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Neorealism, Functionalism, and Chosen-Trauma in American-Chinese Relations: From Conflict Analysis to Conflict Management

Introduction

“Anarchy is what states make of it.”¹
-Alexander Wendt, The Social Construction of Power Politics

Pickup any newspaper today or listen to any pundit, political leader, or media outlet on either side of the Pacific and you will find a large number of strongly-worded headlines proclaiming the dangers of United States- People’s Republic of China (P.R.C.) conflict. How did the U.S. and China get into such a competitive situation? How can this conflict be understood, its level determined, or the situation resolved or at least mitigated? By bringing together structural neorealism, sociology’s structural functionalism theory of social conflict, and the historical-political mass physiology theory of chosen-trauma, a clearer understanding of the history of the conflict and its causes emerge as well as multiple means of addressing the problem. This paper argues that the U.S. and the P.R.C. are currently locked into a regional hegemonic conflict as the result of (1) great power politics and the security dilemma in an anarchical system, (2) the lack of sufficient positive adjustment and adaption on the part of the American-led international system, and (3) contradictory historical-political histories and beliefs by both the Americans and Chinese which negatively color perceptions of each other. Furthermore, this paper asserts that given these factors and the potential for massive violence, the current American-Chinese conflict can at best be managed and contained, not resolved. Finally, this paper suggests a realistic, and nuanced, strategy for managing this conflict and preventing war can be found in using a combination of

neorealist disincentives and liberal/functionalist incentives within the physiological framework of chosen-trauma.

Conflict Background

The complex part-friend, part-enemy relationship between the U.S. and China has a long and complex history, part of which I will elaborate on later when discussing the chosen trauma of each society and the impact this has on their foreign policies. A brief overview of the history however provides a sense of how fraught with antagonism and distrust the relationship between America and China. The U.S. had a long-standing policy of seeking out new fueling stations and markets for its industrial goods and viewed the threat or use of force as an acceptable means of forcing the issue when diplomacy failed.² For instance, it was the American Commodore Matthew Perry who used his gunboat to threaten the Japanese government to allow the opening of two ports for fueling and eventual trade. Although it was largely the British who forced open China after the failure of the diplomatic Lord George Macartney mission in 1793-1794, other great powers such as the US were happy to take advantage of a weak China and to assist in subduing any anti-Western uprisings such as the Boxing Rebellion.³

This imperialism and negative treatment of the Chinese people and state continued well into the twentieth century. The only support and attempts at positive relations from Washington towards China were when the Qing Dynasty government seemed in danger of collapse to groups hostile to Western trade in the late 1800s or when the pro-U.S. Nationalist Party fought a civil war with the Communist Party and the invading Japanese forces for control of the mainland in the 1940s.⁴ In 1949 Mao Zedong's communists won and forced Chang Kaishek's nationalists to flee to Taiwan.⁵ It is a mark of how much domination America traditionally had exercised over China, or that the US perceived itself to have, that when this happened domestic American politics were consumed by arguments over "who lost China."⁶

Throughout most of the Cold War, especially the early days, most experts in Washington had mistakenly thought of communism as one large political force that was completely monolithic and coordinated by Moscow. What this meant was that China was seen as a new appendage of the Kremlin in the contest for dominance of the international system and thus had to be contained. As a result, from 1949 to 1978 Washington had no official, normal, and permanent diplomatic mission to Beijing and refused to completely normalize China's trade status permanently until as late as 2000.⁷ In addition, the US maintained support for the nationalist government on Taiwan with economic aid and arms sales, much of which is still official U.S. policy and practice even today.⁸

Finally, now in the twenty first century, Washington sees the P.R.C.'s rising political, military, and economic power as a threat to its regional and global interest. With the announcement of the "pivot to Asia" in 2012 the U.S. has moved to reinforce its alliances in the Pacific and East Asia in order to balance and contain China.⁹ As part of the pivot, the US plans to station 60% of its navy and air force in the Asia-Pacific region by 2020 and to increase the number of troops stationed in the region as well.¹⁰ For instance, the U.S. plans to nearly double the number of troops stationed in Australia in 2017¹¹ and in 2015 Washington reaffirmed the American-Japanese mutual defense treaty while encouraging Tokyo's plans to reinterpret or adjust the pacifist clauses of its constitution.¹² In addition, the U.S. has even moved to cultivate previous adversaries in the region as new allies such as Vietnam, with whom America held joint naval drills for the first time in 2011.¹³ Finally, the attempt to create the largest free trade zone in the world, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, can also be seen as an attempt to improve the economic fortunes of the U.S. and its regional allies to the exclusion of China.¹⁴

In light of this history of antagonism, it can be seen that major dynamics of the U.S.-China conflict include distrust in addition to competition economically, geopolitically, and militarily. There are many contentious issues that highlight these points and which remain or are rapidly becoming possible major flashpoints for accidental or deliberate armed conflict. For instance, there is the conflict over explicit fact that the Chinese military is modernizing and growing and that the U.S. military is shifting to the region in response.¹⁵ Both militaries have also been preparing specifically for war with each other as well as developing and deploying weapons designed to counter each other's forces.^{16 17 18} More specific flashpoints includes sovereignty disputes over islands in the South China Sea between China and regional U.S. allies, including Beijing's policy to force the situation in their favor by building artificial islands in the area.¹⁹ There is also the old issue of whether Taiwan, an ally the U.S. is theoretically obligated to defend, should be considered a part of the P.R.C. and what should happen if any party ever tried to change its de facto independent status.²⁰ Other points of conflict include what would happen if North Korea collapsed or invaded South Korea, another U.S. ally. Finally there are also many concerns over not just borders but human rights in China,²¹ U.S. accusations of Chinese trade manipulation and cyber espionage,²² and finally the degree to which Beijing will be successfully integrated into the international system and its institutions in acknowledgement of its rising status.²³

The complexity of the American-Chinese relationship and rivalry, and the many points of contention, mean that although Washington and Beijing are the primary parties to most of these disputes, many other states play major secondary or tertiary roles. Regional powers are well aware of the potential conflicts, with South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, India, Russia, and Vietnam all potential or concerned parties.²⁴ Indeed, many of these states are members of different or

overlapping regional organizations that have debated how to respond to the P.R.C.'s rise and America's response of reinforcing its own position in the Pacific. These include the association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN),²⁵ the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),²⁶ the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO),²⁷ and the attempts to form a new free trade block, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).²⁸ This demonstrates that interested parties and stakeholders are both numerous and include states and organizations outside the immediate geographic area. Thus the conflict between China and America is a regional one, but has global implications.

Neorealism: The Security and Power Imperatives

“[T]he main goal of states is survival. States seek to maintain their territorial integrity and the autonomy of their domestic political order... [but] states can never be certain about the intentions of other states. States ultimately want to know whether other states are determined to use force to alter the balance of power (revisionist states), or whether they are satisfied enough with it that they have no interest in using force to change it (status quo states).”²⁹
- John J. Mearsheimer

As Mearsheimer writes in *International Relations Theories*, structural realists (neorealists) believe that international relations are ultimately all about power because states have to rely on themselves to survive and protect their interests from other states since there is no global police force or government to do it for them.³⁰ This is especially true of great powers since they are the ones with the greatest capability to harm each other or to change the existing international order and institutions.³¹ In fact, great powers are also those with the most to lose if they fail to act to maintain a favorable balance of power.³² These dynamics can be seen in the conflict between the U.S. and China today. The current international system is still structurally anarchical since there is no world government to enforce international law or arbitration between disputing parties. In the absence of a global state, neither Washington nor Beijing can take for granted that the other side will not use force to resolve any of their disputes or be sure of each other's intentions. The result is that both sides are stuck in the security dilemma and so are actively engaging in policies to influence the regional balance of power in their favor.

There are many clear indicators that both the U.S. and the P.R.C. are great powers and that the gap of real and potential economic and military capabilities is closing. Estimates made by the International Monetary Fund in 2014 put the Chinese economy actually as the world's largest by \$17.6 trillion over America's \$17.4 trillion when adjusting for purchasing power parity (though without such an adjustment China remains in second at \$10.3 trillion).³³ 2015

estimates by the defense website Global Firepower, China has an active duty military of 2.3 million to America's 1.4 million (and almost as many reserves) and a similarly sized navy, but over 11,000 fewer aircraft.³⁴ Added to this are concerns over the often-taken-for-granted defenses surrounding American aircraft carriers against the asymmetrical capabilities that potential adversaries such as the P.R.C. are developing and deploying. For instance, a 2010 article from the U.S. Naval Institute wrote about the danger of anti-ship ballistic missiles³⁵ and much has been made of a 2007 incident in which a Chinese diesel submarine emerged without warning within critical striking distance of the *USS Kitty Hawk* during an exercise.³⁶ Finally, a 2005 RAND study concluded that P.R.C. military preparation and reforms were largely influenced by the fear and uncertainty surrounding America's Pacific and Asian military presence and a desire to counter Washington's influence and options in the event of a crisis over Taiwan.³⁷

To be fair it should be noted that America maintains a much larger military budget³⁸ and has large advantages in training and experience since China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) was designed primarily to maintain domestic control for the Communist Party and only secondarily to ward off foreign threats.³⁹ However, the previously mentioned statistics and the intentions plain in Beijing's military preparations should give any neorealist pause when considering the long term regional balance of power. The focus for a neorealist is largely on the importance of eventual capabilities stemming from current potential. Finally, it should be remembered that there are examples of vastly weaker, undertrained, underfunded, and less advanced militaries defeating, or at least holding off, superior ones throughout history. America's own experiences in the Korean, Vietnam, and Second Gulf Wars are cases in point.

China doesn't have to have the capacity to invade the continental United States or threaten it existentially for neorealist theory to apply and view the PLA as a threat.

Beijing's regional ambitions and capabilities are still sufficient to cause some alarm since Washington has long had the aim of preventing the rise of any other regional hegemon, either in Europe or in Asia, since such regional dominance would be a necessary prerequisite for a state to then look outward and challenge the global hegemony of the United States.⁴⁰ This is completely in line with offensive neorealist theory. In a 2005 article the theorist John Mearsheimer wrote "If China continues its impressive economic growth over the next few decades, the U.S. and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war... [T]he mightiest states attempt to establish hegemony in their own region while making sure that no rival great power dominates another region. The ultimate goal of every great power is to maximise its share of world power and eventually dominate the system."⁴¹

It should finally be noted that actual experienced diplomats such as former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Susan Shirk have written that, whether it is seeking hegemony or not, the P.R.C. is rapidly becoming a major regional power with increasing global implications simply as a result of its economic growth.⁴² In her book, *China: Fragile Superpower*, she argues that China's domestic politics must not be overlooked and that internal instability and international conflict are interlinked in a dangerous feedback loop.⁴³ If Washington is to mitigate regional competition and prevent armed warfare, it must recognize and adapt to the facts of China's internal politics.⁴⁴ She writes, "China's leaders face a troubling paradox. The more developed and prosperous the country becomes, the more insecure and threatened they feel. The P.R.C. today is a brittle, authoritarian regime that fears its own citizens and can only bend so far to accommodate the demands of foreign governments."⁴⁵ When this is taken together with the

previously mentioned U.S.-Chinese history, the current many potential flashpoints for conflict, and the hegemonic ambitions and domestic concerns of Beijing, conflict over regional dominance, though not necessarily war, appears inevitable. In order to further see if this is really so, Washington-Beijing relations are next examined in the context of the international system and its institutions through the lenses of functionalism.

Functionalism: International System Maintenance

“Why shouldn’t China support the status quo? It certainly has flourished under it. Chinese experts often observe that China has benefited more than any other country from the World Trade Organization and the open international economy... But how permanent is China’s commitment to international cooperation? Will its growing global role and its search for the raw materials necessary to keep its economic juggernaut going pit it in a geopolitical contest with the United States?”⁴⁶

-Susan L. Shirk, China: Fragile Superpower

If a certain level of geopolitical competition is inevitable between the United States and the P.R.C., then the question becomes that of whether Beijing will be content to become a stakeholder in upholding, and perhaps pursuing minor adjustments to, the current international system, or if Beijing will see the current global norms, institutions, and distribution of power as insufficient or even a direct threat. Among those scholars, whether neorealist or neoliberal or theorists, who have accepted the idea of strategic competition, this question is the serious and all-encompassing one. Because we are talking about U.S.-China competition within the international system and the question of that system’s long-term maintenance, bringing in part of sociologist Lewis A. Coser’s structural functionalism theory of social conflict would be illuminating.

One of the ideas that Coser posits is that conflict is only a real threat to the stability and existence of a given social system if that system and its structures fail to be tolerant and flexible in response to such conflict.⁴⁷ Though his theory was meant to be used regarding the individual and society, and not the global system of states, the idea of positive feedback and mitigation norms and institutions is a useful framework and isn’t at all unfamiliar to traditional liberal or structural theories of international relations. Coser wrote that “Social system provide for specific institutions which sever to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments. These safety-valve institutions help to maintain the system by preventing otherwise probably conflict or by reducing its disruptive effects.”⁴⁸ If this key idea from Coser’s theory is taken and applied broadly to the

U.S.-led international system, then it could be used to determine the chances of longevity for the current world order and perhaps some policy recommendations can be suggested from that analysis.

The international system built by America and its allies after World War II is unique and without historical precedent due to both its global scope and its attempt to have built-in institutions and norms to prevent, or force the end of, all future interstate warfare. The United Nations Charter speaks for itself in this regard by declaring such lofty intentions as “to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institutions of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest,” and “to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.”⁴⁹ To be clear, the institutions and norms that the United States set up was in its own interests. These included reducing European power and colonial ambitions, ensuring freedom of the seas for open commerce, establishing a vast military presence to protect and transform its defeated enemies of Germany and Japan.⁵⁰

In addition, these institutions sometimes did work by adapting to a changing world by accepting the new states that were once colonies, forming new methods of peacekeeping,⁵¹ and defending the territorial integrity of South Korea and Kuwait from aggression. The purpose of the new world order created by Washington and its fellow allies in 1945 was to foster into existence a new and more flexible set of global norms and institutions to prevent and mitigate conflict. Though serving American geopolitical and economic interests, the positive externalities of freedom of the seas and the idea of sovereignty and borders being sacrosanct has benefited many, though certainly not all, states.

But are these norms and global institutions enough to prevent China from ever seeing itself as a potential revisionist power instead of a defender of the status quo? So far, the evidence

seems to suggest that China is hedging its bets. One can find articles and books proclaiming China to be successfully integrating as a responsible international partner and stakeholder, and yet also find plenty of other books and articles denouncing China for working to undermine the entire system and replace the U.S. as hegemon. First there's all the evidence that Beijing is acting within the international institutions and norms by striving to fulfill its duties as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (U.N.S.C.).

For instance, China has a total of 3,082 personnel working for the Peace Keeping forces while the United States only has 80.⁵² Also, there's the fact that China has dedicated some of its new and largely untried navy towards the international armada fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia.⁵³ China has usually abstained in the UNSC, and has only used its veto twice, and in most cases consistently to oppose intervention and uphold other state's sovereignties⁵⁴ and has worked to reassure its neighboring regional powers through diplomacy and economic agreements.⁵⁵ Finally, Beijing also sought and gained accession to the World Trade Organization (W.T.O.) in 2001⁵⁶ and has engaged in goodwill actions such as providing aid to Nepal in the aftermath of its deadly 2015 earthquake, including a pledge of \$500 million.⁵⁷

On the other hand, however, there is also evidence of China acting as a revisionist power with less clear intentions towards the current system. Instead of engaging in arbitrated disputes, China has been using its navy building artificial islands in disputed waters to establish *de facto* control over potential vast oil and gas reserves which would force its weaker neighbors to accept a *fait accompli* or risk open war.⁵⁸ Despite gaining acceptance to the W.T.O., and growing tremendously economically as a result, Beijing still manipulates its currency to boost exports and keeps its market fairly closed to foreign imports, all of which are against W.T.O. rules.⁵⁹ Legitimate complaints by American, and other Western, companies about piracy and corruption

in China are also concerns.⁶⁰ As mentioned before, China also continues to build a military largely around the idea of a regional confrontation with Washington⁶¹ and its allies in addition to engaging in cyber-attacks on American businesses and governmental departments.⁶² Finally, the creation of the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (A.I.I.B.), to which most major economic powers except for the U.S. eagerly gained admission, is widely seen as a direct challenge to the U.S.-dominated World Bank and the 1945 world order it came from.⁶³

It is for all these reasons that many observers find it difficult to know with certainty if China is just hedging its bets, if it is trying to hide its revisionist ambitions, or if it is simply struggling to decide what kind of rising power it wants to be. The current world order was built on the premise of inclusion through the creation of a new set of behavioral norms and institutions that, though far from perfect, have been arguably more viable than previous systems. But if the system doesn't appear to cater sufficiently to Beijing's interests and security concerns then the existing safety valves and feedback mechanisms might not be enough. How then does the U.S. or any group of states attempt to maintain the stability and functionality of the international system? How do policy makers undertake actions to prevent another cold war or worse the use of force to overturn the system as previous attempted by aspiring regional hegemons Imperial Germany in 1914 and Nazi Germany and Fascist Japan in 1939 and 1937?

There is one thing that both neorealist and liberal international relations theorists can agree on together along with functionalism in societal conflict theory, and that is the structural nature of the system being examined as a major contributor or mitigator of conflict. Explain how but also ask if it is sufficient just to address institutions and not attitudes and a nation's collective psychological elements as suggested by other SCAR scholars like Mitchell. As explored before, neorealists like Mearsheimer view conflict as the result of anarchy in the international system but

they don't insist that that anarchy is completely inevitable. Traditional realists like Henry Kissinger acknowledge the importance of understanding the other side and in adapting to changes without always resorting to force.⁶⁴

If the problem is the need to successfully integrate China into the existing international system and to accommodate them reasonably along the way, then it would appear that that would be the most prudent policy suggestion. Both Kissinger and Shirk point out that to do otherwise would be a grave mistake. Shirk conclude that "After a century of sitting on the sidelines, the Chinese leaders and people crave respect and approval from the world community, especially from the United States... Making China a member of all important multilateral forums enhances the prestige of China and its leaders, as well as giving them a stronger sense of responsibility for maintain world order."⁶⁵ Additionally, Kissinger wrote that "An international system is relatively stable if the level of reassurance required by its members is achievable by diplomacy. When diplomacy no longer functions, relationships become increasingly concentrated on military strategy...[leading] finally [to] war itself."⁶⁶ He continued referencing the lessons of World War I, saying "The crisis of the system was inherent in its structure. No single country could avoid it... [b]ut they *could* avoid policies that exacerbated latent tensions [emphasis added]."⁶⁷

In fact, there are many analysts who see Beijing's creation of the A.I.I.B. as avoidable had only America been willing to give China a greater role in the World Bank.⁶⁸ Another example is the fact that China has also been deliberately excluded from participating in the International Space Station, forcing China to set up its own orbital laboratory.⁶⁹ Based on these two failures to adopt existing international institutions to the changing geopolitical scene, one might well worry what other opportunities to engage positively with China and assist their integration as a stakeholder into the system have been or are being lost.

Chosen Trauma: The Psychology of a Conflict

“...I put the reader in the shoes of China’s leaders as they struggle to manage their domestic political threats while making China into an international power. Only by taking this leap of empathy and understanding the situation China’s leaders face, can America and other countries influence China’s rise in a peaceful direction.”⁷⁰

-Susan Shirk, China: Fragile Superpower

Now we have a understanding of the structural forces driving conflict and problems of the international system’s stabilizing mechanisms potential inability to account for China’s concerns and ambitions, especially if the U.S. insists exclusively on containment as the policy framework towards China at the expense of encouraging integration. But one final obstacle remains in discussing the Washington-Beijing rivalry and that is the need to fully put oneself in the other’s shoes in order to understand more deeply why, beyond the obvious power politics, U.S.-China regional competition exists and how it could be better managed and reduced. If one is going to understand another nation it makes sense to look at how they interpret their history and how their collective memory influences their identity and perception of the present and its challenges. The psychiatrist Vamik Volkan’s theory of chosen trauma is the framework through which the Chinese nation can be understood to have suffered a major collective devastation at the hands of Western powers, including America, and how that has become a major part of the Chinese identity and the need to regain China’s lost place of power and glory to right those old wrongs.

Volkan wrote that his theory “investigates the psychological links between massive large-group trauma and the development of political ideology of exaggerated entitlement such as irredentism.”⁷¹ He says that such trauma effects thousands or millions of individuals with a shared identity, such as an ethnic group or a nation, and that this trauma is caused deliberately by either another group or by natural disaster.⁷² This collective pain and humiliation is passed down

through the generations by that group with each handing the expectation that the next will find a way to resolve the trauma.⁷³ For instance, he explains that “The chosen trauma becomes a significant marker for the large-group identity. Furthermore, it may create a foundation for the society’s development of an exaggerated entitlement ideology that, under new historical situations such as a threat to group's identity, can be manipulated by political leaders to develop new political programs and /or take new actions supported by this ideology. Exaggerated "entitlement" provides a belief system that asserts that the group has a right to own what they wish to have.”⁷⁴

This phenomenon of chosen trauma can be found all throughout the Chinese own understanding of their history of interactions with the West and has been pointed out as a major roadblock to cooperation by many scholars. For instance, Chinese textbooks routinely refer to the time from 1895 to 1945 as the “century of humiliation” in recognition of the fact that it took about 150 years for China to slowly reemerge as a major power again.⁷⁵ China had once been the most powerful empire on earth but had fallen from that height of power only in the span of one decade.⁷⁶ One can imagine the massive shock of a culture and society that had for thousands of years had been at the center of the East Asian world, demanding fealty and tribute from neighboring states only to be suddenly overcome by less numerous, but much more technologically advanced, invaders from the other side of the world.⁷⁷

Therefore it should be of no surprise that this historic memory is at the heart of public and official debate throughout the P.R.C. on what to do with that newfound might as China recovers from the destruction it suffered at Western hands.⁷⁸ Indeed, already many Chinese, including several senior military leaders, believe that it is only natural and just that no matter the cost China should retake its place of regional, and thus eventually global, dominance.⁷⁹ This

nationalism and historical trauma and anger is so widespread that China has been dedicated to ensuring that never again can any country, most especially a Western one like the currently dominant United States, could ever threaten it again.⁸⁰ Such nationalism is why Beijing's greatest fear isn't first the threat posed by America, but rather what would happen if the Communist Party was ever perceived by the Chinese people as having failed to fulfill that promise to restore China and redeem their people and culture from historic humiliation. Shirk made the point that if a crisis ever occurred, such as Taiwan, and the Communist Party failed to react with sufficient force, the popular anger and protests would probably collapse the entire Communist regime.⁸¹ This is why Shirk focused her book on getting across to American policy makers and citizens the grave imperative that "Unless we understand the fears that drive China's leaders' international behavior and craft our own policies accordingly, the historical odds predict war, not peace."⁸²

Conflict Mitigation: Preventing a War of Hegemonic Succession

“The future of Asia will be shaped to a significant degree by how China and America envision it, and by the extent to which each nation is able to achieve some congruence with the other’s historic regional role.”⁸³

–Henry Kissinger, On China

In the end we come back to the structural aspects of neorealism, but we include structural functionalism in social conflict and psychological chosen-trauma frameworks. When all three of these theories are combined they provide a much more in depth and accurate picture of American-Chinese relations than had each theory only been applied separately. After examining the Washington-Beijing conflict through those lenses, this paper suggests two possible solutions for mitigating the conflict sources in the U.S.-China relationship through (1) making a more inclusive, flexible, and viable international system through U.S. leadership and (2) formulating American foreign policy with an understanding of and sensitivity towards the Chinese historical and political context.

This does not mean America should refrain from rebalancing its military forces towards the Asia-Pacific region or that it should neglect its security alliances. Deterrence is important but the purpose of this paper is to argue that American leadership is needed to reform certain institutions it build to allow China a greater role. None other than the realist Henry Kissinger himself warns that the possibility of war will increase with each decrease in the amount of maneuver room both sides have.⁸⁴ In the concluding chapter of his book *On China*, he writes “Relations between China and the United States need not-and should not-become a zero-sum game.”⁸⁵

It makes more sense to focus on integrating China instead of keeping it out of the international system which would leave Beijing with fewer options and a greater likelihood of

deciding that perhaps a different world order is needed to secure the Chinese state and Chinese interests. Stronger safety valve and feedback mechanisms must be built into international system to protect certain U.S. interests like freedom of the seas and thus trade, respect for territorial integrity, all of which benefit China too, since that system was designed expressly to mitigate anarchy and prevent another world war. America must reassure China by addressing the many negative events in China's past while recognizing the emotional importance of their collective memories.

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