see Jing Zhao: The Japanese Communist Party and the June 4th Incident of 1989. Sino-Japanese Studies, pp.25-32, 12:1, 1999.

²² For example, Japan's invasion of China was described as "shinshutsu (advance) to China".

²³ See, for example, Chalmers Johnson, "The 1955 system and the American connection: a

powerful political ally in the Japanese politics, was a grateful blessing to PRC's foreign policy. On the other hand, the JSP's dramatic collapse due to the Tiananmen Incident verifies how deep the JSP was dependent on China and the Cold War international context.

Compared with the JSP, Komei's political turning round was much easier and natural, since it did not have a clear political principle. Komei silently dropped off all "socialist" wordings from its charters, pamphlets, meetings, and advertisements. Komei and its grassroots election body Soka Gakkai's paramount leader Ikeda Taisaku went to Beijing to meet Li Peng soon after the Tiananmen Incident. He obtained the cheapest shake-hands photo picture with one "world leader".²⁴ Komei also abandoned its peace and constitution-protection lines. Since the LDP usually could not control both the House of Representative and the House of Councillors,²⁵ Komei's stance sometimes could determine Japan's important policies. In 1991, Komei's agreement made it possible for Prime Minister Kaifu to send the Japanese Self-Defense Forces minesweepers to Gulf even though the war had ended. In 1992, Komei helped the LDP pass Japan's PKO (peace keeping organizations) bill, which legally authorizes sending SDF abroad, under the flag of the UN. In July 1999, Komei formally decided to make an alliance to share power with its life-long enemy, the LDP and Ozawa Ichiro's Liberal Party. During the meeting between the heads of Komei and the LDP, Prime Minister Obuchi especially mentioned Komei's role in establishing Japan's "normalization" with China.²⁶ However, this time, Komei's contribution to the Japanese national interest would no longer benefit China any more.

The Japanese government collaborated with the Chinese government to persecute Chinese people in Japan during and after the Tiananmen Incident.²⁷ It could not, nor has the willing to use the

bibliographic introduction"; Norbert A. Schlei, "Japan's 'M-Fund' memorandum, 7 January 1991"; Michael Schaller, "America's favorite war criminal: Kishi Nobusuke and the transformation of U.S.-Japan relations". They are all in Japan Policy Research Institute Working paper #11, July 1995. Schlei's essay has been translated to Chinese by Jing Zhao and published in "China and the World" December 1998. Also see David Kaplan, "U.S. propaganda efforts in postwar Japan". Japan Policy Research Institute Critique, February 1997.

²⁴ Ikeda's life-long goal is Nobel Peace Prize. Increasing Ikeda's shake-hands photo pictures with "world leaders" becomes one important accomplishment of Komei-Soka Gakkai's worldwide diplomatic activities.

²⁵ The House of Representatives were elected from middle election districts, so the LDP usually could obtain more than half of seats with less than one third popular votes. The House of Councillors were elected rationally from popular votes, so the LDP usually could not become majority. Important bills/acts should be passed in both houses to become laws. When there is a conflict to form a cabinet, however, the House of Representatives is superior.

²⁶ Since the JSP was China's public ally in Japan during the whole period of Cold War, Zhou Enlai knew that the LDP would not make a deal with China through the JSP. Instead, he had to utilize Komei, whose central committee chairman Takeiri had personal connection with Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, at the final stage to negotiate the core conditions (Taiwan status and war reparations).

²⁷ Jing Zhao, "The betrayal of democracy: Tiananmen's shadow over Japan." San Jose:

“democracy and human rights” card against China. Backed by Japanese people’s attitude change toward China²⁸ and the Japanese politics “regime shift” since the Tiananmen Incident, the Japanese government for the first time sent a clear “No!” signal to China in 1995 by freezing a small fraction of that year’s ODA. Japan used the pretext of China’s two nuclear tests, emphasizing its unique experience as the world’s only nuclear victim country. China was annoyed. The PRC Ambassador to Japan rebuked: “Japan should first leave the nuclear umbrella under the world’s solo superpower before criticizing China for developing its moderate nuclear capacity.” Some Chinese media asked: “If Japan can use the small amount of ODA as a diplomatic tool against China, why our government cannot use the huge amount of reparations issue?”

The Japanese government calculated that nuclear tests or military budget could be issues to be at odds with China, and more and more Japanese people are “educated” by rightist media (such as Sankei, Yomiuri) to connect their attitude change to the ODA issue.²⁹ However, Japan touched the “tiger’s bottom.” China’s Vice Premier Qian Qichen told Japan’s Foreign Minister Kawaguchi: “It is understandable for Japan to reduce the ODA. However, we cannot accept the pretext of China’s military expansion.”³⁰ In fact, the Chinese government has changed its policy on the war reparations issue, from suppressing its own people to tolerating, encouraging, and to supporting the Chinese victims seeking for reparations from both the Japanese government and private Japanese companies.³¹ This is a positive change, because the Chinese government can no longer monopolize the PRC foreign policy. The Chinese official line now becomes: “Although the Chinese government gave up the 120 billion USD state-to-state reparations, however, under any circumstances, the Chinese government never gave up the 180 billion USD individual reparation requests.”³² Neither the Japanese government nor the Japanese people are prepared to face to this “already settled” reparations issue between China and Japan.³³ The Sino-Japanese friendship, based on the bitter experience of the worst war between the two peoples, was buried by their

Comparative Policy Review, January 2003. <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr2003/tiananmen.pdf>.

²⁸ Yomiuri Daily has a series of survey of Japanese people’s attitude toward China since 1988. In the first time survey, 76% answered to trust China, while 14.2% answered not to trust China. In 2002 (August 24th and 25th), 37% answered to trust China, while 55% answered not to trust China. (Yomiuri, September 11, 2002.) Notice that the rightist Yomiuri does not have a good relationship with China, so the above numbers may not be accurate. But the Japanese people’s attitude change toward China is clear and sharp.

²⁹ Ibid. Yomiuri (September 11, 2002) survey shows 43% Japanese answered to reduce ODA, 13% answered to stop ODA to China.

³⁰ Mainichi Daily, September 10, 2002.

³¹ Unlike many other democratic activists for domestic political reform who were persecuted or harassed by the Chinese government, Bao Ge, a famous activist on this reparations issue, enjoyed his wide connections with various governmental officials supporting him.

³² Wang Xianyong, “How we gave up the Sino-Japanese war reparations”. Dangshi wenhui (The CCP History Collection), July 2002.

³³ For a thorough survey on this issue, see Yan-Jun Yin, *Chunichi Senso Baisho Mondai--Chogoku kokuminseifu no senji/sengo tainichiseisaku wo chushin ni* (Sino-Japanese War Reparations). Japan: Ochanomizu shobo, 1996. Jing Zhao wrote a review of the book for H-Japan, April 1997. <http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=2385874357020>.

governments' selfish policies. The Japanese government is also rushing to prepare a series of subsequent war-related acts and to sanction the "national flag" Hinomaru and "national anthem" Kimigayo.

A historical event occurred in one site always brings about significant responses in global settings. Deng Xiaoping's crushing of the democracy movement in Beijing helped and encouraged the regimes in other countries, especially in Japan, to utilize this incident to pursue their own reactionary policies. The ending of Cold War in East Asia on June 4, 1989 sent the Japanese ruling class a misleading signal that they could mistreat the ordinary Chinese people, and mislead Japan from an economic giant to a global political power. In more than one decade, they utilized the opportunity of China's isolation and oppressed the Chinese democratic movement; they succeeded in delimiting oppositions hence undermining the relative healthy Japanese democracy and independent foreign policy;³⁴ they succeeded in sending the Self-defense Forces abroad.³⁵ With Japan's deepening domestic conflicts among different classes along with the stagnate economy, and without a healthy opposition, the Japanese politics becomes more corrupt and more reactionary. The Japanese ruling class has less and less options, except militarism.³⁶

Once a taboo in the Japanese politics, which violates Japan's "three non-nuclear principles" and the peace constitution,³⁷ the question "will Japan go nuclear" has reached a conclusion within the Japanese ruling class.³⁸ How and when will Japan declare nuclear depend on the development of the international (especially in East Asia) political environment³⁹ and Japanese domestic political development. Should a similar mistake as the Tiananmen Incident occur again, the majority of Japanese people would be easily agitated to revise the peaceful constitution and rearm Japan.

The direct consequence of the reactionary Japanese politics in turn reacts on Chinese politics and shadows forth concerned Sino-Japanese relations. Unlike the Sino-American relations which can

³⁴ For example, the single district election "reform" enables the biggest party to obtain 70% Diet seats with only 30% popular votes, thus makes constitution revision much easier.

³⁵ However, Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council failed.

³⁶ Yomiuri (September 11, 2002) survey shows total to 70% Japanese from different aspects consider China's military strength a future threat to Japan's security. Notice that the rightist Yomiuri does not have a good relationship with China, so the above number may not be so accurate.

³⁷ The Japanese constitution chapter II "Renunciation of war" has only one article: "Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."

³⁸ Comparative Policy Review, April 2002. <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr2002/nuclear.pdf>

³⁹ Since the September 17, 2002 summit between Koizumi and Kim, with North Korea having accepted Japan's conditions, the possibility of Japan's utilizing the North Korea card is low. Militarily, there is no need for Japan to participate a US-South Korea action directly to subjugate North Korea. Rather, Japan's involvement would make such a military action difficult.

be rehabilitated,⁴⁰ the Sino-Japanese political relations have deteriorated irreversibly for ever. This leaves the PRC narrower and narrower space to maneuver since the Tiananmen Incident. Without a political ally inside the Japanese politics, and most significantly, without a democratic mechanism inside, the PRC Japan policy failed bitterly.

From people's perspective,⁴¹ the Taiwan problem is domestically a unification process from a prolonged civil war. The international reality, added by the PRC domestic and foreign policy mistakes, however, makes the development and changing aspects of the Taiwan question into a transforming PRC-US-Japan tripartite relationship. The once remote nightmare, Japan's eventual military alliance with the US against China over Taiwan, a de facto triangle alliance of Washington-Tokyo-Taipei to contain China, is gradually coming into emerging.

Prospects for People's Security in East Asia

After the Tiananmen Incident, the U.S. forced Japan to "redefine" the U.S.-Japanese Security frame to transform it from an "exclusively defense-oriented" (*senshu boe*) regime to a globally offensive military alliance. In 1996 the US and Japan signed the Clinton-Hashimoto Declaration and began to revise the 1978 "Defense Guidelines". In 1999 Japan's Diet passed three new Defense Guidelines acts to ensure that Japan would mobilize its national resources to support any U.S.-initiated military actions in "area surrounding Japan."⁴² Japan has been gradually transformed to be able to participate global actions with the U.S. forces.

Internationally, this is an era of a single super-power, which is much more powerful in military, economic, political, technological, diplomatic, and cultural influence than any empire throughout history. In this era, when the leader of that superpower has announced that any country not "with us" is to be considered "with the terrorists", what country is prepared to risk standing defiant of U.S. demands? The Bush administration even indicates that not only Seoul, but also Pyongyang and Beijing should be prepared to accept the idea of a U.S. military presence in Korea even after the unification.⁴³ Although even many Japanese still regard using the US-Japan alliance against

⁴⁰ Human rights issue is not vital to both sides, and the Taiwan problem is not vital to the US interest. That is the reason the US maintains an "ambiguity strategy" policy on Taiwan. Since the Bush Administration has created so many enemies in the world, there is a high possibility that in the future the other White House administration has to sacrifice Taiwan to exchange the PRC concessions for other vital American interests in the world.

⁴¹ We can trace the concept from the anti-imperialism Chinese Revolution for people's liberation or people's rights to peaceful life without foreign intervention. The question is how long the PRC foreign policy could hold this view?

⁴² Inside the ruling LDP, only the Kato faction does not belong to the so-called Taiwan Gang. Kato went to Beijing to explain that 90% Japanese regard "area surrounding Japan" as North Korea, but the Cabinet Secretary-Chief Kajiyama corrected Kato stating "area surrounding Japan" includes Taiwan. In April 2002, Kato was forced to resign for tax deviance, a common practice by almost all Japanese politicians. He dissolved his LDP fraction and lost his hope to become the Prime Minister for ever.

⁴³ See, for example, Avery Goldstein, U.S. policies toward Asia, Foreign Policy Research

China a nightmare,⁴⁴ the political base for the US-Japan alliance – the US and Japanese domestic politics, is currently pushing the military alliance toward the coming catastrophe.

The PRC foreign policy is under transformation. If the PRC foreign policy is continuously monopolized by the Jiang regime, the heavy Tiananmen shadow since 1989 over East Asia will last, and the PRC foreign policy will be further transformed into the US-dominated imperialist international politics frame, from where there is no future for people's security. On the other hand, a regime change in Zhongnanhai, either through a revolutionary democratization or through a peaceful political reform, will democratize PRC domestic policies as well as foreign policy. Only this alternative could provide East Asian people's security and permanent peace.

Despite the Tiananmen Incident and the consequent international politics transition, a strong China is inevitable. However, this does not automatically mean the Chinese and other East Asian people will live in a peaceful society. Never before in the modern history, the Chinese people have a greater role to determine their own fate and a greater obligation to contribute to East Asia's future.

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⁴⁴ For example, Asai Motofumi, a former MOFA China Section Chief, now an international politics professor at Meijigakuin University, is the most famous critic of Japan's current foreign policy. He argues that, from the minimum moral standard, Japan should not to be involved into a Taiwan conflict under any circumstance.