

# The Construction of a Chinese Ethos

*Chinese foreign policy in an era of uncertainty*

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# Introduction

*To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting"*

From *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, Chapter III.2

## Theme and background

Identity is political. In a discourse analytical perspective, national identities are constitutive, relational and situational and depend upon interactions with other nations, a retelling of the past, and a careful defining of the present for their substance. Identity plays a role in determining patterns of interaction, particularly in relation to conflicts, and in defining what is acceptable and preferable ways to interact (Neumann 2001: 124-126). Governments are sensitive to the perception of their state's national identity and invest considerable effort in shaping, protecting, and honing it on the international arena. In recent years, the People's Republic of China has faced increasing problems on this arena, particularly with relation to the United States, that can be partially ascribed to national identity perception or ethos. The Current, the mood in the US is ambivalent, but swaying towards hostility to China. In response to the darkening mood, Beijing has embarked on a campaign to change the country's tarnished image. It is this diplomatic self-promotion and ethos-construction that I begin to study in this thesis.

Since opening up in 1979, China has experienced an annual economic growth of almost 10 percent. At the end of 2005, the Chinese were enjoying an annual growth of 10.2, a significant foreign trade surplus of US\$ 90.8 billion, and supported a large proportion of US foreign debt. This trend shows no sign of slowing despite outside pressure on the Chinese authorities to cool down the economy. China now support the world's fourth largest economy, ahead of France and Italy (BBC News 2006: 25/01; BBC News 2006:9/01; BBC News 2005: 12/12).

This stellar economic growth has enabled the Chinese authorities to improve their capabilities in many areas, most notably in the military, diplomatic and trade sectors, with ever rising military expenditure and more political and

trade ties with countries around the world. Though Beijing argues that China is still a developing country, the assumption that it is becoming a great power has become close to conventional wisdom among scholars, expert commentators and policymakers in the West (Jacques 2005). The argument over what the growth of Chinese power and influence will mean for the world is gaining momentum, but I argue that no single view has yet become what Stuart Hall calls a 'dominant discourse'. However, voices warning of a "China threat" are gaining the ear of policymakers in the United States, and moves have been made to prevent China gaining influence on the US market. In mid-2005, the Chinese oil giant CNOOC was forced to back down from bidding for the US oil and gas producer Unocal because of "unprecedented political opposition" related to "security concerns" on the American side (BBC News 2005: 2/08). By 2005 the US trade deficit, much of it with China, has reached an all time high of 6.4 percent of the total value of the US economy that year. This imbalance, which is also felt in the EU, has led to a great deal of political unease on both sides of the Atlantic and has sparked rows with China over the openness of international trade (BBC News 2006: 26/03; BBC News 2005: 25/04).

In this thesis I shall review the main theoretical assumptions underlying the discourse about the impact of China's growth on the world, and relate this to China's diplomatic discourse in 2005. I view the study of ethos-building to be central to the diplomatic discourse and behaviour, but this is a neglected area in the study of Chinese foreign policy and studies of perceptions and misperceptions are favoured (Wang 2005: 98 n5). Some commentators, such as Evan Medeiros (2004) and Robert Suettinger (2004), have commented on the use certain phrases, such as a "peaceful rise", but few have conducted systematic studies of Chinese rhetoric in foreign policy discourse. In this thesis I begin to address this issue by suggesting one avenue by studying Chinese national ethos-building in an international context based on Jervis (1989) and Kunczik's (1997) discussions of the significance of image in international relations. I can identify a shift in the content, character and execution of Chinese diplomacy and foreign policy behaviour which began in 1997. The shift pivoted post September 11, 2001, and after the appointment in 2002 of a new central leadership in the Chinese

Communist Party (CCP). I discuss how these factors have led to significant changes in outward-directed foreign policy discourse. To do this, I analyse discursively texts produced by three central figures in the PRC – President Hu Jintao, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, and the President’s academic advisor, Zheng Bijian. This fourth generation of CCP leaders has a different approach to foreign policy than the previous generations. Their stance is emerging at the same time as the global perception of China is shifting.

### **Research Problem**

How do the Chinese authorities communicate China’s foreign policy intentions since the changeover of central leadership in 2002-2003? This was the original research problem for the thesis and is still the basis for the other research questions. However, it became clear that the discursive preconditions for or social practices of the Chinese foreign policy discourse are so complex and integral to the discourse I want to study, that the first research problem had to be dissected and fine-tuned using several sub questions. This thesis therefore also concerns itself with first, the US discourse on Chinese foreign and domestic politics and development as it unfolds. And second, with the particulars of Chinese history and social practice that have an impact on political behaviour. An updated research problem may therefore be phrased as follows:

*What characterizes the Chinese foreign policy discourse as a form of ethos construction, and how does it relate to the US discourse on China?*

This question is based on the problem of how international actors draw inferences about another actor based on the actor’s behaviour and how actors may influence the inferences others draw. The solutions to these problems are what Jervis (1989: 3) calls image and image building but which I shall call *ethos* and *ethos-construction*.

Because the discourse is still under development and we may only be at the beginning of a debate that may become more significant in the years to come, the thesis can only be exploratory. Furthermore, my thesis is exploratory in the sense that little academic work is performed on the issue of Chinese *ethos-construction* in foreign policy, though the subject is well known from studies of other countries. It is important to emphasize that I shall not study discourse in the Gramscian

sense of uncovering hegemonic ideologies and revealing false consciousness on either side of the debate. Rather, I shall seek to shed light on basic values and orientations in Chinese foreign policy, particularly as a response to competing values and orientations emerging from the US.

As I want to discuss the relationship between the international and in particular the US discourse on China's development, I need to link this with general debates in political science on relations of power, causes of conflict, and motivations for peace. The theories employed in the China debate in political science are roughly divided into the realist and liberal schools of thought. From a theoretical standpoint, these schools of thought take oppositional views of China's growth and future intentions. On the one hand, realist theory adheres to the 'China threat' lobby, which sees China as a future challenger to U.S. hegemony and an aggressor in world politics because of its new-found strength. Liberal theory, on the other hand has a mixed view of China's future, seeing both potential problems of regime transitions and incentives for peace because of interdependence. The research task is to specify the connection between these discourses and China's ethos-construction efforts.

I therefore base the analysis on the assumption that **the issue choices of the Chinese authorities and the choices they make with regard to facework, rhetoric and genre are founded in the assumptions evident in the theoretical debate and reflected in international discourse on China's future.** Chinese authorities and policy advisers are highly aware of the academic and political debates and respond to these. Zheng Bijian addresses US concerns directly by denying China will ever pose a threat to the international community, that the country does not wish to exclude the United States, and that China does not seek hegemony or predominance in world affairs (Zheng 2005: 24)

### **Theory and method**

The focus of study in this dissertation is how one state attempts to project a certain image of itself and its intentions; its use of rhetoric, genre and facework in the process, and how this effort is linked to the discourses and policies emerging from other states. Here, the Chinese state, the ruling party and key politicians are

seen as one actor. In the analytical chapter I use terms borrowed from the theory of rhetoric, genre study, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness as facework. These terms and theories are a part of the discourse analysis work as proposed by Fairclough (1992). Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a particular direction within the diverse field of discourse analysis. Fairclough has a clear political agenda and often concerns himself more with politics and critiques of power relations related to globalization, neoliberalism, commodification and the production of social inequalities. I do not have the same agenda in my analysis and attempt to maintain an awareness of the prejudices that may be present in the CDA method.

Discourse analysis is a post-positivistic method which uses language and other social practices as a basis for analyzing meaning as a part of the social world where meaning is produced (Neumann 2001: 38). Fairclough has divided CDA into three dimensions - social practice, discourse practice and text – and goes from a macro to a micro level of analysis. Each dimension overlaps and involves a progression from interpretation to description and back to interpretation again (Fairclough 1992: 231). For an effective analysis, it is necessary to present the complexity of the context or what Fairclough calls social practice. I have selected two areas of social practice which I shall use as tools in my analysis. First, I consider the US relations with China and the theoretical political discourse on which they are founded. Second, I consider the historical and philosophical underpinnings of Beijing's current foreign policy.

### **Sources**

Discourse analysis is a text-based analytical tool as I am primarily concerned with analyzing diplomatic texts as a form of political action, my research material consists of three published texts. I look at the interaction and interrelationship between two competing discourses. First I look at the more abstract international relations discourses on power and conflict potential, and then I discuss how these discourses are reflected in US foreign policy. Further, I discuss Chinese history and culture as it is applicable to rhetoric and foreign policy practice in the PRC. I establish this mainly by using academic and secondary sources. Secondly, I



examine Chinese diplomatic publications from 2005 using primary sources. My main sources consist of two speeches and one article emerging from Beijing's top leadership. I have based the selection of the three main texts I shall analyze on the authority of the authors, the centrality of the medium through which they were published, and the extent to which they are referred to as important by Chinese state news media such as the China Daily and Xinhua News Agency. The authors are prominent in Chinese politics and their opinion is certain to be noticed by policy makers, expert commentators and scholars alike. I have, as far as possible, reviewed other texts by the same actors from the past year in order to compare the rhetoric and positions. However, the texts are remarkably similar except in terms of issues and style with differences largely attributable to the discursive situation. Two of the texts are clear examples of diplomatic correspondence as they are speeches given by prominent politicians intended for foreign consumption. The last text is an article published in a scholarly periodical by an academic associated with, but not part of, the CCP central leadership. This text is thus more ambiguous in terms of its intent and position in the official Chinese rhetoric, but I have included it here because the author is one of the minds behind the change in foreign policy. He is also often mentioned by international media in relation to Chinese foreign policy and as being a close associate of Hu Jintao.

According to discourse theory, it is not significant how close these texts get to the "true" direction and purpose of Chinese foreign policy thinking, what is significant is how they present it. Therefore, a critical evaluation of the of the sources is not as central as they might have been in a more conventional international relations analysis – the statements of the actors are interesting regardless of their relation to any perception of reality.

### **Thesis outline**

This introductory chapter is followed by a discussion of theory and method as well as an introduction to the specific concepts I rely on in my analysis. In chapter 2 I first introduce the foundation for the idea of studying national identity construction in international politics. Then I discuss the theory and method of

discourse analysis and the particular theoretical concepts related to the theories or rhetoric and politeness practices.

In chapter 3 and 4 I account for the social practice and discursive environment in which the Chinese authorities work. I attempt to show the background which has influenced the current state of affairs for the perception of China in international relations and the fundamental differences that have affect the US- PRC relationship. This entails a discussion of the theoretical texts that constitute the most significant aspects of the US discourse on China, and particulars of Chinese cultural and political practices. I especially emphasise Chinese politeness practices and the centrality the concept of “harmony” and its related philosophy. In this connection I also discuss the transfer or traditional philosophy to the practice of Chinese politics.

In Chapter 5 I analyse the three selected articles. Here I first present the recent changes in Chinese leadership and its effect on foreign policy making. Further I discuss the manifest consequences of the leadership changes in terms of policy practice as interdiscursivity and its effect on genre. Then I do a close-reading of the texts and discuss the use of rhetorical modes of persuasion as forms of facework. The thesis is brought to a close with a conclusion regarding the construction of the Chinese ethos, its particular characteristics as a response to US policies and Chinese domestic challenges, and how successfully Beijing has played the Western diplomatic game.

# 1. Theory and Method

*The softest thing in the universe*

*Overcomes the hardest thing in the universe.*

*That without substance can enter where there is no room*

Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu, chapter 43

I do a limited study of recent Chinese ethos-building efforts using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the tool of investigation. In CDA, theory and method are seen as one and I therefore gather them in one chapter. As I discuss below, the method relies on a number of theoretical concepts to describe language use in both linguistic and social terms. However, CDA is a hybrid method that draws these concepts from a number of disciplines, and can itself be applied to many different disciplines. The theoretical concepts I use to conduct and describe my analysis in an accurate manner therefore require particular explanation. The number of possible concepts that may be drawn into the method is also too great for me to apply exhaustively. Therefore, I shall present here a selection of the concepts I find most useful for my purpose, define them in a manner relevant to political science, and operationalize them in accordance with the precepts of CDA.

My central point is that the issues and subject matters political actors engage in and relate to are formed as political issues via linguistic communication (Mathisen 1998: 6). In this combined method and theory chapter, I shall begin by introducing ethos-building on the international arena. I shall then present the theory and method of discourse analysis as this is the overarching system underlying the discussion. After presenting my epistemological starting point, I shall give an account of a selection of concepts used in discourse analysis, more specifically Fairclough's (1992) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and shall explain why I chose to focus on these concepts. First, I discuss CDA and discourse. Then I present the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity followed by the theories of genre, rhetoric and politeness. Finally, I suggest how these theories relate to one another. The main emphasis is on the connection between particular elements of rhetoric and certain practices of politeness because the politeness concept of 'face' is important in any social interaction but is

particularly well-articulated in Chinese culture and rhetorical traditions (Locher 2004: 60; Watts 2003: 25).

## **2.1 Diplomacy and international ethos-building**

The ethos or image of a country on the international arena is an important aspect of a country's foreign relations. This is because the perception others have of an actor may be a major factor in "determining whether and how easily the state can reach its goals" (Jervis 1989: 6). The aim of international ethos-building is to appear trustworthy to other actors in the international system. Achieving trust, or a desired level of good-will, prestige and mutual respect are important factors in mobilising resources such as cooperation, credibility or access to desired material resources (Jervis 1989: 7-8; Kunczik 1997: 74). This kind of trust is becoming more and more essential to China as the country engages in the world economy. The shift in Beijing's foreign policy approach which emerged after 1997 is part of a response to the adverse reactions generated by China's rapid rise. Though China has not yet acquired clear enemies, prudence requires a strategy for coping with, or preferably off-setting potential problems (Goldstein 2003: 58)

States go about the task of ethos-building through diplomatic representation abroad. Representation abroad functions as an opportunity to listen for key issues and relevant economic, social and political conditions. In addition, it can be used as a means to prepare the ground for new policies or initiatives as well as "reducing friction or oiling the wheels of bilateral or multilateral relations" (Barston 1997: 2). There is no specific ways in which a state can project a desired image because, in order to get others to believe in an image, a state must fully act out that image. That is, the state must provide some proof that the image is accurate. However, the link between actions and ethos is not firm and immutable, and even an accurate ethos or image is not automatically accepted (Jervis 1989: 9, 11). This is because states rarely provide any kind of proof of their future intentions, and ethos is partially independent of reality as states are often unable to convey their intentions convincingly (Jervis 1989: 9).

## 2.2 Discourse

Discourse is a popular term used by many different scientific disciplines and thus has a range of conflicting and overlapping definitions. The meaning I am interested in takes a particular view of language as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements. I have drawn this concept of discourse from Fairclough's (1992) *Critical Discourse Analysis*, which goes beyond mere linguistic understanding of discourse. In linguistics, discourse may refer to extended samples of spoken or written text and processes of producing and interpreting speech and writing in a situational context of language use (Fairclough 1992: 3). In Foucault's social theory, on which Fairclough partially relies, discourse refers to "different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice" (Fairclough 1992: 3), that is, a discourse may be a "particular way of using language and other symbolic forms" to reflect or represent social entities. However, discourses also work to shape themselves and other discourses as well as position actors as social subjects (Fairclough 1992: 3-4).

The idea that signs and symbols – whether or not they are linguistic - do not receive their meaning from some objective reality but from a dynamic process of interpretation is derived from Saussure's theory of semiotics. According to Saussure, signs get their meaning from each other. Thus language is not a static, unchangeable system. Structuralists like Saussure do not regard language as *one* system of meaning, but several, where meaning changes from discourse to discourse. The patterns of meaning are maintained and evolve through discursive practice. The maintenance and development of the patterns must therefore be sought in the specific context in which language is used (Winter Jørgensen and Phillips 1999: 19-21). The reproduction and change of meaning that take place in discourse are broadly speaking a political act that reflects, acts upon, or reproduces relations of power. Discourse is therefore not just a reflection of a deeper social reality, but rather social organization is a result of continuous political processes that takes place partially through language. In political science there is a prejudice that favours actions over words, regarding actions as somehow more important and real. But I argue that the study of issues of language and meaning, dissemination and interpretation may bring new dimensions to the study

of international relations that more conventional methods preclude. How events, actions and issues are labelled and defined linguistically is a political as well as a linguistic act. It imbues them with certain connotations that again produce particular perceptions that may have political consequences (Mathisen 1998: 1-6). An example of the political nature of name-giving is the difficulty of labelling disabilities. Whether someone is referred to as physically or mentally challenged, disabled or even retarded goes beyond a person's medical condition. It carries with it connotations about the person's place in society and how others should relate to them. This is particularly evident in the frequency with which labels attached to undesirable conditions go from being acceptable euphemisms to becoming jocular or derogatory terms with negative connotations.

### **2.3 Discourse analysis**

Discourse analysis is a post-positivistic method which uses language and other social practices as a basis for analyzing meaning as a part of the social world where meaning is produced (Neumann 2001: 38). Fairclough incorporated these insights and has created a three-dimensional concept of discourse that forms the basis for his Critical Discourse Analysis. A discourse in CDA is simultaneously a piece of text, a discursive practice and an instance of social practice. First, the text aspect involves a linguistic analysis of a given text. Second, discursive practice deals with the process of text production and interpretation. Third, social practice attends to issues of the social context of a text such as institutional and organizational circumstances (Fairclough 1992: 4).

Language analysis, rather than analysis of, for example, media, prisons or the family, is the most common method because "changes in language use are linked to wider social and cultural processes" and its primary function is to create meaning (Fairclough 1992: 1; Neumann 2001: 38). CDA combines language analysis and social theory arriving at a more social-theoretical sense of discourse as the use of language as a form of social practice. CDA is a method for analysing texts or language use as a social act, and in its social contexts. The reproduction and change of meaning that take place in discourse is broadly speaking a political act that reflects, acts upon, or reproduces relations of power. Discourse is

therefore not just a reflection of a deeper social reality, but rather social organization is a result of continuous political processes that takes place partially through language. To operationalize CDA I make use of Fairclough's (1992: 232-238) dissection of the theory into central concepts. However, textual analysis in political science is a far more coarse application of the method than that found in, for example, linguistics. The following definitions and explanations are therefore greatly simplified to suit my discipline and space limitations applicable to this thesis. I operationalize CDA by dividing my analysis into three parts based on Fairclough's three-tire model. First, I present the social practice or the context in which the discourse takes place in chapters 3 and 4. Second, I look at discourse practice and particularly focus on interdiscursivity genre and karios. Finally, I consider the text itself. Here I discuss issues of intertextuality and I look at the rhetorical choices and their implications for politeness behaviour and the significance of world choice. Elements of the three categories overlap. I look at this overlap in my discussion.

## **2.4 Intertextuality**

As discussed above, texts are not made in isolation, but “draw upon, incorporate, recontextualize and dialogue with other texts”, establishing what Bakhtin calls dialogicality (Fairclough 2003: 17, 214). This process is referred to as intertextuality. Intertextuality may be explicit or implicit. That is, the incorporated text may or may not be attributed to the original source. Intertextuality is selective with respect to choice of events and texts represented. It recontextualizes the subject matter and orders voices in relation to one another. This ordering of voices is known as ‘framing’ or contextualising in relation to other parts of the same text. Intertextuality is deliberately selective in its inclusion, exclusion and ordering of voices. Examples of intertextuality where this is particularly evident include direct and indirect quotes and references to events, or ideas such as are frequently found in news article, scientific papers and political speeches (Fairclough 2003: 47-55).

## **2.5 Interdiscursivity**

Both intertextuality and interdiscursivity refer to the external relations of texts. The difference is that intertextuality brings other ‘voices’ into a text whereas interdiscursivity, which Fairclough sometimes refers to as assumptions, reduces difference by assuming common ground (Fairclough 2003: 39-41). It refers to norms manifested in genres, activity types, style and discourse (Fairclough 1992: 125). All texts invariably rely on such assumption to some extent because what is said rests against a backdrop of unarticulated common ground and common conventions. For example, using “we” in a text may assume that the addressee knows who “we” are and may accept being interpellated as one of “us”. The ability to shape this ‘common ground’ through the exercise of social power, domination or Gramscian-type hegemony is important with regards to ideology. (Fairclough 2003: 55-56).

## **2.6 Genre**

Studying genre is the examination of the characteristics of various types of texts and the understanding what they accomplish in different social settings based on their production and presentation. There are varying concepts of what genre is, but in my discussion I stick to what Freedman and Medway (1994: 8-10) call the North American School as this is closest to Fairclough’s (1992: 125) understanding of genre (Freedman and Medway 1994: 9). This school derives its concept from a rhetorical tradition inspired by Carolyn R. Miller’s essay, “Genre as Social Action”.

Miller (1984) proposes a dynamic understanding of genre that does not rely on closed syntactic or semantic classification. Instead, she suggests that “in rhetoric the term ‘genre’ be limited to a particular type of discourse classification” based on rhetorical practice as an open system that both responds to and shapes contexts (Miller 1984: 27; Freedman and Medway 1994: 10). This is an ‘ethnomethodological’ classification scheme that “seeks to explicate the knowledge that practice creates” (Miller 1984: 27). The important feature of rhetorical situations for a theory of genres is that they recur. Recurrence is “implied by our understanding of situations as ‘comparable’, ‘similar’ or



‘analogous’ to other situations” on a large scale (Miller 1984: 29). We classify recurring situations into types, creating new types every time our old knowledge is not sufficient to label a new situation. The situation and social context gives genre meaning based on a hierarchy of rules for symbolic interaction. As such, genres are means of orientation - a way of recognising a particular communicative situation where a given genre is used to accomplish a certain task. Once established, genres become a relatively stable set of conventions or cultural products associated with, and enacting, socially ratified types of activity (Fairclough 1992: 126). As conventions, genres constitute the framework to which a text producer must relate. Already established conventions may constitute an important rhetorical precondition in any rhetorical situation, sometimes having a greater effect on the shape of a text than the situation at hand (Kjeldsen 2004: 101). Furthermore, genres may determine not only how the speaker should respond, but also how the audience should receive and understand a text. Established conventions may come to represent institutions and actors in a way that serves to shape the expectations of the audience and guide the production of other texts from those authors. News is an example of such an overarching genre that relies on established conventions which again influences understanding and expectations. It has a well-know format, including language and layout, determined by the medium. It carries with it assumptions about the type of content and standards of production the receiver can expect. And it interpellates the receiver in a certain way that is common and recognisable between media (Kjeldsen 2004: 107).

Miller proposes a hierarchy of meaning to guide the interpretation of genre in a given context. She locates genre below human nature, culture and form of life, but above episode, speech act and language. Placing genre in such a hierarchy avoids taxonomy, emphasising the meaning of genre as context dependent (Miller 1984: 37-38). Furthermore, given that the rules guiding genre classification do not form a normative whole, the hierarchy of meaning is the basis of the operationalization of genre. I operationalize genre by asking a set of questions relating to the propositions suggested by the hierarchy of meaning surrounding a given text (Miller 1984: 37-38). I keep in mind the conventions the context implies

and ask 1) who delivers the text and to whom (who), 2) what is the social purpose of the text (why), 3) what is the expected content of the text based on the purpose (what), 4) through what medium is the text delivered (how), 5) when and where did the communication take place (when and where).

## **2.7 Rhetoric**

Rhetoric is the art or technique of persuasive discourse. It is intentional, purposeful and effective communication intended to sway an audience to the speaker's ends. The study of rhetoric provides a useful and particularly relevant set of terms and concepts that I will use in my discourse analysis. Because my research material is from political communication, I deal only with the deliberative type of discourse. The decisive factor in determining the type of discourse is the function of the audience. The audience in this case are judges of what action is to be taken in the future and thus the discourse is deliberative (Kennedy 1998: 6). As in the classical understanding of rhetoric, derived from Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, general symbolic communication such as visual images or music will not be included, though I recognize these as significant. They are, however, excluded because of space limitations. My analysis will further be limited to a narrow persuasio. That is, communication in situations where there is divergence with regard to experience, meaning and interpretation. Broad persuasio, on the other hand, includes any communication that presents an issue to an audience for consideration (Kjeldsen 2004: 15-17, 23).

### **2.7.1 Kairos**

The Greek term *Kairos* (Latin: *aptum*) refers to the communicative situation as a deciding principle for the sender's choice of active means, rhetorical strategies, style and so on (Eide 1999: 84). Kairos also denotes the correct or critical moment to present a message and what is appropriate in a given communicative situation (Kjeldsen 2004: 67-68). A consideration of kairos is relevant for all forms of rhetoric and communication in general (Kjeldsen 2004: 74). The concept is divided into external and internal kairos. External kairos includes an appropriate relationship between the speaker and the speech on the one hand, and the subject,

audience and speech situation on the other. Thus the rhetorical statement must be seemly, or decent and respectable on the one hand, and functional or suitable to the purpose on the other. External kairos is decisive for the effectiveness of the language (Kjeldsen 2004: 69-72; Cockroft and Cockroft 1992: 19). Internal kairos refers to the coherence between the individual elements of the text as a whole (Kjeldsen 2004: 73).

I will use Kjeldsen's (2004: 72) reduction of external karios into five factors in order to operationalize the concept: 1) the sender 2) the issue 3) the medium and form of expression 4) the receiver and 5) the specific circumstances as a means to operationalize the concept. The relationship between these must be appropriate and there must be consistency between form and content (Kjeldsen 2004: 69-72; Cockroft and Cockroft 1992: 19).

### **2.7.2. Modes of persuasion**

Classical Aristotelian rhetoric discusses three means of persuasion and the integral relationship between them. The means are called ethos, pathos and logos.

*Ethos* is an appeal to the character and authority of the author, conceptualized as *personality* and *stance*. Personality is the image character and credibility the author or sender inspires in an audience. Any interaction involving spoken or written persuasion will inevitably begin with the communication of personality. Stance is the attitude a sender conveys in relation to topic and audience. In a broad sense, it is the set of values held by an individual or community represented as the sender of a message. Ethos is the most important of the means of persuasion because it is decisive for the way people listen to and absorb the message. (Cockroft and Cockroft 1992: 19-21; Kjeldsen 2004: 117).

However, ethos is not a fixed quality. It is subject to change and is dependent on surrounding events and conditions. The sender comes into a communicative situation with one ethos, generates a new state of this ethos during the event, and leaves with an ethos that is a combination of the initial and the derived ethos. The initial ethos is a precondition for the desired reception of a message to be achieved. Its persuasive appeal is determined by the perceived

degree of relevance of the sender's background and personal characteristics. For example, a scientist will achieve a greater degree of credibility than a layman when presenting an issue within the scientist's field of expertise. During the presentation, ethos development depends on the audience's response to the sender's subject matter and rhetorical choices. If the sender establishes common ground with the audience by, for example, taking a political stance with which they agree, or substantiating claims with credible data, the audience will more readily accept the message. The final impression the receiver has of the sender's ethos when the communication is over is the product of the exchange between the initial and derived ethos. (Kjeldsen 2004: 116-117, 122-131; Eide 1999: 64).

Communication can be issue-oriented or ethos-oriented. In ethos-oriented communication the sender is primarily concerned with generating and strengthening his or her ethos. In issue oriented communication the sender takes advantages of ethos in order to influence the attitude of the audience with regard to a given issue.

*Pathos* is an appeal based on emotion designed to engage the audience - playing on emotions in order to effect persuasion. How an audience feels about an issue relates to their understanding of it, thus determining how they perceive the arguments and the sender. Effective persuasion is unlikely to take place without the activation of emotion. The persuader needs to actualize the desired emotions in the appropriate intensity, clarity, and sharpness of focus. However, conveying the appropriate emotion may be difficult in interactions between actors whose ideas and feelings are divergent (Cockroft and Cockroft 1992: 9, 40). US President George Bush's reference to "the Axis of Evil" in his 2002 State of the Union address is a typical pathos appeal because it attempts to generate fear and resentment in the audience, prompting them to accept the speaker's position. Emotional appeal is a common feature of American political behaviour, especially of the last two Republican administrations (BBC News 2005: 26/09)

*Logos* is an appeal to reason and logic, but not according to the strict rules of scientific logic. It relates to the way a text is structured rather than the nature of the composite arguments. Such appeals employ the presentation of data or arguments when demonstrating or seeming to demonstrate that something is the

case. Scientific writing typically employs logos appeal. They use discipline-appropriate scientific data as the premises for a given conclusion. Arguments are presented either as inductive or abductive. Inductive reasoning uses *topos* to proceed from the particular to the universal. Abductive reasoning uses *enthymemes*, often presented as syllogisms, going from generally accepted principles or suppositions to draw conclusions (Kennedy 1998:6-7; Cockroft and Cockroft 1992; 78).

The above means of persuasion, not just logos, can take the form of a *topos* or an enthymeme. *Topos* or inductive reasoning refers to the point of common understanding between the sender and the receiver as the starting point for addressing diverging views. They take the form of particular patterns of argumentation either as general means of observation or patterns of argumentation, or argumentation related to particular issues. Arguments can take the form such as opposites (“if carbon emissions from energy production are the cause of global warming, then we must find other sources of energy to prevent it”) or refutation (“people say that coral reefs are damaged by greenhouse gas emissions, but there is not conclusive evidence to support the claim”), cause and effect (“if students receive free meals at school, they will be better able to concentrate on schoolwork”) and more (Kjeldsen 2004: 149-157; Cockroft and Cockroft 1992: 58-77). Third, *topos* can come in the form of standard arguments or commonly accepted truths and convictions known as *loci communes*. These are often expressed as maxims, clichés, proverbs or other forms of fixed expressions. They may be difficult to explore because they are often beyond discussion and some are characteristic of certain societies (Kjeldsen 2004: 158-167).

*Enthymemes*, or abductive reasoning, represent the efforts of rhetoric to convince through open ended arguments. It is characterized by being structured as a syllogism that misses one part of the argument, creating a connection to something absent by referring to something present. Unlike logic where one attempts to deduce a true conclusion based on true premises, the sender seeks through an enthymeme to argue for a probable conclusion using *probable* premises

with one or several of the elements of the argument remaining unarticulated or implicit. The argumentation is also less formal and removed from the strict rules of logic, and the arguments are always addressed to the audience in order to attain approval. The particular characteristic of the enthymeme is that it is constructed by the author and the audience together. The audience is invited to fill in the missing information, thus generating self-conviction, flattering and challenging the audience, especially when the enthymeme is in a shortened form. Enthymemes both create and require communality because it is taken for granted that the audience share the proposed values and attitudes. It is difficult to argue against because the premises are assumed to be so obvious they do not need explaining. It is also problematic because it means admitting to ignorance of the obvious, thus lowering one's own social position, opening oneself up for attack and losing face (Kjeldsen 2004: 170-173).

## **2.8 Politeness theory and Facework**

Politeness is the application of certain types of behaviour to ease the communication and relationship between actors to avoid hostilities, even if the parties are potentially aggressive (Brown and Levinson [1978] 1987: 1). Fairclough (1992: 162-163) includes Brown and Levinson's considerations of linguistic politeness in CDA because particular politeness conventions embody, implicitly acknowledge, and reproduce particular social and power relations. They may also serve instrumental purposes for the communicator, particularly in power-laden settings (Harris 2003: 27, 31). I will concentrate on the aspect of politeness behaviour known as facework.

The concept of face as a part of social theory was developed by sociologist Erving Goffman. (Watts 2003: 122). Goffman defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share" (quoted in Locher 2004: 52). Face can be equated with a mask or "public self -mage" a person tries to give him or herself in the course of social interaction. This 'image' may differ according to the particular situation. In addition, face is a social

construct that is a condition for interaction, but a condition that can be given only by others (Watts 2003: 105, 125; Holtgraves 1992: 142). Face can be “lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61). People tend to cooperate in maintaining face as each actor’s face is vulnerable, and a threat to one actor’s face is expected to generate retribution. Brown and Levinson call the preoccupation with maintaining and protecting face ‘face-wants’ and ‘face-needs’ (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61-62). This includes the “need to feel unimpeded, free, or self-determining within an inviolable, internal personal preserve, and the need to feel accepted, appreciated, or respected by at least some others” (Janney and Arndt 2005: 28-29)

Brown and Levinson (1987: 62) divide face into positive and negative face. Positive face is defined as “the individual’s desire that his/her wants be appreciated and approved of in social interaction, whereas negative face is the desire for freedom of action and freedom from opposition” (Watts 2003: 86). However, “‘face respect’ is not an unequivocal right”, and there may be times when face may not be recognized. This makes face vulnerable, and Brown and Levinson assume that each participant will attempt to maintain the face of other participant. Watts (2003) identifies two types of strategies that address face. I use Watts’ classification rather than that of Brown and Levinson’s because I find this to be easier to operationalize and more conducive for organising the subsequent analysis.

First, there are face-threatening acts (FTAs). In this group of strategies we can distinguish between acts that threaten the receiver’s negative face (e.g. orders), the receiver’s positive face (e.g. disapprovals) and acts which threaten the sender’s own face (e.g. apologies) (Locher 2004: 54; Watts 2003: 86). The second group of strategies are face-saving strategies, which may be applied to redress a situation in which a FTA has already been used. These strategies include such acts as noticing the receiver’s needs, interests or wants, using in-group identity markers and being indirect (Watts 2003: 86-91). I add to this Brown and Levinson’s concept of positive and negative politeness as a way to further define face-saving strategies. *Positive politeness* is giving the receiver positive face by assuring that the sender wants to show respect for the receiver because he wants at least some of what the

receiver wants. For example, instead of using a direct statement like “Give me that”, the sender may say “Could you please give me that?”. *Negative politeness* addresses the negative face wants of the receiver. It is avoidance based on and consists of assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the receiver’s negative face. Thus, it often takes the form of “self-effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of [the receiver’s] self-image, centring on his wants to be unimpeded”. For example, an indirect statement like, “I would like to do this” implies a hope or expectation of an offer from the addressee. Alternatively, the responsibility for an FTA can be minimized by pluralising. “We are sorry to tell you this bad news” is such a statement intended to remove some of the responsibility from the speaker, making the statement less provoking (Brown and Levinson 1987: 68-70).

The choice of strategy depends on the social distance between the participants, their relative power, the possible pay-offs or disadvantages, and the relative ranking of the imposition in the cultural context. And these factors together determine the “weightiness” of the FTA. The effect of the acts is enhanced by the presence or absence of an audience (Locher 2004: 56, 66-67).

The strategies described above are known as facework. This is the verbal and nonverbal actions undertaken to deal with the face-wants of other actors or to deal with face threats to self and to others and to make whatever the actor is doing consistent with face (Cupach and Metts 1994: 6; Watts 2003: 105, 125). All human interaction consists of facework of one kind or another, and politeness is an aspect that may be included (Watts 2003: 130). Facework may take place either through preventive facework or corrective facework. Preventive facework can for example be accomplished by avoiding face-threatening topics, using disclaimers or applying linguistic politeness as described below. Corrective facework may be accomplished using such tactics as avoidance, humour, apologies or accounts to explain the undesired behaviour (Cupach and Metts 1994: 6-10).

I use the concepts of face and facework to explain the various features of language use in deliberative rhetoric. I operationalize facework in terms of specific



linguistic strategies described by Watts (2005) as the essence of Brown and Levinson's (1987) face theory.

## **2.9 Linking the theories**

The theories discussed in this chapter contain several parallel concepts that link the theories together and make it constructive for me to use them together to enrich my analysis. Some theories are also linked because one incorporates another. For example, rhetoric incorporates genre theory and Fairclough's discourse analysis incorporates theories of rhetoric, genre and politeness. However, to my knowledge little or no work has previously been done to link explicitly the theories of rhetoric and politeness with one another. The connections I will make below have been alluded to by others, but I have found no systematic study identifying them as I attempt to do. For example, Lynette Hunter refers to positive and negative rhetoric in her discussion of ethos. She says positive rhetoric reveals value whereas negative rhetoric hides value (Cockroft and Cockroft 1992: 22). What is particularly important for me is that, while face and politeness are important in any communication, the importance of politeness is well articulated in Chinese tradition. Furthermore, they have a long history of studying linguistic politeness within the framework of rhetoric. As Lee-Wong (1999: 21-23) argues, "easing the jolt' was a major purpose of ancient Chinese rhetoric" to the extent that saving face or avoiding embarrassment was one of the principal functions in social processes.

Below I will attempt to make an explicit link by referring what the above-mentioned authors have concluded about the link between the theories and by drawing my own conclusions based on the ideas presented above. I concern myself mainly with this link between rhetoric and face as this is central to both Chinese culture - as I show in chapter 4 - and to my analysis in chapter 5.

Genre is linked to discourse in the way they both evolve in a dynamic process of interaction between sender and receiver. Genres are communicative events that to some extent rely on recognition to be understood by the people belonging to the discursive community. Genres are thus typified practices that become predictable

categories. Discourse is realized through genre in social practice and activated through texts.

The way I study politeness and facework in my thesis relies exclusively on linguistic behaviour, excluding body language and other types of actions. It is therefore natural for me to use the linguistic science of rhetoric to classify and discuss my findings. Watts (2003: 55) has also found this to be a useful link because of the parallel concepts and purposes. In addition, politeness, like rhetoric, refers to “ways in which individuals use language socially” to realize various social values, for example through forms of address, subjects for discussion or the use of linguistic ritual expression (Watts 2003: 1, 48).

First, choosing the correct genre is a way of easing the communication and making the relationship between the communicators comfortable and well-understood. This is also the central purpose of politeness behaviour. The appropriate genre not only included the formulation of the message but also the appropriate medium and the requirements of the social context. Opting for the wrong combination of formulation and delivery may endanger the face of one or more of the communicators and may jeopardize their future relationship if the faux pas is grave enough. Threats to a receiver’s negative face may be an erroneous judgement of the requirements of the social context. For example, choosing the inappropriate time or place to make a statement can make an otherwise acceptable statement problematic. Think of the difference between telling someone they have dirt on their face in front of an audience, and doing so in private. Depending on the audience, making such a statement openly is a potential FTA. In private, on the other hand, it is more likely to be received as an act of concern for the person’s face. Showing that one recognizes the appropriate relationship between the actors and that one knows how to appropriately deliver a message appropriately is beneficial because it takes into account the face-wants and face-needs of the receiver by showing the receiver that the sender wants at least some of what the receiver wants.

Second, in modes of persuasion, I perceive the concept of ethos as being the most central to politeness. Ethos contains much of the same as Goffman’s

concept of face. Both refer to personality or image, are attributed to the speaker by the audience, and are not fixed qualities. Both may be gained, lost and given, follow the actors from one interaction to another, and must constantly be worked on and maintained. Face strategies are similar to ethos in that they are socially created and maintained and depend on the audience for their effectiveness (Brown and Levinson 1987: 243). Face is also often used as a metaphor for individual qualities and abstract entities such as honour, respect, esteem, the self etc that are features of ethos (Watts 2003: 119). A problem with an actor's ethos also implies a problem with the actor's face. If the audience does not find the sender to be credible the sender has no face and will have trouble appealing to common ground. There might, however, be a slight discrepancy between the two concepts. Whereas actors tend to cooperate on maintaining face for fear of retaliation, ethos is more easily and more subtly challenged because it relies more on unspoken perceptions, opinions and previous knowledge. Brown and Levinson's ideas of face as divided into positive and negative rites, originally used by Durkheim, is also sometimes echoed in theories of rhetoric (Holtgraves 1992: 143).

Third, using pathos or emotional appeal effectively requires familiarity with the knowledge, perceptions and ideology of the receiver. Without such understanding the sender cannot appropriately address the face-wants of the listener, for example while doing corrective facework. Think of the difference between the perception of US President George W. Bush's speeches among the American people domestically, who view them favourably, and among United Nations member states, who tend to view Bush's statements as "hypocritical" (Burkeman 2006).

Fourth, appeals to logos can be both preventive and corrective facework. An actor can present facts and arguments to prepare the receiver for a potential threat to his or her negative face, making it possible for the receiver to accept something he might not otherwise have accepted. Alternatively, it can be used after the threat to negative face has been made, by justifying the FTA with logical argument to as to offset the effect of the FTA. For example, a controversial political stance that some may find offensive can be justified linguistically by appealing to logos using data or arguments. It can even be negative politeness by

attributing the data or arguments to someone else. This means that such facework can be manipulative because the sender is rendered less open for criticism in that he is just the messenger – he is just retelling facts.

Finally, *topos* or inductive reasoning, when performed successfully, is typical of addresses to positive face because it implicitly appreciates and approves of the receiver's attitudes as the starting point of the argument. Particularly *topoi* in the form of *loci communes* can be such addresses to positive face because the sender may use fixed standard arguments or expressions that may originate from the receiver or the receiver's ideological standpoint. This may of course be manipulative in that the arguments may be used for a different purpose than was originally intended, but because of the familiarity of the argument, the receiver may be less critical of its exact content and implications.

Enthymemes as well as tropes and figures may appeal to communality and positive face, sometimes creating it or articulating it more than referring to it. However, since enthymemes leave out part of the argument, often what is supposed to be commonly known, such arguments may only appear to address the receiver's positive face. Sender and receiver may in fact have a divergent understanding of the same arguments and assume different things to be the "obvious" undeclared information. Tropes and figures are often embedded in a particular culture or political ideology. Using such devices is a way of identifying oneself as a member of the in- or the out-group. Identifying oneself as an in-group member implies an address to both positive and negative face because it draws on common ground and implies that the receiver will not need to fear FTAs. As sender and receiver are both members of the same group, FTAs may be less serious or at least more easily corrected among friends than adversaries. If the sender identifies him or herself as an outgroup member, on the other hand, these devices may take on a far more negative and face-threatening character than would otherwise have been the case. For example, the meaning of irony may be lost or euphemisms and metaphors may be perceived as disguised criticism and thus an FTA.

### 3. America's China policy

Both arms and armour are unblessed things. Not only men come to detest them, but a curse seems to follow them. Therefore, the one who follows the principle of TAO does not resort to arms. It is significant that in peaceful times, the place of honour is on the left and in war times it is on the right. For as arms are unblessed things, they are not the things that men of good character resort to.

From Tao Te Ching, the book of Tao by Lao Tzu, chapter 31

The purpose in this and the next chapter is to place the subsequent analysis of Chinese rhetoric in its proper context. These chapters thus present the social practice that frames discursive practice and text reading. I here present the background knowledge, conventions and assumptions that allow texts to attain a given meaning for the receiver. This framework is especially important for an understanding of genre conventions.

In this chapter I shall introduce the American understanding of China, its evolution, and its relation to political discourses on power relations. I present the general theoretical arguments and assumptions by studying the international relations theories that underlie and inform the current debate over China's future. I am interested in these theories only as typified texts in US foreign policy discourse in and regard them from a structural perspective. That is, I do not discuss the explanatory power and relevance of the various theories, nor do I argue for or against any given theory. Rather, I argue that the theories below and their substantive arguments are reflected in the implicit assumptions and explicit policies of the US in relation to China. Chinese authorities in turn take these theoretical assumptions into account in their diplomatic activities, and it is how the authorities use and respond to the theoretical arguments in their ethos-building efforts that I shall analyse.

To illustrate the relevance of the theories in an analysis of foreign policy behaviour and discourse, I shall first outline the central development in the US-China relationship from the American point to view. I then outline the theoretical arguments and point out examples of how the theories are reflected in US policy discourse. I devote more space to those theories which feature most prominently

in US and Chinese policy considerations. The Chinese approach is outlined in chapter four.

### **3.1 US-China Relations**

The relationship between the US and the People's Republic of China has been fraught with mutual suspicion, hostility and a general lack of understanding since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. From the beginning, the two had conflicting views on the status of Taiwan, the acceptable relations of power and influence in Asia, the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party which governs mainland China, and US world leadership. Over the last decade, bilateral security disputes and trade imbalances have been added to the list of obstacles to a harmonious relationship (Sutter 2005: 26-27; BBC News 1999: 5/24).

The United States took thirty years to establish official diplomatic relations with the PRC. After the communist victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949, the U.S. continued to support the nationalists who retreated to Taiwan. The US kept the communist authorities in Beijing in diplomatic isolation for over twenty years (Kho 1996: 2). During the years of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 70s, the two countries had no diplomatic links whatsoever, though they previously had maintained some contact through their respective ambassadors in Warsaw (Kissinger 1994: 719). Relations did not improve until US policy-makers - no longer "blinded by ideological preconceptions" - made Sino-American relations the key to their Soviet strategy under the Nixon Administration after 1971. By linking policy issues, the Nixon Administrations used a dramatic opening to China as a way to isolate the Soviet Union and encourage a *détente* in the bipolar relationship, allowing for a series of major foreign policy breakthroughs for the US (Kissinger 1994: 719-720). Playing the China "card" paved the way for the PRC to take China's seat in the UN in 1971, and gradually receive diplomatic recognition from the international community (Kissinger 1994: 728-729). However, normalization and resumption of official diplomatic relations between the US and China did not occur until January 1979, when President Jimmy Carter

reaffirmed the US commitment to the “One China” policy and confirmed that neither would seek hegemony in the Asian-Pacific region (Carter 1978).

By the end of the Cold War, the US-China strategic partnership against Russia and the Eastern Block was no longer central to US foreign policy. Instead, the Tiananmen Square Crisis of 1989 initiated an era of serious strain in the relationship between the two. Official dialogue at the highest level was closed down between 1989 and 1997 due to a number of disputes. US dissatisfaction with China’s human rights record, its alleged export of missile and nuclear technology, the mounting bilateral trade deficit in China’s favour, and serious hostilities over Taiwan strained the relationship (Harding 2004: 179-180). The Taiwan issue reached a climax in 1995-96 when conflicts over diplomatic conduct led to a military mini crisis in the Taiwan Straits, prompting the US to launch the biggest military show of force in the region since the Vietnam War (Kennedy 2003: 171; Havelly 1999).

The 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis alarmed the foreign policy establishment in the US and prompted a reconsideration of the country’s China policy. Maintaining close relations with Taiwan – which Beijing regards as a renegade province – while supporting the PRC’s “One China” was, and still is, sufficiently vexing to the PRC to tarnish other affairs between the two (Kennedy 2001). In 1997 the Clinton administration tried to turn this around by reopening high-level diplomatic relations (Harding 2004: 179-180; Sutter 2005: 85). However, the “engagement” policy of trying to establish a “constructive strategic partnership” did not lead to moves in the direction of political reform in the PRC, as originally hoped (Harding 2004: 183-185; Childs 2002). Renewed concerns over human rights violations came after clampdowns on religious dissidents, and allegations of corporate and military espionage. The dramatic increase in Chinese nationalism and anti-Americanism after the 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade led to the US government ceasing to refer to the relationship with China as a “strategic partnership” (Goldstein 2005: 147, 152).

After winning the 2000 Presidential election, the Bush administration inherited a host of concerns over China. With no clear China policy ready, the administration interpreted China’s growing prominence as ambiguous, and dealt

with this uncertainty within a broader US international strategy (Sutter 2005: 85). Uncertainty over whether China would become friend or foe led to a far less solicitous approach to China, and a redefining the relationship as one of “rival” and “competitor” rather than “partner” (Sutter 2005: 85; Goldstein 2005: 157). Washington accused China of stealing nuclear secrets from US government laboratories, funnelling illegal campaign contributions to Democratic Party officials and of human rights abuses (Kennedy 2001; Childs 2002). The April 2001 diplomatic stand-off over the spy plane incident appeared to drive Sino-American relations into a downward spiral (BBC News 2003: 10/29; Childs 2002).

However, after the terrorist strikes of September 11, 2001, American priorities were reordered and there was a return to the rhetoric of “a constructive and cooperative relationship”, albeit with the term “candid” added to set it apart from the less successful Clinton policy (Goldstein 2005: 158-159). The split between those who wish to contain and those who wish to engage China was pushed aside post September 11 in favour of a less confrontational policy (Sutter 2005: 28). Upon receiving support from China for the War on Terror, the US fast-tracked the arduous negotiations to admit China to the WTO in December 2001 – a move which the US had blocked in 1995 thus preventing China from becoming a founding member (Kennedy 2001; Childs 2002). The Bush administration began cooperating with China on a number of issues such as terrorism, international trade and investment, transnational crime, environmental issues and North Korea. Washington has also come to recognize that China is increasingly becoming the engine of regional and global growth and that stable ties with Beijing are of great strategic importance (Lampton 2005: 321; Goldstein 2005: 184-185).

In 2005, there were several signs that China had become an important consideration in US foreign policy, but that the mood towards China is now toughening again. First, the annual Pentagon report to Congress on China’s military power - which is always studied carefully in order to sense how China is seen in Washington - indicates a leaning towards the ‘China threat’ view (Marcus 2005). According to the report, China spends about two to three times more money on its military than official figures admit, making China the worlds third largest military spender after the US and Russia (Pentagon Report 2005: 21-22).



Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said of the report that it “clearly points up the reason that the President and the United States government have been urging the EU to not lift the arms embargo on the People’s Republic of China” (Marcus 2005). The shift is also clearly visible in the difference between the National Security Strategy (NSS) documents from 2002 and 2006.

In 2002 the tone was positive overall, and spoke in optimistic terms about mutual trade relations, China’s growing power and partnerships in the promotion of peace and prosperity in Asia. It even acknowledges China as a developing country – a major sticking point in the WTO negotiations. Only a few lines are devoted to a disclaimer, which conditions the envisioned bright future on the emergence of democracy and political openness, cooperative trade relations and non-proliferation (NSS 2002: 18, 20, 26-28). In the 2006 edition of the same document however, the up-beat tone has vanished, replaced by lengthy sombre admonitions. While recognising China as an engine of growth and regional partner, Washington now urges China to open its markets and warns that it “must act as a responsible stakeholder that fulfils its obligations and works with the United States and others to advance the international system that has enabled its success” (National Security Strategy 2006: 21, 26-28, 41). The document openly questions the “peaceful development” rhetoric coming from Beijing saying that “mutual interests *can* [my emphasis] guide our cooperation”. “China’s leaders must realize, however, that they cannot stay on this peaceful path while holding on to old ways of thinking and acting that exacerbate concerns throughout the region and the world” (NSS 2006: 41). These old ways include non-transparent military expansion, mercantilism and the locking-up of energy supplies and support for discredited regimes because they have resources China wants. The US explicit strategy is “to encourage China to make the right strategic choices for its people, while we hedge against other possibilities” (NSS 2006: 42).

Second, US Congress has become increasingly xenophobic and protectionist, threatening trade tariffs against China unless Beijing float its currency to even the trade conditions. In 2005, the US ran the largest bilateral trade deficit of any country in history, and the trade war with China has become *the* overriding economic issue in Washington (Hutton 2006; Stewart 2006). Third, US Secretary of State, Condoleezza

Rice, has publicly encouraged a policy of containment of China among America's allies, warning that China could become a "negative force" (Weisman 2006; Elliott 2006). Finally, in early 2006 there was a dramatic shift in US diplomacy. Diplomats were transferred from their positions in Europe and moved to China and the developing world. There were 74 new posts in all, 15 of these in China, 12 in India and five in Jakarta. This illustrates the change in the way the US engages with the world. Similar reshuffling of diplomatic engagement is taking place among European states that are also refocusing their strategic considerations, though mostly regarding trade matters (Borger, MacAskill and Watts 2006). On Hu Jintao's visit to the US in April 2006, the tension in the relationship was evident in the official diplomatic protocol. The US called it an "official visit", not a "state visit" which would have been Beijing's preference. The visit did not lead to any breakthroughs in diplomatic relations though US pressure elicited vague promises of "steps to reevaluate China's currency" and help restart negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program (BBC News 2006: 4/21).

### **3.2 Political Theory**

The theoretical arguments discussed below roughly fall into the classical dichotomy between realism and liberalism. However, I must emphasize that the arguments outlined here are radical simplifications. Actual arguments rarely, if ever, conform to just one of the theories and the theories themselves rest on such simplifications. Discussions are informed by a combination of the below discourses, but vary with regard to the degree of emphasis on the various elements. It is difficult to divide the following theoretical direction into favourable and unfavourable views of China's growth because all include some scenario that sees China as a threat. I have therefore chosen to order the discussion using the classical dichotomy between realist and liberal theories

#### **3.2.1 Realist argument**

The realist perspectives has been the most dominant tradition in thinking about international politics and it supports some of the most troubling predictions about the future of world politics with a rising China (Mearsheimer 2001: 55). The aspects discussed there concern the growth of Chinese power as structurally driven phenomenon leaving out possible influence by individuals (Li 2004: 26).

The overarching principle of realist theories is that all great powers worry about their power positions relative to other states (Mearsheimer 2001: 40). Power, though a troublesome concept, is commonly understood to refer to the military, economic and technological capabilities of a state (Gilpin 1989: 13-14). Latent power attributes such as abundant wealth, a large population and other material capabilities are prerequisites for building formidable military strength, and considerations of these capabilities is of critical importance to all states (Bert 2005: 15; Mearsheimer 2001: 55-56). Other base assumptions of realist theories include the notion that, in a world where states are the principal actors, the international system is essentially anarchic (Bull 1995: 8). The lack of any central authority to govern the behaviour of individual states leaves them in a self-help system that forces states to coalesce against would-be dominant powers. In this system states seek to protect their national interests by maximizing their economic and military power capabilities. It is the structure of the international system of states that largely determines foreign policy behaviour. Thus the behaviour of great powers, including their rise to power and pursuit of hegemony, is determined not so much by the state's intentions as by its capabilities (Mearsheimer 2001: 17-18, 40-41; Li 2004: 26). Finally, states compete for power among themselves and this thinking, which dominates states' calculations, is characterized by zero-sum thinking and may sometimes necessitate going to war, as this is an acceptable instrument of statecraft (Li 2004: 24-25, Mearsheimer 2001: 17-18).

Branches of realist theories are described as offensive or defensive according to their view of the cause of expansionist foreign policy behaviour. The various theories agree that the distribution of power among nations is central to the cause of war, but disagree on when states resort to the use of force and what distribution of power best maintains peace (Copeland 2000: 1; Mearsheimer 2001: 336). Defensive realists such as Robert Gilpin, Kenneth Waltz and Jack Snyder argue that states seek security and predict that states expand when they feel threatened. According to them, states have little incentive to seek additional increment of power but rather seek to maintain the status quo. States thus only expand because they must in order to maintain their security. Offensive realists like John Mearsheimer and Dale Copeland assert that states are concerned with

survival and that power is the key to that survival. Capabilities shape the intentions of states and the ultimate goal of any power is to be the hegemon in the system. A rising power is thus predicted to expand at advantageous moments against weaker competitors because they can, not because they need to (Zakaria 1999: 9, 18-22; Mearsheimer 2001: 18-20).

### 3.2.1.1 Power preponderance and power transition theory

Power preponderance theory and power transition theory, though distinct theories in the abstract, are difficult to set apart in the discourse on China. Many of the assumptions they make are the same and actors often use arguments from both theories. For the sake of simplicity and brevity I shall discuss these theories in tandem. There is agreement among theorists that a preponderant power in the system of states fosters stability and peace. “Peace is best preserved when there is an imbalance of national capabilities between disadvantaged and advantaged nations” (Mearsheimer 2001: 336; Organski and Kugler 1980: 19). They also agree that shifts in the relative capabilities in the state system” is an important cause of conflict (Organski and Kugler 1980: 19). The leading state, or hegemon, ensures an international system of relative peace and security by drawing on its wealth, power and status to set the rules of the game. It assumes these responsibilities because the benefits of a stable system functioning according to its preferred rules outweigh the associated costs (Gilpin 1989: 145). Over time, the leading power may weaken its grip on preponderance and be challenged by dissatisfied rising powers that try to alter the rule of the international system to their advantage. The two theories differ in their view of the conflict-causing mechanism that is at work at this stage of the process.

Robert Gilpin argues in power preponderance theory that, over time, the cost of dominance tends to rise, draining the leading power of its superior strength. Rival powers increase in numbers and strength, forcing the dominant state to “expend more resources to maintain its superior military or political position”. In addition, the military and economic techniques of the dominant state tend to diffuse to other states, redistributing power, thereby depriving the state of the basis of its success (Gilpin 1989: 145, 168-169, 176). As its relative power

increases, a rising state may attempt to change the rules of the international system to its advantage. The dominant power tries to restore equilibrium by changing its policies. In pursuing this, the dominant state may engage in some form of hegemonic war by attempting to eliminate the challenger or expand its territory to acquire a less costly, defensive position. Alternatively, it can reduce the costs by reducing foreign policy commitments - political, territorial or economic retrenchment. The first option may lead to overextension and subsequent decline while the second option may have adverse effects on relations with allies and rivals because retrenchment signals weakness and decline enticing rivals to close in and allies to waver in their loyalty (Gilpin 1989: 187, 191-194).

Organski and Kugler argue in power transition theory that the conditions of the “crossover” period – the point where the challenger surpasses the leading state – and the degree of satisfaction states feel with regard to the status quo determine the probability of conflict. The potential for crossover is dependent on the relative power of the hegemon and challenger, and the risk of conflict depends on the level of satisfaction with the current and prospective new system felt by the old and the new leading power (Lemke 1997: 23-24). Dissatisfied challengers often had no share in the creation of the international status quo and the dominant nation is not likely to grant the newcomer more than a small share of the advantages it receive. Challengers seek to establish a new place for themselves internationally that grants them the place to which they feel entitled. Such dissatisfied challengers have often grown rapidly in power and expect continued growth thus have reason to believe that they can rival or surpass the power of the dominant state, and are thus unwilling to accept a subordinate position (Organski and Kugler 1980: 19-20).

The source of war is found in the crossover period when the differences in size and rates of growth between the challenger and the hegemon are narrowing. The risk of war is especially high when the *military power* of a dissatisfied challenger or revisionist state begins to approach that of the dominant power. It is the *interaction* of the relative capabilities and the *speed* with which it happens, not the equality or capabilities in themselves that are destabilizing. When the power gap narrows, the leading state becomes ever more desperate to prevent a takeover, and

the challenger becomes more determined to succeed. If the development of a rival is slow, differences have a greater chance of being resolved, whereas if development is quick, both parties may be unprepared for the result (Organski and Kugler 1980: 20-21; Bert 2005: 15-16). It may be that the calculations of power leading to conflict are subject to misperception, but these may nevertheless provide a short-term explanatory variable explaining the onset of war (Wolforth 1987: 381).

The United States is the most powerful state in the system and China is regarded as the challenger - suspected of being dissatisfied with the status quo. Both power preponderance theory and power transition theory generate expectations of a capable Beijing demanding a larger role in the management of international affairs and thus intruding on the domains hitherto dominated by the US (Organski and Kugler 1980: 21; Goldstein 2005: 82-85; Li 2004: 25). As China's military, economic and technological power increases, two scenarios are envisaged. Either the US may overextend itself and gradually be unable to devote sufficient resources to maintain its former advantage over its competitors. Or it may act pre-emptively to preclude a transition while it still has the military and economic advantage. The use of force then becomes more likely when either the Chinese challenger fields a stronger army in support of its demands for greater influence in Asia, or when the US tries to hinder a crossover (Goldstein 2005: 81-83).

The rapid rise of China implies a major shift in the distribution of power in the international system because of China's enormous size in terms of its economy, population and geographical reach. The theoretical assumptions from the above theories are clearly reflected in recent US foreign policy discourse. The two National Security Strategy documents paint a picture of the US as the hegemon in the international system responsible for upholding the current international order - policing international agreements and maintaining peace and stability. The 2005 Pentagon report and the 2006 National Security Strategy especially echo power transition theory because they reveal unease on the American side with the speed and direction of China's military modernization.

The documents do not explicitly say the US regards China as being a dissatisfied power, but it is implied by the insistence that China adjust to the international norms advocated by the US (such as democracy, free trade, open markets and shunning discredited regimes).

### 3.2.1.2 Balance of power theory

David Hume argues that the concept of balance of power has been well-known since ancient times but that the idea has several distinct meanings. Today, the most common understanding of balance of power is that suggested by Kenneth Waltz (Doyle 1997: 134). Balance of power theory draws on the logic of game theory, but differs from it in that “the stakes of the game are considered to be of unusual importance” and that “in international politics the use of force is not excluded as a means of influencing the outcome” (Waltz 2001: 205). Great powers balance, that is, they seek parity or stability, against states with intimidating military capabilities, because such capabilities constitute a threat to their survival. States seek balance whether or not they wish to because their goal is to survive in an anarchic system, and states can seldom make maximizing power their goal (Waltz 1979: 126-127). The logic of balancing suggests that the level of fear between great powers varies with changes in distribution of power rather than with changes in assessments about each actor’s intentions. Great powers also pay attention to the capabilities of rival states and their prospects of military advancement. “Thus, great powers tend to fear states with large populations and rapidly expanding economies, even if these states have not yet transformed their wealth into military might” (Mearsheimer 2001: 45-46; Waltz 1996: 114-115).

There are two aspects of balance of power theory that deserve special attention: polarity and the security dilemma. First, polarity relates to the distribution of power in the international system. The debate concerns which system, the bipolar or multipolar, is the most dangerous or least likely to facilitate international peace (Waltz 1979: 129-160). Bipolar arguments concentrate on the risk of hostile overreactions to a single adversary. In bipolar systems imbalances may be righted only by the internal efforts of the two powers, but the balancing act is far simpler because internal balancing is more reliable and precise. There is

less chance of the uncertainty and miscalculation that cause wars because single states are less likely to misjudge their relative strengths than are opposing coalitions (Waltz 1979: 168; Waltz 2001: 198-210). In multipolar situations, says Mearsheimer (1990: 14) the number of conflict dyads is greater and deterrence is harder because imbalances of power are multiple. Complexity increases and there are more possibilities of miscalculations. In addition come the potential problems resulting from buck-passing in response to military adventurism.

China favours a multipolar system and the fear is that China could be tempted to attempt military adventures to advance its interests on the basis that other powers would fail to balance it in a timely fashion. Alternatively, there is some fear of a Sino-American rivalry similar to the Soviet-American conflict during the Cold War (Goldstein 2005: 89).

Second, security dilemma logic, derived from the prisoner's dilemma of game theory, states that the anarchic nature of the international system makes states feel insecure and thus they take measures to secure themselves (Elster 1989: 126-132). States arm themselves for the sake of security and set in motion an arms race cycle where each party feels compelled to buy more arms because an improvement in the security of one state is a threat to other states who then respond by arming themselves further. The goal is deterrence by means of a credible threat of unacceptable retaliatory consequence. None of the parties desires conflict, but the nature of the system makes it impossible to establish binding commitments and difficult to interpret other's capabilities and intentions making the system unstable and susceptible to unintended provocation (Waltz 1979: 186-189). This scenario is particularly pertinent to China's interest in the South China Sea – especially Taiwan. Here, China's improvements in military power projection capabilities and assertions of sovereignty over waters and territory under dispute (Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, the Spratleys and Taiwan) could be interpreted as signs that China plans to undertake offensive military actions (Goldstein 2005: 90-92).

Balance of power concerns were a clear motivation for the reopening of diplomatic relations and admittance of the PRC to the UN in 1971. As stated above it was Kissinger and Nixon's explicit goal to use the PRC to balance against



the Soviet Union. More recently, China's military development has to some extent invoked security dilemma thinking. The US realizes that its interests conflict with those of China and strategic uncertainties prevail about the advantages of offence versus defence. Furthermore, the lack of transparency, especially on the Chinese side heightens uncertainty and concern on the American side – as demonstrated in the carefully worded Pentagon report on the Chinese military (Goldstein 2005: 16-17).

The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC) has warned Congress of the narrowing gap in the US's advantage in economic, military and other geostrategic terms. Especially China's energy policies cause concerns because of the environmental impact and the possibility of future competition for limited resources such as oil and gas (USCC 2005).

### **3.2.1 Liberal argument**

Liberal theories are aligned along a spectrum and are less homogenous in their core assumptions than realist theories. Their common feature is their tendency to focus on domestic rather than international features, and take into account factors such as culture, ideology and political structure to explain states' foreign policy choices (Doyle 1997: 208-209; Li 2004: 30). Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the importance of the freedom of the individual, especially the freedom from arbitrary authority (Doyle 1997: 206). There are three strands of liberal thinking – economic, social and political – that each seek to explain how the effects of anarchy between states may be offset (Nye 2005: 44, 207)

#### **3.2.1.1 Regime perspectives**

The regime perspectives argue that grounds for worrying about China's rise are not found in the distribution of power among states or the condition of international anarchy. Rather, they worry about the consequences of the nature of the political regime ruling China.

Democratic Peace Theory, as proposed by Doyle (1997), emphasize that liberal states tend to exercise peaceful restraint, due to domestic institutional restraints on leaders, providing them with common strategic interests and landing them on the same side in impeding world wide conflict. They also share the belief

that use military force is neither necessary nor desirable when dealing with other liberal democracies because leaders of liberal democracies are seen as legitimately representing the will of their people and deserving of respect. Non-liberal democracies do not enjoy this freedom from foreign intervention from liberal states, and vice versa. Furthermore, authoritarian leaders “both stimulate and respond to an international political environment in which conflicts of prestige, of interest, and of pure fear of what other states might do all lead states to war” (Doyle 1996: 313-314)

China is not a liberal democracy and is thus outside the zone of peace and its growing power would be internationally disruptive because of its assumed greater potential for belligerence. Liberal democracies would feel justified in adopting a confrontational view against a state whose leaders is neither constrained by representative institutions nor accountable to anybody but a secretive elite. Furthermore, an authoritarian Chinese regime would also be a likely belligerent in a great power war (Goldstein 2005: 93-94).

Democratic transition theory as offered by Mansfield and Snyder (1995) rests on similar logic to that of democratic peace theory. It proposes that it is during the shift from authoritarianism to democracy that states are likely to adopt disruptive foreign policies. Democratic control over foreign policies is only partial and there is a volatile mix of elite and democratic politics potentially leading to “insipient nationalism and war” (Mansfield and Snyder 1995: 5-6). The ideological foundations of Communist China are eroding and the CCP’s tenuous political legitimacy is based more and more on nationalism. The growth of nationalism feeds fears abroad of a belligerent foreign policy in an attempt to regain ancient glory. Leaders may also tap into volatile nationalist sentiment in an attempt to gain legitimacy and popular support in order to outshine their competitors within the CCP (Gries 2004: 116-150; Zhao 2004 a: 248-249).

The Clinton administration’s 1997 ‘engagement’ policy clearly reflects the democratic peace theory logic in its attempt to offset strategic problems by instigating democratic political reform in China. More recently the National Security Strategy documents declares in the opening letter by President Bush that leading the community of democracies is one of two pillars upon which US

security strategy rests. Bush declares the community of democracies to be essential to multinational efforts to combat cross-border security problems. This has changed from 2002 when democracy was declared essential for national success and that “America will encourage the advancement of democracy and economic openness” in both China and Russia (NSS 2002: 4). The 2006 document is less categorical, instead emphasising stability: “Because democracies are the most responsible members of the international system, promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability; reducing regional conflict; countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism; and extending peace and prosperity” (NSS 2006: 3)

### 3.2.1.2 Institutional perspective

Internationalist theory comes from the social strand of liberal theory and is based on the assumption of rational behaviour and argues that institutions can affect state strategies because they mitigate the effects of anarchy (Haftendorn, Keohane and Wallander 1999: 327). Institutions are said to “facilitate cooperation, modify state power, and alter the way in which states identify and pursue their interests” (Ikenberry 2001: 14). By stabilising expectations and lengthening the time perspective of the actors, institutions reduce the acuteness of the security dilemma. They do this in four ways. First, institutions provide a sense of continuity and generate expectations of future cooperation by imposing costs for defecting, establish standards and monitor conformity. Second, they provide an opportunity for reciprocity that allows for non-zero sum interaction because transactions over time are likely to balance out leaving no party worse off than they otherwise would have been in the long run. Third, institutions provide a flow of information and rules of transparency, making cheating harder to conceal. Finally, they provide ways and means by which to resolve conflicts (Haftenforn, Keohane and Wallander 1999: 7, 9; Nye 2005: 46). Institutions are established largely because of uncertainty about other states’ intentions and likely strategies, generating a need for information. Through international institutions actors can influence how others see the world and be able to provide credible information. The establishment of institutions depends on the (expected) durability of the

problems faced and issue density and interdependence actors face (Wallander and Keohane 1999: 31-32). Wallander and Keohane (1999) also implicitly refer to the common values, cultural similarity and common interests that are necessary for successful institutional management of conflict.

East Asia is far less homogenous and harmonious than Western Europe and North America where the strongest support for the theory is found. Conditions necessary for trust and cooperation, such as common interests, similar culture and an overarching transnational identity, appear to be absent from Asia. In addition, a preference for bilateral rather than multilateral approaches to problem solving, as China has shown in the past, precludes the establishment of more effective regional institutions (Goldstein 2005: 97-98).

The US has sought to involve China in international institutions since allowing the PRC to take China's seat in the UN in 1971. Drawing the PRC into the UN, the WTO and other international organisations has been an attempt to integrate China into the international economic system and to compel China to become a global player that behaves like a "responsible stakeholder" (NSS 2006: 41). The motivation is that "China shares our exposure to the challenges of globalization and other transnational concerns" (NSS 2006: 41). International organisations is the avenue through which the US and China can manage their relationship because these involve both opportunities and obligations. Additionally, the organisations are regarded as vehicles for promoting democratic reform in partner countries (NSS 2006: 6).

### 3.2.1.3 Interdependence perspective

Interdependence perspective, based on the economic perspective of liberal theory, is one of the most frequently used discourses. It appears on the American and the Chinese side as both a goal and a motivation for policy. Interdependence, simply put, refers to mutual dependence characterised by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries (Nye 2005: 198). "These effects often result from international transactions – flows of money, goods, people and messages across international boundaries" (Keohane and Nye 1999: 7).

Interdependence can “originate in physical (i.e. in nature) or a social (economic, political, or perceptual) phenomena”, but quite often has elements of both (Nye 2005: 198). However, such interconnections in transactions can only be called interdependence if the transactions are of significant importance to the parties involved. The degree of importance of a transaction to the parties may also vary, making the power relationship between the actors asymmetrical. Being less dependent can be a source of power, and actors may try to link issues to improve their bargaining position. Complex webs of linkages may also restrict the behaviour of otherwise strong actors because of the extended implications of the use of force. Much of the political conflict over interdependence involves the creation or prevention of issue linkage (Nye 2005: 203-204). Interdependence can also involve short-run sensitivity and long-term vulnerability costs, which may also be asymmetrically distributed among the actors. Sensitivity refers to the speed and effect with which changes in one part of the system bring about effects in another, as well as the associated cost of these effects. Vulnerability, on the other hand, refers to the relative cost of changing the structure of the system of interdependence – the availability and costliness of changing the rules of the game or seeking alternative solution (Keohane and Nye 1999: 10-11; Nye 2005: 200-201).

The theory of complex interdependence, developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, is a thought experiment in reversing the core (defensive) realist assumptions of states as the only significant actors, military force as the dominant instrument, and security as the dominant goal. In complex interdependence, transnational actors working across state boundaries may also be significant actors. Economic manipulation and the use of international institutions are also significant instruments. And welfare is the dominant goal. (Nye 2005: 207). Complex interdependence is characterised by multiple channels connecting societies, the absence of hierarchy among issues, and the minor role played by military force. The multiple channels connecting societies may be formal or informal interstate, transgovernmental, and transnational relations. The absence of hierarchy among issues arises from the fact that foreign affairs agendas are larger and more diverse. Conflicts related to energy, resources, environment, and

population impinge on one another and cannot be subordinated to military security. The minor role played by the military is due to the widened perceived margin of safety, particularly among industrialized, pluralist countries. Military force is often not an effective way to achieve goals of welfare (Keohane and Nye 1999: 21-24). The alternative to hard military power is Nye's concept of 'soft power'. Soft power describes that ability of a state or other entity to influence another actor and get them to do what one wants. It is an indirect way to get others to want what you want without resorting to inducements or threats. This aspect of power rests intangible resources such as culture, ideology and institutions and leads, when successfully applied, to get other actors to want what you want. Nye (2005: 61) argues that soft power, especially the ability to set the agenda and to define issues, is becoming more important among postindustrial societies. By contrast, he argues that direct ways of applying power is more important in industrialising and pre-industrial parts of the world.

Chances for conflicts in systems of complex interdependence may appear in two instances. First, in the case of drastic social and political change, force could again become an important direct instrument of policy. Second, "even when elites' interests are complementary, a country that uses military force to protect another may have significant political influence over the other country" (Keohane and Nye 1999: 24)

From this perspective, the U.S. and China may be described as being in an interdependent relationship. They trade heavily with one another, and, though China enjoys a surplus of exports to the U.S., it is also dependent on this export for continued growth. The U.S. holds the power to alter the system by e.g. erecting trade barriers, while China supplies goods wanted on the U.S. market and is also an important market for U.S. products. A dramatic change in the current relationship of mixed cooperation and competition could lead the current mutual suspicion to discontinue the current trajectory and move towards greater trust (BBC News 2006: 04/19). A severe reduction in international trade would significantly hamper China's ability to sustain the high rates of economic growth necessary for the state to have any hope of emerging as a great power (Goldstein 2005: 99).

#### **4. Image, Culture and Political Rhetoric in the PRC**

“To achieve harmony is the most valuable function of observing ritual propriety. In the ways of the Former Kings, this achievement of harmony made them elegant, and was a guiding standard in all things large and small”

From ‘The Analects’ of Confucius, Chapter 1.12

In this chapter I shall discuss the social practice which frames the subsequent analysis. I include significant political and cultural factors which influence Beijing’s behaviour. I especially concern myself especially with previous ethos-building efforts as the planned and continuous distribution of ethos bound information aimed at improving others’ perception of the PRC. This is not an effort to disclose “false consciousness” in the Gramscian sense, as Fairclough does, or “hidden agendas” as found in PR theory. My approach is closer to rhetorical theory in that I regard the actors as genuine communicator.

I argue that, in addition to political and economic circumstances, culture and established social practices have an impact on the diplomatic conduct of states. Below I outline important features of Chinese culture and social practices, both in general terms and as they manifest themselves in foreign policy behaviour and rhetoric. I use a definition of culture found in anthropology and sociology that conceptualises it as being values, norms and behaviour or artefacts that together make a system of meaning whereby people interact with one another (Krieken et al 2000: 7). I study political behaviour in the Chinese culture in relation to Western political culture, as far as there is such a thing, by emphasising differences and adaptations. I point out how some key words and verbal behaviour have a particular meaning, which functions these serve and how their use reflects culture. However, cultural members are active participants that do not just abide by prescribed values and rules, but often choose ways around them, borrow from other cultures, or invent new alternatives to solve emerging problems. I therefore do not regard behaviour as a demonstration of static and unchanging cultural characteristics. Instead, behaviour is conceived as ways through which cultural members, using their particular coding systems, communicate and deal with the particular complex of problems before them.

I realize that using the above approach to studying Chinese political behaviour is problematic because I risk cultivating a view of Chinese rhetoric and culture as a peculiar other. However, I maintain that including the cultural perspective is important because, as Lee (2003) and Lu (2002) argue, rhetoric is culturally based in meanings and practices, and recognizing the differences “allows us to describe and evaluate a rhetorical system on its own terms and thus reduce the chance of imposing an ethnocentric view of rhetoric onto other cultures” (Lu 2002: 108). I look especially at politeness conventions because, as Fairclough (1992: 163) notes, investigating the politeness conventions of a given genre or discourse type is one way of gaining insight into social relations within the practices and institutional domains with which it is associated. Particulars of politeness conventions, and their use, implicitly acknowledge specific features of social and power relations.

In this section I shall first outline the particular characteristics of Chinese culture. The features on which I concentrate are based on Confucian traditions and stratagems stemming from Daoism and the military treatise “The Art of War” by Sun Tzu. These works form the basis of values, norms, and especially concepts of politeness that are well-known in East Asia. An understanding of these traditions is central to understanding the PRC’s foreign policy discourse as they inform much of their rhetorical behaviour. However, Confucianism was condemned during the revolutionary era, especially during the Cultural Revolution, and thus does not feature overtly in the rhetoric from this period. It is only over the last decade that Confucianism has been revived and has found an official place in political rhetoric once again, alongside Daoism and the strategic teachings of Sun Tzu. The ancient canons have been revived in the guise of nationalism because, it is alleged, there is a lack of new ideological orientation and thus a vacuum with regard to regime legitimacy after the gradual de facto demise of Chinese communism since the country opened up in 1979 (Seligman 1999: 52; Kang 2005: 58; Zhao 2004 a: 29). President Hu Jintao now refers explicitly to these philosophical traditions and they also permeate modern Chinese idioms (Watts 2006). Second, I briefly discuss how the philosophies above are incorporated into general rhetorical behaviour. Finally,



I provide a synopsis of Beijing's foreign policy behaviour and rhetoric since 1949 until the first two years of Hu Jintao's leadership.

#### **4.1 Chinese philosophy and culture of politeness**

The philosophical foundations of the particular characteristics of Chinese behaviour are articulated in the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. These teachings form the ethical and philosophical system that emphasizes a number of virtues. These virtues are summarized in eight concepts that are what Wiersbicka (1991) refers to as "cultural key-words", or words that are of particular importance in a given language, revealing significant aspects of the culture of speakers. These concepts are loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, love, trust, justice, harmony, and peace – known as the eight virtues. They form the basis of what is considered polite and appropriate behaviour in Chinese society and are the hallmarks of a true gentleman. (Seligman 1999: 52; Cortazzi and Shen 2001: 126). The Confucian ruler needs to be conspicuous and set a good example, and these virtues figure prominently in Confucius' view of ruler and government. It is only by having the moral power of a gentleman that a government may hold the 'Mandate of Heaven', or legitimacy as a ruler (Bary and Bloom 1999: 27, 42-43)

These virtues are expressed in the relationship-based social organization of Chinese society. Actors hold a particular status in hierarchic relationships which determine how they should behave with regard to others (Stockman 2000: 71-73, 79). In contrast to the Western concept of an "individual" as an independent entity with free will, emotions and personality, the Chinese individual is defined by its surrounding relations or groups (Gao 1996: 83). Seligman (1999: 44) refers to individualism versus group-centeredness as "the single most important fundamental difference between Chinese and Westerners". For the Chinese, the construction of the self tends to be interdependent. The importance of others in defining the self sets boundaries for the appropriate interaction between individuals and groups. It leads to a tendency to behave in accordance with external expectations or social norms, rather than personal wishes or integrity (Gao 1996: 84; Stockman 2000: 76). This group mentality also means that a real

premium is place on consensus. An issue may be debated at length, but when a decision has been made, individual group members are expected to fall into line, embrace the decision and act on it without question - at least overtly. There are real limits to when and under what circumstances it is permissible to express individual differences (Seligman 1999: 45, 47). This is visible in the particularistic nature of relationships, defining obligations to others based on the specific nature and network associations of a given relationship. The stability of society is built on unequal relationships between people based on the concept of filial piety and measured against the standard for ritual propriety. This is in contrast to the Western organizational mode of association in which members of the same organization enjoy clear and equal membership. Obligations to others are regulated by norms which apply equally to all members of a category, whereas in China, norms of ritual propriety depend on the particular relationship where there are no fixed groups with defined memberships. For example, a junior partner owes the senior partner respect and obedience, and the senior partner owes the junior protection and consideration (Stockman 2000: 73; Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 208-209). Furthermore, relationships and actions are thought of in long-term perspectives (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 211). This can take the form of lengthy exchanges of favours to establish social relationship or connections, or *guanxi*. *Guanxi* describes the manner in which Chinese strategically employ relations as a social resource (Lu 2000: 14;

Exercising ritual propriety is closely linked to the concept to “face” which plays a vital role in the established social code of Chinese culture. It can be divided into “moral face” and “social face”, but for the purpose of this analysis I treat them as one because they are used interchangeably as referring to the sense of being aware of oneself as a locus of observation by others. The state of one’s ‘face’ describes the confidence of society in the integrity of a person’s moral character, one’s social respectability, reputation and prestige. Loss of face may make it difficult or impossible for an individual to function properly within the community because it equals the loss of humanity.

Face can be lost, gained and given and is of grave concern to the Chinese. However, an individual’s face not only concerns the individual but also the

collective, for example the family. “Face needs” therefore, serve to regulate a person’s behaviour. Maintaining face is a balancing act implying reciprocity – in looking after the face of others one ensures that one’s face is being looked after in return. This means that public conversations tend to become ritualized to avoid face-threatening situations, whereas private conversations are substantive (Jia 2001: 39, Lee-Wong 2000: 21, 24; Gao 1996: 94-95; Seligman 1999: 53). However, “Face”, as Goffman points out, is by no means unique to Chinese society. Instead, it is a more well-known and finely-tuned concept explicitly referred to in social interaction (Stockman 2000: 78).

Face is closely tied to the concept of *liamo*, or manners, courtesy and politeness known as ritual propriety. It is a code of conduct defining how one should behave in all situations, public and private - a part of normative politeness expected of individuals in any social interaction. Face and politeness in this sense are two sides of the same coin. Whereas face is attributive – what individuals accord to one another - *liamo* is prescriptive – what society lays down as rules to be observed. In observing social etiquette, the face of the other is attended to. Face maintenance is an ethical responsibility, while *liamo* is a social responsibility. The two concepts are intricately linked and it may be difficult to determine whether etiquette is strategically or normatively motivated. Observing the rules of politeness may be done for a variety of reasons, often to be strategic and to preserve surface harmony (Lee-Wong 2000: 25-26). Cultural norms hold that politeness involves showing modesty and humility, almost to the point of being self-deprecating. Value is placed on reserve and formality as well as on restraint and inhibition of strong feelings, because control of emotional expressions is a sign of maturity. Direct confrontation or criticism is seen as insulting or arrogant, behaviour that is likely to become a threat to someone’s face. The Chinese prefer more indirect ways of communicating, often layering messages with multiple meanings (Seligman 1999: 52; Gao 1996: 85, 91; Lee-Wong 2000: 19; Lafayette de Mente 2004: 179, 181, 183).

### 4.3 Chinese rhetorical style

The traditional view of Chinese rhetoric is that it “always rely upon idioms, clichés, and set phrases”, offering repetitions of assertions rather than proofs and premises. The most defining characteristic is seen as the use of “indirection” in language and actions, and the concern about “avoiding the kind of overtness that leaves nothing subtextual” (Liu 1996: 318). Individuality and originality, much valued in the West, are replaced with the use of already established forms and phrases or what I call standard topoi in chapter 2. In short, the defining characteristics of Chinese rhetoric are seen to be diametrically opposite to Western rhetorical style and preferences. This is an exaggeration of the differences, however, and is only a starting point (Liu 1996: 318, 330).

There is a lack of research exploring the specific areas of similarity and difference between the two cultures of rhetorical behaviour. In a stereotyped characterization, the differences may be found in a general lack of logic, depreciation of speech and audience centeredness in Chinese rhetoric, whereas in Western rhetoric the speaker is central, logical systems are well-developed and delivery is dynamic (Lu 2002: 8). Lee (2003: 365-366) found that native Chinese writers tended to leave some gap in the text for further interpretation by the readers, leaving out specific details and preferring non-specific references. This may be a part of politeness work or efforts to maintain social harmony (Chang 2001: 156). Indirect forms of communication, using imprecise, ambiguous verbal communication behaviours may protect the participant’s face by being less assertive and more self-effacing. Aggression may be toned down or inhibited to avoid direct confrontation, and silence, negativism or passive resistance may be used (Chang 2001: 157; Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey 1988: 122 quoted in Chang 2001: 158). Chinese treat communication as a way of reaffirming the communicator as a member of society and of maintaining existing relationships, social harmony and status credentials (ref. *liamo* above) (Chang 2001: 158).

However, the emphasis on harmony has certain limits. There is a tendency to “cleverly craft messages to communicate competition and frustration, while maintaining a front of harmonious relationship”, and unkind messages are often communicated under a guise of harmony or friendly gestures. It is a well know

strategy in traditional Chinese politics to use clever language, employing metaphor, analogy, irony and other rhetorical devices to utter criticism (Chang 2001: 159). The desire to maintain social harmony provides other, less direct ways, of designing communication strategies that can be highly manipulative and intended for personal benefit even though they appear not to be at a surface level (Chang 2001: 174). Non-contention is often used to maintain balance and manage conflicts so as not to disrupt harmony and threaten face. Moreover, deception of out-group members is considered acceptable and strategically wise as lying is not considered morally wrong in such relationships (Lu 2002: 16-17).

In the case of adversarial relations, especially if trust is lacking, the Chinese will make use of traditional stratagems as a form of psychological wrestling (Ghauri and Fang 1999: 12-15). These are carefully devised tactics or strategies to deal with various kinds of situations in order to gain a psychological and material advantage over one's adversary. Most are found in the classical work in Chinese strategic thinking "Art of War" by Sun Tzu - a 6<sup>th</sup> century BC general and military strategist. The stratagems include such behaviour as deception, attacking the opponent's vulnerabilities, espionage, manipulating friendship and hospitality, playing the competitors against each other, benchmarking and flexibility (Ghauri and Fang 1999: 12-15). These stratagems differ from traditional Western thinking on strategy, captured in Clausewitz' *On War*. Western strategy often involves "absolute force" whereas the Chinese assert superiority using human wisdom, preferably without fighting (Ghauri and Fang 1999: 12).

#### **4.4 Foreign policy - history and rhetoric**

The following discussion of Chinese foreign policy behaviour relates to all actors as representatives of a system rather than as individual actors. This is meaningful because the party-state symbiosis between the CCP and the PRC makes distinctions meaningless. The state's ideological apparatus ensures that political communication is uniform throughout the nation, either by force or by cultivation of consensus behaviour (Qui 2000: 251). The following is a summary of past events that have contributed to the current state of the Chinese ethos

#### 4.4.1 The Mao era

On its establishment in 1949 and until the end of the Mao era between 1976 and 1978, the PRC was a revolutionary state, applying a highly articulate and systematic Communist ideology to foreign policy. That is, continuous revolution, both internally and externally, was the state's first priority and all non-communist countries were regarded as enemies (Qui 2000: 256; Bert 2003: 110). China regarded itself as an outsider trying to change the international status quo within the international community (Zhao 1996: 40-41; Zhao 2004 b: 7). The country was diplomatically isolated after it failed to gain control over Taiwan immediately after the communist victory on the mainland in 1949. Instead, Taiwan established itself as the Republic of China (ROC), gaining international recognition as the legitimate Chinese government and China's seat in the UN. Since then, Taiwan's status has been a sensitive issue in PRC foreign policy, even after the majority of the international community had switched diplomatic recognition to the PRC during the 1970s (Zhao 1996: 47). In a hostile international environment, the PRC attempted to prevent threats to the regime by using aggressive rhetoric and frequent use of force as diplomatic deterrence to protect its security (Zhao 1996: 49). In fact, China was second only to the United States in the use of force, attaining the highest average level of hostility and violence in its disputes (Bert 2003: 109). However, China also had a reputation for bluffing. In the 1950s, Chinese diplomacy was discredited by a series of unfulfilled threats and self-imposed deadlines for the "liberation" of Taiwan that were not met (Sartori 2005: 33-36).

In response to its failure on the diplomatic front, Beijing presented a new line of policy in 1954 which reduced the ideological content of the PRC's foreign policy. The *five principles of peaceful coexistence*, 1) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, 2) mutual non-aggression, 3) non-interference in internal affairs, 4) equality and mutual benefit, and 5) peaceful coexistence are still official policy (Bert 2003: 110, Wu 2004: 61). At the time, these overlapping principles and the softer approach to foreign policy was an attempt to appeal both to a broad range of third world countries and justify continued support for insurgent movements in Southeast Asia (Bert 2003: 110; Wu 2004: 61). The application of

the principles to specific issues has been difficult, and Beijing has often pragmatically opted to compromise principles for a more realistic approach which serves Chinese interests (Wu 2004: 62).

The principles also reflect China's intense concern over sovereignty. Beijing's concept of sovereignty includes the moral values of justice, equality and mutual respect. Any perceived violations of these principles are identified as threats to the country's sovereignty (Wang 2002: 218). This concern over sovereignty is driven by three factors. First, during what is referred to as the 'century of humiliation', from the opium wars in 1839 to the end of Japanese occupation in 1945, "China suffered from political, economic, and military aggression by the West". The "victim" discourse inspired by this historical period has been an important frame for Chinese interactions with the West (Gries 2005: 46-47; Wu 2004: 59). It reflects a fear of losing face - giving rise to a "sour grapes" mentality and an official rhetoric of pretending not to want what they could not have (Gries 2005: 62). Second, China claims to differ from Western notions of state building in its unique value system supporting a distinctive political and legal system. This claim rests on China's claim to status as a developing socialist state and Lee Kwan-Yew's Confucian-inspired 'Asian values' (Wu 2004: 59-60; Stockman 2000: 91). As a result, China tends to invoke the principle of sacrosanctity when referring to its sovereignty. Third, some disputed territories are central to Chinese domestic politics as Beijing has invested significant prestige in conflict outcomes in these areas. The central government fears for its territorial integrity and stability of the regime if Tibet, Xinjiang or Taiwan attain any semblance of independence, or there is too much foreign interference in the management of these territories (Wu 2004: 59-60; Bert 2003: 54). China's lack of engagement in international organizations until the mid 1990s reflects this concern over sovereignty. Such organizations were regarded as vehicles of Western imperialism until the attitude gradually eased after China's entry into the UN in 1971 (Zhao 1996: 57-58).

During the revolutionary period, a combination of ideological and traditional thinking formed the foundation of Maoist foreign policy. Mao was deeply influenced by ancient principles of diplomacy and ideas of principled and

flexible behaviour. Diplomatically, Mao and China's top military commanders favoured the stratagem of 'negotiating with faraway countries while fighting those that are near'. This is said to be the rationale for first proposing rapprochement with the US after the Sino-Soviet border clash in 1969 (Zhao 1996: 116-117). Other patterns of behaviour evident in foreign policy draw on both Marxist and traditional Chinese thinking rhetorically and strategically, and Western values for technical and practical purposes (Zhou 1996: 118). The Marxist and traditional Chinese thinking is evident in Mao's tendency to use bombastic political slogans, clichés, and quotations and articulated opposition to the superpowers in favour of close relations with developing countries. While politically the language and arguments were Marxist-inspired, the strategic use of language to affect thinking is based on the Confucian ideas of the power of naming<sup>1</sup>. The naming process aims at prescribing and advocating a vision of social reality to correct one's way of thinking and style of work (Lu 2000: 10-11; Medeiros and Fravel 2004: 389).

#### **4.4.2 Reform period**

The rapprochement between the US and China initiated the transformation of China into a post-revolutionary state. As a post-revolutionary state, China set economic development as its main priority, thereby also opening up for pressure from the public (Zhao 1996: 41). The Sino-Soviet split finalized in 1968 had generated a strategic opportunity enabling the PRC to become a strategic ally for the US in efforts to isolate the Soviet Union (Zhao 1996: 128; Kissinger 1994: 491; Dittmer 2004: 208). The internal political transformation was marked by the death of Mao in 1976 and Deng Xiaoping's emergence as the new top leader in 1978. He and his followers initiated a series of fundamental changes in both principle and substance (Liu 2004: 11). Full diplomatic recognition from the US in 1979, opened the door for other internal and external developments (Zhao 2004 b: 15). It

Deng era politics had three main ambitions. China was to 'oppose hegemonism' and 'preserve world peace', work toward unification with Taiwan and promote modernization. Under modernization, political reform also

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<sup>1</sup> Ref. "the Analects of Confucius", chapter 13. 3



transformed foreign policy making, making it more open to the international community (Zhao 1996: 51). The ‘open door’ policy required a rhetorical turnaround without being seen to reverse Communist ideology. Deng also employed the Confucian principle of naming, devising the contemporary Chinese oxymoron of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. This was an attempt to legitimize and promote economic reform without being seen to reverse Communist ideology. In order to manage this Deng turned to what is widely known as “building socialism with Chinese characteristics” – a broad and ambiguous phrase that conceals as much as it reveals (Qui 2000: 252). To Western eyes it appears to be a euphemism for economic flexibility, but such naming processes were an essential part of the reform process (Lu 2000: 11). This reinterpretation of Mao opened up for crucial rhetorical space for the next decades and the revival of common sense after the heady policies under Mao (Qui 2000: 253-254).

However, in foreign policy rhetoric Beijing retained many of the axiomatic responses from earlier decades. They frequently employed face-saving strategies known as psychological emphasis. One such strategy is not to argue against a given charge but to counterattack, ignore and pose new threats on the basis of a careful analysis of the opponents’ weaknesses and motives. For example, after the Tiananmen Square crisis Beijing faced charges of human rights abuses and threats to China’s ‘Most Favored Nation’ status (MFN) with the US. The Chinese response was counter-charges of interference with sovereignty and threats of economic loss if MFN was revoked. Another strategy is to “disengage” the argument. Here, an actor chooses to direct the audience’s attention away from the major premise set up by the opponent and instead focus on different variables and situations. This is seen in China’s response to repeated US charges of human rights violations, whereby Beijing charges the US of racial discrimination (Lu 2000: 11-12).

Since 1989 PRC leaders have continued to use public occasions for posturing, establishing trust and seeking substantial results only through private channels. In public, the relationship between the speaker and the audience is more important than verbal expression (Lu 2002: 12). Saving face remained important

enough for Beijing to risk serious diplomatic rows with Washington after the 1999 Belgrade embassy bombing, and the 2001 spy plane incident (Gries 2005; BBC News 2001: 07/03). Their uncompromising stance on issues regarding Taiwan and the South China Sea, military modernization and the regionally disruptive economic behaviour generated a lot of ill will in the region (Shambaugh 2005: :32). However, Beijing's rhetoric has changed substantially over time. Wang's (2005) analysis of translated government publications documents designed to publicize and explain to the international community China's position documents this (Wang 2005: 74). He found that, over time, the projected images of China as peace-loving, a victim, socialist, revolutionary, antihegemonic, developing, major power, cooperator and autonomous fluctuated. The image of China as peace-loving peaked around 1987, but was rising again in 1999. The victim discourse along with the socialist, revolutionary and autonomy discourses have virtually disappeared, declining rapidly in use after rapprochement in 1971. The emphases on China as a major power and antihegemonic force have fluctuated heavily but were both declining in 1999. On the other hand, the emphasis on cooperation had increased dramatically since 1989, featuring above all other discourses in terms of frequency in 1999 (Wang 2005: 78).

#### **4.4.3 Recent development - The rise and fall of 'Peaceful Rise'**

Today, the two main pillars of Chinese foreign policy thinking are *independence* and *peace* (Cheng and Wankun 2004: 184). The *five principles of peaceful coexistence* from 1954 are still in place as a guiding doctrine, and ideology still plays an indispensable role in political institutions (Lin 2003: 39; Wu 2004: 61). The principles build on traditional Chinese thinking - dreaming of a world in universal harmony - the century of humiliation, and the legacy of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist thinking (Wu 2004: 61). China today sees itself as the world's largest developing nation. As such it takes on the role of patron and spokesman for other developing nations. It makes a point of stating that China will always side with the developing countries and never seek hegemony or superpower status (Wu 2004: 61).

However, principle has gradually given way to pragmatism in more areas. Before 1997, China showed itself as an irredentist, revisionist rising power, particularly in relation to Taiwan (Goldstein 2003: 83). But Beijing has come to realize that a confrontational relationship with the US would complicate the PRC's ability to benefit from participating in the international economy, and force it to forfeit linkages established by partnership with the US. More seriously, Beijing could risk being cast as the unequivocal adversary of an American military that unquestionably outclasses the PLA (Goldstein 2005: 159). In 1997, leaders in Beijing began to search for ways to portray China's growth as unthreatening. They made this change only reluctantly because they were, and still are to some extent, unwilling to openly acknowledge that China is rising to great power status (Shih 2005: 755). The change in approach is seen in three fundamental transformations in foreign policy.

First, China now actively embraces multilateralism. The country more readily accepts policies that help redefine China as a responsible and reliable international actor. The aim of this policy direction is to combat China's image as an untrustworthy international player and counter potential threats. One move that is typical of the change in approach is the self-restraint China showed during the 1997 Asian financial crisis, when Beijing stuck to its assurances that it would not devalue the yuan to maintain the competitiveness of Chinese exports. Declining exports hurt the national economic growth in the midst of a painful domestic reform period, but was tolerated in expectation of significant international political dividends (Goldstein 2003: 73-74).

Second, Beijing has sought to establish and cultivate "strategic partnerships" with great powers. This policy is aimed at reducing "the likelihood that others would unite to prevent China's slow but steady rise to the ranks of great power" because it underscores "the opportunity cost of working against it", binding their interests to China's (Goldstein 2003: 72, 74). Such an approach avoids direct confrontation with the US as far as possible and allows China to eschew traditional ally and adversary models (Goldstein 2003: 74-75).

Third, the making of foreign policy has changed significantly. Diplomatically, China has become a much more capable and adept player,

bringing more to cooperative efforts than before (Medeiros and Fravel 2004: 388). However, there is also mounting evidence that Beijing leaders are under increasing social pressure when making policies (Hao 2005: 3). Foreign policy making today is far more institutionalized, professionalized and decentralized, depending much less on any individual leader. Internal think tanks and specialists from outside the government often serve as consultants who travel abroad, interact with international experts in their field, and sensitize China's leaders to international trends as well as present them with a range of policy options (Medeiros and Fravel 2004: 393; Hao 2005: 7; Lu 2005: 111). The most radical change in foreign policy practice has been the efforts to publicize and promote policies. The trend began in the mid 1990s with the publication of new white papers on controversial policy topics, so as to articulate and defend Beijing's positions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides wide access to its publications via its website (Medeiros and Fravel 2004: 394-395; Lu 2005: 112-113).

The above re-conceptualization for foreign policy is evident in foreign policy promotion efforts. American China observers and policy-makers have long hoped for a "peaceful evolution" in China. However, foreign proposals for Beijing to adopt 'peace' as official policy was originally rejected by as "just a coup d'etat by other means" coming from capitalist countries. This concept has now been appropriated by the Chinese authorities and rephrased in Chinese terminology as "peacefully keeping pace with the times", "Peaceful Rise" and "peace, cooperation and development" (Wan 2005: 296, n48 303). The "peaceful rise" policy was launched in November 2003, by academic advisor Zheng Bijian as new the model for Chinese foreign policy. The essence of this idea was that China would rely mainly on its own strength in its rise to great power status, but that it needed a peaceful international environment to accomplish the task of lifting its enormous population out of a condition of underdevelopment. Furthermore, China would rise without destabilizing the international or regional order (Suettinger 2004: 2). The idea did not come from Zheng alone, but had been circulating among academics and think tanks for some time. But it was only after Zheng led a delegation of scholars to the United States in 2002 in an effort to find ways to alleviate foreign concerns for China' rise and to seek cooperation with the West

that it became official. During the trip it became clear that in US circles, there were two prevailing views of China's future that needed to be confronted. Either China was expected to rise rapidly and challenge US power and security, or, it might collapse as a failed state. The project received 2 million Yuan in sponsorship – an unheard-of amount in Chinese social science research – and was promptly approved by Hu Jintao. (Suettinger 2004: 3; Wan 2005: n49 303). The term “peaceful rise” was used by premier Wen Jiabao, President Hu Jintao and others, including the state news agency Xinhua and party newspaper People's Daily, during the latter part of 2003 and early 2004. Chinese embassy websites also featured the theme prominently (Suettinger 2004: 6, Wan 2005: n49 303).

However, by April 2004 Hu Jintao had dropped the phrase in favour of “peace and development” for reasons unknown (Suettinger 2004: 6). China Daily, People's Daily and Xinhua have also exchanged it for “peace and development”. Suettinger (2004) speculates that the term was subject to an internal power struggle in the Politburo Standing Committee with Jiang Zemin and his supporters on one side and Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao and their supporters on the other. However, I would also add that in the years after Zheng's research trip, there has been a marked change in the global perception of China. The view that something would go amiss and China would collapse as a failed state is now rarely heard. Recognition of the fact that the country is now a major global player politically and economically has provoked “an intense debate among national policy elites, including China's” (Jacques 2005). I would agree with Suettinger that the change in rhetoric reflects internal debates. However, I would like to add that the change of language may reflect the change in outside perceptions seen in the last two to three years. “Rise” certainly has different connotations from “cooperation” and “development”. The word “rise” might even be said to aggravate the suspicions outlined in chapter 3.

“Peaceful rise” has proved a powerful concept and though the exact phrase is no longer used by the Chinese authorities, it lingers in Western discourse on China (BBC 2005: 11/1; China Daily 2005: 14 Nov; Washington Post 2005: A18; Pentagon 2005: 4).

## 5. Constructing a new “China”

*“When names are not used properly, language will not be used effectively; when language is not used effectively, matters will not be taken care of...the application of laws and punishments will not be on the mark ....Thus, when the exemplary person (junzi) puts a name to something, it can certainly be spoken, and when spoken it can certainly be acted upon. There is nothing careless in the attitude of the exemplary person toward what is said”*

On the art of naming, the Analects of Confucius, chapter 13. 3

In this chapter I discuss the characteristics of recent Chinese diplomatic self-presentation as a part of ethos construction and facework on the international arena. To this end I use Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis. As stated in chapter 3, there are several competing discourses challenging China’s own discourse about the country’s future and role in affairs world. The issue is politically salient, and has been so for some years, yet China’s own discourse on the subject is a relatively unexplored area within China studies. Scholarly work on China’s foreign relations has frequently addressed the topic of perception (and misperception), yielding insights into the formation of China’s perceptions of others, and other’s perceptions of China, as well as the impact of mutual perceptions (Wang 2005: 98 n5). However, there is knowledge gap concerning China’s national ethos construction. Of all the sources reviewed for this study, only one, Wang (2005), systematically addresses this topic.

The following analysis is an extended examination of Beijing’s attempt to improve the condition of its ethos. China’s ethos problem is twofold. First, it has a past blemished with aggressive behaviour and rhetoric, uncooperative behaviour and unfulfilled threats and promises, giving Chinese diplomacy a lack of credibility and the country an unsavoury image to some states. Second, China’s growing clout both regionally and globally based on its fast-growing economy and rapidly expanding network of associates, has Western powers, the US especially, treating China with apprehension. The country is thus in the position of trying to establish a new, more credible ethos while relying on that same ethos to influence the perceptions and policies of other states. The texts I have chosen are prominent and representative examples of how Beijing wrestles with this Catch 22.

Two of my texts were originally classified as public speeches and only one is published in article form only. However, I argue that all the texts may be analysed as written texts rather than as speeches because of they way they are

consumed. As the speeches were originally delivered in Chinese (Mandarin) the vast majority of the foreign audience for whom the speeches were intended would consume it as a written text in translated form. I argue that the authors take this into account when producing the text. Hu Jintao's speech is published in written form on both the UN website and the Foreign Ministry's website. The Foreign Minister's speech is published on numerous Chinese embassy and consulate websites, the Foreign Ministry's own website and was published as an article in the Chinese Journal of International Law. It is possible that it appears even more places. Thus, I study all the texts as if they were written texts. This recontextualization has an impact on genre classification because I leave out considerations of the particulars of oral presentations such as voice inflection, variations in speed and other non-verbal gestures. The particularity of analyzing written text is that when reading a written text we have time to consider the arguments carefully and can to a certain extent reflect on them independent of the author (Kjeldsen 2004: 60)

As my starting point I use Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional concept of discourse – consisting of text, discourse practice and social practices. Important aspects of social practice which function as a backdrop for the analysis of discourse practice and text understanding are presented in chapters 3 and 4. In the following analysis, I first introduce recent developments in foreign policy making. Then I consider genre, kairos and interdiscursivity as parts of discourse practice. Third, I discuss intertextuality and the use of rhetorical devices and politeness practices as aspects of text. Finally, I analyse the significance of these practices to ethos building.

The sources I have selected for this analysis are all from high-level officials representing different aspects of the Chinese Communist leadership as it is today. I do not regard them as individual actors but as representatives of different aspects of a system that has undergone significant change, giving rise to tension between old and new approaches to policy. My three sources show the types of practices that currently coexist – however uneasily - within the communist party.

In the past three to five years, Chinese political institutions have undergone significant change.

First, the changes that have taken place in the Chinese leadership since 2002 have altered the face of the Party. In 2002-2003 the top leadership underwent an incomplete yet significant transition to the fourth generation of leaders. Hu Jintao was appointed General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party at the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Central Committee in November 2002. He was then appointed President of China at the 10<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress the following March. Li Zhaoxing became Minister of Foreign Affairs at the same Congress (Liu 2004: 11). This new generation of Chinese communist leaders have a background that differs greatly from previous generations. Whereas Mao, Deng, and Jiang all had strong ties to the military and an active revolutionary record, the new generation are primarily technocrats and bureaucrats. They have been technically trained, and that background has influenced their approach to decision-making. Technocrats are trained to be problem-solvers, not ideologues, and they tend to steer away from "isms". As problem solvers in an increasingly complex environment, the fourth generation leaders have turned to experts, such as Zheng Bijian, and research institutions like the China Reform Forum to make policies and hammer out consensus. The decision-making process has thus been enlarged to include additional actors such as non-party academic policy think tanks. However, it must be mentioned that the transition to the fourth generation leadership is not complete or unencumbered. Former President Jiang Zemin still enjoys power and influence, and the PLA continues to exert pressure on military and foreign policy. This friction within the party organs is sometimes evident in the choice of rhetoric such as illustrated by the "peaceful rise" rhetoric discussed in chapter 4 (Fewsmith 2001: 83-84).

The new officials were on a diplomatic offensive during most of 2005 continuing into 2006. The president has retained a high profile, giving speeches in multilateral organs like the UN and APEC as well as going on a number of highly publicized diplomatic visits to Europe, the US, Asia and Africa. President Hu has especially sought to further China's long-standing strategy of befriending its immediate neighbours to ensure they do not seek closer relations with the US



(BBC New 2005: 1/11; BBC New 2005: 11/7; BBC New 2006: 4/19; BBC News 2006: 4/24). Li has addressed ASEAN and the UN while Zheng has addressed the Centre for European Reform (Li 2005 c, d; Zheng 2005; Wen 2005)

Second, the making of foreign policy and the Foreign Ministry itself have transformed dramatically. The Ministry has gone from being one of the most “mysterious and cloistered” government departments to a model of openness and interaction with the public in Chinese politics. It was the PRC first governmental department to go online, and it has thrown considerable energy into achieving the image as well as the result of “public diplomacy” (Lu 2005: 111-113). The website is designed as a one-stop-shop for information on Chinese foreign affairs and diplomatic activities. The site is available in English, French, Russian, Spanish and Arabic in addition to Chinese. Much of my data, speeches and policy statements especially, come from this website or affiliated websites such as embassy homepages (fmprc.gov.cn)

## **5.2 Discourse practice**

As far as discussions of discursive practice is concerned, I am interested in the interdiscursive properties of the texts and the significance of this and kairos for genre construction. I argue that the diverse social practices on which Beijing draws to produce the texts have been highly influential in shaping current Chinese foreign policy discourse. Many of the central concepts and official policies of the Chinese state strongly reflect the intertextual chains of which they are a part. The texts, of course, differ in their interdiscursive properties. This can largely be attributed to considerations of kairos. The results are three different genres which shed light on Beijing’s ethos building efforts. First I discuss factors which contribute to determining genre. Second, I discuss particular interdiscursive qualities of the texts, the norms or assumptions on which they rely and what other genres they draw on.

First, the texts are delivered by three very different actors who clearly have a similar agenda, but deliver the message in significantly different ways. President Hu Jintao is the highest ranking official in the sample. He now holds the highest authority in all three branches of power – party, state and military – since taking

over as head of the army after Jiang in September 2004. He was a largely unknown quantity when he emerged from obscurity in the Politburo in 2002. His moves have been followed closely. So far, analysts argue that politically he is a liberal reformer at home, but a relatively inexperienced strategist abroad. His foreign policy choices, such as adopting the phrase “peaceful rise” to describe China’s role in world politics, have met with opposition at home, presumably from Jiang and the military, and have sometimes been short-lived venture (Gompert et al 2005: 18). Li Cheng, professor of government at Hamilton College in the United States, says Mr Hu perceives his mandate as President of the PRC to be “to save the Chinese Communist Party and to enhance China’s influence and power in the ever-changing international environment” (Luard 2005). However, Hu has made it clear that he has no intention of going as far as countenancing Western-style political reform. He has also moved slowly so as to not antagonize his predecessor Jiang, who remains an influential figure (BBC News: profile Hu Jintao)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Li Zhaoxing, is a professional diplomat who has served as Chinese ambassador to the United Nations and the United States (Liu 2004: 11). The appointment of Li emphasizes the absolute predominance of relations with the US over any of China’s other foreign policy issues. He has a track record as a staunch polemicist, but this does not necessarily indicate he will front a more acquiescent Chinese foreign policy (Gompert et al 2005: 18).

Zheng Bijian is a close associate of President Hu Jintao and the mind behind the “peaceful rise” paradigm from 2003-2004 (Yardley 2005). He represents the recent tendency to draw on academic expertise in policy-making referred to above. Currently, he is Chairman of the China Reform Forum (CIRD), a nongovernmental and nonprofit academic organization that provides research on, and analysis of domestic, international and development issues related to China. Previously, Zheng held the position of Executive Vice President of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee of the Communist Party (CPC) and is still on its academic committee. Foreign Affairs write about Zheng that he has “drafted key reports for five Chinese national party congresses and held senior posts in academic and party organizations in China” (Zheng 2005: 18).

I interpret the underlying social purpose of the selected texts to be similar, differing only in terms of the intended audience and the medium through which they were published. I selected the texts for this very reason. Therefore, any discussion of the social purpose of the texts as a part of the discussion of genre must include elements of both the expected content, the medium and the when and where of publication. The text that is most explicit in its social purpose and where this purpose and expected content are intertwined with the 'when' and 'where' of presentation is Hu Jintao's piece. His text was delivered at the 2005 summit held for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations - the largest-ever gathering of world leaders, bringing together more than 150 heads of state and government (BBC News 2005: 17/09). Thus, the speech has a clear commemorative function, praising "the beautiful ideal of the international community" and recounting how "the United nations has gone through all kinds of tests and traversed an extraordinary course", as did the other speakers. However, it also appears to have had two more agendas, the second of which would benefit from the record-sized audience of top world leaders.

The first agenda is again suggested by the occasion, because the purpose of the UN summit was the negotiation of a plan for a long-anticipated reform of the UN. It was hyped as "an opportunity to reshape the world body for the challenges of the 21st Century" (BBC News 2005: 17/09) At the end of the three-day summit, during which most of the delegates addressed the issue of UN reform during the high-level plenary session on 15 September, a 35-page document provided the authorization to set up new commissions and stake out a new course for the UN. The purpose of the UN summit speeches, as Li later summed it up, was to express China's view on a number of issues thereby articulating China's official policy priorities in the UN. The foreign minister said the views and proposals were well-reflected in the final reform document (Li 2005 a: 18/09). These proposals included greater UN commitment to the question of development... and increased the representation of the developing countries...to participate in the Security Council."

The second agenda is related to Beijing's efforts to build ethos via diplomatic activities abroad. Hu's attendance at the UN summit was part of a

longish diplomatic trip during which Hu visited Canada and Mexico. The foreign minister, who attended the UN summit with the President, said the purpose of the trip was to address the “targets of strengthening dialogues, enhancing mutual trust, promoting cooperation and achieving common development” (Li 2005 a: 18/09). The purpose of the particular text I have selected was to “expound the position of the Chinese government on major international issues, promote the establishment of new equitable and rational international political and economic order and safeguard the legitimate interests and rights of developing nations” (Li 2005 a: 18/9). In addition, Hu attended bilateral meetings with US President Bush, Russian President Putin, Indian Prime Minister Singh and eight other leaders from smaller states around the world. As was the purpose of the trip, “Hu systematically introduced the economic and social development scenario of China and stressed that China is still a developing nation and developing the economy and improving the quality of people lives is still the central task of China” (Li 2005 a: 18/09).

No such clear purpose is stated for Li Zhaoxing’s own text. It is published in a range of places, usually with the date 22 August, 2005, given as the original publication date. The text appears on a number of embassy and consulate websites. It is also referred to by government newspaper China Daily as an important article alongside Hu’s UN speech and appears as an opinion article in China Daily (He 2005: 24/11; Li 2005 b). It appears in the Chinese Journal of International Law, an “independent peer reviewed research journal edited primarily by scholars from mainland China” published by Oxford Journals (Li 2005 b). The journal declares that it has taken the text unedited from the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s website. China Daily writes of both Hu and Li’s texts that they have “drawn up a clear diplomatic roadmap for the country and made clear to the whole world that China has embraced a peaceful diplomatic ideology” (He 2005).

In terms of content the texts are remarkably similar both in terms of choice of theme and words. As official representations of the foreign policy of a state, especially an authoritarian state that controls its media and internal discourse as tightly as does the PRC, it is not strange that their messages should be roughly the same. Li’s and Hu’s texts in particular show a striking resemblance. The Foreign

Ministry's website data on the minister's diplomatic activity also shows that, during the autumn of 2005, the minister's activities shadowed those of President Hu. They travel together and attend meetings with their respective counterparts, as was the case with the above mentioned trip to the UN, Canada and Mexico. Some words and phrases appear in both speeches and appear again in government news reports. For example, Hu's statement "unswervingly follow the road of peaceful development" appears as the headline of a People's Daily article (People's Daily 2005: 2/09).

Zheng Bijian's text undoubtedly has a similar social purpose as the two texts previously mentioned, albeit directed at a different audience. He indicates as much in the introduction when he says "Correctly understanding China's achievements and its path towards greater development is crucial". The kairos also suggests this as the Foreign Affairs' website declares that the journal is "the forum of choice for the most important new ideas, analysis, and debate on the most significant issues in the world" and that "articles published in *Foreign Affairs* shape the political dialogue for months and years to come" ([www.foreingaffairs.org](http://www.foreingaffairs.org)). The council responsible for its publication consists of past and present US "Presidents, Secretaries of State, Defence and Treasury, other senior US government officials, renowned scholars, and major leaders of business, media, human rights, and other non-governmental groups" ([www.foreignaffairs.org](http://www.foreignaffairs.org)). I interpret the social purpose of the article to be generating the "correct understanding" of the Chinese ethos among the council members who also represent the journal's readership.

I expect the content of each text to correspond to China's official foreign policy, as it is laid out in the Foreign Ministry's brief policy statements. The titles include "Independent foreign policy of peace", "China's view on Development", "China's view of Multipolarisation", "China's view of South-South Cooperation", and "Establishing a New International Economic Order" ([fmprc.gov.cn/eng](http://fmprc.gov.cn/eng)). These policies are neatly summarized in Hu and Li's titles: "Building Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity" (Hu 2005) and "Peace, Development and Cooperation – Banner for China's Diplomacy in the

New Era” (Li 2005 b). Zheng’s title “China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’ to Great-Power status” sums up his position but not the content, though his themes are all drawn from the same foreign policy agenda as the other two, but articulated with different words. A number of speeches produced by the same authors as well as Premier Wen Jiabao throughout 2005 appear as rewritings of these titles. For example, Hu’s speech from the APEC CEO summit in October 2005 was called “An Open Mind for Win-Win Cooperation”, Wen Jiabao’s speech from the First East Asia Summit in December 2005 reads “Be open and Inclusive and Achieve Mutual Benefit and Common Progress”.

The individual outlets for the texts have their own institutional settings that influence the genre of the texts. The outlets constitute the selection of the appropriate kairos. First, international organisations, like the UN, have developed their own organisational culture which affects member behaviour (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 340). In the UN, it is well-established diplomatic practice among members to not publicly attack specific member states (Burkeman 2006). The UN is also the ultimate legitimizer of actions on behalf of world peace (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 205). It is in a special position to allow its members to enhance their ability to influence, persuade and attract in a way that does not rely on threats and promises - using what Joseph Nye called ‘soft power’ (Nye 2004: 6,10; Wallander, Haftendorn and Keohane 1999: 10). In addition, the UN and its institutional rules are based on the liberal and democratic nature of the British and American economic system where balancing using soft power is an important feature of institutional practice (Nye 2004: 10). Finally, the UN is currently undergoing a controversial reform process. The direction of this process is spelled out in a 35-page document resulting from negotiations which took place during the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the UN (Black 2005).

Second, as stated above, Li’s article appears several places and is continuously available on the Foreign Ministry’s websites as a part of the information material they offer visitors. The Foreign Ministry and various affiliated websites of its overseas stations are likely to be subject to the Party’s control and thus adhere closely to government policy. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that the Foreign Ministry have resisted the new policy turn. Especially

Zheng's concept of "a peaceful rise" was perceived as "a self-indulgent pipe dream" (Xiang 2006)

Third, Zheng Bijian's article appeared in a special issue of the US based journal *Foreign Affairs* for September/October 2005. His short article opens the section on China. I argue that the social purpose of the article relates to the journal's self-proclaimed ability to "shape the political dialogue for months and years to come" ([www.foreignaffairs.com](http://www.foreignaffairs.com)). Publishing the article in this prestigious academic forum is noteworthy because its publications tend to have a significant impact on American policy. As *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2006: online) notes "Ideas put forward in this journal, if well received by the Foreign Affairs community, often reappeared later as U.S. government policy or legislation". It is a type of testing ground for policies.

The texts rely on a mix of genres to interpellate the reader. Hu's text is addressed to the other statesmen attending the meeting as well as observers of the UN. Like other speeches he interpellates the receiver as one of "us", using the third person pronoun frequently and speaking of ideals and principles. The speaker is a central component of the text and Hu uses the first person singular "I" and refers to "my views", which is uncharacteristic of Chinese rhetorical style. Like other speakers, Hu addresses the UN's achievements and ideals and UN reform. However, the text differs from the others in that it is longer, avoid specific examples, instead speaking of moral principles, frequently uses the phrase "we should", and makes no specific reference to the speaker's origin until a short note at the very end of the text. With its formal official style, moralizing tone, and occasionally bombastic statements like "amid stupendous changes around the world and vicissitudes in the international arena, the United Nations has gone through all kinds of tests and traversed an extraordinary course", Hu's text is a mix of Western and Chinese genres. On the one hand, the personal style and appeal to the ideals of the international community, mentioning human rights and praise of democracy, I would argue, draws on the same norms on which the UN was founded and which – based on causal reading of speeches - it is common for other speakers to refer. On the other hand, the lack of references to specific events, the use of the word "harmony" and other cultural key-word, moralizing modalities such as "we

should”, and frequent indirect references to the five principles of peaceful coexistence are features associated with CCP rhetoric and Chinese cultural practices as discussed in chapter 4. In addition, his use of pathos differs from that of other leaders. Hu’s opening statement:

“At this solemn and important moment, national leaders and representatives from around the world are gathered here to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, renewing our commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and expressing our determination to safeguard world peace and promote common development”

Contrast this with US President Bush’s opening statement “We meet at a time of great challenge for America and the World. At this moment, men and women along my country’s Gulf Coast are recovering from one of the worst natural disasters in American history” (Bush 2005). Hu tends to appeal more to the listener’s sense of justice and moral fibre when he repeats the phrase “we should” when referring to conflict settlement, sovereignty, antiterrorism, disarmament, and so on. While Bush uses graphic and vivid pathos, Hu refers to abstract concepts with positive or negative connotations. He even says “We should actively promote and protect human rights”. In one sentence he uses almost all of his abstract concepts:

“We must abandon the Cold-War mentality, cultivate a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, and build a fair and effective collective security mechanism aimed at jointly preventing war and conflict and safeguard world peace”.

Linguistic imagery so central to Bush’s rhetoric and other UN speeches is almost absent in Hu’s text. Except for occasional statements like “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, his imagery tends to rely on the use of cultural keywords, especially “harmony”, “trust” and “peace” used in topos constructions of pathos, primarily using cause and effect logic. For example, “[We should] uphold mutually beneficial cooperation to achieve common prosperity”.



He relies on emotions tied to concepts that are not necessarily well-known outside East Asia.

Foreign Minister Li's text has none of the personal style of Hu's, in spite of being very similar otherwise in terms of the choice of arguments, themes and words. Like Hu, he attempts to use "we", but does not indicate who "we" are other than the Party. Phrases like "We need cooperation to maintain common security" are paragraph headlines and thus appear more as slogans than as effective interpellation of the receiver. In contrast, Hu's use of "we" has a clear audience, namely the state leaders as representatives of member states of the UN and the international community. Furthermore, there is no clear personality behind the text and no use of "I" or "you" as Hu's has done – it could have been written by anybody and published in any government organ dealing with foreign policy. Unlike the two other texts, the sender does not appear as an important feature of the text itself in the forms of address or in the choice of themes. In other words, the text has an unclear kairos with an ethos that is only present because the author's name is on the document and the publishing organs lend their ethos to the author. But the sender has not restricted himself to one medium of publication and thus does not address the receiver in any distinct way, and is not positioned in any single circumstance to give the text further meaning.

Certain words, such as "peace", "harmony", and "independent" are repeated with high frequency and the language appears to be less varied, more monotonous and formulaic than the other two. Many of the most repeated words are also cultural-keywords, described in chapter 4, or central points from foreign policy. "Peace, development and cooperation" appears eight times, "peace" thirty-two times, and "mutual" "benefit", "trust" and "cooperation" appear eighteen times together. The document, with its weak kairos, lack of personality and repetitive style makes it look more like a policy declaration of the old communist genre of policy statements, with only token references to concepts such as "democracy" and "human rights". The only anomaly between this and the old style is the attempt at logical argument using specific examples. In the second half of the text, Li uses logos arguments shaped as abductive reasoning, or an enthymeme, to validate his position. He always declares the conclusion first, and

then offers the various arguments. For example, section four of the text is called “China's diplomacy continues to make fresh progress under the banner of peace, development and cooperation”. It is followed by six arguments which refer to specific examples of how China has proved itself to be “a good neighbour, good friend and good partner for the surrounding countries”. He taps into the genre of economic analysis with his percentage estimates for China’s past and potential contribution to the region’s growth. However, what is missing is an explanation of why China behaved this way and what motivation exists for the behaviour to continue. The audience is invited to fill in this information and make inferences that are consistent with the stated conclusion.

Zheng’s article stands out among the texts in terms of style and argumentation. As a part of a peer reviewed academic publication directed at the American foreign policy establishment and academics, the style and modes of persuasion reflect the common norms for this type of publication. As expected of an article in a scientific journal, Zheng uses a scientific approach to argue, referring to quantitative data and using less bombastic, more varied academic language. He too draws on the genre of economic analysis to validate his claim.

The article differs greatly from the two other texts in that it deals with the problems China faces with regard to population growth and natural resource scarcity, and openly acknowledges the heated debate China’s rapid and uneven development has generated. His identity and ethos as sender is enhanced by the medium, and the particular fact that the message appears as the introduction to a special edition of the publication dedicated to China. As the opening text for a section of the journal that deals with the same issues as Zheng discusses, it is a particularly well-chosen kairos that maximizes the sender’s potential to shape the reader’s thinking . In terms of style, the main feature that can be associated with classical communist and classical Chinese rhetorical practice is the practice of name-giving. Zheng calls the country’s grand strategies for overcoming problems associated with its growth the “three transcendences”. This rings similar to other policy-naming efforts such as Mao’s ‘Hundred Flowers’ campaign, Deng’s ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics’, and Jiang’s ‘Three Represents’

### 5.3 Text

My close reading of this text is concerned with issues of intertextuality and the manifestations of facework in the use of modes of persuasion. I regard facework in this connection as an important part of ethos construction. In the following discussion I organize the analysis according to the particular discourse the authors draw on. They draw mainly on two discourses within which there are several other discourses which I have outlined previously. The first discourse is that of US foreign policy which includes the various theoretical discourses discussed in chapter 3. The second discourse is that of Chinese foreign policy which refers to previous PRC foreign policy texts and traditional philosophy.

First, the discourse of US foreign policy texts is referred to directly and indirectly through the use of certain concepts, assumptions or arguments stemming from the theories and historical behaviour discussed in chapter 3.

All three authors refer to the concepts of hegemony, power politics and security as they are analysed by realist theories. Hu also refers to multipolarity, while Zheng concentrates on resource acquisition issues as a security problem. The hegemony issue, which is a part of all realist theories, is raised explicitly by Li and Zheng. Li says: "China has all along stood for the development of diplomatic relations and economic and cultural exchanges with all countries and against aggression, hegemony and power politics". Zheng says: "China will not follow the path of Germany leading up to World War I those of Germany and Japan leading up to World War II, when these countries violently plundered resources and pursued hegemony" and "China does not seek hegemony or predominance in world affairs".

Both rely on *logos* arguments structured as *topos*. The first two statements are based on the oppositional model that suggests that because China takes a stand against hegemony and power politics, these are necessarily regarded as bad and the Chinese strategy must by inference be good. Neither author refers to contemporary examples of why power politics is "bad". Li even leaves out examples altogether, talking instead about principles and strategy. Zheng, on the other hand chooses to refer to World War I and II for examples. This way neither

author explicitly threatens the face of their readers by directly saying that they are “bad”. Instead they open up for identification with the Chinese stance against the undesirable consequences of power politics. Zheng’s second argument is a form of testimonial where the validity of the statement relies on the ethos of the sender. He is in the classical position to make such an argument because he is acknowledged as an “expert” published in an academic journal.

The concept of multipolarity stems from balance of power theory. It is the official policy of the PRC that multipolarization should develop in order to “boost the democratization of international relations” (fmprc.gov.cn). Hu and Li talk about the deepening “trend towards a multi-polar world with a globalized ... economy”. Zheng Bijian, on the other hand, stays away from this term. I interpret this as a form of avoidance for political purposes as the desire for multipolarity is unlikely to be very popular in Washington. Similarly, references to “security”, made implicit to refute allegations of endangering regional security with military build-up, appear frequently in Hu and Li’s texts, but is absent from Zheng’s. To include references to security problems, even just potential such, is to acknowledge that such problems exist and require attention. Admitting this directly to the American authorities is far more problematic to China’s face than to talk about security in general terms to an international audience.

References to a “Cold-War mentality” are made in contrast to the favourable view of multipolarity. In the same way as they argue against hegemony and power politics, “Cold-War mentality” is described as something undesirable that must be “abandoned” in favour of a “new security concept”. The interesting part about this area of the authors’ argumentation is that it is clear that they are referring to the United States as the primary culprit of such a mentality and, in Li’s words, “unilateralism and worship of military might”. However, this is never stated explicitly, thus avoiding a direct face threat. Leaving the actor out of the statement in this way is called nominalization. It is a form of generalization and abstraction that is relatively common in genres of governance and “can erase or even suppress difference” (Fairclough 2003: 144). It is a way of minimizing the potential for face-threat while at the same time giving themselves face by

appearing as the voice of reason by advocating the abandonment of outdated modes of thinking.

The question of China's great power status, which is an important precondition for the arguments of all the realist predictions, is only addressed directly by Zheng Bijian. His title "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status" openly acknowledges the common assumption in US policy circles. The very phrase "peaceful rise" is an implicit reference to the assumption that China will eventually become a great power, which is perhaps why it was abandoned in official PRC government circles. All authors spend considerable energy, not only on emphasizing the peaceful nature of China, but also that China is still a developing country and will remain so for quite some time – the next fifty years at least. Zheng and Li explicitly say that China is a developing country and official PRC policy, which has been a catching point on some occasions like at the WTO negotiations, also state this (BBC News 2001: 14/01). Li modestly says:

"It is only under this strategic premise we can achieve the grand goal of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way...China has worked hard to promote South-South cooperation and North-South dialogue, exploring new areas and new ways of mutually beneficial cooperation with other developing countries."

He repeats the word "development" or "developing" 59 times throughout his text. I interpret the emphasis on China's "moderate" success to be a form of negative politeness because it is self-effacing.

In addition, it is typical of polite Chinese behaviour as described in chapter 4 to be modest. Zheng again uses a logos argument using a similarity model of topos to show China is a developing country. He presents objectively recognized data regarding China's growth and development. Rates of GDP growth, value of foreign trade, dissemination of modernisation, wealth and development provide the reasoning. "China has ...significantly improved the well-being of its people, although its development has often been narrow and uneven". "In per capita terms, China remains a low income developing country, ranked roughly 100<sup>th</sup> in the world. Its impact on the world economy is still limited". His conclusion from

this is that arguments relating to the advent of great powers are not yet applicable as “for the next few decades, the Chinese nation will be preoccupied with securing a more comfortable and decent life for its people”.

This claim is further supported by the claim that China is not a dissatisfied state, as is feared by some realists. The claim is made implicitly by emphasizing China’s great commitment to working within and bettering the current system, and the lack of benefit to challenging the status quo. Hu says that China is:

“Always integrating our development with the common progress of mankind, we take full advantage of the opportunities brought by world peace and development to pursue our own development while going for better promotion of world peace and common development through our successful development....China's development, instead of hurting or threatening anyone, can only serve peace, stability and common prosperity in the world.”

Zheng says: “Beijing has stuck to the belief that there are more opportunities than challenges for China in today’s international environment”, and that “it would not be in China’s interest to exclude the United States from the process” of China’s development. This argument is closely tied to the intertextual reference to interdependence discussed below.

The emphasis on satisfaction with the status quo is further enhanced by repeated references to democracy and human rights which are central values associated with the US as a dominant power in the current system. All three authors make explicit references to democracy and democratization in two ways. First they address the positive face of the US, which has been at the forefront criticizing the PRC for its lack of democratic institutions and human rights violations. Li and Hu argue that China stands for “greater democracy and rule of law in international relations”. Zheng goes even further, saying that “China will continue to advance until it becomes a prosperous, democratic, and civilized socialist country”. These are face-saving strategies for Beijing, addressed to the positive face of the US because Beijing acknowledges the US’ claim for value of democracy as a desirable norm. Second, Hu indirectly criticizes the US for putting pressure on China with regard to democratisation. He says “We should...

encourage countries to go for mutual emulation instead of deliberate exclusion, for mutual learning of respective strong points instead of making fetish a particular model". Similar to the other criticisms above, Hu uses nominalization thereby excluding the actor and avoiding a direct face-treat.

Hu and Li refer explicitly to human rights as part of other arguments. They use the term only once each. Hu says: "We should actively promote and protect human rights". This is followed by a list of goals that may be interpreted as a definition of human rights: "make universal education available, achieve gender equality, upgrade public health capacity building and ensure the enjoyment of equal right and opportunity to all-round development by all". Li says: "China has taken an active part in the work of the United Nations, upholding the authority and role of the world body and its Security Council, and conducting extensive international cooperation in such fields as counter-terrorism, arms control, peacekeeping, development, human rights, law-enforcement, and the environment." He offers no further explanation of what he means by "human rights". These arguments are parts of logos arguments structured as enthymemes. Part of the common understanding on which the arguments rely is the definition of human rights. Powers (1999 in Lu 2002: 9) observes that the Chinese definition of human rights tends to focus on economic and subsistence issues, whereas in the West, human rights is understood in terms of political and social freedom, as it is stated in the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Hu appears to have taken this discrepancy into account while Li has not. This is an example of an enthymeme where the sender and receiver have a divergent understanding of the "obvious". What is on the surface an appeal to positive face because it addresses an issue that is of great concern to the US and thus an appeal to communality, disguises disagreement. The reference to both democracy and human rights is a form of positive politeness that addresses the receiver's positive face by showing appreciation for the receiver's ideals and values that may actually disguise disagreement.

Two of the most frequently used intertextual references are related to the institutional perspective and interdependence. Arguments stemming from these

theories are used to implicitly or explicitly address the concerns stemming from realist theories articulated in US foreign policy. First, concerning the institutional perspective Hu and Li emphasize the stabilizing, problem-solving and security aspect of institutions. Hu and Li also link these aspects to the prospect of creating a “harmonious world” and generating “mutual benefit and win-win results by expanding the convergence of interests of all countries”, as Li says. They use logos arguments formed as topos. The particular topos they both use relies on cause and effect argumentation. They tie together “peace”, “development” and “cooperation”, making one a requirement for the others. Li says: “we need cooperation to maintain common security.. we need cooperation to realize common development...we need cooperation to promote inter-civilization harmony and coexistence”. These are the subheadings to his opening arguments. Likewise, Hu says:

“Observing international responsibility, undertaking the international obligation, settling disputes by peaceful means.... These original purposes of the United Nations have also become the sure path towards lasting peace and universal security in the world”.

Hu refers to “cooperation” 14 times while Li uses it a total of 46 times. Li refers to cooperation as the answer to the issues raised by the US because: “Only through international cooperation can we effectively address the common security problems facing all countries”

By connecting cooperation to interdependence they suggest it is not only necessary but beneficial and opting for anything but cooperation would be detrimental. Hu says:

“The promotion of international cooperation for common development and win-win results is not only an important purpose of the United Nations, but has increasingly become an important way for countries to achieve common development and common prosperity”.



He emphasizes “the trend towards multi-polar world with a globalized economy is deepening”. In a logos argument structured as a general topos relying on cause and effect argumentation he maintains that:

“Development has a bearing on the vital interests of the people of all countries, and also on the removal of global security threats from their sources. Without universal development and common prosperity, our world can hardly enjoy tranquillity. The deepening of economic globalization has made countries' interests mutually intertwined, and their respective development depends more closely on global development.”

He then goes on to argue for improvement, demanding “a multilateral trading system that is open, fair and non-discriminatory...”. This is a reference to the trade barriers against Chinese goods that have been set up in the EU and the US, as well as the export ban on certain goods to China. It is clearly a critical comment that again does not explicitly refer to any particular actor, but the meaning is still clear because the trade issue was a hot topic throughout 2005 and earlier. Li makes a similar point using nominalization when referring to “trade frictions” and “unilateral sanctions”:

“China believes that all countries should aim to achieve mutual benefit and win-win results in their pursuit of development... Economic and trade frictions should be properly settled through dialogue, and resorting to unilateral sanctions and retaliations at every turn should be opposed”.

The reference to “unilateral sanctions” can only be a reference to the US’s trade embargo on sales of advanced technology and military equipment to the PRC.

Zheng uses the benefit aspect to cooperation as the main argument for China’s continued “peaceful rise”. He talks about China’s strategic choice to “embrace economic globalization” and how Beijing has stuck to this strategic choice when face with challenges during the Asian financial crisis by opting for cooperation with others by “joining the World Trade Organization and

deepening reform at home”. This links cooperation to the ideas about the reciprocal effects of the flow of money, goods and people across national borders advocated by interdependence theory. Zheng’s discussion of globalization is exclusively upbeat and occasionally self-deprecatory with regard to China’s pre-1979 policies. Unlike the other two, he makes no reference to trade frictions and only give face through positive politeness strategies consisting of declaring his unreserved optimism regarding the development potential and peace-promoting forces engendered by economic cooperation. Hu also emphasizes “mutually beneficial cooperation to achieve common prosperity”. He refers to this link even in the title of his text: “Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity”. Li says of Beijing’s choice that:

“It is a path of coordinating domestic development with opening-up to the outside world, a path that features both the participation in peaceful international competition and extensive cooperation with other countries. By opting for such a path of development, China has committed itself to equality, friendship, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation with all countries in the world in keeping with the tide of history”.

Both Hu and Li repeat the phrases “mutual benefit” and “win-win results”. Li is especially repetitive, using the terms “mutual trust”, “mutual benefit” and “win-win” frequently. The overarching claim of all the authors is, as Zheng says, that “China’s development depends on world peace – a peace that its development will in turn reinforce” and that this is a strategic choice Beijing has made.

Second, Chinese foreign policy discourse refers to both communist texts from the past 50 years for PRC foreign policy and the ancient canon of Chinese philosophy. Referring to these texts Beijing argues that China is a special case and that the analyses which predict a future war with China are not applicable.

Hu and Li refer directly to the five principles of peaceful coexistence from 1954 and the long-standing PRC concern with sovereignty. They use the five principles to establish precedent. Li says:

“In keeping with the spirit of the UN Charter and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, China has all along stood for the development of diplomatic relations and economic and cultural exchanges with all countries and against aggression, hegemony and power politics”.

Hu uses a strikingly similar argument saying:

“We will continue to hold high the banner of peace, development and cooperation, unswervingly follow the road of peaceful development, firmly pursue the independent foreign policy of peace and dedicate ourselves to developing friendly relations and cooperation with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”.

This reference to the country’s record as an upholder of peace is a form of ethos persuasion, or an attempt to give Beijing face.

The reference to sovereignty is both a reference to the five principles and to the ‘Century of Humiliation’ which is the basis for the concern over sovereignty. Their emphasis on sovereignty and independence serves a dual function which may not be immediately clear. Because the Chinese concept of sovereignty includes its value systems, criticism of its human rights abuses and lack of democracy are perceived as attacks on sovereignty. Thus, the frequent reference to independence and sovereignty of states can be interpreted as implicit answers to such criticism. This is evident in some phrases such as in Hu’s statement “Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as respect for countries' right to independently choose their own social systems and paths of development...”. And Li’s: “The right to independently choose the path of development in light of its national conditions is an inalienable right of every people, which must be fully respected.” Hu even goes as far as implying that the US is making “a fetish of a particular model” of social organization and development. I interpret the references to sovereignty as a means of pointing to China’s negative face needs. His statement “Differences in history, culture, social system and mode of development should not become barriers to exchanges between countries, let alone excuses for confrontation” is an attempt to dissuade

criticism. Beijing does not wish to be openly criticized or opposed because of their value systems, and in turn they will not criticize others. Any criticism, like Hu's implicit criticism of US actions - perhaps referring to Iraq and/or Afghanistan-, are answers to criticism of China: "We should all oppose acts of encroachment on other countries' sovereignty, forceful interference in a country's internal affairs, and willful use or threat of military force."

The two discourses above are connected to the Chinese claim of being a principled actor that acts as the champion of developing countries. Though "development" is a key word for all three authors, it is only Hu and Li who discuss the development of other countries as a consideration for China. In connection with the interdependence argument discussed above, Hu says:

"Globalization should benefit all countries, developing countries in particular, instead of leading to a more polarized world where the poor become poorer and the rich richer... so that the 21st century can truly become a 'century of development for all'".

Li is the most staunch advocate of China's principled support for developing nations. While Hu is heavily moralistic, Li upholds principles. He underlines "Strengthening solidarity and cooperation with developing countries as the basic point of China's diplomacy". This is the headline to Li's ethos argument structured as a topos relying on definition. He first declares how to interpret the data, then he presents the actions of the Chinese government that support the conclusion. Standing up as an advocate for principle and moral has been a trademark of Chinese diplomacy ever since the establishment of the PRC. Remembering the 'Century of Humiliation' and the legacy of Marxist-Leninism and Mao Zedung' thought in particular has compelled Beijing to promote itself as the champion of developing countries (Wu 2004: 61).

Zheng devises an argument of his own based on the benefits of globalization and the special nature of the Chinese state. He lays claim to the notion that China will not follow the path of previous rising powers because it has chosen not to do so based on careful analysis of the pros and cons of aggression. He points out how Beijing has made deliberate and consistent long-term strategic

choices from the beginning of the reform period in 1979. He connects this to recent policy called the “three transcendences” plan. This plan consists of three strategies to a “peaceful rise”. First, Beijing aims to “build a society of thrift” in order to “transcend the old model of industrialization”. They seek to “use technology, economic efficiency, low consumption of natural resources ... and the optimal allocation of human resources” to avoid “bloody wars” over resources, “high consumption of energy, and high pollution”. Second, they aim to “transcend the traditional ways for great powers to emerge, as well as the Cold-War mentality that defined international relations along ideological lines”. He again offers assurances that China will not wage war for resources and domination, but will “transcend ideological differences to strive for peace, development, and cooperation with all countries of the world”. I interpret this last statement as an attempt to distance the current leadership of China from the ideologically based hostility of the past leadership.

The third strategy is to “transcend outdated models of social control and to construct a harmonious socialist society”. He goes as far as saying China is “strengthening its democratic institutions and the rule of law”. The logos argument appears as an enthymeme. The tacit assumption on which it rests is the concept of long-term thinking which Zheng has in mind. However, China and the United States – to whom the texts are mainly directed – have different conception of what long-term planning means. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) have conducted a cross-national survey of national values. They especially emphasized the difference between long-term and short-term orientation. Long-term orientation stands for thrift, respect for circumstances, having a sense of shame, willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose, and perseverance in sustained efforts towards slow results. Short-term orientation, on the other hand, refers to an emphasis on quick results, social pressures toward spending, concern with social status and obligations, personal stability and “face”.(Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 210-212). They found that East Asian countries consistently had the most pronounced long-term orientation of all 39 countries on the survey. Of all the countries, China was ranked the number one

long-term oriented country in the survey. In comparison, the United States ranked at number 31 below Norway, in 13<sup>th</sup> place, and Bangladesh 17<sup>th</sup> place, but above countries such as Zimbabwe and Pakistan (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 211). In politics this means that China regards benefits ten or more years ahead as being more important than this year's profit and bottom line. Work values focus more on learning, adaptiveness, accountability and self-discipline as opposed to rights, achievement and freedom for short-term oriented countries (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 225).

Finally, the reference to China's proud history is an attempt to refer to an already established ethos that is recognized as a positive value. Li does so directly by saying:

“Loving peace, honoring promises and living in harmony with all others far and near is an important part of China's cultural heritage...Believing in harmony without uniformity, China's diplomacy has drawn from its 5000-year-old culture inexhaustible wisdom. Engraved on the walls of the UN Headquarters in New York is the teaching of Confucius over 2000 years ago, often referred to as the Golden Rule guiding state-to-state relations.”

Further references to some of the eight virtues also refer to this peaceful history and allude to China's former status as a great power in the region. He further refers to the “socialist nature of the country” as a basis for its “adherence to peace, development and cooperation”.

Hu makes no explicit claim about China's uniqueness and instead refers to the principled nature of Chinese foreign policy, consistency of behaviour and desire for peace:

“Always integrating our development with the common progress of mankind, we take full advantage of the opportunities brought by world peace and development to pursue our own development while going for better promotion of world peace and common development through our successful development. China will, as always, abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter...”

While All three authors make a point of avoiding mentioning certain issues sensitive to the receivers. The issues that are considered inappropriate differ slightly between the texts and I would argue that this is due to the expected audience and medium of choice.

#### **5. 4 The new Chinese ethos**

I have documented Beijing's use of rhetoric and politeness as well as their use of genre in their ethos-building efforts. My findings indicate that Beijing's rhetoric is tapping into discourses that have previously been the domain of Western powers, with the US at the forefront. However, they do this in a way that is, in varying degrees, slightly different from the normative behaviour of the US and Europe, never quite letting go of the old habits of communication for which they have become notorious. Beijing has also dug deep into its own past, borrowing heavily from both the communist and the ancient canon in order to reinvent their foreign policy. They draw especially on Confucian values and language to frame their new policies in what appears to be an attempt to transform the Chinese ethos into that of a classical Confucian gentleman (*junzi*). The focus of this new ethos is not surprisingly the new cooperative, morally upstanding and mutually profit-seeking Beijing.

David Shambaugh (2005) has reduced China's new regional posture to four mutually supporting pillars consisting of participation in regional organisations, establishing strategic partnerships and deepening bilateral relationships, expanding regional economic ties and reducing distrust and anxiety in the security sphere (Shambaugh 2005: 30). My brief analysis above support these findings and suggests the strategy is also used beyond the Asia-Pacific region. Shambaugh (2005: 34) also notes that the "inept and indoctrinated Chinese diplomats cut off from their resident societies" are no longer found. Instead, diplomatic activities are adjusted at all levels and activity levels have increased and diversified. There can be no doubt that Beijing is acquiring new skills. For example, during Hu Jintao's recent visit to the US, Chinese news media were eager to point out Hu's "human touch" with him donning a baseball cap and hugging corporate leaders. At the same time Chinese television edited out the Falungong protests and

newspapers made no mention of the disagreement over human rights, leaving no doubt as to their degree of liberation from old habits (BBC News 2005: 21/04)

However, this new ethos is not necessarily a great success in all arenas as some important aspects, such as the extent of China's long-term thinking, may not come across well. On the other hand, I would argue that to receivers in the US foreign policy establishment, the distasteful flavour of past Chinese foreign policy discourse is still present. The texts have, as Bakhtin put it, the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work...each word tastes of the context and the contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitably in the word." (Bakhtin 1981: 293). Beijing has attempted to adapt its rhetoric to Western political discourse in terms of style and choice of themes. However, my small selection of texts shows how old and new diplomatic styles coexist. They have not succeeded in playing the Western diplomatic game in a way that the US finds thoroughly convincing. Zheng may be admitted to exclusive US forums such as Foreign Affairs and shows he masters the genre. Hu and Li, on the other hand, retain more of the old communist style and less accessible dogma, with Li as the most stereotypical example. In addition, there is not necessarily consistency between words and actions in the eyes of the observer. As US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick said ahead of Hu's visit to the US in April 2006: "China seems to be saying the right things,...But the process of change seems agonisingly slow." (BBC News 2006: 19/04).

Beijing carefully words its diplomatic statements, as indeed do most states, to avoid offence. The particular characteristic of Chinese diplomacy is that they have so many things to be careful about and, at the same time, a wish to be more assertive. The solution they have adopted is to look after the face of their colleagues on the international arena, never openly criticizing yet leaving the audience in little doubt as to the meaning of critical statements. The avoidance of direct criticism is not just related to the *kairos*, or medium of choice, for the authors. It is a relatively common phenomenon in Chinese politics and tends to trickle down to the media as well. For example, during George W. Bush's visit to



China in November 2005, the Western press wrote about his emphasis on greater political and religious freedom and lack of progress in contentious areas of trade and finance. The Chinese press on the other hand made no mention of disagreements whatsoever. Instead they ran headlines like “Leaders highlight common interests” (Lim 2005).

It emerges from Hu’s assertiveness - though the criticism is still indirect - that he, and the rest of Beijing’s leadership, believe that China has the economic, diplomatic and military wherewithal to compete with the US. Now, Instead of passively countering American efforts at an “anti-Chinese containment policy”, they take an offensive approach (Lam 2006: 2).

## 6. Conclusion

“Indirect tactics, efficiently applied are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more”

From *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, Chapter V. 6

The intension in this thesis was to look beyond the regular realms of political science to the type of influences that stimulate our thinking about issues. More specifically, I wanted to study a particular moment in current China debate and how the parties attempt to guide the discussion in certain directions. I chose to study this debate for the very reason that the debate itself exists: because regardless of the direction of China’s growth, its development has the potential to affect profoundly the world we live in. Above, I have illustrated how the Chinese authorities have worked to improve their national ethos in order to be in a better position to influence how the US and the world think about the country’s growth and behaviour. Beijing has engaged in a diplomatic dialogue with the US and other actors on the international arena where they compete for influence over the discourse. The two parties, China and the US, are involved in a struggle for the power and capacity to define the nature of China’s evolution. I use Stuart Hall’s concept of ‘primary definer’ to interpret my findings. A primary definer is a person or institution that gains the most dominant voice in a discourse, who establishes the initial definition of the topic in question. A primary definer requires arguments against it to make use of *its* definition of ‘what is at issue’. The framework set by the primary definer is the starting-point for discussion and it is extremely difficult to alter fundamentally once it has been established since the framework sets the terms of reference within which any further debate takes place (Hall et al 1978: 58). In a political context, Neumann (2001: 18) calls this the ‘power of concepts’<sup>2</sup> or the “ability to determine, institutionalize and activate concepts” in a way that has significant ramifications for political actions. It may be regarded as a type of ‘soft power’ to lead the audience’s thoughts in the desired direction.

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<sup>2</sup> Begrepsmakt

My analysis suggests that Beijing is following the US lead in terms of ideas and concepts to which they must relate. Though the texts show attempts to bring in other discourses, such as Confucianism, the PRC is still compelled to use the political theories outlined in chapter 3 and the US discourse on China as a starting point for recreating their own ethos. In addition, they are adopting, if only slowly, Western norms of behaviour and interaction to suit their purposes. The authors work hard to distance China from the discourses of hegemony and power politics. Yet at the same time, they admit the legitimacy of these ideas. As Nixon found to his detriment, it is too late to yell “I am not a crook” when everyone is already thinking in those terms (Kilpatrick 1973). Though Beijing has tried to turn this to their advantage by appealing to the logic of interdependence and institutional theories, the going has proved tough.

In 2005, the top brass of the CCP leadership went on a diplomatic offensive in order to stave off growing apprehension and inopportune responses to Chinese moves on the international arena. It has not been my aim to determine whether Beijing’s proactive diplomacy is merely a charm offensive or whether it signals a fundamental alteration of course in the long run. However, it is the case that, for a long time, Beijing’s efforts to articulating its purpose in an appropriate manner on the foreign policy arena have been fraught with problems. As Washington Post commentator and director of China Center at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Lanxin Xiang, said “When the Chinese invent a foreign policy theme, they often deploy coded language that leads to more confusion than clarity on the international front.” (Xiang 2006). Though they have been seen to have made an effort to play the diplomatic game dominated by the US and Europe, many of the old patterns are still present.

Beijing relies on politeness behaviour manifested in carefully worded rhetoric in order to avoid direct confrontation. Though it has expanded their arena of operation and enriched their bank of reference, it still depends on concepts and assumptions that do not necessarily translate well. Chinese diplomatic behaviour emanating from Beijing is not always consistent with the new profile in terms of genre, though there is a great deal of consistency with regard to themes and phrasing. Probably the most problematic feature of Beijing’s

ethos construction efforts is the extent to which they rely on concepts where the understanding is not the same. China and the US have a history of such miscommunication. Previously, it was their different understanding of the American interference in China during the Century of Humiliation (Lampton 2003: 252-253). Today, it is, amongst other things, their understanding of time perspectives and human rights. Change may seem “agonisingly slow” to the United States while Beijing cannot see any problem and is unwilling to speed up the process. And Beijing may feel that it is actually addressing human rights as they see it, in the time perspective it regards as appropriate.

Revolutionizing a state’s foreign policy is rarely conceivable, especially over a short period of time. Beijing has attempted to adapt its rhetorical style, but has failed to deal with some of the fundamental differences in assumptions and norms. Leaders have dug deep into the communist and ancient Chinese cultural canons while echoing liberal ethos principles like human rights and diplomacy. This supports Fairclough’s (2000: 3) argument that “political differences have always been constituted as differences in language, and political struggles have always been struggles over the dominant language”.

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