



EAI Working Paper Series

Dilemma of Openness: Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

March 2007

Yufan Hao

Professor of Political Science
Robert Ho Professor of Chinese Studies
Colgate University

East Asia Institute

www.eai.or.kr

Dilemma of Openness:
Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making*

Yufan Hao

ABSTRACTS: This paper examines the increasing influence of various domestic factors such as academics, media, and public opinion on the China's Japan policy in the last decade within the context of newly developed internet technology. The questions raised in this study are: has there been an emergence of societal forces, independent of the Communist Party that have begun to exert influence over the foreign policy making process? If so, how are they affecting the ability of Chinese government to frame and implement foreign policy? It argues that due to the opening up policy and the fast development of information technology, China's hierarchical, elite-driven foreign policy making structure has experienced profound changes which are characterized as pluralization, professionalization and institutionalization. These changes have created opportunities for societal forces to influence the decision making process, which is best reflected in China's recent policy toward Japan.

KEYWORDS: Chinese Foreign Policy, Societal Forces, Chinese Civil Society and Social Factors in Chinese Policy towards Japan

The spring of 2005 witnessed quite turbulent in China-Japan relations. Along with the issues of Security Council bid, the history textbook, and the gas exploration in disputed waters, Japan claimed on the Chinese Lunar New Year that the Senkaku Islands were officially Japanese. In February, Japan and the US declared a closer military bond. After another visit by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where convicted Class-A war criminals are honored along with other Japanese war dead, the bilateral relations plunged to their lowest point since 1972, with a

* I would like to thank the EAI Fellows Program on Peace, Governance, and Development in East Asia supported by the Henry Luce Foundation for generous support for travel and research.

nationwide anti-Japanese riots erupting in China. Angry Chinese protesters marched on the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, throwing eggs and rocks to protest against school textbooks they say whitewash Japanese wartime atrocities in China, against Tokyo's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and against Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. After a week of violent protests against Japan in Beijing, thousands of protesters marched on the Japanese consulate in Shanghai, smashing its windows with rocks, pelting it with paint bombs and attacking Japanese restaurants along the way. Protest spread to several large cities in the south, as Chinese massed outside Japanese stores and consulates, calling for a boycott of Japanese products and demanding that Japan own up to war crimes of 60 years ago. The rising anti-Japanese sentiments within Chinese society have made it difficult for Beijing leadership when making their policy towards Tokyo. Chinese government became increasingly tough towards Tokyo and publicly registered its objection to Japan's bid to UN Security Council. Meanwhile, Chinese government began to clamp down harder to keep the capital peaceful before Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura's visit. University students were warned by email not to protest. Top anti-Japanese activists in Beijing were rounded up to prevent further protests. China even began to control media coverage of Sino-Japanese relations and had cancelled a few academic conferences and workshops related to Japan.

Why did the Chinese leadership decide to take a tough stand toward Japan at the time China is trying to show to the world its intention of "peaceful rising"? At the same time, what had made the Chinese leaders continuously try to maintain relations with Tokyo, not hurting 178 billion dollars in annual trade between the two countries? Is it that the Chinese government manipulating the public so as to promote nationalism at home and to gain leverage over Japan as some international observers believed? Or when the Chinese leaders hope to engage Japan, only to find their hands tied due to powerful public sentiments nourished unintentionally by their early policy?

What happened in the spring of 2005 seems to illustrate a long overlooked element affecting Chinese foreign policy making: the influence of social forces. Since 1949, Chinese foreign policy has been traditionally viewed as highly centralized, dominated by a few powerful, personalized seniors acting free from domestic public pressure. Never before has Chinese leadership considered the interests and opinions of various domestic political constituencies. What happened in 2005 in China's policy

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

towards Japan seems to illustrate an interesting change. Beijing leadership had to accommodate domestic outcry in the wake of the certain external events, even though they wished to maintain and continue to improve Sino-Japanese relations. The moment may have arrived in China when policy makers cannot make policy initiatives without a serious consideration of public opinion, and without the support within the bureaucratic apparatus. This may represent a gradual but significant shift from the Communist Party's centralized control over China's foreign policy making, relatively free of social pressure, to a new pattern characterized by increasing domestic restraints.

The purpose of this article is to examine the societal forces as an increasingly important variable affecting Chinese foreign policy. It will focus on the role of internet, media, and public opinion in producing China's recent anti-Japanese sentiments and how these sentiments have, in turn, affected China's policy toward Japan.

Traditional Approach to the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy

The study of Chinese foreign policy has traditionally received less attention from the academic community than the study of Chinese domestic politics and remained relatively undeveloped until the 1980s. This is partly due to the tight control by the Chinese government, partly due to training of early China Watches in the West, partly because of the uncertain role of comparative foreign policy in the field of political science, and to a certain extent, due to a lack of conceptual methodology in the study of Chinese foreign policy.¹

In the West, the early study of Chinese foreign policy was based on the state-centric assumption of a traditional realist approach to the study of international politics. China's foreign policy was treated as the product of a rational, unitary state pursuing and maximizing its national interests under the constraints imposed by the external environment. Several studies focused on the domestic politics of Chinese policy toward the United States and the former Soviet Union, arguing that the outcome of political struggles among the Chinese ruling elite fundamentally affects China's strategic postures and policy preferences. (Gutove and Harding 1971, Zogoria 1967, Whiting 1979, Lieberthal 1978, Garver, 1980). Some studied the domestic politics of Chinese foreign policy emphasizing its relationship to China's international position (Goldwin 1984, Ross 1989); others focused on domestic political events and their relationship to foreign policy behavior (Whiting 1970). The early study of Chinese foreign policy

mirrored the larger domestic-international linkage debate, emphasizing the importance of factions within the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party to the policy making process.²

Since the death of Mao in 1976, Chinese foreign policy has undergone significant changes. It has become less personal, radical, and ideological, and increasingly pragmatic and sophisticated. China's national interests are more specifically defined, and the pursuit of those interests has become more realistic and flexible. The new sources of information that became available in the 1980s have triggered a more vigorous and diverse generation of the study of Chinese foreign policy. Since the Chinese foreign policy has been elite-driven and free from public scrutiny, most attention before the mid 1990s was given in trying to reveal the "black box" of the Chinese foreign policy process. The research still relied on the sovereign state-centered approach, but it had a special emphasis on the foreign policy making structure, processes, and bureaucratic politics. A. Doak Barnett's ground-breaking work of 1984 revealed the role of various domestic institutions and their interaction within China's foreign policy making process (Barnett 1984). David Shambaugh has also examined, through in-depth interviews of scholars and officials, the Chinese foreign policy bureaucracy and foreign policy analysts at various institutions regarding their perception and approaches to international affairs and the United States. (Shambaugh, 1989) Some scholars attempt to understand Chinese foreign policy making institutions, structure and processes from various perspectives (Lu 1997, Swaine 1998, Hamril and Zhao 1995). Others try to provide a deeper understanding of the policy making system, its relationship to the external environment and domestic politics, and the reasons behind decisions in major policy issues (Hao and Huan 1989, Robinson and Shambaugh 1993, Christensen 1996, Nathan and Ross 1997, Johnston 1996, and Whiting 1995, Zhao 1996). Although all of which provide useful information and understanding, it does not pay enough attention to domestic constraints.

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in literature concerning the relationship between domestic politics and China's external behavior. More efforts were made to explore the role of various domestic factors in the Chinese foreign policy making process in the age of globalization. This domestic-centered approach, however, still emphasizes ideological preferences, objectives of key players and their factional politics, and bureaucratic cleavages as an extension of domestic politics.(Christensen,1997,

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

Whiting, 1995) Only recently has attention been given to social factors that have long been held as insignificant such as public opinion, media, think tanks and other social forces (Lampton, 2001). Scholars are beginning to recognize that Beijing leaders are under increasing social pressure when making their foreign policies. The complexity of the leaders' responses to social pressure however, remains largely unknown.

Structural Changes and New Variable in Chinese Foreign Policy Making

The Chinese foreign policy making structure has undergone several interesting and simultaneous changes such as pluralization, institutionalization, and professionalization since the late 1970s (Lampton 2001). In terms of pluralization, the number and variety of actors involved in decision-making have expanded rapidly and now even non-government (or quasi-government) actors are included. China's growing economic, political and military interaction with the world has created an environment in which many ministries at the national level, most of the Chinese provinces, and many large military and civilian corporations are engaged in foreign affairs through their direct dealings with other countries. Foreign policy is no longer the domain of ministries of foreign affairs, defense and national security, and heads of government. It has begun to involve ministries dealing with industry, commerce, trade, agriculture, and banking, to name only some of the more observable ones. The policy making process has thus become much more fragmented and decentralized with an increasing number of agencies becoming active players.

The media and think tanks in China have exerted increasing influence on the foreign policy process. The distribution of information is no longer limited to ranking officials in the hierarchy. Media sources have already begun to shape and influence public opinion and their support for government policies. The internet has allowed access to a rising numbers of Chinese to the global media, influencing public opinions and the way the Chinese decision makers formulate their foreign policy. Although the government has recently attempted to censor internet material, technical innovation has made it possible for many Chinese to breach governmental controls.

Meanwhile, many academics are consulted by local TV and radio talk shows and write for local newspapers, providing more informed and less biased reporting. Even governmental officials rely more and more on the opinions of non-government experts. Although Chinese think tanks have not reached the level of independence and influence

of their American counterparts, their new roles, however, have challenged the monopoly of the government in conducting foreign policy.

In terms of institutionalization, various inter-agency organizations have been set up in recent years to shift power and influence from individuals to institutions involved in foreign policy making. Some formerly symbolic institutions such as the National People's Congress have started to assume a greater role in Chinese foreign affairs (Ken O'Brian 1999). Apart from that, horizontal linkage between institutions in the Chinese foreign policy community, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Trade, and various agencies of national security and the military agencies, has enhanced policy coordination and consensus building during in the process.

In addition, there has been a growing trend of professionalization in China's foreign policy-making apparatus. Many mid-level officials have received extensive training in both international affairs and foreign languages at China's top universities. They have an international-oriented outlook and are generally supportive of China's integration into the world. The decision makers are increasingly reliant on the information provided by specialized bureaucracies.³

The decision making style of Beijing leadership has also changed profoundly as the charismatic appeal of the revolutionary leaders of the first and second generation had long gone. Both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have to rely on collective leadership that requires internal consensus building when making major policies. This, together with the structural changes mentioned above, has provided opportunities for various unconventional factors to influence Chinese foreign policy making process in a way that was unimaginable two decades ago.

It is within this changing context that the societal force is examined as a new variable in our understanding of Chinese foreign policy making. So far, not much has been written or documented about this domestic determinant. In fact, the societal pressure has been largely neglected as a meaningful inquiry in the study of Chinese foreign policy because of the traditional view of government's autonomy in public policy making in an authoritarian society.

How to define societal force in this study? The term societal force here refers to the force outside top leadership and the policy making inner circle. It is almost a catch-all notion covering a variety of societal factors including public opinions, think tanks, opinion makers both in the media and in academic community, technocrats within the bureaucratic

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

apparatus, business community, local governments, and other sub national entities within Chinese society that seek to influence directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, the final foreign policy outcomes. This societal force operates as a loose conglomeration of individual actors and barely coordinated groups with different interests and goals. Each perceives problems and act independently, but together they represent a force that is often powerful enough to make an impact on decision makers even in a strong authoritarian state like China.

We need to understand the societal force as a result of an endless series of forces both from below and from the mid-level bureaucrats fighting to get attention from policy makers at the top, in the mid of the public mood led by past experience and present value orientation of a society. Since the socialization process of citizens, the role of media and educational institutions may all shape the outlook of foreign policy makers, we therefore need a “mixed approach” to take into account China's institutional structure, coalition building process within the society and the interaction between societal force and policy making elite.

China's Japan policy is selected primarily because it is revealing in this aspect. As we know, Sino-Japanese relations have been highly emotional and s issues related to the history of Japanese military invasion of China more than 60 years ago have now come to case a huge cloud overshadowing the relations between the two Asian powers. Due to geographic proximity and the bitter historical experiences between the two countries in the past 100 years, the Chinese public mood towards Japan has fluctuated so much in the last century. It not only reflects the ups and downs of the bilateral relations, but also exerts influences from below, making it an obvious subject to study.

History Issue in Recent Sino-Japanese Relations

In order to understand why history issue has become an obstacle in maintaining Sino-Japanese relations, we need to review briefly the last 50 year history of Sino-Japanese relations, and the gradual nourishment of the anti-Japan sentiments within Chinese society.

From 1949 to 1972, Beijing's policy towards Japan was practical in nature. For strategic and security concern, Beijing primarily viewed Japanese government as a puppet of Washington and had once aimed to drive a wedge between Tokyo and Washington by engaging Japan on an unofficial level. For that purpose, Beijing initiated a “people to

people” diplomacy with Japan and late premier Zhou Enlai had spent enormous amount of time meeting with Japanese visitors. It was reported that Zhou once told visiting Japanese diet members in 1954: “The history of past sixty years of Sino-Japanese relations was not good. However it is a thing of the past...we can not let such history influence our children and grandchildren.”⁴

After the Sino-Soviet split in early 1960s, China moved to improve relations with Japan, so as to balance against the Soviet Union for strategic and political purpose, and to obtain much needed technology and hard-currency for its domestic economic need. The normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972 turned a new page in Sino-Japanese relations and started a decade-long honeymoon period in bilateral relations. Out of strategic interest, China even formally renounced “its demands for war indemnities from Japan.” In return, the Japanese side acknowledged that it was “keenly aware of Japan’s responsibility for causing enormous damage in the past to the Chinese people through war and deeply reproaches itself.” From 1975 to 1978, China and Japan negotiated a peace and friendship treaty. It was finally concluded when Tokyo shifted its previous policy of balancing Beijing and Moscow to a pro-Beijing stance.

Deng’s “reform and opening up” program had provided opportunities for Japan to bring China into a regional economic cooperation led by Tokyo. Frequent exchange of visits between leaders of both countries had substantially improved and strengthened bilateral economic ties. In May 1979, Japan decided to provide China with an energy loan of 420 billion yen to help jointly extract natural resources. In December 1979, Japanese government committed to provide China with the first package of official development assistance(ODA) of 330.9 billion yen (about US\$1.5 billion), helping to finance major infrastructural projects including the construction of two ports on the Yellow Sea. Tokyo also promised to grant Chinese products privileged tariff treatment so as to boost bilateral trade. In 1984, Japanese government decided to provide China with its second loan package of 470 billion yen (around 2.4 billion). Bilateral trade for the first time reached US\$16.4 billion in 1985, ten times that of 1972. Japan became China’s top trade partner, accounting for 27.3 % of China’s total foreign trade.⁵ From 1982-1988, China was the largest recipient of Japanese ODA, and in July 1988, Japanese Prime Minister Takeshita pledged to provide China with the third loan package of 810 billion yen (US\$6.4 billion) over the next five years.

Dilemma of Openness:
Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

However, this honeymoon period was dampened by an array of irritants including the textbook issues. China repeatedly protested to Japanese government for its alleged efforts to whitewash Japan's past aggression in the revision of middle school textbooks and Japanese officials' visits to the Yasukuni shrine, as well as the disputes over the settlement of the Guanghua Hostel," and Japanese defense budget issue. In addition, there were also Chinese complaints about the growing trade deficit with Japan and the Japanese reluctance to engage in direct investment and technology transfer, as Japanese direct investment in China only accounted for 1 percent of its total FDI in 1988. The government's rhetoric sparked a popular response from the society. During the mid 1980s, Chinese students staged a demonstration protesting Japan's "second economic invasion." In 1989, Deng Xiaoping raised the history issue, telling Japanese visitors that: "the harm the Japanese did to China is beyond calculation. In term of death toll alone, tens of millions of Chinese people were killed by the Japanese. If we want to settle the historical account, Japan owes China the largest debt."⁶

However, the bilateral relations seem to develop reasonably well particularly after the Tiananmen Incident. Japanese official reactions to the incident on June 4, 1989 were remarkably restrained compared with those of the Americans and Europeans. Prime Minister Sosuke Uno stated on June 7, 1989 that "I say clearly that Japan invaded China 40 years ago. Japan can not do anything against a people who experienced such a war. Sino-Japanese relations differ from Sino-United States relations."⁷

Although Japan signed the G-7 joint statement condemning the Tiananmen Incident, it only selectively adopted sanctions implemented by other Western powers and lobbied for not isolating China. Japan was the first G-7 country which resumed governmental interaction with China. Not only did Japan reaffirmed its third yen loan package to China in November 1990, Prime Minister Takashi Kaifu also took a bold move to visit Beijing in August 1991, marking a full scale restoration of Sino-Japanese relations after the brief setback of Tiananmen Incident.

In April 1992, Jiang Zemin returned a visit to Japan during which he made an official invitation to Japanese emperor to visit China. Jiang promised that the emperor would not be embarrassed by contentious issues such as the Senkaku Island dispute and war reparation claims, and there would be no popular protests in China. In October 1992, the Japanese emperor visited China for the first time in two thousand years' history of the monarchy. China seemed to be pleased by the visit and became more supportive of Japan's yearning for a greater political role in world affairs. By the end of 1992, Japan's

FDI in China reached \$3.4 billion, accounting for 6.5 percent of its total FDI, which made Japan the 4th leading investors in China after HK/Macau, the U.S. and Taiwan.

Meanwhile, Sino-Japanese trade arose from US\$16.6 billion in 1990 to \$37.8 billion in 1993 and \$57.5 billion in 1995. And Japan's technology export to China surged to account for 28% of China's total technology imports in 1993.⁸ During Zhu Rongji's visit to Japan in 1994, the Japanese government promised China another 600 billion yen loan for 1996-1998, making China the leading recipient of Japanese ODA. The momentum of Sino-Japanese economic interaction improved steadily. The bilateral trade increased from US\$ 87.7 billion in 2001 to US\$102 billion in 2002, to US\$133.5 billion in 2003 and US\$167.8 billion in 2004, doubled in four years' time. Japanese FDI in China has also increased from US\$5.4 billion in 2001 to US\$9.2 billion in 2004, making Japan the second largest investor in China.

Why then has history issue emerged rapidly as the single most important issue in bilateral relations at the beginning of the new century? The answer lies, to a large extent, in the increasingly powerful anti-Japanese sentiment gradually brewed in Chinese society since the 1980s.

The 1980s witnessed a decline of confidence in communist ideology within Chinese society and the efforts by the government to promote "patriotic education" to fill in the value vacuum left by the torment of the Cultural Revolution. During this campaign, Chinese suffering during the "century of humiliation," particularly the wartime suffering at the hands of Japanese invaders, was emphasized to inspire patriotism. Government-sponsored films, academic publications and various history museums, both private and state-sponsored, brought back the bitter memory of what happened in the last 100 years and were received well among the public. Through mass media, academic conferences and network building, a community of history activists relating to Japanese invasion were gradually created, within which findings and resources were shared, collaboration on research was undertaken and public debate on history issues was initiated.

This traumatic recollection of long suppressed suffering has understandably generated anger and indignity that has been directed, for a while at the United States as reflected in the publications of *China Can Say No* in 1996 and *Behind the Demonization of China* in 1997, as well as mass demonstration after U.S. bombing of China embassy in 1999. But this anger, throughout the whole 1990s, was primarily at Japan. One aspect of nationalism is a sense of national pride and dignity, which is generally understood as the

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

opposite of national humiliation and oppression.⁹ For most Chinese, Americans have never invaded and humiliated China the way that the Japanese did. Japan is viewed by many Chinese as an ungrateful “little brother” who had borrowed extensively from the “big brothers” in the past but had brutalized China in modern time with a full fledged military invasion. The humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895, the insulting “21 demands of 1915 and the atrocity committed by the Japanese and the sheer number of Chinese civilians killed by Japanese troops during the war, all give anti-Japanese anger a “higher” moral ground and a “lower” visceral dimension.¹⁰ The collective memory of Japanese oppression was never too far below the surface. Gradually, history activists increased in great number. They began to engage in public education and successfully revived the collective memory, making Japan a nation viewed in Chinese society as impenitent about its colonial past.

The question is how could this anti-Japanese nationalism in Chinese society gain such a great momentum in such a short period of time? What have contributed to this successful revival of those anti-Japanese collective sentiments? The answer seems to lie, to a large extent, in the role of internet, media, and public opinion in the wake of gradual opening of Chinese society to the world. Some even call this round of anti-Japanese nationalism as internet nationalism (wangluo minzuzhuyi).

The Role of Internet

The swift development of the internet in China bears a much more important socio-political significance than in many other societies, not only because the internet in China has had the fastest development at a geometric rate and the largest number of users in the world, but more importantly because China's unique political and social contexts have made the internet a crucial force for both the construction of information society—informatization and the creation of societal pressure on the country's policy-making.

Since China built up the first domestic internet e-mail node in September 1987, the internet has been growing explosively. The total number of internet surfers in China had reached 137 million, ranking second in the world only after the United States by the end of 2006.¹¹ The total number of computers that can access internet has hit 41.6 million, and the total number of websites has reached 669,000¹². Compared to the three figures in 1997 when China started to develop the Internet, in less than ten years

Internet users, on-lined computers, and websites had increased 152 times, 139 times, and 446 times, respectively.¹³

Considering China's unique social and political contexts, probably the most significant Internet development is the emergence of the cyber forums that provide the public an access to online discussion. Cyber forums refer to the online chatting, instant messages, BBSs and other online discussion forms, such as blogs, Wikis, and SMSs. The three most popular online activities in China are news reading, online chatting/cyber forum discussion, and information downloading. Together they constitute more than 60 percent of the total online activities. Among them, online chatting is the 6th most frequently used online activity with 40.2 percent of internet users, and BBS posting is the 7th with 21.3 percent of users (The Investigative Report on Internet Use and Its Impact, 2001). These figures indicate that online discussion and opinion-exchange have become a major online activity of internet users in China as well as an important part of their daily life.

According to Hong Junhao who studies China's internet activity, the online forum is effectively functional in four ways especially for "public participation" or "civic involvement". Firstly, it is a publishing medium, as postings and news text on the online forums can be read by any visitor. Secondly, it is a distribution medium as the information posted on the forums can be instantly spread to other online communities throughout the entire nation and the whole world. Thirdly, it is a participatory medium as the posted information and comments can elicit further responses, promote replies, and encourage various kinds of views from the public, thus putting civic participation on a large scale that is impossible by any other means. Fourthly, it is also an action-oriented medium as cyber-forums can be a platform for organizing offline campaigns and social movements (Chase & Mulvenon, 2004). In addition, cyber forums have more significant and unique functions in a society like China, as the availability of cyber forums has inevitably become a new force to yield an unprecedented impact on the social structure and political system.¹⁴

By the end of 2003, there were 2,536 Chinese language chat room websites and 12,592 online BBS columns (The Fourth Investigative Report on China's Outstanding Cultural Websites, 2003), which had become the favorite places for netizens to speak their minds and engage in discussing public affairs. The forums on China's popular website sina.com, for example, cover a variety of subjects, such as culture and arts,

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

current affairs, emotions, female topics, business, science and technology, games and exams, with a geographic classification such as Beijing, Shanghai and South China. Online individuals are usually involved in the cyber-forum-discussion by subjects, though many of them are often multi-subject participators. In the last few years, the government has been making great efforts to promote the development of internet, even though the leaders do see the political risks of the swift development of this new technology. As Zhao Qizheng, Director of the State Council's Information Office, said, "We (the Chinese government) missed a lot of the industrial revolution, but we do not want to miss the information revolution. We are determined not to be left behind this time" (Ming, 2004). Consequently, China's IT sector has been growing at a rate faster than any other industry and is three times as fast as the overall economic growth rate (Hachigian, 2001).¹⁵

Quite a few years ago, Beijing began its effort to keep abreast with the developments and requirement of the internet age. Sixty percent of government departments in China, by July 1999, have set up their websites to send out information about their functions, programs, regulations and activities.¹⁶ Leaders appear to be willing to tolerate a certain amount of frankness, which in the online public opinion that would be stamped out in the country's traditional media. The government seems to believe that providing the public with relative freedom to surf the web and to chat on the internet may give the netizens, and citizens as well, fewer incentives to challenge the Communist Party and the government.

For more than half a century, even in the reform period, foreign policy had always been a forbidden area for public discussion and all foreign policies were made at the top level of the Chinese Communist Party and government. Common people were completely excluded from any kind of participation in foreign policy discussions, let alone policy making process. This situation started to change in recent years, thanks to the internet. Many ordinary Chinese began to use the internet to express their views on various foreign policy issues, especially when major international events or crises involving China. A number of specialized cyber forums on foreign policy issues have been established, including BBSs, chat rooms, and blogs, and many more people have expressed their views in their responses to the related online news items. The public's cyber discussion has begun to exert direct or indirect, subtle or salient influences on China's foreign policy-making.¹⁷

For example, the *People's Daily*, the most important state-owned national newspaper and the political organ and mouthpiece of CCP, runs a very popular BBS, "Strong Nation Forum." This website offers a platform for the public to vent their emotions and to publish their voices on sensitive social and political issues, many of which would have been forbidden in the past because they would have been categorized as "taboos." The Strong Nation Forum has more than 280,000 registered users and more than 12,000 postings per day (Zhu, 2004). The main reason for this kind of online forum to emerge and exist is that, while China is moving toward a more open society, the Party and government have willingly or unwillingly come to want to know how the public react to the issues they are concerned with. As a result, in order to more easily collect the public's views online, over the past several years the Chinese governments at various levels have been working on the e-government plan, which refers to the use of advanced information technologies to improve communications and relations with the citizens and to make the government work more efficiently. Particularly, the central government has been vigorously promoting the e-government project. One goal of this project is to establish the online opinion collection system, from which the government can draw public views from the internet when making major decisions and issuing policies. Many government agencies have come to regard the internet as a useful tool that can help them make better decisions.

According to a survey in 10 large Chinese cities conducted in 2003, 63.95 percent of the people surveyed regularly go to online forums. Although "hobbies" is the most popular topic, "political affairs" ranks outstandingly the second, followed by "academic issues" as the third most popular topic (The Internet Timeline of China, 2003). Despite the fact that chat rooms and many other online forums are mainly used for discussing people's daily life, many of the discussions do contain bursts of frustration with the political system and other political or policy issues and contentious matters. For example, in regard to China's foreign policies and international relation issues, the U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999, the collision of a U.S. spy plane with a Chinese fighter plane in 2001, the assault of Chinese businesswoman Zhao Yan by a U.S. immigration officer in 2004, and the China-Japan row over the Diaoyu Islands all led to heated discussions and fierce criticisms in chat rooms and other types of cyber forums.

Dilemma of Openness:
Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

Although online journalists and common people practice self-censorship online, those who are willing to meet in virtual arenas and daring enough to air their discontent with social and sensitive foreign policy issues are definitely on the rise. In July 2003, anti-Japanese activists organized a web-based petition to deny Japan a Beijing-Shanghai high speed rail road construction contract. It is a \$12 billion contract for which both German and Japanese governments had been actively lobbying for years. Just in one week, the organizers gathered 90,000 signatures, which they then submitted to the Ministry of Railways in Beijing on July 29. Although it is hard to assess the direct impact, Chikage Ogi, Japan's minister of transport, was given a cool reception when she visited Beijing the following week as she was denied a meeting with Prime Minister Wen Jiabao or with any ministerial official from the Ministry of Railways. The rail contract decision was suddenly deferred.¹⁸

The sheer volume of harsh postings against Japan had once worried Kureshige Anami, the Japanese Ambassador to China, who has browsed Chinese web sites. At the end of 2003, he predicted that anti-Japanese news items and comments could lead to deterioration of Japanese-Chinese relations in the near future particularly when the Japanese WWII ammunitions cache was found in Heilongjiang province in August 2003. One person died and 43 others were injured during that incident, which added fuel to already strong anti-Japanese feelings. On September 18, a large party of Japanese businessmen on a visit to southern Chinese city of Zhuhai demanded that more than a hundred call girls be sent to their hotel rooms, and the day coincided with the day when Japanese army invaded Chinese northeastern provinces in the 1930s. Chinese netizens were furious and compared it as the Japanese military brothels set up in China and other parts of East Asia during WWII. Subsequently, calls for a nationalist petition were circulated on the internet with a more than one million signatures collected and sent to Kureshige's embassy in Beijing.¹⁹

The impact of the internet on the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is also apparent. The MFA was among the earliest government departments that went online. In its effort to achieve the image as well as the result of "public diplomacy," the MFA is opening itself to the public not only virtually, but also physically. On the afternoon of 23 December, 2003, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing conversed online with the general public, which marked the first time that the Foreign Minister of China communicated online directly with the general public. The number of participants in

this online event registered 27,000. The “fearlessness” of the participants in questioning and the candor of the Minister in answering were widely espoused and appreciated.²⁰

A quick visit to the Ministry’s official website (<http://www.mfa.gov.cn>) will reveal that the Ministry is not only virtually open to but also virtually interactive with the public. Results of online conversation between five female diplomats and the public are posted with a link on the first page of the official site. Furthermore, registered users are able to converse online with (former) ambassadors and directors of various departments of the Ministry, and the results will be posted at the official website. Historically, before the advent of the internet age, this type of openness and interaction with the public by governmental departments was hardly imaginable. The official site is designed also in such a way that readers of online articles can respond immediately by posting their own feedback to the articles. Registered users can also post their own independent articles for all to view. Statistics by the Ministry’s official website indicates that this site is heavily used by the public. Between the first day of 2004 and early June of the same year, there have been more than 146,668,000 visits to the Ministry’s official Chinese site. For the same period, visits to other sites affiliated with the Ministry have registered more than 243,746,000. Posted statistics rank different content areas and links to help the viewers better track “hot points” and popular issues.

Interviews with numerous directors of the Ministry’s departments revealed that these directors go online almost daily in order to know the general public’s sentiments and opinions on China’s foreign policy. Assistant Director Le Yucheng said that it was imperative to have a grip on public opinions and sentiments in face of major international events.²¹ The adoptive changes in the MFA in the internet age are a reflection of the thesis outlined above. Even though the Chinese government has constantly attempted to control the internet, the impact of the internet on foreign affairs is profound and the emerging pattern of interaction between the MFA and Chinese public is evidence that globalization and transnational forces are making their way into Chinese society in a way unimaginable only a decade ago. The result is the internet nationalism. It is seen as “more powerful” than earlier nationalism, as it can better convert popular opinion into political action.

In the spring of 2005, China’s official stance towards Japan’s UN bid was quietly put on the agenda of Zhongnanhai. Although many within the policy making inner circle did not want to see Japan become a permanent member of the UNSC, they

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

have to consider China's lucrative economic relations with Japan and other political and diplomatic interests. Until the mid April, they had chosen to take a backseat on the issue, letting other countries, such as South Korea, to take the lead in opposing Japan's UN bid. However, the societal pressure was rapidly accumulating during the month of March and April. An internet petition was initiated to oppose Japan's UN bid (dizhi riben zhengchang) broke out and had gathered as many as 44 million signatures from Chinese netizens."²² On April 13, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao publicly announced during his visit to India that Chinese government opposes Japan to bid for UNSC permanent membership.²³ The timing of the announcement coinciding with the time when the public protested clearly indicates the role of societal pressure.

The Role of Media

In examining societal force, no one can downplay the importance of media in shaping public opinion and influencing the social environment in which policy makers formulate their foreign policy. Conventional wisdom says that mass media in modern societies is powerful and omnipotent. Since media can sway public opinion on fashion, automobiles, pop music, movie stars, and political candidates, it can certainly influence public opinion on the image of a particular country and foreign policies. What role do Chinese media play in shaping public opinion?

We know that media is good in "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution."²⁴ Historically, the Chinese government has played a significant role in shaping public opinion about a particular country by sketching a general frame and let scholars and government-controlled media to fill in the details. The government would usually provide a basic guideline to be circulated among TV, newspapers, and the press, specifying what could be covered and where the borderlines were. The pattern is that the government influences the media and through the media to influence the public opinion. However, since most of the party-controlled newspapers and publishing houses have become profit-making operations, many began to create lively mass-appeal papers and sensational tabloids and have published a variety of books that have flourished on urban newsstands and in bookstores. Market competition among papers and magazines has become so intense that many headlines

are often determined by responses from sellers on the street, even though the censorship and licensing systems are still firmly in place.²⁵

As the content that the media can cover expands, Chinese media seems to have a growing impact on public opinion. A new pattern has gradually emerged that as the government's monopoly on information and opinions weakened. The media are playing an increasingly important role in covering international events, sometimes presenting different views from those of the government, to influence public opinion and further influence the government.²⁶ We found that the role of the government in shaping the image of the outside world among the younger generation, although still remains strong, has become a less determining factor than it was a decade ago. When we asked our respondents in a recent survey conducted among 161 college students to name the means by which they understood Japan, 18 percent of them named TV, 16 percent mentioned books, another 16 percent said movies, 12 percent referred to government statements, 11 percent said internet, 10 percent mentioned newspapers, and 8.5 percent said school education.

In explaining the cognitive change of Chinese image of Japan, many blame the Chinese Communist leaders for their efforts to demonize Japan as a ploy for their political interests. Some Japanese scholars even believe that Chinese government failed to let the public know the financial assistance Japanese government provided since the early 1980s. The group we surveyed is supposedly influenced most by the government's position, yet the positive change in their perception of Japan seems to indicate a trend in which the government's control of people's minds is becoming less effective.

When asked whether domestic media was objective in reporting Japan related affairs, among those surveyed, 54 percent thought it was not objective, 39 percent thought it was basically objective, and 7 percent said they had no way to judge.²⁷ A large percentage of the Chinese does not trust the press and media because they only have a one-sided story and sometimes no story at all.

The compensation case involving Toshiba notebook was a typical example to demonstrate how the Chinese media can stir up nationalism among the public. In 1999, Toshiba corporation reached an out of court settlement of US\$1.05 billion in a class-action lawsuit in the U.S. concerning the faulty floppy disk drives in 5.5 million laptop computers it sold in the U.S. market. As the Chinese media and consumers discovered

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

that the settlement didn't apply to the Chinese market (where 200,000 notebooks were sold), public discontent grew into an uproar.²⁸

The provocative words such as “discrimination,” “looking down upon”, hurting Chinese people's feeling” were frequently used in the Chinese media, and some even used war metaphor between Toshiba and Chinese consumers to remind people of Japan's past aggressions and atrocity in China. Although the case could be viewed an act of consumer right violation or a result of different market condition, the Chinese media played a dominant in making it a discrimination case against Chinese people. It was later intervened by the Chinese government to have the issue shifted into an act of consumer right violation of a commercial nature. But the early stages of the disputed case many people more dislike Japan. For a short while, slogans such as “boycott Japanese goods for a month and Japan will suffer for a whole year,” “Boycott Japanese goods will castrate Japan,” became popular.

Patriotism and public sentiments relating to Japan is, to a large extent, the result of the media coverage. According to one source, People's Daily, the mouthpiece of Chinese Communist Party had used the terms “collectivism, patriotism and Chinese nation,” respectively 14, 113 and 237 times in 1988, but it rose to 91, 517 and 637 times in 1990, the year that saw the rise of this round of popular nationalism in China.²⁹

One interesting phenomena in China nowadays is that internet helps changing the way traditional media in China operates. Since government censorship and regulatory practices effectively control the traditional media, the internet serves as an alternative means of agenda setting. More critical, sensitive, controversial news are first set in internet news forums. When a significant large critical mass of upset chat room posting makes it an issue for everybody to take seriously, it enters the traditional media. To a large extent, this is opposite to how the agenda-setting function works in the West, where journalists in the traditional media repeatedly question and engage in missions to seek the truth. Then it may become the object of lively discussion in web chat rooms.³⁰

The Role of Academics

Meanwhile, Chinese academics are playing, together with the media, the role of opinion-makers in China. More and more academics have been consulted by CCTV and local TV as well as radio talk shows and have written for local newspapers, about

international events, resulting in more informed and less biased reporting. They have begun to influence public view on international affairs.

Because of the complex and technical nature of the issues involving China's foreign policy, leaders in Beijing have increasingly relied on the advice offered by specialists in academic community. The impact of intellectuals and think tanks on Chinese foreign policy making under Jiang and Hu is increasing and active and multi-layered channels between the center and the periphery, between the decision makers and various think tanks have been created. The difference between Jiang-Hu era and Deng era is that intellectuals now have greater freedom in voicing their dissenting opinion on foreign policy issues.

This has given academia a larger voice in policy making than before, as academic activists would occasionally use their expertise to raise issues sometime not initiated by their government. For example, as Chinese history textbook does not mention Chinese comfort women, and Chinese diplomats did not raise the issue to their Japanese counterparts, no compensation was offered to these women and no official memorial to them was set up anywhere in China.³¹ However, after repeated efforts from the academia in raising the visibility of Chinese wartime victims including comfort women, the comfort women issue is finally included in the revised history textbook used by Shanghai high schools, and a permanent exhibit on Chinese comfort women has been established in Nanjing Massacre Museum.

David Shambaugh³² argues that over the past two decades, China's foreign policy think-tanks have come to play increasingly important roles in Chinese foreign policy making and intelligence analysis. He provides a detailed analysis on the think-tanks' structure and processes by offering historical perspectives on the evolution of this community, arguing that these think tanks often offer important indications of broader policy debates and competitions between institutions and their staff.³³ Indeed, after two decades of reform and opening up, an epistemic community of professions with recognized expertise in a particular domain and issue area has been created and is playing an increasingly important role in Chinese foreign policy making process.

Meanwhile, Chinese civil society is also under the construction. More enterprises and institutional units that were traditionally subordinated to the state gradually acted independently, and the pluralization of interest groups have enlivened the political environment. According to Susanne Odgen, there are more than 200,000 interest groups

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

and professional associations at the county, prefectural and provincial levels and some 1800 national level and interprovincial groups. She divides them into three types: those that assist the state policies by providing consultation and by regulating their membership to conform to state policies, those that represent their member's interests in a way that challenges state policies or state control, and those that do both.³⁴ In terms of Sino-Japanese relations, the largest NGO of the first group is China-Japan Friendship Association and the Chinese Association for International Understanding, and the largest one in the second group is Chinese association of defending Daoyu Island (zhongguo minjian baowei diaoyudao lianhehui.)

One may anticipate that as civil society continues to develop in China, there will be a further demand for policy input and increasing professionalism in both governmental agencies and think-tanks. It is likely that this will push intellectuals and scholars to play even greater role in the years to come.

There are still limitations in terms of policy inputs. It is particularly true when comparing China with Western countries or comparing China with other East Asian societies that have been deeply influenced by the West, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. One major difference is the degree to which official lines of foreign policy can be openly criticized or challenged. The true policy debates over key foreign policy decision are still not open to the public in the current Chinese society, despite the significant progress that has been made.

When dealing with the increasing influence of intellectuals and think-tanks on Chinese foreign policy, Beijing clearly has to calculate the advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, more policy input from intellectuals and think tanks will improve the quality of decision making, and it may also provide bargaining chips when acting in the international community. On the other hand, as an authoritarian society, the Communist Party has been careful to protect its monopoly of power when making major decisions, including foreign policy decisions. With this kind of cost-benefit analysis, there will be inevitable ups and downs in terms of Beijing's control over intellectual life. The degree of intellectual participation in foreign policy formation will correspond to the degree of party-state control over society.

Public Opinions

Because of the internet, a new force has recently emerged within China's foreign policy process: a semi-autonomous, though still limited public opinion. The spread of the internet, the rise of multiple media outlet in an emerging market economy, and the decreased ability of the Chinese government to control peoples' mind have opened China's door to the world. A better educated population has begun to look outward, and more forcefully express their opinions on international affairs.

The impact of the history problem and the widespread usage of internet directly cause the deterioration in the popular perception of Japan in China. Three surveys were conducted in 1988, 1992 and 1995 about Chinese image of Japan; 34% of Chinese surveyed view Japan as untrustworthy in 1988, and the rate rose to 39% in 1992 and 45% in 1995.³⁵ From 1986 to 1999, survey was conducted every year to investigate Chinese people's attitude towards Japan. From 1986 to 1994, the majority of Chinese respondents felt close to Japan. Yet from 1996 to 1998, those who dislike Japan overweight those who like Japan.³⁶ Public opinion poll in China in the late 1990s indicated a much-heightened public awareness of Japan's military aggression in China. In a nationwide survey conducted in 1996, 84% of the Chinese respondents would associate Japan with Nanjing Massacre, followed by "Japan's war aggression to China (81%). 96.6% of the Chinese respondents think of Japan's war against China when they see the Japanese national flag and 93.3% of Chinese surveyed view Japan's attitude toward the history of aggression as the biggest obstacles to developing Sino-Japanese relations.³⁷

Up to date, this situation has greatly not improved. In 2002, the Japanese Studies Institute of CASS conducted a survey among 3157 Chinese.³⁸ They found 43.3% of the Chinese surveyed did not like Japan in 2002, but those who did not like Japan rose to 53.6% in 2004 and 52.9% in 2006. The rate of those who felt close and fondness to Japan was 5.9% in 2002, 6.3% in 2004 and 7.5% in 2006.³⁹

The present author recently conducted a survey among a group of China's emerging foreign policy elites' on their perceptions of Japan and Sino-Japanese relations. Based on a survey conducted among a group of over 161 randomly selected Chinese undergraduate and MA students majoring in international affairs in Xiamen University and Renmin University of China, I found out that Chinese emerging elites' image of Japan is shaped by external events and the way those events are interpreted by the media and the academics. To a large extent, scholars and experts are involved in creating a discourse that shapes the image of a specific country such as the United

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

States and Japan, among the Chinese people. This group seems to have two distinctive views of Japan: Japan is an economic and technological power and Japan is a homogeneous culture. The former is notably positive while the later is quite negative. This has profound implications for decision makers when they formulate their Japan policy because it provides room for maneuvering in either direction.

Public opinion in China has become more and more important in two major ways: first, it is relevant to the extent that current Chinese leaders want to know what people think. Since the current generation of Chinese leadership lacks the charismatic appeal that its predecessors Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping enjoyed, they must listen to the public to show that they care about their interests. Lately, the government has even made efforts to commission various kinds of opinion polls and solicit the public thoughts on various issues.

Secondly, public opinion matters in that the elite within the policy circle mobilize public support so as to strengthen their policy positions especially when there is an internal struggle over policy preference. For example, there are disagreement regarding China's American policies; some feel pessimistic about the prospect of Sino-American relations and want to be prepared for the worst, while others believe that Sino-American confrontation can be avoided by building trust through cooperation and by interaction between the two countries in all areas. It is in this case that the public opinion can be extremely valuable. The change of Chinese position in Sino-American negotiation over China's entrance into WTO reflected the role of public opinion. It is reported that Chinese chief negotiator, vice-trade minister Long Yongtu said that his greatest pressure during the negotiation came not from his foreign counterparts but from domestic opinion that cursed him as a "traitor."⁴⁰ Similarly, for the Sino-Japanese relations, there are people within the bureaucratic apparatus that would like to maintain a good relationship with Tokyo while there are also those who want to stand up against Japan.

This growing independent and assertive public has important implications for Chinese foreign policy, particularly for China's Japan policy. In their study of Chinese public opinion and foreign policy, Fewsmith and Rosen suggest a three-dimensional interaction among public opinion, elite cohesion, and the state of Sino-American relations. They argue that a high degree of elite cohesion with a relaxed Sino-American relationship may sharply limit the impact of public opinion, whereas a high degree of tension in U.S.-China relations, or of popular mobilization, is more likely to render

public opinion as a significant role in limiting policy preferences when there is high degree of policy differences among the elite.⁴¹

In the case of China's Japan policy, public opinion has created an environment in which politicians could not ignore. Although the elite's opinions tend to rather different over how to view Japan's intentions toward China, public opinion tends to be more homogeneous, and it can be easily mobilized by either side. When the masses' opinion and attitudes concerning Japan are different from official position, those elite within the circle who happen to share public preferences would be in a better position to lobby for possible change and may influence the final policy outcome.

For example, there has been no official position concerning reparation from the society since 1972. After mounting demands from the society and the changing public opinion concerning this issue, finally at the NPC annual convention in 1995, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen officially declared that China's decision on forgoing official reparations did not apply to civil lawsuits by individuals from the Chinese society.

⁴²The public pressure was also apparent in the cleanup of chemical weapons in China. At the end of WWII, Japanese military in China disposed of vast amount of chemical weapons and agents by burial, dumping them in rivers or mixing them in with ordinary weapons. For decades, the Chinese government kept silence about the issue, even though an estimated 2000 Chinese people had been injured or sickened by the weapons since 1945.⁴³ Even though Japanese government pledged in 1999 to remove all left chemical weapons by 2007 and had engaged in a few operations, Chinese officials still did not raise the issue with Japan. However on August 4, 2003, Chinese construction workers unearthed Japanese chemical weapons in Qiqihaer, poisoning 44 people and killing one. The media coverage of the news was overwhelming. Over a ... which prompt the government to take actions.

It is true that during the tension in Sino-Japanese relations in the last decade, internal conflicts among the elite generated a wave of popular nationalism that culminated in several bestsellers denouncing Japan. The public outcry forced leaders, who sought a more cooperative approach, to "do something" in order to avoid their patriotism from being questioned. Again, the 2005 crisis in Sino-Japanese relations provided an area where the public opinion play a larger role than otherwise expected in influencing Chinese policy towards Tokyo.

Dilemma of Openness:
Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

Some history activists even take actions within the official channel, lobbying for legal actions from Chinese legislature. One NPC delegate from Hong Kong actively lobbied over 100 NPC representatives to support draft bills urging more official commemoration of key wartime anniversaries such as September 18, the date Japan invaded northeast China, December 13, the date of Nanjing Massacre. One Nanjing delegate even proposed a bill that would ask the government to see world cultural heritage status for the Nanjing Massacre Museum and would declare December 13, a national holiday. Although none of the bill got passed, media attention on these efforts continues to mount and the government definitely felt the pressure.⁴⁴

The Role of Government

As more and more Chinese fall in love with internet, China has become a networked society, which has made it difficult for the Chinese government to control. Although the Chinese Communist Party found the vast commercial potential from the internet for China's economic growth, it has also realized the danger and has tried successfully to tighten state control over the Chinese Web and its use. Being aware that an unregulated network may shift power from the state to citizens by providing an extensive forum for discussion and collaboration, Beijing has taken efforts to prevent this commercial gold mine from becoming political quicksand.

It is true that Chinese government is still capable of preventing street protests, intervening in the commercial compensation act like Toshiba case, and even stifling massive online protests efforts through blocking and even closing prominent websites and harassing their founders. When the Japanese emperor visited Beijing in 1992, university students launched a petition movement trying to deliver an open letter to the Japanese Embassy which demanded that the emperor apologize for war crime and offer reparations. Sympathy among mid-level bureaucrats was so strong that the government was forced to issue a stern warning for officials "not to raise, encourage others to raise, or support any attempt to claim indemnity against Japan as the Japanese emperor is to visit China."⁴⁵ Yet, the government faces a new challenge from below and has been dragged by the masses to take action toward Japan that it may otherwise have preferred not to.

For example, the Diaoyu Island is a few desolate rocks lying in the East China Sea between Taiwan and Okinawa and is claimed by both China and Japan. For years,

activists in Japan have pushed their government to claim sovereignty over the island. There was no societal pressure on this issue in China until recently and Beijing government hopes that it could shelve the issue for the future, not letting it to torpedo the bilateral relations. However, in March 2004, seven Chinese civilian activists landed on Diaoyu Island and were seized by Japanese authorities. The Chinese Foreign Ministry immediately demanded that Japan should not harm them and should release them right away. This was the first time since the founding of the PRC that Chinese civilians organized voluntarily out of the governmental control to initiate an action to defend the country's territorial sovereignty. It has, of course, complicated Beijing's Japan policy.

On April 25, 2005, Liberation Daily, the mouthpiece of Shanghai Municipal Party Committee, had even published an editorial statement denouncing the anti-Japanese protesters and accusing the protest as illegal and stated that the protest must be demolished immediately. "The demonstration is not patriotic activities at all," it said, "but illegal conduct; they are not activities participated by the citizens voluntarily but are backed up by certain conspiracy." This reminded us the editorial of People's Daily during the 1989 Tiananmen popular movement. In this anti-Japan demonstration, 42 people were arrested in Shanghai and the street protest was quickly suppressed.⁴⁶

What we now see in China is a society-wide phenomenon high-lighting the Japanese aggression in China and China's war resistance. Public media is saturated with stories about the war and Japanese atrocities, and many of them were not ordered from the government. The Japanese media criticize Chinese government as the Black Hand behind recent anti-Japanese movement. Western media is also quick in pointing an accusing finger at Beijing for fanning the flames of nationalism in an attempt to shore up its own legitimacy. On the contrary, Chinese government found its hand tie by the public opinions, worrying that appearing weak-kneed attitude vis-à-vis Japan may undermine the Party's legitimacy.

There is clear indication that government has been trying to tighten the control of media to promote a better image of Japan. On October 4, 2004. Mr. Zhao Qizheng, the Director of State Council's Information Office said in a press briefing that China, as a socialist country, would guide the mass media on reporting about Japan. "There will be no anti-Japan reporting by Major news organizations," he said. However, in the age of internet unverified or false information may pop up on the internet if Chinese major

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

media remain silent about Japan. Therefore, Beijing was also looking at administrative measures to regulate net-based bulletin boards which are seen as breeding ground for anti-Japan sentiment.⁴⁷

The recent round of anti-Japanese nationalist movement is autonomous activity by nature. Instead of manipulating the public, the Chinese government was playing the role of putting the brake on the public anti-Japanese outcry. As the country opens and matures, the government's political control over society weakens. To use high-handed manner to crack down this budding social movement, in particular those in the name of the Chinese nation, is tantamount to undercutting its own legitimacy. Therefore, Beijing has to tolerate it, watch it carefully and contain it when it is necessary.

Indeed, China is examining how the so-called IT-intelligent island of Singapore keeps civil society within boundaries acceptable to the ruling party. Yet, as former President Bill Clinton once optimistically proclaimed, it would be impossible to build a great firewall around China.⁴⁸ In order to gain political legitimacy, the ruling elites must also deliver on their promises that they are taking care of the interests of majority Chinese. Even if the control of the internet exists and tends to be strengthened, ordinary people should also be able to feel they are free, at least to some extent. Harsh censorship and repressions, in their eye, may not help in producing social stability which they treasure most at the moment.

The government has taken efforts in educating the public about Sino-Japanese relations and Beijing's broad strategic interests. During the spring of 2005, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Propaganda jointly organized a series of lecture tours by senior diplomats, scholars and officials, touring to Sichuan province, Zhejiang provinces, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. During this persuasive campaign, Mr Xu Cunxin, former Ambassador to Japan, had reportedly talked to 1400 students in Sichuan about the Sino-Japanese relations, urging them to love the country in a rational manner. Yang Zhenya, another former ambassador to Japan, had spoken to 3000 officials and students in Hangzhou for the same purpose.⁴⁹ Wu Jianmin, former Chinese Ambassador to France, was among the lecture tour, urging Beijing college students to be rational by explaining the comprehensive situation involving Japan.

The government also tries to use societal force as a third channel to improve Sino-Japanese relations. In early August 2006, a high-level NGO activity was convening a conference in Tokyo under the name of Tokyo-Beijing Forum. 400 people from

business, media, academia and elites attended the gathering, promoting better bilateral relations.

It seems that the deeper Chinese reform goes, the more rapid the growth of civil society in China. The last two decades of reform and openness have led to the emergence of a vibrant civil society in China. Professional organizations and citizen groups have increased like bamboo shoots after adequate spring rains. Chinese people today are enjoying more personal freedom than during any other period in PRC history. Civil society and the Internet energize each other in their co-evolutionary development, even as both are constrained by other forces. The internet facilitates civil society activities by offering new possibilities for citizen participation, and civil society facilitates the development of the internet by providing the necessary social basis—citizens and citizen groups—for communication and interaction. Of course, the civil society in China is still fragile and needs special care for it to grow.

On the one hand, the emergence of civil society has broadened the foundation for an open door policy. On the other hand, the rise of the civil society makes it more challenging for the government to monopolize Chinese foreign policy. Decision-makers in Beijing now must take the growing social factors into consideration when making policies toward Japan. There is growing demand in Chinese society for equal international status and meeting international standards on trade, human rights and many other issues. There will be strong popular reaction whenever the people feel that China is treated unfairly by other foreign powers.

Conclusion

In May 2005, when Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao publicly announced China's objection to Japan's bid for permanent member of UN Security Council in the mid of 44 million opposing signatures by Chinese people, China has entered into a new era in which societal force is playing a role in the foreign policy making. Recent round of anti-Japanese nationalism in China nourished in the internet, in spite of technical censorship and controlled media, has created a powerful societal pressure for which the decision makers in Beijing simply can not ignore. The implication of this bottom-up anti-Japanese movement for the future of China's Japan policy is obvious. The day for

Dilemma of Openness:

Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

Chinese policy makers to formulate Chinese foreign policy without serious consideration of domestic public opinion has gone.

Internal influence and external behavior in the study of China is still one of the frontiers where the field of international relations and comparative politics meet. While there can be no doubt that in explaining Chinese foreign policy behavior, there may be numerous factors worth exploring, this study argues that social force is becoming extremely important in explaining Chinese foreign policy output today. This force had been accommodative for decades, but is now pulling in different directions. Chinese foreign policy makers are increasingly constrained by societal pressure, despite the fact that the decision makers in China have a much wider degree of latitude for action than their Western counterparts. Although this paper has not treated the social force as the only variable in the world of constants, it has tried to reveal the effect of this unique and neglected variable, and its relationship with other variables in the case of China's Japan policy. This study is, therefore, in sharp contrast to previous tendencies to treat domestic variables through such broad concepts as factional politics, bureaucratic politics, and nationalistic views of top leaders.

This study argues that first; China's elite-dominated foreign policy structure is undergoing profound changes. The recent trends of decentralization, professionalism and institutionalization have increased the opportunities for societal force to influence the decision making process. Second, the ability of the central authority to formulate a consistent and coherent foreign policy, particularly the policy towards Japan, has been weakened by increased social pressures in the age of information technology. Third, globalization has produced a certain amount of transnational forces within Chinese society, and the degree of its influence depends on how the public is informed and manipulated by the media and academia in a relatively free market environment and web world, and the degree of the country's integration with the world. When the public has more access to information about the outside world and has platforms to express their views, the societal pressure influencing foreign policy behavior becomes more visible.

Domestic issues, especially regime survival and stability, remain as China's top national security priorities, but there is a need now to treat societal influence as a sensible variable in explaining Chinese foreign policy. It is the combination of the international environment (external source) of Chinese foreign policy and domestic societal forces in a unique state structure that has produced a certain policy outcome. This study suggests that individuals (alone and in a group) at the micro level and collectivities (states) at the

macro level shape each other's behavior in China's foreign affairs, and the academics, bureaucracy, media, and public opinions in China have all helped to create a domestic situation that top leaders cannot ignore when making their major foreign policy decisions.

There are two fundamentally different attitudes and perceptions regarding China's Japanese policy: those who favor stronger and improved Sino-Japanese relations and those who wish to stand up against Japan. Although Chinese policy towards Japan is primarily made by the elites based on their perception of Chinese national interests, no matter derived from systemic or domestic cultural sources, it is also influenced by particularistic societal interests embodied in these two fundamental outlooks and expressed by the public. Policy makers, whether motivated by national interests or their own elite interests, was forced to compromise with societal opponents, although sometimes they also seek to guide the public and the policy back toward their "strategic" vision in the long term. Therefore, the societal force often operates as a loose conglomeration of individual actors. Each perceives problems differently and acts independently, or less organized, but together they represent a force that may be utilized by opportunistic leaders within the ruling clique when needed... The nationalist tendencies of Chinese internet could serve to further aggravate an already sensitive bilateral relationship. Any external event may quickly transform the net-based public opinion into a political powder keg.

At the beginning of this century, there is a possibility that Sino-Japanese relations may grow out of control if not carefully managed. Sino-Japanese relations are crucial to the stability of East Asia, yet the bilateral relations are also very sensitive. It may take a long time for Chinese collective memory of Japanese militarism and invasion from 1937 to 1945 to heal. It is now up to Beijing and Tokyo to manage this difficult relationship of global significance. The fragility in Sino-Japanese relations may result from structural change in East Asian international relations, as Japan has to adjust its view of a rapidly rising China and China has to cope with economically powerful Japan seeking for equivalent status in world politics. Yet, the societal pressure has made Chinese decision makers hard to pursue a pragmatic Japan policy. Will Chinese leadership under Hu Jintao be able to harmonize much diversified and rapidly transforming China with the increasing online demands for openness and nationalistic pride of a growing urban middle-class? Without a fully independent judicial system and a less constrained and free media system,

Dilemma of Openness:
Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

how can Chinese leaders manage and guide public opinion that may help them in their pursuit of a pragmatic Japanese policy? This is a brand new challenge for Chinese foreign policy makers and an interesting subject that deserves serious academic attention.

Yufan Hao is Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities and Professor of Political Sciences at University of Macau. He obtained his MA and PhD from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in 1984 and 1989 respectively and was a McArthur Fellow at Harvard University Center for International Affairs 1988-1989. He was a visiting professor to Peking University, Tsinghua University, and Renmin University of China. His latest books include *Chinese Foreign Policy Making: Societal Forces in Chinese American Policy Making*, (Ashgate, London, co-edited, 2006); *Bush's Dilemma: Experts on the Possible Trend of American Foreign Policy* (Shishi, Beijing, co-edited, 2005); *Power of the Moment: American and the World after 9/11* (Xinhua, Beijing, co-authored, 2002), *White House China Decision* (Renmin Press, Beijing, 2002).

Notes:

¹ Zhao Quansheng, *Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy*, (Oxford University Press, 1996), p.8.

² Robert Ross, and Paul Godwin, "New Directions in Chinese Security Studies," in *American Studies of Contemporary China*, edited by David Shambaugh, M.E. Sharpe, 1993, pp. 138-160.

³ David M. Lampton, edited, *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1979-2000*, Stanford University Press, 2001.

⁴ Quoted in Daqing Yang, "Mirror for the Future or History Card? Understanding the "history Problem" in *Chinese-Japanese Relations in the 21st century*, edited by Marie Soderberg, Londone, GBR: Routledge, 2001.

⁵ Yong Deng, "Chinese Relations with Japan: Implications for Asia-Pacific Regionalism," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 3 (Autumn 1997, p. 376.

⁶ *Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping)*, vo. 3. (Beijing, Renmin chubanshe, 1993) p. 293.

⁷ Asahi Shimbun, June 7, 1989, quoted from Hidenori Ijiri, "Sino-Japanese Controversy since the 1972 Diplomatic Normalization," *China Quarterly*, no, 124, (December 1990), p, 656.

- ⁸ *Renmin Ribao (overseas edition)*, March 5, 1994, p. 3; *Renmin Ribao*, January 13, 1996, p. 1.
- ⁹ Smith, A.D. *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001)
- ¹⁰ Peter Hayes Gries, “China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics and Diplomacy” (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), and his “China’s “New Thinking” on Japan,” *China Quarterly*, p. 847.
- ¹¹ CNNIC (Report on Development of China’s Internet, January 2007).
- ¹² *The Statistical Survey Report on the Internet Development in China 2005*, by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, January 2005, cited from Hong Junhao’s “The Internet and China’s Foreign Policy Making”, *China’s Foreign Policy Making (Ashgate, 2005)*, pg 93 – 109. Also see CNNIC Report 2005.
- ¹³ <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guandian/1035/2284917.html>
- ¹⁴ Hong Junhao, “The Internet and China’s Foreign Policy Making: The Impact of Online Public Opinions as a New Societal Force” in Yufan Hao & Lin Su edited, *China’s Foreign Policy Making (Ashgate, 2005)*, pg 93 – 109.
- ¹⁵ Hong Junhao, “The Internet and China’s Foreign Policy Making: The Impact of Online Public Opinions as a New Societal Force” in Yufan Hao & Lin Su edited, *China’s Foreign Policy Making (Ashgate, 2005)*, pg 93 – 109.
- ¹⁶ “China: Sixty per cent of government departments set up websites,” *China Business Information Network*, 14 July, 1999.
- ¹⁷ Hong Junhao, “The Internet and China’s Foreign Policy Making: The Impact of Online Public Opinions as a New Societal Force” in Yufan Hao & Lin Su edited, *China’s Foreign Policy Making (Ashgate, 2005)*, pg 93 – 109.
- ¹⁸ Peter Hays Gries, “China’s New Thinking on Japan” *China Quarterly*, 2005, p. 844.
- ¹⁹ John Lagerkvist, “The Rise of Online Public Opinion in the People’s Republic of China,” *China: an International Journal*, #3, vol. 1, (March 2005) p. 125.
- ²⁰ “From mystery to transparency: China’s effort for public diplomacy [in Chinese],” (2004, April 5). Available: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-04/05/content_1401465.htm [2004, June 4].
- ²¹ “Government compound open to the public [in Chinese],” (2003, September 7). Available: <http://www.sina.com.cn> [2004, June 3].
- ²² Kent E. Calder, “China and Japan’s Simmering Rivalry,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1006, Vol. 85, Issues 2, pp. 129-139
- ²³ *The Straits Times (Singapore)*, April 13, 2005.
- ²⁴ R.M. Entman, “Framing US coverage of international news, *Journal of Communication*, 41 (4) 1991pp. 6-27, cited from Jian Wang “Politics of Goods: A Case Study of Consumer Nationalism and Media Discourse in Contemporary China,” *Asian Journal of Communication*, vo. 16, no. 2. June 2006, p. 192.
- ²⁵ According to the editor of *Global Times*, a mass-appeal paper created by the *People’s Daily*, their editors will give a few tentative headlines for the street vendors to choose which they like most, as some eye-catching headlines would prompt street vendors to double their retail copies.
- ²⁶ Yu Yanmin, “the Role of the Media: A Case Study of China’s Media Coverage of the U.S. War in Iraq,” in Yufan Hao and Lin Su edited, *China’s Foreign Policy Making: Societal Force and Chinese American Policy*, Ashgate, 2006.p. 84.
- ²⁷ This seems to be in line with the poll taken by Global Scan on December 2003 concerning public attitudes toward media and press in China, a plurality of 42.6 percent of the Chinese public do not trust press and media (21 percent no trust, 18.42 percent not

Dilemma of Openness:
Societal Pressure in China's Japan Policy Making

much trust while 2.66 percent no trust at all), while 31.5 percent trust Chinese press and media, 23 percent have some trust.

²⁸ Jian Wang "Politics of Goods: A Case Study of Consumer Nationalism and Media Discourse in Contemporary China," *Asian Journal of Communication*, vo. 16, no. 2. June 2006, p. 193.

²⁹ Li Haiyuan, "Fang Zhi Ji Duan Min Zu Zhu Yi Qing Xu 'Jie Chi' Zhongguo,"(Prevent China from being Hijacked by the extreme nationalism), <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guandian/1035/2284917.html>

³⁰ John Lagerkvist, "The Rise of Online Public Opinion in the People's Republic of China," *China: an International Journal*, #3, vol. 1, (March 2005) p.127.

³¹ James Reilly, *China's History Activism and Sino-Japanese relations*, p. 197

³² David Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process," *The China Quarterly*, 171 (September 2002): pp. 575-596.

³³ See Janet Liao, "Chinese Foreign Policy Think-Tanks and China's Policy toward Japan", *Chinese University Press*, forthcoming.

³⁴ Suzanne Ogden, *Inkling of Democracy in China*,(Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 265-275.

³⁵ Lu Yi, *Contemporary Japanese Economy*, 1998, Vol. 6, pp. 43-44

³⁶ Liu Zhiming, "Cong Yulun DiaoCha Kan Zhong Ri Hu Ren bianqian, <http://www.jccnet.cn>

³⁷ Daqing Yang, "Mirror for the Future or History Card? Understanding the 'history Problem' in Chinese-Japanese Relations in the 21st century," edited by Marie Soderberg, Londone, GBR: Routledge, 2001, p. 13.

³⁸ Jiang Lifeng, *Journal of Japan Studies*, p.2.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ma Licheng, "New Thinking", Yufan Hao,*China's Foreign Policy Making: Societal Force and Chinese American Policy*. pp. 1-15

⁴¹ Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen, "The Domestic Context of Chinese Foreign Policy: Does 'Public Opinion' Matter?" in Lampton edited, *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) pp. 174-175.

⁴² Xu Jingbo and Hu Lingyuan, *Leading Social Trends*, pp. 128-32.

⁴³ Peter O'Meara Evans, "Destruction of Abandoned Chemical Weapons in China," Bonn International Center for Convention, Paper 13, cited from James Reilly's *China's History Activism*.

⁴⁴ James Reilly, "China's History Activism and Sino-Japanese Relations,"

⁴⁵ Yinan He, *Overcoming Shadows*, p. 323.

⁴⁶ Shih-Ding Liu, "China's Popular nationalism on the internet. Report on the 2005 Anti-Japan network Struggle," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Volume 7, number 1, 2006, pp. 144-155.

⁴⁷ Charles Hutzler, "Politics & Economy: Beijing Closes Web Site Airing Nationalist Views" *Asian Wall Street Journal*, September 3, 2004, p. A2.

⁴⁸ John Lagerkvist, "The Rise of Online Public Opinion in the People's Republic of China," *China: an International Journal*, #3, vol. 1, (March 2005) p.121.

⁴⁹ *United Morning Post (Singapore)*, April 25, 2005.

Work Cited

- Barnett, A Doak. *The Making of Foreign Policy in China: Structure and Process*, Westview 1985.
- Chase, Michael S., Kelvin L. Pollpeter and James C. Mulvenon, *Shanghaied?: The Economic and Political Implications of the Flow of Information Technology and Investment Across the Taiwan Strait*, Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 2004.
- Christensen, Thomas. *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*, Princeton, 1996.
- Garver, John. "Chinese Foreign Policy in 1970: The Tilt towards the Soviet Union," *China Quarterly*, no.82, June 1980.
- Godwin, Paul. "Soldiers and Statesmen in Conflict," in *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy in the Post-Mao Era*, ed. Samuel Kim, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984.
- Gurtov, Melvin and Harry Harding, *The Purge of Lo Jui-Ch'ing: The Politics of Chinese Strategic Planning*, R-548-PR, Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1971.
- Hamrin, Carol Lee and Suisheng Zhao, edited, *Decision-making in Deng's China: Perspectives from Insiders*, M.E. Sharpe, 1995.
- Hao, Yufan and Guancang Huan, ed. *Chinese View of the World*, Random House, 1989.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. "Learning versus Adaptation: Explaining Change in Chinese arms Control Policy in the 1980s and 1990s," *China Quarterly*, no.35, January 1996, pp. 27-62.
- Lampton, David M., edited, *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform 1979-2000*, Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Lieberthal, Kenneth. *Sino-Soviet Conflict in the 1970s: Its Evolution and Implications for the Strategic Triangle*, R-2342-NA, Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1978.
- Lu Ning, *Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decision Making in China*, Westview 1997.
- Robinson, Thomas and David Shambaugh, edited, *Chinese Foreign Policy, Theory and Practice*, Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Ross, Robert and Andrew Nathan, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress*, Norton, 1997.
- Shambaugh, David Leigh. *China's America Watchers' Imagies of the United States, 1972-1986*, Dissertation Ph.d)The University Of Michigan,1988.
- Swain, Michael. *The Role of Chinese Military in Naitonal Security Policymaking*, rev. ed. RAND Center for Asia-Pacific Policy 1998.
- Whiting, Allen S. *Chinese Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in the 1970s*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, 36, Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1979.
- Whiting, Allen S. "Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy after Deng," *China Quarterly*, no. 142, June 1995, pp.295-316.
- Zagoria, Donald S. *Vietnam Tiangle: Moscow/Peking/Hanoi*, NewYork: Pegasus, 1967.
- Zhao, Quansheng. *Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy: The Micro-macro Linkage Approach*, Hong Kong ; New York : Oxford University Press, 1996.