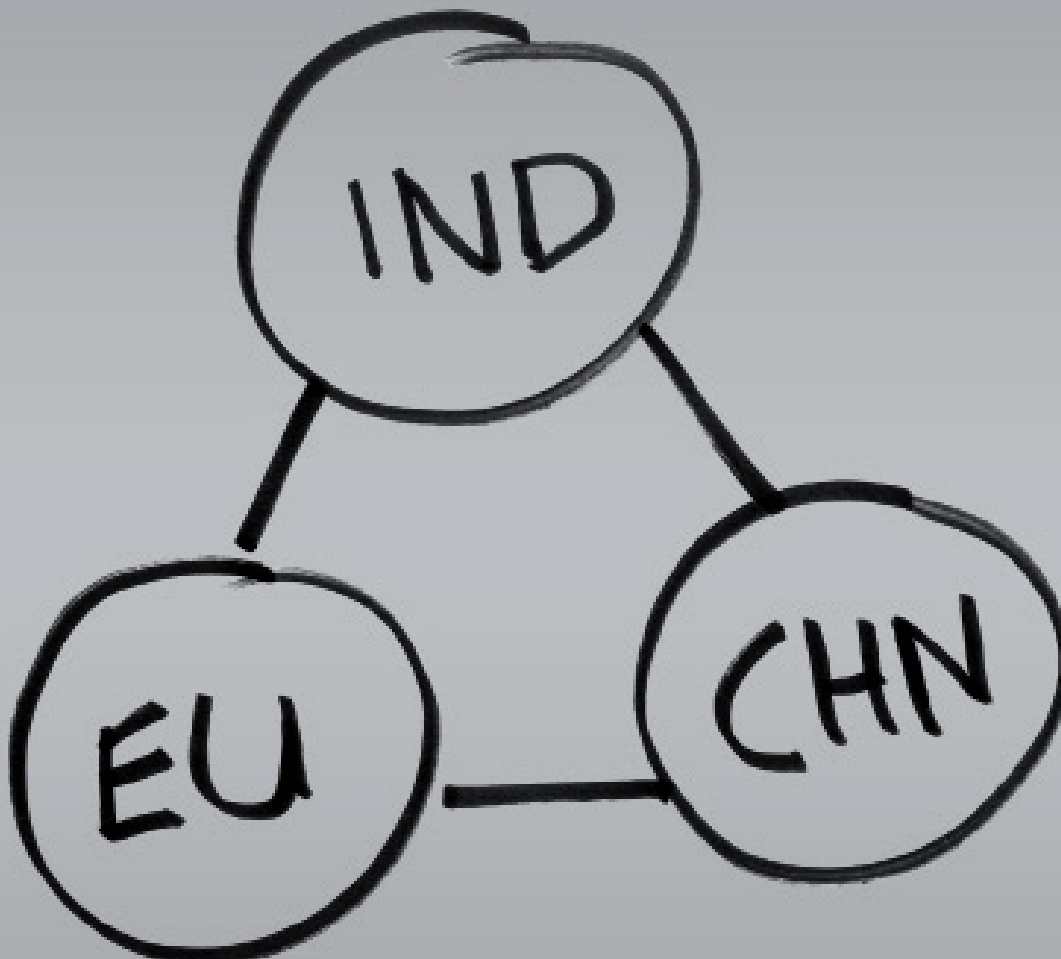


THE POWER STRATEGY OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY

Bringing Theoretical and Comparative Studies Together

CHEN Zhimin and CHANG Lulu

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Abstract

The debate whether power is a kind of resource or an application of resources shows the complexities of the concept of power. By combining both perspectives, the authors argue that it is possible to develop a new categorization of power: soft power, soft hard-power, hard soft-power and hard power. Compared with the US and the European Union, the authors argue that if the American power strategy could be seen as “omnidirectional American primacy” and EU “omnidirectional post-sovereignty”, China’s power strategy at the moment could be mainly described as an “attraction-defence” one. With relatively limited tangible and intangible power resources, China relies more on attraction than coercion, and focuses more on defence rather than shaping. Finally, the authors propose to improve China’s power strategy by prioritizing its soft economic hard-power, upgrading soft power, extending soft military hard-power, moderately developing hard power and hard soft-power, and expanding its shaping function while maintaining the central defensive role.

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Keywords

China; power strategy; power resources; attraction; coercion; defence

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I. Introduction

Power is the core concept in international relations, and also the most disputable one. After American scholar Joseph S. Nye first advanced the concept of soft power systematically in 1990, discussions and research on power, especially on soft power, increased dramatically in both Chinese and international academic discourse.¹ According to data from the database of Chinese journal articles, doctoral and master's theses, in the period between 1990 and 2011, in the categories of politics, the military and law, the number of articles that had a title containing the words "soft power" was 1022 while the number of articles whose titles contained the words "hard power" was 30. This phenomenon indicates that Chinese research on power much more strongly focuses on soft power.² Chinese scholar Li Shaojun also mentioned that there have been abundant articles discussing soft power in recent years, "but short of articles that directly discuss the concept of 'power'"; therefore, it is necessary to discuss power as an integrated concept.³

In fact, even when soft power is still a focus in Chinese academic discourse, the general trend in the study of power has shifted at the international academic and policy-making levels. For example, leaders from the European Union (EU) and America frequently use the concept of "smart power", which combines both soft power and hard power. Also, Joseph Nye, who initially promoted the idea of soft power, also reconsidered the concept to include a more general understanding of power in his new book *The Future of Power* in 2011.⁴ Furthermore, since the US and the EU have experienced a relative decline in power due to the financial crisis beginning 2008, and since China's comprehensive national strength has continued to grow, how China will use its growing power is becoming a key question in the foreign policy debate both in China and around the world. Under such circumstances, Chinese scholars are expected to develop and articulate a power strategy that is more comprehensive, with Chinese characteristics and policy relevance. This power strategy should have the capacity to answer the following questions: What factors are included in China's power resources? What are the core factors among these? How should China apply these resources? Does the way that China applies its resources have any of its own characteristics, especially compared with other major international actors? What goals should the strategy serve - to defend or shield China from external interference or to shape the outside world? How can China improve its future power strategy? The answers to these questions are the focus of this article.

1 This is an English version of the article originally entitled "Power Resources and Applications: A Study of China's Power Strategy"(quanli ziyuan yu yunyong:jianlun zhongguo waijiao de quanli zhanlue), which appeared in the Chinese journal of World Economics and Politics[shijie jingji yu zhengzhi], No. 7, 2012. Translated by Dr. May-Britt Stumbaum.

For the Chinese understanding of power, see SONG Lilei, CHEN Zhimin, Different Perceptions on Soft Power of China and EU and Influences on Bilateral Relations (Zhongguo dui Ruan Shili de Butong Renzhi ji dui Shuangbian Guanxi de Yingxiang), Chinese Journal of European Studies, No.2, 2011, pp 47-49

2 Database includes all Chinese journals, doctoral and master's theses

3 LI Shaojun, What Is Power of International Politics(Guoji Zhengzhi Zhong de Quanli Shi Shenme), Chinese Journal of European Studies, No. 2, 2011, pp.1-14

4 Joseph S. Nye, Jr. , *The Future of Power*, New York: Public Affairs, 2011

II. The concept of power: power as a resource and an application

Power as a resource or as an application of resources represents two main currents in the research on power. The former equates power with a resource or capacity while the latter views power as the application of resources for certain goals. In the perspective viewing power as a resource, a country's power depends on the degree of its capabilities, or the size of the resources it can access. This view can be seen in realist international theory. In realist Hans J. Morgenthau's classical book *Politics Among Nations*, he considers nine elements including geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character, national morale, the quality of diplomacy and the quality of government as the components of national power.⁵ Neoliberalism develops the idea of power as a resource to the extreme, based on structuralism and the basic idea of an international structure that is shaped by power/capacity distribution. Kenneth N. Waltz thought that this international structure is defined by the distribution of capabilities across units. States in a self-help system have to use their combined capabilities in order to serve their interests: "Their rank depends on how they score on all of the following items: size of population and territory, resources endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence".⁶

However, the reality of international relations is that "those best endowed with power do not always get the outcomes they want".⁷ A typical example is that America had strong power but still failed to win the Vietnam War. Therefore, more and more focus lies on the perspective considering the application of power resources, or the perspective of "relational power". Power and Society by Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan in 1950 is the watershed between the old "power-as-resource" approach and the new "relational power" approach.⁸ Robert A. Dahl's concept of power was widely acknowledged by western academic discourse. He wrote, "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do."⁹ This definition comes from the perspective of relationship or application. Other scholars emphasize "power as an individual's relative capacity to modify others' states by providing or withholding resources or administering punishments."¹⁰ Influenced by these opinions, scholars in international relations try to combine the concepts of power resources and application, "(power) as a set of national attributes or capabilities and power as a process of exercising influence".¹¹

5 Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (Chinese version) Beijing: Peking University Press, 2006, pp 148-188

6 Kenneth Waltz *Theory of International Politics* (Chinese version) Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press, 2008, p.139

7 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power*, p.8

8 Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse & Beth Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations*, London: Sage Publications, 2002, p.178

9 Robert A. Dahl "The Concept of Power," *Behavior Science*, Vol.2, No.3, 1957, pp.202-203

10 Dacher Keltner, Deborah H. Gruenfeld and Cameron Anderson "Power, Approach, and Inhibition," *Psychological Review*, vol.110, no.2, 2003, p.265

11 Bruce Russett, et al., *World Politics: The Menu for Choice*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2003, p.98

There are also scholars that discuss power from the perspective of application and trivialize its characteristic as a “resource”. Mingjiang LI held this view on soft power. He argued that soft power does not exist in the nature of certain power resources but rather it has to be nurtured through a soft use of power.¹² Joseph Nye’s theory of soft power and its later development are precisely based on this combination of both resource and application perspectives. According to his original idea, hard power is a command power which is based on threats and inducement, and relates to tangible military or economic resources, while soft power is a co-optive power which is based on attraction and establishing preferences, and with the use of intangible culture, ideology and institutional resources.¹³ However, this opinion simply concludes that intangible resources bring attractive soft power while tangible resources bring commanding hard power, and therefore omits the far more complicated relationship between power resources and application. Also, Joseph Nye put coercion and inducement into the same category of command power, which underplayed the significant differences between them.

In fact, this idea also brought confusion to Nye’s later works. In *Soft Power*, written in 2004, when talking about the soft power of the European Union, Nye regarded the development assistance of the EU as a major resource of its soft power.¹⁴ However, development assistance is definitely a tangible resource, which leads to a contradiction of Nye’s previous stance. To clarify his power theory more systematically, in his newly published book *The Future of Power*, Nye proposes a solution which is to differentiate “power resources” and “power behavior”. In terms of power resources, military and economic power are defined as tangible resources, while culture, institutional and foreign policy are intangible resources. With regard to power behaviors, Nye argued that hard power is to “push”, soft power is to “pull”. Though tangible resources can bring about commanding hard power behavior, under certain circumstances they can also produce soft power behavior. For example, the U.S. Navy’s help in providing relief to Indonesia after the 2005 East Asian tsunami increased Indonesians’ attraction to the United States. Meanwhile, intangible resources can produce attractive soft power behavior overall, but can also bring about hard power behavior. The example he uses are military threats not involving the direct use of force.¹⁵ Nye’s new theory that differentiates power resources and power behaviors help us better understand of concept of power. It is also a great leap from his original theory of power. But we should still point out that this development is not thorough and comprehensive enough and it still has some contradictions. Nye didn’t affirm the following ideas: tangible and physical power can also produce influence based on attraction in general (not only in exceptional cases), and intangible and non-physical resources can also produce influence on coercion in general (not only in exceptional cases).

12 Mingjiang LI, “Soft Power: Nurture not Nature,” in Mingjiang Li, ed., *Soft Power: China’s emerging Strategy in International Politics*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009, p.3

13 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1990, pp.31-32

14 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004, pp. 76-80

15 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power*, pp.20-22

The US Navy's humanitarian rescue provided some material interest to the victim country, such as relief supplies and treatment of the wounded. It is this urgent tangible interest created that helped America win the public favor of Indonesians, thus becoming a source of attraction to the US for Indonesia. By extending this logic, the authors believe that by providing military and economic aid, assurance of security, investment, markets and raw material, a country can develop the power of attraction on the basis of material interests, and hence the ability to influence other countries' behavior.

Therefore, we can differentiate coercion from inducement, removing inducement from Nye's command hard power, and view inducement as a kind of material power of attraction. Some Chinese scholars already disagree with Nye's definition of inducement and coercion as command hard power. For example, Li Shaojun decided that hard power requires forcing other countries to accept its lead by using coercion or violence, such as military attack, economic sanction, or both.¹⁶ Though the use of inducement is to change other countries' stances on certain issues, one country usually needs to give equal or more interest in other areas in order to induce. From this point of view, those countries required to change their stance will decide based on their potential gain with respect to other issues. Overall, it is attributed to the attraction of material interest. That is to say, both material and non-material resources can produce attraction, though the mechanisms of the production are different: while the former results in a country giving up its stance on a certain issue in order to receive benefits it considers more valuable, the latter is based on the recognition of other countries' culture, institutions and policies.

Nye realized that intangible resources can produce coercive hard power behavior, but he did not have a proper example. The use of military force is not involved in military threats, but the effectiveness of military threats relies nevertheless on military force. Therefore, a military threat is still a coercive way of using material military power. The difference between that and war lies in the non-use of military violence. In fact, among Third World countries, especially China, which has different institutions than Western countries, it is easy to find some examples where intangible resources are used in a coercive way towards these countries. Western countries usually take advantage of their discursive power on international public opinion and use politicians' statements and media reports to produce a negative image of a country and demonize its competitor. Beyond this, Western countries could put moral pressure on a country to force it to change its domestic and foreign policies, thus realizing the effect of a "soft strike".¹⁷ In PRC's history, China has suffered a lot from such coercive use of intangible resources.

The purpose of the above assessment of Joseph Nye's power theory is to develop a framework to better explain China's current power strategy and its characteristics. In the following paragraphs based on Nye's theory, we will analyze and categorize power through an integrated resource-application approach.

16 Li Shaojun, *Introduction to International Politics (Guoji Zhengzhi Xue Gailun)*, 3rd edition, Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press 2009, p.123

17 LIU Ming, GUO Suping, *Watching soft attacks' influence on national image (Jingtì Ruan Daji dui Guojia Xingxiang de Yingxiang)*, *Forum of Chinese officers*, No. 1, 2007, p.18

In view of power's nature as a resource, power resources can be categorized into two kinds: material and nonmaterial. Material resources include military and economic capacity and nonmaterial resources include foreign policy, institutions and culture. Scholars have largely reached a consensus regarding classifying material resources into military and economy capacity, while holding different viewpoints on the components of nonmaterial power. In his early works, Nye believed that soft power came from three resources: culture, ideology and international institutions.¹⁸ Then in *Soft Power*, he changed the resources to culture, political values and foreign policies.¹⁹ Chinese scholar Men Honghua mentioned that soft power included the five core components of culture, norms, development model, international institutions and international image, in the context of China's soft power building.²⁰ Synthesizing all the opinions above, the authors of this study conclude that intangible resources consist of foreign policy, institutions and culture, listed in order from a low to a high degree of intangibility. Foreign policy resources include those policies that will have an attractive effect on other international actors. Institutional resources have two dimensions: attractive domestic institutions and the mainstream international institutions significantly shaped by a country. Culture, in a broad sense, is both the physical and spiritual wealth that human beings create during the development of society. Here we tend to define culture in a narrow sense, however, maintaining that culture is a country's "spiritual wealth, such as education, literature, art, religion and science" that can produce international influence.²¹

From the perspective of application, coercion and attraction are two kinds of power resource application. The coercive method includes sanctions and antagonism. Sanctions are a tool that an international actor uses to deprive others of some material or nonmaterial value, in order to force them to accept its own stance; antagonism refers to actions that an actor attempts in order to fully deprive others or deny the governments of other countries that effectively hinders their national interests or the achievement of their goals. In addition, deterrence can also be seen as the lowest level of coercion since it uses the threat of sanctions or antagonism to forcibly prevent other international actors from acting unfavorably. Methods of attraction include reciprocity and providing benefit. Reciprocity means a country cooperates with other international actors for mutual and equal benefit. Since both parties in a reciprocal agreement will tend to protect the cooperation for their common interest, the existence of mutual benefit, such as the forming of symmetric interdependence, can also effectively prevent one party from taking measures harmful to the other's interest. In the case of providing benefit, by giving extra benefit such as aid, one country can therefore create a dependence on the part of the recipient, especially in the aspects of security and economy.

18 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, p.188.

19 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p.11

20 MEN Honghua, Report on China's Soft Power (Zhongguo Ruanshili Pinggu Baogao), *International Review*, Vol.2, 2007, pp.19-20

21 MENG Honghua, Report on China's Soft Power (Zhongguo Ruanshili Pinggu Baogao), *International Review*, Vol.2, 2007, pp.19-20

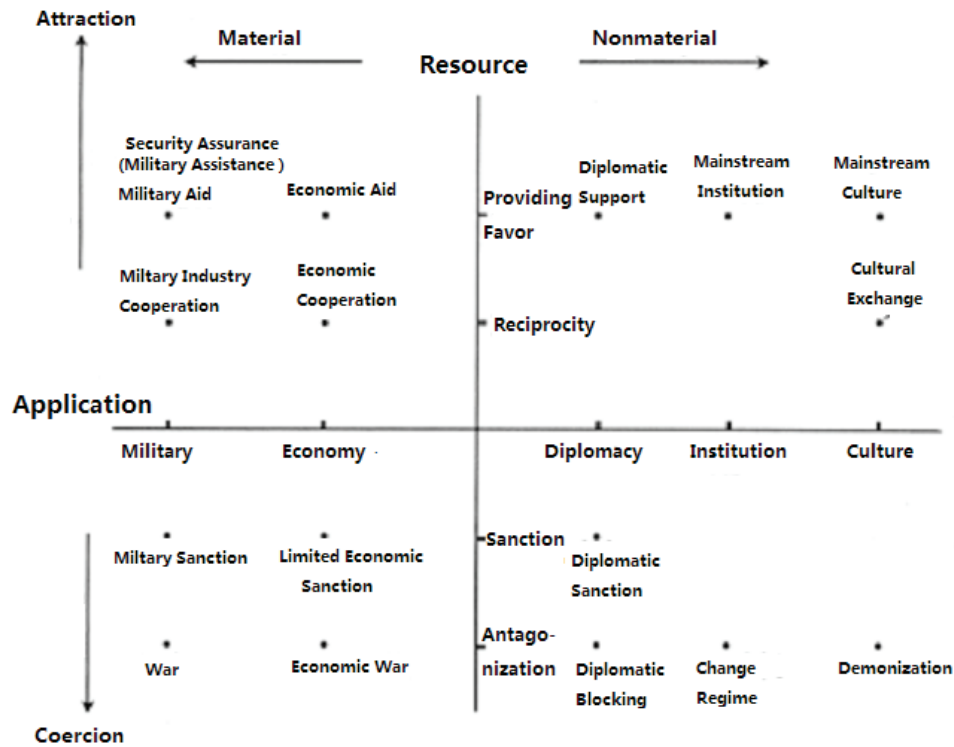


Figure 1 Categories of Power

Figure 1 puts power resources on the lateral axis and power application on the vertical axis; its four quadrants represent four models of power. Counterclockwise from the first quadrant, they represent soft power, soft hard power, hard power and hard soft power respectively.

First, soft power. We call the power depicted in the top right quadrant soft power, or the soft use of soft power. This kind of power will usually use nonmaterial resources and the method of attraction is to influence others. At the level of reciprocity, for example, cultural exchange through the media promotes mutual understanding and achieves improved communication. At the level of providing benefit, a country can develop a higher degree of influence over others by offering non-reciprocal benefits such as diplomatic support, cultivating a mainstream culture and institutions. If a country's foreign policy can take into consideration the interests of most countries and people and support them, a more influential international attraction will necessarily be granted to this country by the legitimacy of its foreign policy. Developing mainstream culture and institutions is not a common way of using power, for it requires that the country's institutions and culture be attractive enough in order that even if without deliberate promotion, its inherent attractiveness will be demonstrated automatically to other countries and people.

Second, soft hard power. Power depicted in the top left quadrant could be called soft hard power, or the soft use of hard power. The use of material resources for attraction is a characteristic of this kind of power. Hard power produces more than coercion, it can also bring about attraction, such as by means of economic and military aid, cooperation in the economy, trade and military industries. Military and economic capacity is merely a material source of power, and will not necessarily lead to coercion or attraction.

“Economic strength can be converted into hard or soft power: You can coerce countries with sanctions or woo them with wealth.”²² Also, in disaster rescue and UN peacekeeping actions, strong military power can also elevate a country’s international image. Chinese scholars have already paid attention to this soft use of hard power. As globalization and democratization of international relations increases, the use of hard power has also undergone significant changes, one of which is from hard to soft use. The development of the soft use of both hard and soft power, as one of the grand strategies of power use, is in step with the trend of the times.²³

Third, hard power. Power described in the bottom left quadrant is hard power, or the hard use of hard power. The characteristic of this kind of power is the coercive use of material power to exert influence. War, which is the highest level of violence, and total economic war are within this range; low-intensity military sanctions and limited economic sanctions are also included.

Fourth, hard soft power. Power described in the bottom right quadrant could be called hard soft power, or the hard use of soft power. This is a special way of using power: it employs nonmaterial, soft resources to exert influence in a coercive way. Diplomatic coercion includes sanctions and containments. Institutional coercion could be the promotion of a change of regime, such as “color revolution” that overthrows the current regime by cultivating opposition. And cultural coercion includes wars of propaganda, which is to impair a regime’s legitimacy by defamation or demonization.

III. Power resources and applications with Chinese characteristics

According to the above categories of power, this section will demonstrate a qualitative comparison between the power strategies of China, the United States and the European Union (including her member states).²⁴ This comparison is made to highlight the characteristics of China’s power strategy. The power strategy of international actors refers to certain actors relying on a specific combination of power resources (tangible/intangible resources), adopting specific ways of applying power resources (methods of coercion/attraction) for specific purposes (defense/ shaping).

From Figure 1 we can categorize material resources into military and economic resources, and nonmaterial resources into foreign policy, institutions and culture. In the category of material resources, the economic power of America and EU are close to equal, which are the first and second in the world while China comes in third. American military power is far ahead. According to the defense budgets in 2010, the US defense bud-

22 Joseph S. Nye. Jr. Rethinking Soft Power (Chinese Version), Foreign Social Science, No.4, 2006, p.90

23 GAO Lan, Yu Zhengliang Transformation of Power Strategy: Hard Strategy or Soft Strategy (Shili Zhuanlue de Biange: Ying Zhanlue yihuo Ruan Zhanlue), Modern International Relations, Vol.12, 2008, p.2

24 EU in this article refers to the broad one, which includes both European institutions and member states of the European Union. See CHEN Zhimin, China, America and Europe: Cooperation and Competition in Trilateral Relations (Zhongguo, Meiguo yu Ouzhou: Xin Sanbian Guanxi zhong de Hezuo yu Jingzheng), Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press: 2011

get is 661 billion dollars, compared with the EU's 386 billion and China's 100 billion.²⁵ Therefore, America has more tangible resources than both the EU and China combined. Compared to hard power resources, soft power resources are more difficult to measure, since the latter are often nonmaterial, abstract and intangible.²⁶ Joseph Nye also tried to measure and compare soft power resources of major countries. However, due to the difficulties of measuring precisely, he only gave some qualitative judgments. When mentioning the EU's soft power resources, he reported that "currently, the closest competitor to the United States in soft power resources is Europe".²⁷ When he considered China's soft power, he provided the following judgment: China is far from America's or Europe's equal in soft power.²⁸ Chinese scholar Zhang Guozuo mentioned in his article that China's cultural soft power was still lagging far behind its hard power. For example, America occupied 43% of the cultural industry in the world; the EU held a percentage of 34; Japan and Australia had 10% and 5% respectively; other Asia-Pacific countries including China only had 4%.²⁹ Without any doubt, China's power is the weakest with respect to intangible resources. As to American and European strength, due to the lack in standards of measurement, we can only assume that America and Europe are tied with each other in soft power resources.

Chart 1 Qualitative Assessment on the Effect of Power Resource Application of the Three Parties

actors		military	economy	foreign policy	institutions	culture
China	attraction	medium	high	high	medium	medium
America		high	medium-high	medium-high	high	high
EU		medium-high	high	high	high	high
China	coercion	low	medium	medium	low	low
America		high	high	high	high	high
EU		medium-high	high	high	high	high

Chart 1 lists our qualitative assessment on the effect of power resource application by the three parties. First, America has a high level of military attraction. This should be attributed to its high capacity to provide its allies with security guarantees, military aid, military technology transfer and export of high-tech weapons. China's military attraction is only at the medium level. China's adherence to its non-alignment policy and its weaker military capacity limit China's ability to provide security guarantees, military aid

25 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: SIPRI Annual Report 2010, Beijing, Shishi Press 2011, pp. 267-268, 270.

26 ZHANG, Xiaoming, An Analysis of Joseph Nye's "Soft Power" Concept (Yuesefu Nai de Ruan Quanli Sixiang Fenxi), American Studies Quarterly, No.1, 2005, pp.33-34

27 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, p.75

28 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., The Future of Power, p. 90.

29 See Zhang Guocuo, Studies on China's Cultural Soft Power in 2009, Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Press 2011, pp. 37-38.

and technology to other countries. The EU's military attraction is between that of America and China. It is weaker than the American, but obviously stronger than the Chinese.

As for economic attraction, the EU has an import market which is equal to that of America, and also provides the largest foreign development aid in the world. Therefore the EU has a high economic attraction. China's import market is smaller than that of America, but importation grows rapidly. The absolute size of China's foreign aid is still limited, but it is popular among developing countries for not attaching political conditions. If we further include China's large foreign exchange reserve, we tend to see China's economic attraction as close to a high-level one. America has a huge import market, but its foreign aid occupies a small proportion to its total GDP. In addition, the US often abuses the US dollar's privilege as a reserve currency and due to its obvious trend of economic selfishness, its economic attraction will drop to the mid-high level.

In foreign policy, the EU and its member states emphasize multilateralism in their foreign policies overall; China stands for the idea of a harmonious world and also respects every country's sovereignty. So we define both their diplomatic attraction as high. After the Obama administration came into power, to some extent America abandoned the Bush administration's unilateralism, and its diplomacy became the multilateral coordination and development of a multi-partner world. Its international image improved. However, since the US still makes every effort to maintain its own leadership in the world and over-relies on the coercive use of military power, the level of its diplomatic attraction is mid-high.

In terms of institutional attraction, both America and the EU have developed mature political and economic institutions and therefore become examples for other countries. In comparison with them, China has a unique domestic institution, and internationally it is more a rule-taker than a rule-maker. Nevertheless, we should also see that after 30 years of successful development, China's success also attracts the attention of other countries. Also, China's permanent membership in the UN Security Council grants China a significant role in its policy making. Taking all of these into account, China's institutional attraction should be defined as medium-level.

In cultural attraction, both America and the EU have highly developed modern culture and enjoy a high level of global attraction. China's traditional culture has some influence in the world, however when it comes to the development of modern cultural resources and nurturing attraction, China still has much to do. China's cultural attraction is mid-level.

With regard to coercion, the comparison among the three parties could be summarized as follows: America leads in the coercive use of all resources. The EU also uses coercive measures widely and at high intensity, but due to the limits of its military power, its military coercion is weaker than America. China, both limited by its power resources and its diplomatic ideas of peaceful diplomacy and noninterference, is the weakest in coercion. Its military, institutional and cultural coercion are all at low levels while economic and diplomatic coercion are relatively higher, up to mid-level.

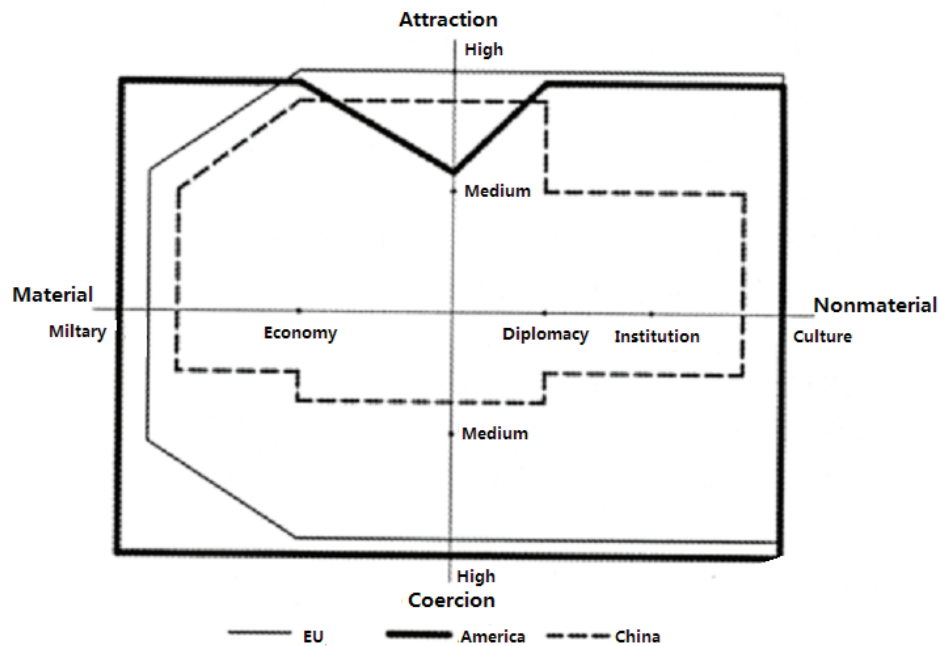


Figure 2 Comparisons on Power Resources And Application

Figure 2 indicates the overall situation and illustrates the comparison of the power resources and their application of all three parties. The lateral axis represents the total amount of material and nonmaterial resources and the vertical axis refers to the different levels of their coercion and attraction. The strength of the application of power is manifested by the polygon's position relative to the vertical axis. The points of intersection of the lateral axis and the polygons show the situation of the resources. The points of intersection of the three polygons with the lateral axis on the left side can compare the three parties' material resources: from strong to weak are America, Europe and China. The points of intersection on the right sides display the situation of the material resources, from strong to weak are Europe/America and China.

From Figure 2, we can find that the polygon of America almost covers the whole picture except for a small blank space at the top. America has strong power resources and has the most material resources among the three parties; its nonmaterial resources obviously overwhelm China and are equal to that of the EU. Viewed from the perspective of the vertical axis, America's coercive power of every resource is at the top level, and has only a slight disadvantage in attraction: America has a stronger military attraction, but a weaker economic and diplomatic attraction than the EU.

In general, the EU also has a polygon in the shape of a large square, which means it has rich power resources and various methods of power application. From Figure 2, the polygon has gaps at both top left and bottom left, which indicates that the EU's military power of both attraction and coercion has its limits, especially compared with the US. This is due to its relatively limited military capacity. In all, the EU's attraction is close to or even higher than that of America, but its coercive power is weaker.

In conclusion, no matter what the size of the power resources or the diversity of methods of power resource application, China lags far behind the US and the EU. China mainly uses the method of attraction and much less frequently uses coercion, in contrast to the high intensity of use of both attraction and coercion by the US and the EU.

China display variable usage of economic and foreign policy resources, with a relatively high level of both attraction and coercion compared with the low level of attraction and coercion of its military, institutional and cultural resources.

IV. Chinese Method of Power Application and its Purposes

Besides the choices behind power resources and the methods of its application, an international actor's power strategy also includes the purposes of its power. Power is the ability to influence another's choice whether or not to act. Shaping and defense are two kinds of purposes of power. Shaping means that an actor, through the use of power resources, tries to change others' domestic and foreign policies, tries to establish an international order, as well as the domestic order of others that can reflect the actor's own interests. A shaping strategy aims to change the outside world, thus an outward-looking strategy. Defense refers to the fact that an actor, through the use of power resources, tries to prevent others' actions from harming its interests. It is an inward-looking strategy, aiming to defend its internal autonomy, not interested in changing other international actors' domestic behaviors and those foreign policy behaviors which do not pose a threat to its interests. The distinction between shaping and defense indicate the outward-looking or inward-looking nature of the power strategy of an international actor. The use of power includes attraction and coercion. As far as attraction of power resources, America and the EU are close and the EU is even a bit higher while China lags far behind. To better illustrate the difference in attraction among the three parties, we use data from a public opinion survey by the BBC done in 2011.³⁰ In the survey, 28619 interviewees from 27 countries were asked about their opinions on the international influence of 17 countries or groups of countries. From the result, positive assessment of the EU, America and China's international influence were 57%, 49% and 44% respectively. Therefore, we assume that the EU has the strongest attraction in the international community, while the US has second strongest and China has the weakest.

With regards to coercion, America commands the full power of coercion. The EU is deficient in military coercion but still far above China. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2011 on the public's support of counter-terrorism actions led by the US can show us the preference of the use of coercion. To some extent, the support of counter-terrorism can represent a country's reliance on coercive actions such as the use of force. The higher the reliance of a country, the more inclined it is to use coercion. On the contrary, low reliance means a lower inclination to use force. Since there are no data on the EU, we use the average of data from the UK, France and Germany to represent the EU. According to the result, 80% of the US public supports the US-led counter-terrorism campaign; the EU has 65.7% approval and China has only 23%.³¹

30 BBC. World Service Poll, "Views of US Continue to Improve in 2011: BBC Country Rating Poll" March 7th, 2011, p.28, http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/mar11/BBCEvalsUS_Mar11_rpt.pdf.

31 Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project: "China Seen Overtaking U.S as Global Superpower: 23-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey," July 13th, 2011, p.26. <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2011/07/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Balance-of-Power-U.S-Image-Report-Final-July-13-2011.pdf>

In terms of outward shaping, the authors chose the participation rate of international military operations led by the UN and other organizations as an indicator. The more military personnel a country sends to take part in these actions, the stronger the country's desire and ability to shape the outside world. According to the data from United Nations Peace Operation 2009: Year in Review, the number of soldiers from China, America and EU countries that were sent to peacekeeping actions led by the UN was 1892, 12 and 7299 respectively.³² The Annual Review of Global Peace Operation 2010 provides the data for the top 20 countries that sent the most troops to peace operations led by other organizations.³³ Among them, the number of soldiers sent by EU countries was 37133. China was not included in the book. In 2009, U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan had 123769 and 66000 soldiers, respectively.³⁴ Therefore, in 2009 America, EU countries and China sent 189781, 44432 and 1892 soldiers to participate in overseas military actions, respectively. As these figures showcase, we would argue that America has the strongest ability and desire to shape the international community. The EU is in second place and China falls further behind.

Concerning defense, the different attitudes of the three countries towards protecting sovereignty can be represented by the number of their ratifications of international treaties that may erode their sovereignties. To some extent, the more international treaties which may erode sovereignty one country approves, the higher its acceptance of restrictions to its sovereignty, and the weaker its defense. Ian Manners chose eight international treaties on labors rights, ten treaties on human rights, seven humanitarian treaties and six environmental treaties as indicators. According to his statistics, among all of the three parties, the EU countries approve the most treaties with an average number of 30; China approves 18 of them while the US approves the least, only 11 of them.³⁵ That indicates the lowest degree of defensiveness of the EU, and the strongest sovereignty protection of the US, while China stands in the middle.

Figure 3 summarizes the perspectives on shaping, defense, attraction and coercion to further indicate the characteristics of the power strategies of China, America and the EU.

32 United Nations, United Nations Peace Operation 2009: Year in Review, p.72. www.un.org/en/peace-keeping/publications/yir/yir2009.pdf

33 Center for International Cooperation, Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2010, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010, p.170.

34 US Department of Defense, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, September 2009, p.37. http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_Congress_Nov_09.pdf; Us Department of Defense, Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, October 2009, p.18, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/October_2009.pdf

35 Ian Manners "The Constitutive Nature of Values, Images and Principles in the European Union," in Sonia Lucarelli and Ian Manners, eds., Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy, London and New York, Routledge, 2006, p.31

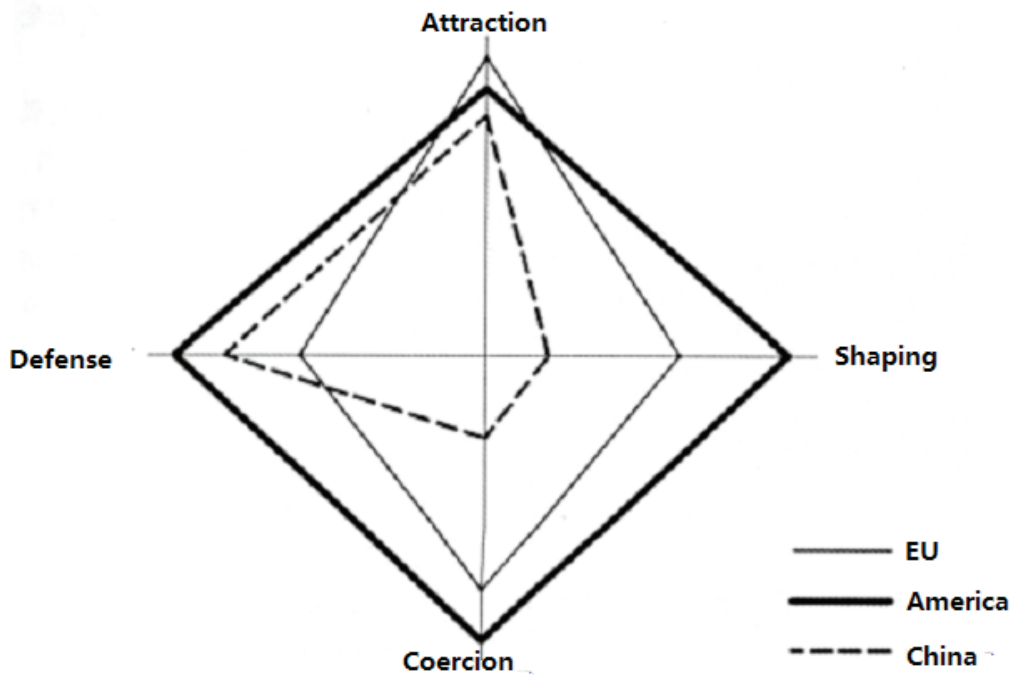


Figure 3: Comparison of Power Strategy of China, America and EU

First, the “omnidirectional American primacy” power strategy. As shown in Figure 3, in the US’ power strategy, the two methods of applying power resources, coercion and attraction, are both fully exercised. Its coercive power is the strongest among the three while its attractive power is slightly weaker than the EU’s. Also, shaping and defence purposes are both strong in its power strategy: it has the strongest shaping ability in the world as well as the staunchest protection of its sovereign integrity. On the one hand, the US shapes international institutions and international rules with its strong material and discourse power; on the other, it has a strong sense of sovereignty—when international rules violate its national interest, it will seek to get rid of the limitations of the international rules. Therefore, the US’ use of power is omnidirectional and variable, and both shaping and defence are highly valued. Attraction and coercion, shaping and defence are equally represented in the American power strategy, without the problem of self-contradiction. This characteristic is a result of the status of America as the only superpower in the world, and its global strategic goal that of American primacy. The status of the only superpower allows and pushes the US to use both methods, coercion and attraction, to exert its international influence with all its power resources, and the strategic goal of American primacy motivates the US to shape the outside world but at the same time to maintain the highest degree of freedom for its own actions.

Second, the EU’s “omnidirectional post-sovereignty” power strategy. Among the EU and its member states’ power strategies, attraction and coercion are also brought into full play. Its attraction is first among the three countries; its coercion is weaker than that of the US, but far stronger than that of China. Just like America, the EU also has a strong desire to shape the outside world, tries to construct an international order according to Europe’s norms and institutional models and influences other countries’ internal development. But differently from America, the EU is the most willing to accept limits from international norms on state sovereignty, and to yield parts of its sovereignty in different domains. Therefore, it has the weakest defence among the three.

This power strategy of the EU manifests the EU's characteristic as a post-sovereign power. Though walloped by the debt crisis, as the largest group of developed countries with the second greatest amount of power after the US in the world, it still has a lot of resources to exert its coercion and attraction, and to support its desire to reshape the outside world. At the same time, as the regional group that has the highest level of integration, the EU has already developed as a remarkable postmodern actor, willing to yield some state sovereignty to the international institutions in Europe and in the world. In all, the EU has quite a full range of use of both coercion and attraction, and a unique combination of strong shaping and weak defence.

Third, China's "attraction-defence" power strategy. China's power strategy focuses more on attraction and less on coercion, has strong defence but little shaping ability. In comparison with the EU and America, though weaker, its attraction is not far behind them. But China is obviously much weaker than the EU and America in the use of coercion. China has a stronger defence than the EU, but weaker than that of the US. And China's shaping power is the weakest among the three. China tends to use attraction rather than coercion in the use of power, which is the result of China's tradition of peaceful diplomacy. China's focus on defence indicates that although China has participated in international regimes and treaties, it still highly values its sovereignty and autonomy. Meanwhile, China's passiveness in shaping the outside world reveals China's still weak discursive power in international affairs, and its low level of proactive engagement in international institutions. When Chinese scholar Fang Changping discussed the purpose of Chinese soft power, he said that the most important goal of the Chinese use of soft power is to defuse the "China threat" theory both regionally and internationally, to enhance the understanding of China in the international community and to make other countries and people accept and support China's peaceful development. As he argued, China would not mimic the US in actively exporting its own values, social system and development model to the whole world and changing the identities of other countries.³⁶

V. Upgrading China's power strategy

China's power strategy mostly relies on the attractive use of economic hard power and different kinds of soft power resources, especially foreign policy. It focuses more on defence than outward shaping. Along with the continuous rise in China's international status, the global extension of Chinese interests and deeper engagement in international affairs, China should upgrade its power strategy in the following aspects:

First, China should prioritize its economic hard power. More specifically, China should more effectively bring into play its power of economic attraction through its expanding market, foreign investments and aids. Since China's entrance into the WTO in 2001, China has imported goods valued at 750 billion dollars and created more than 14 million jobs for countries and regions involved.

³⁶ FANG Changping The Comparison of Soft Power between China and US. World Economics and Politics, No. 7, 2007, pp.24-25

During the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period, China has become an important engine of global economy growth and China's contribution rate to global economy growth was above 20%. During the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, China's accumulating imports have the potential to exceed 8 trillion dollars, which may bring more business opportunities to countries all over the world.³⁷ China's expanding market has already provided a large emerging market for the main exporters of raw materials, agricultural products and high-tech manufactured products, and has created lots of job opportunities and economic interest for the states concerned. As a result, China's foreign economic partners are increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy, and are pushed to develop more cooperative political relationships with China.

In the last few years, China's direct and indirect foreign investments have also developed rapidly. In direct foreign investment in 2010, China's outflow reached 68.8 billion dollars, ranking 5th in the world; its stock has climbed to 317.2 billion dollars, the 17th in the world; China also has 13 thousand enterprises located in 178 countries and regions. As one top Chinese banker argued, after China's GDP per capita surpassed 4750 dollars, China's foreign divestment may enter into a stage of explosive expansion.³⁸ In indirect foreign investment, China's foreign exchange reserves rose from 165.57 billion dollars in 2000 to 3181.15 billion at the end of 2011;³⁹ China firmly occupies the place of the country with the most foreign exchange reserves. Though China's foreign exchange reserve assets that are invested in American and European debt face the risks of devaluation because of those countries' easy monetary policy, these countries' financial dependence on China to various extents would inevitably influence the directions of their foreign policies towards China. Additionally, China's foreign exchange assets allow China to increase its share of contributions to the IMF, bringing more voting rights and influence to China in this financial organization, and then improving China's ability to provide global public goods and shaping the international order.

With regard to foreign aid, China had provided aid of 256.29 billion RMB, 106.2 billion of which are non-reimbursable assistance, by the year 2009. Entering into the 21st century, and especially since 2004, the amount of China's foreign aid has grown rapidly in the context of China's fast-rising economic power and comprehensive national strength. The average annual rate of aid growth was 29.4% from 2004 to 2009.⁴⁰

37 WEN Jiabao's Speech at the Royal Institute, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-06/28/c_121592031_4.htm

38 JIANG Jianqing, China's foreign investment enter into a large-scale expanding period, *China Economic Herald*, Dec 31, 2011

39 State Administration of Foreign Exchange: The time-series data of China's Foreign Exchange Reserves http://www.safe.gov.cn/model_safe/index.html

40 The State Council Information Office, P.R.C: China's Foreign aid , April, 2011, http://www.china.com.cn/ch-book.node_7116438

In the future, China will expand its foreign aid. At the same time, China needs to re-adjust the aid distribution, shifting priority to the less developed countries and small island developing countries; China needs to improve structures of aid projects and increase the number of urgent, popular and widely beneficial projects such as hospitals and schools, providing water and clean energy like solar energy and marsh gas which can be helpful to deal with climate change and protect the environment; China also needs to encourage innovations to foreign aid and to better coordinate “hard aid”, like supplying whole factories, with “soft aid”, like developing human resources.⁴¹

Second, China should focus on improving its soft power. Foreign policy based on equality, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation can win many friends and cooperation partners for China. This is also the resource from which China’s core influence in world affairs originates. The spokesman for Foreign Ministry Qin Gang once said, “China’s saying and acting fair, non-practicing hegemonism, appealing for peaceful development and win-win cooperation in the world, in my opinion, is China’s strongest soft power.”⁴² However, UN Security Council’s sanctions on Iran and North Korea and the international community’s interference in Libya and Syria indicate that China’s insistence on noninterference and solving international disputes peacefully is undergoing severe challenges. China’s diplomacy should keep pace with the times. They call for China to develop new diplomatic ideas when inheriting its diplomatic traditions, so that China may continue to occupy the moral high ground and maintain popularity of its foreign policy, and therefore reinforce the soft power of China’s foreign policy.

Since the 1990s, though China has accepted the idea of multilateralism gradually and become more involved in the international community, China should still improve its soft power in international institutions. According to the CIA World Factbook 2006, China participates in 66 international organizations whereas France takes part in 92. Both America and the UK have membership in 77 and Russia 71. The number of international organizations that China takes part in only accounts for 71.7% that of France, 85.5% that of the US, 85.5% that of the UK and 92.9% that of Russia, respectively.⁴³ In the past few years, a few international institutions led by China were established, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the China-ASEAN FTA and the China-Africa Cooperation Forum. China’s participation in international organizations should further improve and China’s influence in them should be further enhanced. To this aim, China needs to play a more active role in the construction of international institutions; it should have greater impact on the agenda-setting in international institutions dominated by Western countries; it should have more influence in decision-making, push the reform of institutions to better reflect the interests of China and other developing countries. In international institutions initiated by China, China should push the strengthening and improvement of the regimes, enlarge their memberships, and expand the international influence of these international institutions.

41 CHEN Deming Nuli Kaichuang Yuanwai Gongzuo Xin Jumian—Shenru Guanche Luoshi Quanguo Yuanwai Gongzuo Huiyi Jingshen Qiushi, Vol.19, 2010, p.44

42 Qingang: Saying and acting fair is China’s Soft Power, Renmin Net, April 6th, 2012 <http://world.people.com.cn/GB/57507/17591488.html>

43 XU Jia, CAI Wei, International Institution and China’s Choice(Guoji Zhidu yu Zhongguo de Xuanze), International Politics Quarterly, No.4, 2007, p. 137

As for cultural attraction, data from the China Education Ministry shows that the number of foreign students that study in China for the whole year first exceeded 290 thousand in 2011, 27521 students more than the number in 2010, with a growth rate of 10.38%.⁴⁴ By October 2010, China had established 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius classes in 96 countries and regions all over the world.⁴⁵ Besides that, the successful holding of the Beijing Olympic and Cultural Years with France, Russia and Italy all show that China has already focused on the construction of cultural soft power. But China's soft power is still not strong enough in general. According to the soft power ranking of different countries in 2010 made by the Skolkovo/E&Y Institute, the US scored 87 and ranked first; France and Germany occupied second and third place. China only had 30.7 points and ranked 8th on the list, with a big margin from the US. Different from other emerging countries, China's soft power mainly benefits from the development and attraction of China's transnational enterprises, tourism and the expanding of universities. But in other indexes, such as immigration, media exports, celebrity influence, political freedom, rule of law and CO₂ emissions, China's ranking is relatively low.⁴⁶ Therefore, China should take measures to strengthen its cultural soft power with a strategic plan in future years.

Third, China should expand its soft military hard power gradually. China's defense budget was 650.3 billion RMB in 2012, thus it became the second country in the world to have an annual defense budget over 100 billion dollars. With the support of national economic power, China should endeavor to develop its military hard power resources, especially long-range power projection capacity. China should also strengthen its capacity for international peacekeeping and humanitarian aid, improve its level of international cooperation in military industries, and increase foreign military aid.

Concerning international peacekeeping, since 1990, the first time China took part in UN peacekeeping actions, until October 2010, China had already participated in 19 UN-led peacekeeping operations, and sent 17390 person trips in all. In December 2010, 1955 officers and soldiers of China's PLA were on peacekeeping missions in 9 UN missions. Also, in line with relevant UN resolutions, China dispatched naval ships to conduct escort operations in the Gulf of Aden and waters off the coast of Somalia on December 26, 2008. As of December 2010, the Chinese Navy had dispatched, in seven sorties, 18 ship deployments, 16 helicopters, and 490 Special Operation Force soldiers on escort missions. Through accompanying escorts, area patrol, and other onboard escorts, the Chinese Navy provided protection for 3139 ships sailing under Chinese and foreign flags, rescued 29 ships from pirate attacks, and recovered nine ships released from pirate capture.⁴⁷ From now on, China needs to continue to take part in UN-led international peacekeeping, and more actively participate in UN-authorized international peacekeeping. China should also consider expanding its troops' role in international peacekeeping.

44 Statistics of Foreign Students in China, 2011, Feb.28, 2012 <http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5987/201202/131117.html>

45 See On Confucius Institute http://www.hanban.edu.cn/confuciusinstitutes/node_10961.htm

46 Peter Johansson, Seung Ho Park and William, The Rising Soft Power of the Emerging World, FT.com. December 19, 2011

47 The State Council Information Office, P.R.C: China's National Defense in 2010, March 2011, http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2011-03/31/content_4249942.htm

Based on the principle of equality, mutual benefit and win-win, China should strengthen cooperation on defense technology with friendly countries. China should also encourage and support the military industry's companies engaging in international cooperation, develop cooperation on military technology through co-developing, co-manufacturing, and co-training personnel, such as the developing of the Xiaolong fighter jet with Pakistan. With the rapid development and improvement of China's military technology, China has a large potential for international military industry cooperation. Also, China has great potential for providing military equipment, personnel training, and technology transfer to friendly countries.

Fourth, China should enhance its hard power and hard soft power to an appropriate level. Considering the fact that power politics still prevail in the world and some countries try to exclude and balance China, China should develop its coercion power moderately, to effectively counter power politics and acts of balancing. This includes the development of military deterrence, economic and diplomatic counter-measures, institutional balancing and the ability to counter public opinion.

As to the military, with the principle of non-first-use of nuclear weapons, China should develop a credible and minimum power of nuclear deterrence, establish modernized conventional military power, dispel all the illusions of waging local or total war on China of any country, and effectively protect territorial integrity and maritime rights. For the economy, while obeying the rules of the WTO and other international economic rules, China should also develop its toolbox of counter-measures. To those countries that impose discriminative trade and investment measures against China, China should develop a systemic plan to limit the access of these countries' goods and capitals to the Chinese market. This should be a proportional response with its sole aim being to assure that China's economic partners abide by international rules and to protect China's legitimate economic interests. At the same time, these counter-measures can also serve the goals of national foreign policy when necessary. In order to protect the country's core interests, diplomatic counter-measures such as breaking off and reducing diplomatic relations and suspending high-level communication has occurred throughout the history of the PRC. In the future, more counter-measures should be developed to increase effectiveness. With regards to institutional balance, China should conduct domestic reforms to revitalize its own institutions and increase its international attractiveness. Regarding international institutions, China should have a dual strategy of both intra- and extra-institutional balancing. Effectively participating in current international institutions using China's status in the institution (like permanent membership in the UN Security Council) and the elevation of status (such as the increase of voting rights in the IMF), can be used to prevent certain countries' endeavors to establish an unfair international order and impair China's interests. Apart from this intra-institutional balancing, China should also develop international institutions that could serve as potential alternatives (like the Developing Bank of BRICS countries), to contain the unhealthy trend of development in existing international institutions. In public opinion, China should strengthen its efforts to expose and counter effectively any cultural hegemony and demonization of China by foreign forces.

Fifth, China should continue to use its power mainly for defensive purposes, while strengthening its efforts to shape the outside world. The main goals of China's expansion and use of power resources is to serve the protection of China's national security and territorial integrity, and to promote the opening-up and reform of China. For example, China's defense strategy clearly states that "China pursues a national defense policy which is defensive in nature. China unswervingly maintains its fine cultural traditions and its belief in valuing peace above all else, advocating the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, prudence on the issue of war, and the strategy of 'attacking only after being attacked'".⁴⁸ Therefore, defending from the interference of Chinese domestic affairs by the outside world and securing a stable external environment that helps China's development is still the main task of China's power strategy. At the same time, as China's power grows, its interests globalize and the international community's expectation of China to undertake more responsibility soars, China is bound to devote much more effort toward engaging in international affairs. A growing shaping role of Chinese power should serve to promote peace and prosperity in the world, as well as a fairer and more just international order.

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⁴⁸ The State Council Information Office, P.R.C: China's National Defense in 2010, March 2011, http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2011-03/31/content_4249942.htm

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