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**CANADA'S CHINA POLICY IN THE 1990's:
PRAGMATISM, PROGRESS, AND PROSPECTS**

A Policy Paper Submitted to the CCFPD by

**Jing-dong Yuan
University of British Columbia**

March 1999





CANADA'S CHINA POLICY IN THE 1990's:
PRAGMATISM, PROGRESS, AND PROSPECTS*
(March 1999)

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INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, Canada's China policy has shifted from an earlier period (1968-1988) of "special relationship" to a more pragmatic approach of engagement and dialogue. This approach has been based on a more realistic assessment of China's role in the Asia-Pacific region and its potentials as an emerging global power, and Ottawa's ability to apply its "soft power" to influence events, in particular in seeing a growing and responsible China that is crucial to regional stability in the years to come, hence promoting Canadian values and interests, viz., international and regional order, human security, and increased opportunities for trade and investment.

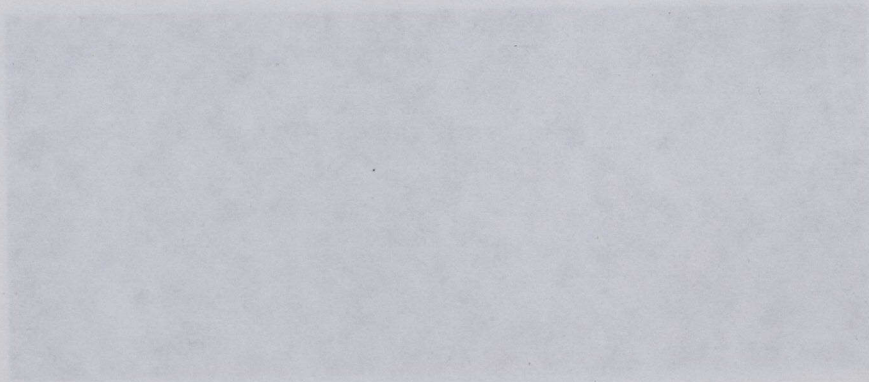
This policy paper takes stock of Canada's China policy over the past decade, focusing in particular on issues of security and arms control and disarmament, with a view to both assessing the debates and discussion leading to various policy options, their objectives, achievements and limitation, and suggesting innovative policy options that can best meet Canadian foreign (security) policy objectives of promoting international and regional peace and stability, good governance, and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and inhumane and illicit use of conventional weapons.

There has been a general consensus within Canadian academic community and policy making circles that China's perceptions of and approaches to, cooperative security and multilateralism can have a great impact on the evolving international relations in post-Cold War Asia Pacific. Indeed, one can argue that the very concept of Asia-Pacific multilateralism as advocated and promoted by Canada can be said to have derived from

* Research for this policy paper is supported by a grant from the John Holmes Fund. The author alone is responsible for the content of the paper. The author is currently a Senior Research Associate with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, Canada's China policy has shifted both from an earlier period (1968-1988) of "special relationship" and the immediate post-Tiananmen shock to a more pragmatic approach of engagement and dialogue. This approach has been based on a more realistic assessment of China's role in the Asia-Pacific region and its potentials as an emerging global power, and Ottawa's ability to apply its "soft power" to influence events, in particular in seeing a growing and responsible China that is crucial to regional stability in the years to come, hence promoting Canadian values and interests, viz., international and regional order, human security, and increased opportunities for trade and investment.

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There has been a general consensus within Canadian academic community and policy making circles that China's perceptions of, and approaches to, cooperative security and multilateralism can have great impact on the evolving international relations in post-Cold War Asia Pacific. Indeed, one can argue that the very catalyst of Asia-Pacific multilateralism as advocated and promoted by Canada can be said to have derived from

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the need to build regional institutions in the face of US and Soviet/Russian drawdown of their military presence in the region resulting in a potential "power vacuum" that may invite aspiring powers such as China and Japan to contend for regional dominance. This further underlines the importance of both our understanding of Beijing's perspectives and how concerned countries in the region like Canada can encourage and facilitate China's active and positive involvement in the security-building endeavors.

Canada has been in a unique position to use its influence gained through years of contribution to international peace and its reputation as a trusted mediator in international conflicts and pioneer in international arms control and disarmament to engage China in cooperative security and various non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (NACD) issues. At the same time, Canadian interests in expanding trade and investment opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region of necessity will have targeted China as both an important player and potential market. Ottawa has approached these issues through a variety of venues: the multilateral forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), and the Conference on Disarmament; bilateral dialogues such as the recently launched Canada-China Seminars on Asia Pacific Multilateralism and Cooperative Security (CANCHIS) held in Ottawa, Toronto, and Beijing over the past three years; and growing exchanges between Canadian and Chinese officials and academia. Much has been achieved through these undertakings, in particular a better understanding of each other's positions on a broad range of issues, and the establishment, although still at an initial stage, an epistemic community of experts. Obviously, differences in perspectives and approaches remain, due to the two countries' divergent historical, cultural, and geostrategic backgrounds.

The objectives of this policy paper are to inform policy discussion and develop new innovative China policy options for the years to come. Past experience has indicated that neither the Trudeau era "special relationship" nor the post-Tiananmen rhetoric have served Canadian foreign policy interests well. What is needed is a pragmatic approach, which has evolved over the last years but which needs renewed focus on the issues, alternatives, and policy choices in a holistic fashion so that the overall Canadian foreign policy objectives can be achieved.

CANADIAN APPROACHES TO ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY

Post-Cold War Canadian foreign policy has sought to achieve three key objectives: the promotion of prosperity and employment; the protection of security, with an emphasis increasingly placed on human security, within a stable global framework; and the projection of Canadian values and culture abroad.¹ Within this broad context and under the new circumstances, security has been refined as not just the absence of military threats against the state, but more broadly as the protection against economic privation,

¹ André Ouellet, *Government's Official Response to the Foreign Policy Review*, 7 February 1995.

an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights. Human security is to be achieved through good governance, sustainable economic development, and peaceful resolution of conflicts.²

As much as the shift of traditional security conception is noticeable, so is the geographical re-orientation in Canada's foreign policy. While maintaining its long-held ties within the NATO alliance and with the United States, Ottawa has been increasingly looking beyond its transatlantic connection to regions of increasing significance to Canadian prosperity and security. Asia Pacific features prominently in this context. Indeed, the past two decades have seen increasing Canadian connections with the Asia-Pacific region in terms of trade, investment, and immigration. Canada now trades more across the Pacific than the Atlantic. Four out five of Canada's top trading partners are in Asia Pacific and over half of the annual immigrants (220,000) come from that region. Clearly, the significance of Asia Pacific for Canada has important impacts on its policy formulation and implementation.³

This sets the context in which Canada tries to reorient its security policy. Traditionally, Canadian focus has been active participation in the transatlantic/NATO collective security/alliance with the US assuming the leadership role and providing extended nuclear deterrence, a commitment to bilateral defense structure such as the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD), and a high-profile global role, in particular in United Nations peacekeeping operations (UNPKOs) and in the arms control and disarmament fora. As a middle power with limited resources but with an avowed internationalist orientation toward global security/economic issues, Canada highly values and actively promotes the principle of multilateralism and rule-based, norm-based institutions.⁴ The post-Cold War Canadian security interests in the Asia-Pacific region, not surprisingly, consist of the following elements: (1) increasing economic linkage with Asia Pacific to share a piece of the region's dynamic economic growth and prosperity (but also the ability to withstand the shockwaves of the region's financial crisis, which has turned out to be not easy); (2) maintaining a peaceful and stable environment in which economic development can proceed; (3) promoting long-standing Canadian internationalist role in facilitating confidence building, conflict resolution, and

² Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security: the Need for Leadership," *International Journal* LII (Spring 1997).

³ Paul M Evans, "The emergence of Eastern Asia and its implications for Canada," *International Journal* 47:3 (Summer 1992), pp.504-528; Brian L. Job, "Canadian Interests and Perspectives Regarding the Emerging Pacific Security Order," *NPCSD Working Paper No.2* (Toronto: York Centre for International and Strategic Studies, 1992); Brian L. Job and Frank Langdon, "Canada and the Pacific," in Fen Osler Hampson and Christopher J. Maule, eds., *Canada among Nations 1993-94: Global Jeopardy* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), pp.266-294; Frank Langdon, "Canada's goal in the Asia Pacific," *The Pacific Review* 8:2 (1995), pp.383-400.

⁴ David B. Dewitt and John J. Kirton, *Canada as a Principal Power* (New York & Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1983); David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown, eds., *Canada's International Security Policy* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1995).

transparency; and (4) building an international and regional order predicated on democracy, rule of law, good governance, and respects for human rights.⁵

Since the 1980s, Canadian policy toward the Asia-Pacific region has evolved in a number of important ways. First has been a greater focus on establishing and strengthening bilateral relationships with the major regional powers/players -- China, Japan, South Korea, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), through concerted efforts at expanding diplomatic/official, commercial, academic, social, and cultural contacts. Second, there have been more conscious efforts in better use of the official development assistance (ODA) to promote Canadian commercial interests, as well as to assist recipient countries' economic development. Third, Ottawa has tried to avoid direct entanglement in the region's military/security issues except participation within broader international (UN) commitments and occasional military exercises with allies/friendly countries. Fourth, Ottawa has encouraged the establishment of linkage and exchanges between domestic research institutes and their counterparts in the region. Finally, immigrants are encouraged from the region.⁶

Meanwhile, there have been sea changes in the Asia Pacific since the end of the Cold War. Prominent among them are the growing economic interdependence and proliferation of trans-Pacific trade & investment. This has been paralleled by the establishment and deepening of nascent institutions such as APEC and the Pacific Economic Council for Cooperation (PECC). At the same time, the end of superpower rivalry in the region, and growing domestic economic difficulties weaken the US commitment to continuously provide leadership and resources for the defense of allies and friends; this in turn creates uncertainty and a potential power vacuum. There has been a recognition that continued economic growth depends on stability and management of potential tensions and conflicts. Therefore, Canadian interests must be the introduction and promotion of cooperative security and arms control agendas. The North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD) represents such an effort.

As much as Canada was mindful of the fact that the absence of multilateral alliance in Asia Pacific left the region with few building blocks to reorient post-Cold War security structure, it was equally cognizant that the different setting in Asia Pacific suggested that multilateralism should take into consideration the region's particular characteristics. It is the spirit of the (European/CSCE) models rather than the models themselves that presents an alternative and in the long term a more viable and sustaining way of promoting security. Indeed, the Canadian initiative in the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue took as its point of departure the recognition that Asia Pacific is different from Europe. It therefore advocated a gradual approach, with dialogues and inclusive participation rather than direct transplant of institutions as the initial focus. It deliberately "envisioned a more gradual approach to developing multilateral institutions, recognized

⁵ Job and Langdon, "Canada and the Pacific"; Evans, "The emergence of Eastern Asia."

⁶ Paul M. Evans, "The Prospects for Multilateral Security Co-operation in the Asia/Pacific Region," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 18:3 (September 1995), pp.201-217.

the value of existing bilateral arrangements, and encouraged ad hoc, informal dialogues (habits of dialogues), and inclusive participation until conditions mature for more formal institution-building." As David Dewitt suggests, "institutions may evolve; they may indeed be the desirable goal, but more immediately and for the mid-term, multilateralism as process, structure, and regularized activities on an agenda of common concern is more important than multilateral [sic] as institution."⁷

As a result of the Canadian initiatives and similar efforts undertaken by Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the ASEAN, Asia Pacific has witnessed a tremendous growth of multilateral security dialogues since the early 1990s. There are a number of factors that underlie the gradual acceptance of multilateral approaches by regional actors. First is the recognition that region-wide problems/issues need to be addressed through regional and/or subregional efforts. Inclusiveness engages almost all important players in the region. Second, economic interdependence provides the condition for greater security cooperation and rule-based systems/framework. The APEC/PECC experiences certainly have been instrumental. Third, regional actors, in particular the lesser powers, realize the values of such frameworks as a hedge against the perceived decline of US role and as a mechanism to keep the US engaged. Fourth, the arrangements also aim at keeping the rising powers enmeshed in a networks of political, diplomatic, and economic interdependence. Finally, small powers are given greater control over the process and agenda-setting of these evolving institutions. As we have seen, the ASEAN-led ARF and the multitude of both Track I and Track II activities in the region are more "local" in character, with initiatives taken by regional powers and not even the major regional powers. The step-by-step approach, with inclusive participation and focusing on confidence building, has resulted over the past few years in a greater acceptance of multilateralism in dealing with security issues. The workshops on the South China Sea, on peacekeeping, and on other security-related issues testify to the usefulness of multilateral approaches. The question that should be more fruitfully raised is how the region could come up with multilateral approaches toward region-specific issues other than one that is concerned with whether or not (and even how) the European models can be applied in the Asia-Pacific context. China's co-sponsorship of the CBM workshop in Beijing in March 1997 certainly belie the somehow mis-perception that Chinese perspectives on, and involvement in, Asia-Pacific multilateral security dialogues have been cautious, passive, and even dismissive.

Within these broad contexts, Canadian political/security interests in Asia Pacific can be understood as of short-, medium-, and longer-term perspectives.⁸ In the first, Canadian interests lie in managing and containing escalation of conflicts in regional hot spots such as the Korean Peninsula, South Asia; maintaining open sea lanes of communication and open skies; and stemming and stopping illegal trafficking. For the medium term, Canada

⁷ David Dewitt, "Common, Comprehensive, and Cooperative Security," *The Pacific Review* 7:1 (1994), pp.1-15.

⁸ Brian L. Job, "Canada's Foreign Policy in the Asia Pacific," paper presented at the Asia Pacific Security Forum, Maritime Forces Pacific, Esquimalt, BC, 18 February 1997.

hopes to see stability in the region's key states such as China and Indonesia; facilitates peaceful settlement of outstanding territorial disputes; and prevents the buildup of conventional arms and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Eventually, Canada's longer-term objectives are to establish effective regional and subregional frameworks for security; engage major powers in the region; and maintain a relevant Canadian voice in regional/subregional affairs. These are to be achieved through cooperative security, confidence building, transparency measures, and arms control verification.

Cooperative Security

Cooperative security has become of catchword of the post-Cold War international relations discourse. With its emphasis on assurance rather than on deterrence, cooperative security recognizes that the changing nature of security renders the traditional approach -- the reliance on the preparation and use of military force -- less tenable in meeting effectively the emerging security challenges. It "seeks to devise agreed-upon measures to prevent war and to do so primarily by preventing the means for successful aggression from being assembled"⁹ and consequently should be seen as "in essence, a commitment to regulate the size, technical composition, investment patterns, and operation practices of all military forces by mutual consent for mutual benefits."¹⁰ It is hoped that this will prevent the adverse effects of a security dilemma where suspicions, secrecy, and the pursuit of absolute security only lead to intense arms races, uncertainties, and most probably actual conflicts as a result of the self-fulfilling prophecy, making it less secure for both (all) concerned.

Two central ideas and a number of key features constitute what would be considered the concept of cooperative security. The first is that threats to security are no longer military only. Indeed, many of these threats are increasingly diverse, multi-dimensional, and distinctly non-military. They may include economic underdevelopment, trade imbalances and disputes, irregular or even illicit migration of people, uncontrolled population growth, environmental degradation, conflicts over access to, and depletion of, natural resources key to economic development, drug trafficking, and human rights abuses. A second central idea is that the management of these issues can no longer rely on unilateral and/or bilateral measures alone but must seek multilateral efforts through the process of discussion, negotiation, cooperation, and compromise.¹¹

Cooperative security approach also consists of a number of distinct features. It emphasizes assurance rather than deterrence, security with rather than against potential adversaries, with the understanding that security cannot be achieved at the expense of, or in isolation from, other players. It advocates a gradual approach, with dialogues rather

⁹ Janne E. Nolan, "The Concept of Cooperative Security," in Nolan, ed., *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994), p.5.

¹⁰ Ashton B. Carter, William J. Perry, and John D. Stenbruner, *A New Concept of Cooperative Security*, Brookings Occasional Papers (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992), p.6.

¹¹ Dewitt, "Common, Comprehensive, and Cooperative Security."

than a direct transplant of institutions as the initial focus. It allows for differentiation in sub-regional contexts and therefore their distinct security approaches. It deliberately “envisioned a more gradual approach to developing multilateral institutions, recognized the value of existing bilateral arrangements, and encouraged ad hoc, informal dialogues (habits of dialogues), and inclusive participation until conditions mature for more formal institution-building.”¹² And it recognizes the merits of both governmental, Track-I and non-governmental, Track-II activities. The Track-II approach is particularly valuable in that it can serve as a sounding board for new ideas. It also encourages interaction between representatives of non-like-minded countries with one another. It moves thinking ahead where official dialogues are absent.

Confidence Building

Confidence building both as a process and product (CBMs) remains an important element in multilateral cooperative security. The recently concluded Shanghai Agreement and Delhi Agreement demonstrate how confidence building has been able to achieve where distrust, hostility, and open confrontation failed: namely, mutually beneficial peace, security, and stability. Particularly important are the two agreements’ emphasis on confidence building and transparency in the military field, a concept that was still alien to Chinese, Soviet/Russian, and Indian strategic thinking not a long while ago. To some extent, it can be suggested what James Macintosh terms the “security management fatigue” has prompted leaders in these countries to seek alternatives in preference to the status quo.¹³ In any event, the two, and especially the Shanghai Agreement, provide a welcome addition to our current understanding of what confidence building is, how it works, and under what conditions. In the Asia-Pacific context, the process of confidence building is well under way, although one should take note the fact that not until the early 1990s have there emerged a number of proposals for regional security frameworks and only since then has there been a general trend toward discussing how confidence building can be usefully applied in promoting cooperation on regional security issues. Today, there are a multitude of security dialogues at various levels, or what may be called “multiplex,” “multi-layered,” or “multifaceted” structures aimed at confidence building.¹⁴ Given their relatively recent nature (compare, for example, with the CSCE/OSCE process that has been more than twenty years in the making), it is understandable that Asia-Pacific confidence building remains at the stage of formulating and implementing CBMs to manage existing and/or potential conflicts, but the very process (e.g., ARF, and various ISG workshops) is clearly in the interest of regional peace, security, and stability.

Transparency

Transparency constitutes another important element of confidence building. As Alan Crawford has suggested, the concept of transparency can be both narrow, focusing

¹² Ibid.

¹³ James Macintosh, *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View*. Arms Control and Disarmament Studies, No.2 (Ottawa: The Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, October 1996).

¹⁴ Paul M. Evans, “The Prospects for Multilateral Security Co-operation in the Asia/Pacific Region,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 18:3 (September 1995), pp.201-217.

exclusively on exchanges of information about military activities, and broad, referring to the availability of information on all security-related matters.¹⁵ Recent years have seen a number of initiatives aimed at increasing transparency in both military and the wider security spheres. The UN Conventional Arms Register, the bilateral China/India Agreement on Confidence building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, and the multilateral (starting as bilateral) Shanghai Agreement between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz, and Tajikistan on confidence building in the military field in the border area are examples. These agreements are aimed at reducing the likelihood of conflicts through carefully elaborated measures to make sudden military activities at once difficult and easily detectable. In the UNCAR case, it is the concern with any excessive accumulation of conventional weapons in particular countries/regions that is the focus. Other countries make their security-related activities more transparent by publishing defense white papers and providing accountable, itemized defense budget information. However, these are far and between, and the notion of transparency has yet to overcome the still strong resistance against exposing "secrets" the preservation of which is regarded imperative for national security. It has been argued that while great powers like the United States can afford transparency (indeed, there has been suggestion the Pentagon may deliberately make its counter-proliferation planning/measures "transparent" so as to deter any contemplation of the use of WMDs by potential adversaries), countries not so endowed may feel vulnerable should their military planning, structure, and capabilities be exposed. Again, to counter the argument that transparency as thus conceived may actually undermine rather than enhance security, there is the need to emphasize that transparency must be seen as a process whose aim is not so much the access to exhaustive information about things military as it is about the willingness (or the lack of it) to share information to promote trust and build confidence.

Verification

Verification, including on-site inspections (OSI), and transparency are important ingredients of the process of confidence building and CBMs. It is equally true in regional security frameworks and arms control and disarmament in general. In the latter case, one may suggest the very success of all NACD agreements depends on compliance of all parties, in spirit as well as in letter. As a recent study suggests, "an arms control verification regime consists of the totality of measures, procedures and methods for acquiring the information necessary to assure compliance, deter non-compliance and/or resolve ambiguous events on the part of the parties to an arms control agreement."¹⁶ Verification itself does not imply distrust; rather, it is both a norm enforcer and a confidence building measure. The key point lies in how to use various verification mechanisms in a least intrusive, least expensive way to achieve the maximum in

¹⁵ Alan Crawford, "Transparency and the NACD Process," paper presented at the Canada-China seminar on Asia-Pacific multilateralism and cooperative security, Ottawa, 30 January 1997.

¹⁶ Patricia Bliss McFate et al., *The Converging Roles of Arms Control Verification, Confidence-Building Measures, and Peace Operations: Opportunities for Harmonization and Synergies* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1994).

collecting data that are most relevant to the assessment of compliance with an agreement in question, reliable, and accurate.

ENGAGING CHINA IN COOPERATIVE SECURITY: UNDERSTANDING BEIJING'S PERSPECTIVES AND POLICIES

China's approaches to cooperative security and confidence building to a large extent reflect its changing threat perceptions.¹⁷ China's security policy in the post-Cold War era focuses on three issues: modernization, unification and territorial integrity, and great-power relations. That economic development is in command derives from the recognition that international competition is shifting from military confrontation to one that tests a country's overall economic, scientific and technological capabilities. Security is no longer affected by the military power of other countries alone; it is contingent on a host of factors. The building of the country's comprehensive national strength (*zonghe guoli*) is the only way to ensure China's long-term security. The emphasis on national reunification and sovereignty both reflects an eagerness to eradicate the legacy and remains of "the hundred years' humiliation" and demonstrates the continued sensitivity to perceived and real encroachment on China's territorial integrity. Anti-hegemonism is as much directed towards the US as it is to serve as a warning to Japan, which is increasingly being viewed as harboring political and military ambitions, hence constituting a long-term potential threat to China's security. While the geo-strategic reality dictates that Russia will remain a long-term competitor, for the time being, China is more confident the security threats Russia now poses is minimum. CBMs in this sense give the Russians assurance as much as they institutionalize what China has gained from a decade of negotiations.

Chinese perspectives on cooperative security have evolved over the last decade. Beijing has gradually begun to accept some of the key elements of cooperative security. These include unilateral disarmament measures such as the reduction over 1985-2000 of two million personnel from the People's Liberation Army (PLA); participation in multilateral cooperative security dialogues (e.g., the ASEAN Regional Forum and the South China Sea workshop); and CBM negotiations with India and Russia. However, at the same time, Beijing has been increasing its defense spending over the past decade; it has acquired a panoply of advanced Russian weaponry; and it has been modernizing its nuclear forces. These developments raise the question of learning and how it helps our understanding of changes in Chinese security policy over time.¹⁸ This refers to two concepts: learning in the sense that growing experience in various multilateral forums will make the Chinese both aware of the many benefits resultant from active participation and better multilateralist; and learning to the extent there is a fundamental change in their perceptions of the nature of threat and the appreciation that there are alternative, and hopefully more cost-effective ways

¹⁷ Jing-dong Yuan, "Threat Perception and Chinese Security Policy after the Cold War," *Pacific Focus* 13:1 (Spring 1998), pp.55-78.

¹⁸ See Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization* 48:2 (Spring 1994), pp.279-312.

of dealing with security dilemmas other than the traditional, realist self-help approaches. While one may suggest that learning has certainly occurred in the first instance, that in the second, namely, the recognition of security interdependence and the relevant policy changes, has yet to take place.

Chinese approaches to CBMs and transparency demonstrate the extent to which Beijing has embraced the concept of cooperative security. There is no denying that Chinese attitudes to confidence building have shifted from suspicion to guarded endorsement over the past decade. However, as reflecting a *holistic* approach to security and arms control issues, China has maintained that military CBMs only form one (albeit an important one) aspect of overall inter-state relationships. In other words, attempts at military CBMs probably would not go very far if not accompanied by an overall improvement in trust and confidence in political, economic, and social spheres. The usefulness of military CBMs is measured against the political commitment to improve security relationship and consolidate that process. Indeed, according to Chinese analysts, "CBMs themselves do not necessarily involve the reduction of military forces of countries involved, but they have the practical effect of reducing suspicions, relaxing tension, maintaining regional stability, and making it easier to reach agreement on issues of contention."¹⁹

The Chinese therefore would always emphasize that CBMs should be broader in scope and not confined to the military sphere only. Indeed, a more useful way of conducting confidence building is to begin with non-military issues. Once confidence and trust have been established in political, diplomatic, and economic spheres, the process of confidence building then can be introduced to deal with military issues.²⁰ Another characteristic of Chinese approaches is the advocacy for a step-by-step rather than an over-ambitious, all encompassing package-deal method. Trust must be built starting with the relatively easier issues where common interests may already more than outweigh differences. Yet a third is to lay down certain markers for the negotiating counterpart to meet as a test of the other's sincerity in wanting to achieve substantive results.²¹

Chinese views on transparency are that transparency is a relative, rather than absolute, concept. Again, to quote two Chinese analysts

Given its size relative to other powers in Asia, China should have no difficulty being transparent. But, military transparency is not bilateral; rather, it is open to all. Therefore, it will be impossible for China to allow the same degree of transparency -- given China's limited nuclear arsenal --

¹⁹ Liu Huaqiu and Zheng Hua, "Confidence-building Measures in Asia," in Michael Krepon, ed., *Chinese Perspectives on Confidence-building Measures*. Report No. 23 (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, May 1997), p.1.

²⁰ Si Chu, "Confidence-Building in Asia-Pacific," *Beijing Review* 34:9 (4-10 March 1991), pp.15-16.

²¹ Liu Huaqiu, "Step-By-Step Confidence and Security Building for the Asian Region: A Chinese Perspective," in Ralph A. Cossa, ed., *Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures* (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1995), pp.119-136; Si Chu, "Confidence-Building in Asia-Pacific," *Beijing Review*, 4-10 March 1991, pp.15-16.

as exists with regard to the Russian or American nuclear arsenals. Such a degree of transparency would call into question the survivability of China's nuclear weapons. Accordingly, a better political climate will be necessary before China can be more transparent.²²

In other words, military transparency for China can only proceed step by step, and can never achieve the degree compared to the United States because of China's weaker military forces.²³ The purpose of transparency is to enhance confidence and trust, not to obtain unavailable information. In other words, the aim of increasing transparency should be to enhance security rather undermine it.²⁴ And transparency itself is not a panacea and should go hand-in-hand with other efforts in promoting political trust and a peaceful environment.

Asia Pacific and China's Regional Agenda

China's basic assessment of the security situation in post-Cold War Asia Pacific is a dialectic one. On the one hand, the security environment in the region is characterized as stable and peaceful, with economic development being the priority for most countries; on the other hand, there remain factors of uncertainty and sources of instability, highlighted by the recent economic crisis in the region and political and social unrest in a number of countries.²⁵ Within such contexts, the establishment of a new political order in the region, according to Chinese analysts, requires the following: (1) resolving existing conflicts and preventing new ones; (2) promoting regional arms control and disarmament; (3) establishing state-to-state relations based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence; (4) respecting each country's right to decide its own course of democratization conducive to political stability; (5) promoting regional economic cooperation and prosperity; and (6) setting up regional security dialogues based on regional specificities.²⁶

This rhetoric aside, what has really transpired over the past few years is the fact that balance of power features prominently in Chinese thinking about the post-Cold War order not by choice but out of necessity. While short on specific proposals, there seems to be a working consensus among Chinese analysts as to the preferred mechanism for managing regional security *problematique*. There is a marked emphasis on great power relations and how they may affect the contour of regional security arrangement. What have emerged in recent Chinese discussions on Asia-Pacific security are such concepts as the "new trilateral relationship" (Japan, China, and the US) replacing the Cold-War strategic triangle (the US,

²² Liu and Zheng, "Confidence-building Measures in Asia," p.7.

²³ Xia Liping, "The Evolution of Chinese Views Toward CBMs," in Krepon, ed., *Chinese Perspectives on Confidence-building Measures*, p.17.

²⁴ Luo Renshi, "On the Ways of and China's Efforts in Increasing Transparency in the Asia-Pacific Region," *International Strategic Studies* 4 (1995), pp.11-12.

²⁵ Lu Zhongwei, "Yatai anquan xingshi xiangdui wending [A Relatively Stable Asia-Pacific Security Environment]," *Liaowang [Outlook Weekly]*, no.27 (4 July 1995), pp.41-43; Liu Jingsong, "Jinrun fenbao zhongde yatai anquan [Asia-Pacific Security under the Financial Storm]," *Shijie zhishi [World Affairs]*, no.7, (1998), p.20.

²⁶ Chen Qimao, "Seeking for a New Political Order in the Asia-Pacific Region," pp.5-8.

China, and the Soviet Union);²⁷ the quadrangular-power relationships (China, Japan, Russia, and the US), and the five-force interactions (the four powers plus ASEAN).

China's emphasis on major power relations is based on the principle of multipolarization in which itself will have an important place in regional affairs. In addition, regional stability will also be affected by a host of other factors, including: continued economic growth and increasing interdependence among the region's countries; Asian values, in that the collective good takes precedence over individual rights; the ASEAN way of non-confrontation, consultation, and consensus, and simply most countries' desire for peace and stability.²⁸ This being the case, regional stability will largely depend on the relationships between the region's major players; how existing disputes are to be resolved, including the establishment of security mechanisms; and how the diversity of the region (history, culture, economic development, political systems, etc.) can be managed.

While proposing general principles for peacefully settling any disputes in the region, China has not so far offered any specific mechanism for managing potential conflicts. Regarding emerging security-building initiatives, Beijing has been rather cautious in either endorsing or criticizing them, for obvious reasons. For instance, ASEAN's role since the end of the Cold War has become increasingly important in regional affairs. It seeks to establish its pivotal role in Southeast Asia as a balancer between major powers. Very pro-active, ASEAN seeks the driver's seat, hoping to prevent big powers from taking over the agenda setting authority.²⁹ Chinese analysts have viewed the ARF with mixed ambivalence. For some, the purpose of the ARF in essence is to retain the influence the United States in the region and to cast some restraining net over the region's major powers.³⁰ For others, there is the concern that regional multilateral security arrangements would be dominated the United States and become appendix to existing military alliances.³¹

Despite its ambivalence toward the regional security mechanisms, China at least shows a toleration of such mechanisms as long as the small and medium-sized countries are taking control. Although ARF serves as a multilateral forum for dialogue on regional security issues, it is also useful for high-level bilateral encounters, such as one between the US and China. In this regard, ARF represents ASEAN's ability to engage major powers, which is crucial for regional security.³² However, its ability to manage regional security

²⁷ Xu, "Changing Chinese Security Perceptions," pp.12-13.

²⁸ Sa Benwang, "Maixiang ershiyi shiji de yatai anquan xingshi [Asia-Pacific Security toward the 21st Century]," *Heping yu fazhan* [Peace and Development], no.58 (December 1996), p.3.

²⁹ Shi Yongming, "Lengzhanhou dongmong diweide zengqiang jiqi yingxiang [ASEAN's Rising Position and the Its Influence in the Post-Cold War Era]" *Guoji wenti yanjiu* [International Studies], no.1 (1997), pp.29-33.

³⁰ Wu Xinbuo, "Dongya hezuo anquan de xianzhuang yu qianjing [The Current Status of East-Asian Cooperative Security and Its Prospect]," *Heping yu Fazhan* [Peace and Development], no.4 (December 1995), pp.8-11.

³¹ You Ji, "China's position on collective security," *Trends*, 22-23 February 1997, p.4.

³² Michael Vatikiotis, "Uncharted Waters," *FEER*, 5 August 1993, pp.10-11.

issues remain limited due to its own institutional weakness and the fact that great powers continue to exert unsurpassed influence over the agenda, the pace, and mechanisms regarding regional security issues.³³ Meanwhile, China is strongly opposed to establishing any institutionalized mechanisms for dealing with regional security issues for the reasons that countries are vastly different in terms of history, culture, political and social systems, and different visions of national security and priorities. An OSCE-type institutional arrangement not only will not be able to deal with the complexity of issues but also likely falls under the control of certain powers.³⁴

Chinese positions on the multilateral approach to Asia-Pacific security have undergone noticeable changes.³⁵ China seems to have gradually moved toward acknowledging the utility of multilateralism, while still hesitant about adopting institutionalized mechanism right away. Chinese analysts assert that a direct transplant of the CSCE model to the Asia Pacific region is impractical and may even be counterproductive. And Beijing's understanding of the notion of comprehensive security is premised on the recognition that different countries have different focus on different aspects of national and regional security: some on economic security; some military security; political and social security; etc. Dealing with this multitude of issues should make use of a combination of political, economic, military, diplomatic measures instead of solely relying on military force for maintaining security. At the same time, the negative side of the comprehensive security concept is that certain countries may attempt to extend the scope of security, politicize and internationalize domestic economic, social and environmental issues; pretext for interference in domestic affairs; power politics and hegemonism.³⁶

China's evolving positions on Asia-Pacific security can be characterized as what I call "conditional multilateralism."³⁷ Its essence is to present China as a supporter of the emerging regional security dialogue while at the same time avoid committing itself to a more institutionalized arrangement whose norms and rules may constrain Beijing's freedom of action. Conditional multilateralism allows China to be part of the process of building regional security, influence its agenda, and have a voice in its pace and direction; selective involvement accrues experience in dealing with issues cooperatively while preconditions for its participation would allow Beijing to retain the ability to maneuver. Such posturing has as much to do with Beijing's inherent suspicion about the effectiveness of multilateral approaches in handling regional security, as with its concern that multilateral forums may

³³ Sheldon Simon, "The Limits of Defense and Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* XXXIII:1 (February 1998), pp.62-75; Shaun Narine, "ASEAN and the Management of Regional Security," *Pacific Affairs* 71:2 (Summer 1998), pp.195-214.

³⁴ Tian Peiliang, "Dongbeiyu anquan taishi ji zouxiang [Northeast Asian Security Posture and Its Orientation]," *Heping yu Fazhan [Peace and Development]*, no.1 (March 1996), pp.1-3, 51.

³⁵ Rosemary Foot, "China in the ASEAN Regional Forum: Organizational Processes and Domestic Modes of Thought," *Asian Survey* XXXVIII:5 (May 1998), pp.425-440.

³⁶ Li Yunlong, "Yatai diqu de zonghe anquan hezuo [Comprehensive Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region]," *Xiandai guoji guanxi [Contemporary International Relations]*, no.5 (1996), pp.23-25.

³⁷ Jing-dong Yuan, *Conditional Multilateralism: Chinese Views on Order and Regional Security*. CANCAPS Papier No.9 (Toronto: The Canadian Consortium on Asia Pacific Security, March 1996)..

be used for "China bashing."

There are a number of distinct features about China's conditional multilateralism: (1) The multi-channel approach. Regional security issues should be dealt with by a variety of channels, including bilateral, multilateral, and sometimes unilateral approaches at governmental and non-governmental levels. Indeed, China's approach to regional security issues can be seen as distinctly bilateral, arguing that under certain circumstances bilateral approaches can be more appropriate in resolving security issues (e.g., Sino-Russian agreement on reducing military forces in the border areas); (2) The minilateral approach. Beijing continues to emphasize the importance of major powers in managing regional security issues; (3) A gradualist approach. The regional security building process should begin with bilateral dialogues, moving to sub-regional, and then region-wide ones. Issues should be dealt with from an order of ascendance, i.e., from the relatively easy to the more difficult; and (4) An Asia-Pacific approach. The region, because of its special characteristics—history, culture, economic development, political systems, religion, etc., should not blindly copy the CSCE model; substance is more important than form. Dialogues, confidence building measures should serve to enhance political trust, which is the basis of stable security relationships.

Arms Control and Disarmament

Chinese positions on arms control and disarmament issues have changed over the years. During the 1960s and 1970s, Beijing was highly critical of U.S./Soviet arms control and disarmament activities, regarding them as nothing more than schemes of superpower collusion aimed at maintaining their nuclear monopoly. Consequently, Beijing categorically rejected superpower NACD proposals and refused to accept any constraint on its own weapons development programs.³⁸ Since the early 1980s, Chinese positions have shifted from outright rejection of NACD measures to partial and guarded endorsement of selected NACD activities that would constrain superpower arms races. Beijing began to participate in UN-based arms control fora, in particular the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva.³⁹ However, during most of the 1980s, China's NACD activities focused on issues important to its security interests such as chemical weapons, space weapons, and superpower nuclear disarmament while continuing put forth high-principled proposals at various international fora.⁴⁰ It is only since the end of the Cold War that Beijing began considering arms control and disarmament not just a game for scoring political points but an important policy area in which to balance a number of national security interests.

³⁸ Zhou Enlai, 'Wuomen Weishenmu Fandui Sanguo Bufen Jinzhi Heshiyan Tiaoyue [Why Do We Oppose the Partial Test Ban Treaty]', *Zhou Enlai Waijiao Wenxuan [Selected Works of Zhou Enlai on Diplomacy]* (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe (Beijing: Government Document Press, 1990), pp.335-39.

³⁹ Wu, "China's Policies towards Arms Control and Disarmament."

⁴⁰ Alastair I. Johnston, *China and Arms Control: Emerging Issues and Interests in the 1980s*. Aurora Papers 3 (Ottawa: The Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, 1986); Alastair I. Johnston, "China and Arms Control in the Asia-Pacific Region," in Frank C. Langdon and Douglas A. Ross, eds., *Superpower Maritime Strategy in the Pacific* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p.176.

China's NACD policies have been guided by a number of principles persistently stipulated over the years.⁴¹ First and foremost is the argument that since the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia possess the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals in the world, they bear a primary and unshirkable responsibility in disarmament. Second, all NACD measures are but steps toward the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons. In other words, nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear test bans, fissile material production cut-offs, etc., are not the goals themselves, but are specific measures and steps toward the ultimate objective of eliminating all nuclear weapons. In addition, China insists that NACD will not succeed unless the root causes of global/regional conflicts are addressed. This involves economic, political, as well as military and NACD measures. Third, as the danger of nuclear war threatens the entire human race, every country has the equal right to participate in the discussion and settlement of the question of nuclear disarmament.⁴²

While the Chinese have persistently enunciated their principles over the years, in handling specific NACD negotiations and dealing with particular issues, they have managed to present policy positions in ways that both preserve (if not advance) core national security interests and appear in conformity with declared principled stance.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). China acceded to the NPT in 1992 and has supported the three major objectives of the treaty--the promotion of nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the enhancement of international cooperation for peaceful uses of nuclear energy.⁴³ At the same time, it also demonstrates its shared concerns with NAM regarding a number of defects in the NPT, especially on Articles IV and VI. However, while appearing sympathetic with the positions of non-nuclear weapons states, and proposing specific measures to address their concerns, China's positions during the NPT extension conference seemed ambivalent except for a repetition of its well-known principles.⁴⁴ Its nuclear testing two days after the indefinite extension of the treaty highlights the conflict between principles and actual behaviour, however the latter has

⁴¹ Jing-dong Yuan, "Arms Control and Non-Proliferation: Chinese Perspectives and Policies," in Andrew Latham, ed., *Non-Proliferation Agreements, Arrangements and Responses: Proceedings of the 1996 Canadian Non-Proliferation Workshop* (Toronto: Centre for International and Security Studies, 1997), pp.87-104.

⁴² Statement of Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian at the Conference on Disarmament, CD/PV.400, pp.2-7. See also, 'Basic Positions of the Chinese Delegation on the Prevention of Nuclear War', Working Paper submitted to CD, CD/691; 'Working Paper on Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and Realization of Nuclear Disarmament', CD/767; Chinese Ambassador Qian Jiadong at CD, CD/PV 330, pp.31-34; Chinese Ambassador Li Luye at CD, CD/PV 215.

⁴³ 'China Supports Extension', *FBIS-CHI*, 19 April 1995, p.1.

⁴⁴ Du Gengqi, 'NPT Treaty at Crossroads', *BR*, 24-30 April 1995, p.19; Fan Guoxiang, 'INF Negotiations and Nuclear Disarmament', *Disarmament*, Vol.11, No.1 (Winter 1987/1988), p.23. See also, 'Heated Exchanges on NPT Extension', *RMRB*, 27 April 1995, p.6; Huang Qing, 'A Step of Great Significance', *RMRB*, 18 May 1995, p.6.

always been described by the Chinese government as in conformity with the long-standing pursuit of complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.⁴⁵

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). China's positions during the CTBT negotiations revolved around two issues: the inclusion of a clause on peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs) in the CTBT, which it proposed in August 1994; and the question of verification. Regarding the former, China's view was that only nuclear explosions with an overt military purpose should be prohibited. Beijing argued that PNEs could have potential civilian benefits for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.⁴⁶ China eventually dropped its demand for the PNE exemption clause on the condition that the treaty would undergo review after ten years.⁴⁷ One of the reasons for this last-minute 'softening' of position may be the political cost of holding out to the PNE demand and potentially wrecking the treaty, especially given the fact that China's position was not supported by the developing countries.⁴⁸

Chinese positions on verification issues are that any verification clauses and arrangements should be strict, effective, fair and reasonable, and provide equal rights and obligations to all treaty members. Out of concern over potential abuse, Beijing opposed the use of national-technical means (NTMs) in CTBT verification and proposed an international monitoring system (IMS) instead. China also proposed a number of principles for on-site inspections (OSIs) ranging from the objective, the triggering procedure, and the limits of such inspections.⁴⁹ OSIs should be minimally intrusive and applied only as a last resort after all other means of verification have been exhausted.

Fissile Materials Production Cut-off. On 4 October 1994, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher signed the "Joint Declaration on the Cessation of Production of Fission Materials Used in Nuclear Weapons."⁵⁰ Apart from this Sino-US joint declaration, China has said little about its positions on the cut-off issue but has reiterated the importance of measures such as NFU in contributing to disarmament. China has been unwilling to commit itself to a moratorium on production although reportedly it has long stopped production of fissile materials. A number of factors will likely affect Chinese positions on the cut-off issue. These include the development of the theatre missile defence (TMD) and the national missile defence (NMD); current size of

⁴⁵ 'Statement by the Government of China on the Question of Nuclear Testing', 5 October 1993. A/C 1/48/3.

⁴⁶ 'CTBT article on "Peaceful uses of nuclear energy and peaceful nuclear explosions"', Chinese working paper. CD/NTB/WP.167. 23 August 1994.

⁴⁷ Robert Karniol, 'China to sign pact after one more nuclear test', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 19 June 1996, p.25.

⁴⁸ Johnson, 'Endgame Issues in Geneva', p.15.

⁴⁹ 'China's position on CTBT on-site inspection'. Working Paper, CD/NTB/WP.266, 5 September 1995, p.1; Ambassador Sha, CD/PV.717, p.7.

⁵⁰ 'Accords on Nuclear Weapons', Xinhua Domestic Service, 4 October 1994, in *FBIS-CHI*, 5 October 1994, pp.8-9.

Chinese stocks; current and future nuclear weapons programs; Japan's and India's nuclear developments; and domestic politics.⁵¹

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). China was most concerned with the issues of abandoned chemical weapons on its territories and verification. There are indications that should the issue be settled properly, that is, should Japan carry through its pledge to remove them, it may improve the chance of China's ratifying the CWC. On the whole, the Chinese approach to the convention has been serious. The military (represented by the Ministry of National Defence) clearly had a strong role in China's PrepCom participation. Meanwhile, the timing of ratification by the US, Russia, India, Japan will also have an important impact on China's decision. With regard to verification, China favoured a limited scope of on-site inspections (OSIs), and emphasised the need to maximise predictability and avoid abuse. Hence, China insisted that effective, reasonable, and feasible monitoring and verification measures should be established to ensure the non-production of chemical weapons by the civil chemical industry while at the same time allowing legitimate production for civilian uses. It particularly warned against the tendency to broaden the scope of verification and place excessive emphasis on intrusive challenge inspections, with possible abuses of the verification process.⁵²

Anti-Personnel Landmines. China continues to look at the issue of landmines from a security rather than humanitarian perspective, although the latter is increasingly becoming the dominant rationale for prohibition.⁵³ China's behaviour at the CCW, and in particular on the landmine issue, was characterised as non-co-operative to obstructionist. There is a strong (and probably inaccurate) impression that the Chinese position is influenced by its relations with the Khmer Rouge and other liberation movements, and highly ideological. The objection to banning landmines is that these are seen as legitimate weapons in the people's war and in rebellions against imperialists and the capitalist world. Keeping landmines out of the hands of non-state actors is the West's agenda, not China's. The essence here is that on matters of principle: China is not to let Western countries dictate the terms of negotiations. While China prefers not to be identified as a spoiler, it is prepared to stand alone to protect its vital interests. Indeed, China has so far refused to compromise on such issues as the use of identifiers to make mines detectable and a global ban on anti-personnel mines, which would force China to replace them with less cost-effective alternatives.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Liu, 'Evaluation and Analysis', pp.10-11; R. Bates Gill, 'Report on the Mission to the People's Republic of China', *Research Project: Nuclear Proliferation and World Order* (University of Leiden & Netherlands Atlantic commission, May 1995), p.10; Lisbeth Gronlund, David Wright and Yong Liu, 'China and a Fissile Material Production Cut-Off', *Survival*, Vol.37, No.4 (Winter 1995-96), pp.147-167.

⁵² CD/PV. 406, pp.17-19; Ambassador Hou, CD/PV. 551, pp.4-5; CD/PV. pp.635, 29.

⁵³ I am indebted to Andrew Latham for calling my attention to this point. On China's position, see Rod Mickleburgh, "China reaffirms opposition to mine ban," *The Globe and Mail*, 20 November 1997, p.A12.

⁵⁴ Interviews with DFAIT officials. June 1996.

ASSESSING CANADIAN CHINA POLICY: A CONCEPTUAL FIRST CUT

The above discussions of Canadian security interests in Asia Pacific and China's post-Cold War security policy serve to highlight a number of issues and raise some questions. To what extent Canadian initiatives have been successful in the sense that China begins to see security not in traditional terms of force and deterrence, but more toward dialogues, confidence building, transparency? Where does the gap still remain and what specific policy options can be recommended to better engage China in cooperative security and multilateralism and hence advance Canadian foreign policy interests in Asia Pacific? The following paragraphs provide a rough first cut at the conceptual level.

It would certainly be an overstatement to suggest definitively that Canadian initiatives over the years have brought about changes in China's security perceptions, but there is increasing convergence between the two on a number of issues. One noticeable development is that Beijing has gradually overcome its earlier suspicion of the multilateral approach in discussing regional and subregional security issues. This has been demonstrated by its more proactive participation in various multilateral security forums such as the ARF and NEASD (Northeast Asian Security Dialogue) and other channels including the ASEAN + 3, China-ASEAN, where security issues are also discussed.⁵⁵ One still has to determine both the motivations for and the causes of Chinese participation, but the general trend so far seems to be encouraging, compatible with Canadian interests in the region. In the Track II arena, Chinese participation is also steady and on the rise. The Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies' *Dialogue Monitor* project would testify to this new found Chinese interest in multilateralism.

What is most important, though, is that through these various Track I and Track II channels, there are increasing opportunities for the Chinese and Canadians to exchange views and understand each other better on a wide range of issues. To some extent, an epistemic community of experts has been established and its number is growing, at least in terms of moving toward a common understanding of key security concepts and terms so that dialogues are possible, with both knowing what the other is referring to and talking about.⁵⁶ Currently there are multi-channel venues where the two can meet and discuss various security issues, including ARF, APEC at Track I level, CSCAP, the South China Sea Workshop at Track II level, and bilaterally, the CANCHIS (Canada-China Seminar on Asia Pacific Multilateralism and Cooperative Security), which has recently held its third meeting in Beijing. The last is credited with training a new generation of young Chinese diplomats, think tank analysts on key concepts of security, CBMs, and others. Indeed, one of the key objectives of Asia Pacific security dialogues in the 1990s

⁵⁵ Indeed, one indication is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Asian Department has added another division to handle multilateral security dialogue related matters.

⁵⁶ A reflection of this on-going effort can be found in David H. Capie, Paul M. Evans and Akiko Fukushima, *Speaking Asia Pacific Security: A Lexicon of English Terms with Chinese and Japanese Translations and a Note on the Japanese Translation*. (Toronto: Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, 1998).

has been to increase mutual understanding and the continuing (and expanding) process of interaction and exchanges enhances this prospect.

However, notwithstanding the progress and the encouraging developments, significant differences remain due to different historical, cultural, and geostrategic perspectives. For instance, even though China's participation in various Track I and Track II multilateral security forums has been on the rise, a fundamental change of perspectives on China's part in seeing multilateralism as the norm of conducting interstate relations remains cosmetic rather than substantive. On key regional issues, such as the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, Beijing and Ottawa remain apart regarding the mechanisms for and routes to resolution. There has yet to be a big step forward beyond the endorsement of multilateralism in general terms (which both countries find no particular difficulty in so doing) to the institutionalization of multilateralism as a norm in dealing with specific regional security issues, where Beijing and Ottawa still see differently. This resistance to fundamental change can be traced to the resilience of the Chinese strategic culture and its influences over Beijing's security perceptions and policy making.⁵⁷ Indeed, there may be a number of reasons that would account for the absence of a "leap forward" from Beijing. These are the regional characteristics, and China's past experience and the dynamics of domestic politics. Unlike the case in Europe, where multilateral institutions such as NATO and WTO dominated the security architecture during the Cold War, in Asia Pacific, approaches to security had been either unilateral (self-reliance) or bilateral; indeed, most defense arrangements have involved the US at one end and one of the Asia-Pacific countries at the other. The few exceptions to this general rule, such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), or the Five Power Defense Arrangement (FPDA), have not played a predominant role in regional security.⁵⁸ This probably explains the initial US response, which was lukewarm at best, to initiatives aimed at setting up a multilateral, region-wide security framework.⁵⁹

Another point that should be kept in mind is that not until the early 1990s have there emerged numerous proposals for the regional multilateral security frameworks and only since then has there been a general trend toward discussing new mechanisms for regional cooperation on security matters. Today, there are a multitude of security dialogues at various levels, or what may be called "multiplex", "multi-layered", or multifaceted" structure.⁶⁰ Some of the principles of cooperative security have only recently taken roots: assurance rather than deterrence; multilateral process to replace or at least coexist with bilateral military alliance; and promotion of both military and non-military security. If progress in Asia-Pacific multilateralism must be judged against its own past, considering,

⁵⁷ See, for example, Jing-dong Yuan, "Culture Matters: Chinese Approaches to Arms Control and Disarmament," *Contemporary Security Policy* 19:1 (April 1998), pp.85-128.

⁵⁸ William T. Tow, "Contending Security Approaches in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Security Studies* 3:1 (Autumn 1993), pp.75-116.

⁵⁹ James A. Baker, III, "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs* 70:5 (Winter 1991/92), pp.1-18.

⁶⁰ Paul M. Evans, "Building Security: The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)," *The Pacific Review* 7:2 (1994), pp.125-139.

for instance, that fact the CSCE/OSCE has been more than twenty years in the making, while one of the earlier, more serious efforts—the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD) initiative—had its origin merely six years ago, and the Asia-Pacific version approximate to CSCE/OSCE—the ARF—only began less than two years ago, we may begin to assess China's progress in quite a different light.

Chinese approaches toward multilateralism should be judged within the broader contexts of its past experiences, its current concerns, and the dynamics of its domestic politics. China has been cautious about adopting multilateral approaches out of a number of reasons: the limited and negative experience; the fear of small states ganging up against China (China bashing); and the concern that multilateral security forums may give Taiwan legitimacy. China's limited experiences in the past with multilateralism were far from positive. A few examples will suffice: The League of Nations and its acquiescence in Japanese invasion of China in 1931; the Soviet attempt to control China through both the 3rd Communist International and later the Comecon. China also suspects, (and has tried to stop), that the territorial disputes in the South China Sea and China's military buildup may be turned into *the* issues at regional security forums.⁶¹ Finally, Beijing is highly sensitive about *de facto* recognition of Taiwan's legitimacy through participation in some of the regional security dialogues. The stalemate concerning membership of both China and Taiwan in the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific (CSCAP) to a large extent is due to Beijing's objection to Taiwan's participation.⁶²

Domestic politics has always featured prominently in China's foreign policy making; indeed, there are discernable linkages between domestic politics and foreign policy behavior.⁶³ Such linkages become all the more pronounced during periods of uncertainty due to leadership succession and power transition, which makes flexibility difficult. The current leadership does not wield the kind of power held by the old generation of revolutionaries and consequently initiatives on their part are less of a possibility than negotiated compromises. Within such a framework, important foreign policy decisions that touch upon important and sensitive issues such as state sovereignty and territorial integrity will normally not be subject to multilateral considerations. Another factor that must be considered is that external environment exerts less of a direct impact on Chinese policy making. While international system acts to encourage certain behaviors and discourage others, the defining variable remains domestic.⁶⁴

Another way of understanding Chinese approaches to multilateralism is what Samuel Kim regards as the tension between rhetoric and practice, theory and praxis. China tends to propose principles well beyond its capabilities; at the same time, there is the practical side

⁶¹ Shirk, *Chinese Views on Asia-Pacific Regional Security*, p.11.

⁶² Paul M. Evans, "The New Multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific and the Conditional Engagement of China," in James Shinn, ed., *Weaving the Net: Conditional Engagement with China* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1996), p.261.

⁶³ Wang, "Comparing Chinese and American Conceptions of Security," p.5.

⁶⁴ David Bachman, "Domestic Sources of Chinese Foreign Policy," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), pp.42-59.

of Chinese foreign policy that seeks to realize maximum security benefits while minimizing moral and normative costs. This would explain the meshing of principled stand (*jiben luxian*) with practical adaptations under certain circumstances.⁶⁵ Yet a third way to understand Chinese multilateralism is what can be called the rhetorical and substantive of Chinese foreign policy. This leads to a combination of rigidity and flexibility in Chinese international behaviors. As long as fundamental national interests can be secured, Beijing has been willing to be more flexible with regard to how certain issues should be handled.⁶⁶

On a number of arms control and disarmament issues of particular Canadian concerns, such as the anti-personnel landmines, light weapons, and general nuclear disarmament involving all five nuclear weapons states, China has not accepted Canada's sweeping recommendation of total bans out of its security considerations; nor is it keen to participate in nuclear disarmament before the US and Russia have substantially cut back on their arsenals. Regarding the negotiation toward a fissile materials cut-off treaty, China may be less interested than Canada in pushing it on the CD agenda, especially after the passage in US Congress of legislation on national missile defense and increasing controversy over the theatre missile defense in Northeast Asia despite Beijing's strong opposition. On peacekeeping and peacebuilding, Beijing is opposed to the idea of expanding beyond the traditional UN mandates and especially concerned over the concept of humanitarian intervention and involvement in intrastate conflicts.⁶⁷ Contrary to the Canadian call for the UN to expand its PKOs to deal with intrastate conflicts in order to protect population and human security and post-conflict involvement in peacebuilding, China is more cautious and indeed has had serious reservations about some of the recent developments in UN peacekeeping activities. Prominent among them are the changed nature of the missions from an originally strictly third party intervention to mediate and supervise cease-fires and peace with impartiality and non-violence, to an expanded yet not well defined one of performing a host of tasks. Aside from the financial burdens, the more serious and long-term consequence lies in the deviation from the traditional principles and norms that made UNPKOs both manageable and successful endeavors. The lack of consultation in the process, with Western powers basically setting the agenda, the increasing use of force and involvement in intrastate as opposed to interstate conflicts, interference in member states' internal affairs, and the failure to withhold neutrality in implementation are effectively eroding the legitimacy and credibility of peacekeeping operations even as they challenge state sovereignty. As China sees it, unless UNPKOs follow certain norms and principles and return to their right track, there is the grave consequence that they may become nothing more than an instrument for power politics, using the UN as authorization and justification.

⁶⁵ Samuel S. Kim, "China and the Third World in the Changing World Order," in Kim, ed., *China and the World*, pp.128-68.

⁶⁶ Quansheng Zhao, "Patterns and Choices of Chinese Foreign Policy," *Asian Affairs* 20:1 (Spring 1993), pp.3-15.

⁶⁷ Jing-dong Yuan, "Multilateral Intervention and State Sovereignty: Chinese Views on UN Peacekeeping Operations," *Political Science* 49:2 (January 1998), pp.275-95.

Chinese concerns have deep historical/cultural roots. Its own unhappy experience since the mid-19th century and the struggle to regain respect and the rightful place in the international system of nation-states makes the protection of state sovereignty a sensitive, non-negotiable issue for China. The emphasis on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the UN Charter as the bases for building a new international order reflects at least a desire to have a more equitable international structure that reaffirms the principle of state sovereignty and has no place for hegemonism and power politics.

But there are areas where Canadian and Chinese interests converge. For instance, both share some common concerns over the issue of weaponization of outer space. The existing international treaties were negotiated over three decades ago and new regulations are urgently needed to prevent the space from being weaponized. An international framework for maintaining the outer space as a weapons-free environment would benefit human kind generations to come. The NMD and TMD systems leading to increasingly military use of space (and to weaponization) for defense purposes could (and already has caused) serious concern. China has already voiced serious concerns but has yet to elaborate specifically on what its concerns are. What is more important is not only to identify the possible negative impacts NMD and TMD can bring but also innovative thinking on what arms control alternatives can effectively address both the concerns of those threatened by the proliferation of missiles and the objections against their deployment.

The difficulty Canada faces in engaging China and hopefully influencing the latter's security perception and policy is Ottawa's credibility, as is its perceived weight in Beijing's foreign relations. While post-Cold War Canadian foreign policy, in particular under the stewardship of Lloyd Axworthy, has sought to move beyond alliance constraints and ventured into issue-based coalition building through the use of "soft power" (e.g., anti-personnel landmines; nuclear weapons policy within NATO), a case has yet to be made that Ottawa now has an independent foreign policy, even though it still enjoys the benefits of being a member of the old club. At the same time, even though Beijing may respect and indeed share some of Ottawa's views on certain issues, it nevertheless realizes that for anything to be done, the "Ottawa process" may be an exception rather than the rule in the international deal making. Innovative policy must be sought in that channels for dialogues should be maintained and further developed. In addition, new avenues must also be sought; a bold step would be to more actively engage the Chinese military through the establishment of mechanisms for regular exchanges and consultation on security matters. It is not enough just to identify issues of common interests, what is needed is to elaborate possibilities of cooperation and coordination in various international and regional arms control and security forums to seek results. Finally, a better understanding of what underline the differences in perceptions, interests, and policy choices between Canada and China is urgently needed,⁶⁸ in particular in the context of the on-going debates over the implications of China's rise as a major global

⁶⁸ Howard Balloch, "China and the 21st Century: Collision or Convergence?" *Behind the Headlines* 54:3 (Spring 1997), pp.4-9.

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power; it is not meant to change the fundamentals as it is to be better prepared so as to minimize the consequences deriving from these differences.

