
Football Game Rather Than Boxing Match: China–US Intensifying Rivalry Does not Amount to Cold War

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Shortly after US President Obama and Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard sealed the bilateral defense deal in November 2011 under which 2500 US marines will be stationed in Australia came Obama's announcement on January 5 2012 of the new strategic defense guidance entitled *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defence*. The document claims that China's rise might have impact on the US economy and security, and that countries such as China and Iran continue to pursue asymmetric means of countering US power projection capabilities.¹ Both the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense refuted these claims, arguing that not a shred of evidence exists to support such wild accusations.² Many media reports nevertheless argue that competition between the United States and China amounts to a new Cold War.³

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¹ 'Obama Visit: Australia Agrees US Marine Deployment Plan', November 16, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-asia-15739995>; Public Affairs Section of Embassy of the United States of America, 'Obama Announces New Defence Strategy', *Washington File*, January 6, 2012, p. 2.

² '2012 nian 1yue 9ri Waijiao bu fayan ren Liu Weimin juxing lixing jizhe hui' ('Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on 9 January, 2012'), <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/gxh/tyb/fyrbt/t893929.htm>; 'Guofang bu xinwen fayan ren Gen Yansheng jiu Mei fabiao fangwu zhanlue zhinan da jizhe wen' ('Department of Defence Press Secretary, Spokesperson for the Ministry of Defence Gen Yansheng Responds to Questions from the Press on America's New Strategic Defence Guidance'), January 9, 2012, http://news.mod.gov.cn/headlines/2012-01/09/content_4336021.htm.

³ 'Yingmei: Zhong Mei shifou hui zouxiang xin lengzhan?' ('British Media: Are China and the U.S. Headed Towards a New Cold War?'), *Lianhe zaobao (United Morning News)*, January 8, 2012, <http://www.zaobao.com/wencui/2012/01/bbc120108.shtml>.

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This article discusses characteristics and trends in Sino–US relations, and in this connection answers the specific question: How do the characteristics of Sino–US relations affect trends in their bilateral ties? How much longer can Sino–US relations continue to follow current trends? Where will strategic competition between China and the United States lead?

Different Views of Trends in Sino–US Relations

The conflict between China and the United States at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Talks gave rise to the mainstream view within US academic circles that Sino–US ties are worsening. Paul Pedrozo and Seth Cropsy argued that competition between China and the United States was a necessary outcome of China's naval modernization.⁴ Robert Kaplan, meanwhile, contended that China's growing military capacities and economic power made heightened tensions in Sino–US relations inevitable.⁵ Thomas Christensen holds that relations between the two countries will come under stress as China shifts towards a hard-line policy with respect to its sovereignty and territorial claims.⁶ While in 2010 US academics blamed China for the deterioration in Sino–US relations, Chinese scholars regarded the worsening of ties in 2011 as obviously a result of the Obama Administration's beefing-up of its pivot strategy in the Asia Pacific region. Scholars are nonetheless split on whether the pivot constitutes a strategy adjustment or a tactical adjustment. Those arguing the former predict long-term competition between China and the United States; those who see it as a tactical adjustment regard the deterioration in Sino–US ties as temporary, that is to say, Obama's pivot strategy in the Asia Pacific region is part of his 2012 electoral strategy that he will drop after the elections and revert to his 2009 policy towards China. We identify three distinct views regarding the future of Sino–US relations.

Pessimists argue that Sino–US relations are entering a new Cold War period. Henry C. K. Liu suggests that a new Cold War is brewing between China and the United States, but that it is more geopolitically framed than ideologically based, albeit couched in residual ideological polemic.⁷ William Jones goes as far as to expect conflict between China and the United States to culminate in a third world war.⁸ Yongnian Zheng also considers that East

⁴ Raul Pedrozo, 'Beijing's Coastal Real Estate', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2010; Seth Cropsy, 'Keeping the Pacific Pacific', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2010.

⁵ Robert Kaplan, 'The Geography of Chinese Power', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2010.

⁶ Thomas Christensen, 'The Advantage of an Assertive China', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2011. Christensen points out that China's negative diplomacy seems rooted in a strange mix of confidence on the international stage and insecurity at home.

⁷ Henry C. K. Liu, 'How the US Will Play China in the New Cold War', April 19, 2002, <http://www.atimes.com/china/DD19Ad01.html>.

⁸ William Jones, 'Obama's Asia Deployments: World War III Could Start from Here', *Executive Intelligence Review*, February 3, 2012, pp. 36–7.

Asia is headed towards a new Cold War dynamic that has prompted developments on the Korean Peninsula.⁹ Mearsheimer holds that it is not possible for China to rise peacefully. He argues that ‘if China continues its impressive economic growth over the next few decades, the United States and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war. Most of China’s neighbours, to include India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Russia, and Vietnam, will join with the United States to contain China’s power.’¹⁰ Lawrence S. Wittner even infers the possibility of nuclear war.¹¹

Those more optimistic about the future of Sino–US relations are primarily Chinese scholars, who generally believe that it is possible for China and the United States to avoid a new Cold War. Wu Jianmin argues that China will not as a matter of national policy enact the role of a hegemon, but follow the historical trend of peace, development and cooperation and absolutely reject war, competition and conflict. Under no circumstances, therefore, will China enter into a new Cold War with the United States.¹² Wang Jisi has long held that while China and the United States will not become allies, nor will a crisis in their ties arise of an extent amounting to Cold War.¹³ Wang argues that the structural contradictions that appeared between China and the United States in 2010 are attributable to the narrowing gap in their respective comparative capacities which, conversely, have driven them further apart in terms of mutual understanding. Major issues such as Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula and the exchange rate have had escalating negative impact on Sino–US ties and created higher levels of strategic suspicion rather than mutual strategic trust.¹⁴ This implies that as long as the United States and China bolster strategic trust they can prevent their bilateral relationship from slipping into a Cold War scenario.

⁹ Yongnian Zheng, ‘Chaoxian wenti chushi ZhongMei zhouxiang xin lengzhan’ (‘Will the Korean Peninsula Prompt a New Cold War between the U.S. and China?’), *Zhongguo xinwen zhouban (China News Weekly)*, December 30, 2011, <http://view.news.qq.com/a/20111230/000009.htm>.

¹⁰ John Mearsheimer, ‘The Rise of China Will Not Be Peaceful at All’, *The Australian*, November 18, 2005, <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/P0014.pdf>.

¹¹ Lawrence S. Wittner, ‘Is a Nuclear War with China Possible?’, December 28, 2011, <http://hnn.us/articles/nuclear-war-china-possible>.

¹² Wu Jianmin, ‘ZhongMei zhijian hui baofa yichang xin lengzhan ma?’ (‘Will a New Cold War Erupt between China and the U.S.?’), *Zhongguo xinwen wang (China News Net)*, December 16, 2011, <http://news.21cn.com/today/topic/2011/12/16/10159919.shtml>.

¹³ Zhao Lingmin, ‘Legua kandai ZhongMei guanxi: zhuanfang Beijing Daxue guoji guanxi xueyuan yuanzhang Wang Jisi’ (‘An Optimistic View of China-U.S. Relations: An Exclusive Interview with the Dean of the Department of International Relations at Peking University Wang Jisi’), *Nanfeng chuang*, October 15, 2008, <http://www.nfcmag.com/articles/1129>.

¹⁴ Wang Jisi, ‘ZhongMei zhongda zhanlue jiaoliang nanyi bimian’ (‘Major Strategic Conflict between China and the U.S. Inevitable’), *Guoji xianqu daobao (International Herald Tribune)*, August 9, 2010.

As distinct from these pessimists and optimists, we, together with a number of colleagues, argue that United States' pivot towards the Asia Pacific represents a strategy adjustment. Competition between China and the United States will consequently grow, but this does not meet the criteria for a Cold War.¹⁵ We characterize the United States and China as 'superficial friends', and argue that as such they have a highly volatile relationship, apparent in shifts between good and bad periods.¹⁶ As, at least for the meantime, China and the United States have no desire to abandon their strategy of superficial friendship, the conditions necessary for a Cold War are not present. For example, although Obama supports a new defense strategy whose focus is on containing China, he purposely avoided any mention of China at the time he announced this new policy at the Department of Defense.¹⁷ Moreover, four days after the announcement, Obama sent Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to China to seek Beijing's support of US sanctions against Iran.¹⁸ As China and the United States will not for the time being abandon their superficial friendship strategy, Sino-US relations will hence not teeter towards Cold War.

Alastair Iain Johnston argues that the classic security dilemma theory can be used to explain US-China relations, and that there is no need for a theory of superficial friendship.¹⁹ What he does not acknowledge is that the security dilemma theory can explain why relations between China and the United States have deteriorated, but not why they can subsequently improve, whereas the concept of superficial friendship explains both sides of this particular coin, thus effectively accounting for the volatility of Sino-US relations. Pessimists and optimists do not share our expectations regarding future trends in Sino-US relations because they do not fully perceive the nature of the superficial friendship between the two countries, in particular, its character-strategy duality. Deterioration in bilateral ties is attributable to the characteristics or nature of superficial friends; improvements in relations are attributable to the strategy employed by the countries to maintain their superficial friendship.

¹⁵ Zhang Meng, 'Caifang qinghua daxue guoji guanxi yanjiusuo suozhang Yan Xuetong: ZhongMei guanxi yidi yiyou?' ('An Interview with Tsinghua University Institute of International Relations Dean Yan Xuetong: Are China and the U.S. Both Friends and Enemies?'), *Diyi caijing ribao (First Financial Daily)*, December 30, 2011.

¹⁶ Yan Xuetong, 'The Instability of China-US Relations', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2010), pp. 263-92.

¹⁷ Public Affairs Section of Embassy of the United States of America, 'Obama Announces New Defense Strategy', *Washington File*, January 6, 2012, p. 2.

¹⁸ 'Meiguo caizhang youshui ZhongGuo qia yilang "youlu"' ('American Secretary of the Treasury Persuades China to Pinch Iran on Oil'), *Cankao xiaoxi (Reference News)*, January 11, 2012.

¹⁹ Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Stability and Instability in Sino-US Relations: A Response to Yan Xuetong's Superficial Friendship Theory', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2011), pp. 5-29.

Character–Strategy Duality of Superficial Friendship

Superficial friendship is epitomized by character–strategy duality. To understand this, we might consider the balance of power—a familiar concept among scholars of international relations and one also characterized by duality. A ‘balance’ is both a characteristic and a strategy. Balance refers to a situation under which there is power parity among great states or coalitions of states. Measures to achieve balance are apparent in the strategic behavior of states aimed at hedging against the power of other states.²⁰ Similarly, the concept of superficial friendship implies a state of bilateral relations as well as a strategy.

The state to which superficial friendship refers is one where neither one of two parties regards the other as a strategic partner, but where both claim a strategic partnership. In their cooperation, each party is solely concerned with the individual benefits to be obtained. Neither of the parties cares whether the other gains or loses as a result of the cooperation, and might even regard achieving benefits at the expense of the other party as reasonable. When one party cannot achieve its objectives in the course of cooperation, it will be disappointed and express discontent, blame the other party, or retaliate by not cooperating, causing a deterioration in relations. For example, China and the United States see one another as trade partners, yet in the face of a trade imbalance, the United States presses China to appreciate the Renminbi solely to enhance United States’ benefits with respect to employment, thus exacerbating China’s difficulties vis-à-vis exports.²¹

A superficial friendship strategy refers to two parties’ exaggerating the nature of their bilateral friendship and paying lip service to the improvement of relations in order to expand the expected value of future cooperation and so temporarily improve bilateral relations. The escalating frequency of summit meetings between China and the United States is a classic example of this strategy. Since January 2009, when Obama took office, to the November 2011 APEC meeting in Hawaii, Hu Jintao and Obama met on a total nine occasions in 22 months—on average once every 10 weeks. Such frequent gatherings make it impossible for any single meeting to produce a substantive outcome, but do delay occurrences of conflicts between the two countries. When I visited the United States in November of 2011, I told a number of State Department Officials that too many summits would make substantive cooperation unachievable, so rendering such meetings pointless.

²⁰ Jack S. Levy, ‘Balances and Balancing: Concepts, Propositions, and Research Design’, In John A. Vasquez and Colin Elman, eds, *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 2003), pp. 128–53.

²¹ Keith Bradsher, ‘China Signals a Gradual Appreciation of Currency’, *New York Times*, June 19, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/business/global/20yuan.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>.

At the time, not a single official agreed with me. They all argued that even though the meetings might not produce substantive cooperation agreements, they still played a positive role. This view is also broadly held among Chinese diplomats. The leaders in both China and the United States meet so frequently without expectation of achieving any substantive outcome hence implies the use of a superficial friendship strategy.

The characteristics of superficial friendship determine that nations will not engage in sincere cooperation, and that conflicts of interests between them will occasionally result in a deterioration of bilateral relations. By adopting a superficial friendship strategy, two nations can temporarily ease conflicts and bring about a short-term enhancement of bilateral relations. The respective effects of the state of superficial friendship and of the strategy of superficial friendship hence work in opposing directions, in the same way as the state of balance of power and the balance of power strategy work in opposition to one another. When comparing the effects of balance of power and of superficial friendship, therefore, it should be clear that both work according to a reverse dynamic. The state of balance of power plays the role of maintaining stability in bilateral relations, whereas the strategy pursuing balance generates tensions in bilateral relations, as one power seeks to gain advantage over a rival. On the other hand, the state of superficial friendship creates conflicts, and is hence the strategy that helps guide Sino–US relations back towards friendship. The state and strategy of superficial friendship has an internal unity.

Certain US scholars understand the theory of superficial friendship solely from the vantage point of its characteristics; they have not considered the explanatory power of the theory from the dualistic perspective of both character and strategy. As they perceive the character of superficial friendship solely as one that causes deterioration in Sino–US relations, and do not acknowledge that the superficial friendship strategy can enhance Sino–US ties, these scholars argue that the classic security dilemma theory explains the deterioration of the relationship, so precluding the need to explicate a superficial friendship theory. Below, we focus on points that Alastair Iain Johnston raises in his recently published critique of my theory of superficial friendship.

Johnston says: ‘Yan’s basic hypothesis appears to be that superficial friendship generates excessive disappointment due to excessive optimism. This, in turn, accounts for the ups and downs in the US–China relationship, particularly since the end of the Cold War.’²² Obviously, Johnston does not realize that the ups of Sino–US relations result from the strategy of superficial friendship adopted by these two countries, and that the downs are caused by the nature of superficial friendship between them.

²² Alastair Iain Johnston, ‘Stability and Instability in Sino–US Relations’, p. 6.

Although very cautious, Johnston's psychological critique still leaves room for discussion. Based on David E. Bell's research, he argues that '[A]fter series of disappointments actors will revise their expectations in more pessimistic directions. Thus, one should see more conflictual (though perhaps more stable) relations with interlocutors over time.'²³ David E. Bell's article researches the psychology of consumers when selecting products.²⁴ Whereas research on consumer psychology is about relations among economic interests, Sino–US relations cover the three areas of economics, politics and security. From 1990 to 2011, Sino–US economic relations were obviously much better than Sino–US political or security relations. Deterioration in Sino–US ties over that time were mainly the result of political or security issues, and economic interests helped to enhance relations between the two countries during this period. Moreover, the key assumption in research on consumer psychology—that actors seek to maximize benefits—differs from what happens in Sino–US relations, where interlocutors look at both absolute and relative benefits. For example, although the United States desperately needs to increase employment, the US government nevertheless continues to restrict Chinese investment in the United States to prevent China from controlling United States' strategic economic sectors. This is a classic example of a policy targeting relative benefits. Hu Jintao requested at the 2011 APEC summit in Hawaii that Obama ease political restrictions on Chinese investment, but there was no progress on the matter.²⁵ Using consumer psychology to analyze the diplomatic policy of states is thus problematic. Johnston admits: 'Of course, exuberance, disappointment, and shattered expectations are characteristics of the psychology of people and small groups, not nations or states.'²⁶

Johnston further argues: 'Mere dissatisfaction does not necessarily lead to proactive, conflictual, responses. Rather, disappointment often results in passivity, based on a feeling of helplessness, rather than a more aggressive or angry response.'²⁷ He also notes: '[P]eople are more likely to concede to another side if that other side expresses disappointment rather than no emotion at all.'²⁸ It would seem, though, that his point of view perfectly illustrates that a superficial friend can opt not to cooperate, or to protest in order to express dissatisfaction, the difference between non-cooperation and protest being that each causes different extents of deterioration in relations. When one party expresses dissatisfaction, this implies that bilateral ties

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁴ David E. Bell, 'Disappointment in Decision Making under Uncertainty', *Operations Research*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1985), pp. 4–5.

²⁵ 'Hu Jintao: Renmingbi shen zhi wufa jie jue meiguo wenti' ('Hu Jintao: Appreciation of the RMB Cannot Resolve U.S. Problem'), *Zhongguo xinwen wang (China News Net)*, November 13, 2011, <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2011/11-13/3456551.shtml>.

²⁶ Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Stability and Instability in Sino–US Relations', p. 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

have deteriorated. If his interlocutor makes a concession, the negative impacts are short-lived, and relations go through a short cycle of deterioration followed by rapprochement. The impacts of such a disturbance are thus relatively limited. If, on the other hand, the interlocutor does not make a concession, the deterioration of relations might be more permanent. By the time one party recognizes that a policy of confrontation will not result in concessions and adopts a strategy of superficial friendship to improve ties, the other party will respond with a superficial friendship strategy, so achieving enhancement of relations. The resultantly lengthy cycle of deterioration–improvement in relations, however, generally leads to a serious disruption of ties. This explains why levels of instability between superficial friends tend to vary so much over time.

For any given issue, the degree of influence superficial friendship has on the policies of the two parties will vary depending largely on how much impact the issue has on the respective parties' interests. The party that benefits more or loses least is always more proactive in adopting a superficial friendship strategy to improve relations than the party that benefits less or loses more. For example, when in 1999 the US Army bombed the PRC Embassy in Belgrade, China demanded a formal apology from the United States. Because the US government was unwilling to offer a formal apology, the bilateral relations between the two states seriously deteriorated. As China was the victim in this case, we can assess the sincerity of the US apology based on the extent to which it was formal. The United States, which caused the harm, was naturally not willing to make a formal apology, and did not regard as important whether or not the apology was formal. A bi-national public opinion survey asking: 'If the United States had adopted another means of handling the bombing of the Embassy, would China's reaction have been more moderate and kept Sino–US relations from suffering so much damage?' showed that 86% of US respondents believed China's reaction would not have been more moderate, while 57% of Chinese respondents believed that it would have.²⁹ Generally speaking, the party that is not injured or that benefits will proactively adopt a superficial friendship strategy to improve relations, while the injured party, or the one that feels disappointed, will respond with a superficial friendship strategy after its interlocutor has proactively made improvements. (Figure 1)

We can see from Figure 1 that superficial friends have two strategic options. They are: 'not cooperate' and 'superficial signal of friendship'. Should one party respond to the other by playing 'not cooperate', bilateral relations will begin to decline. In the event that only one party adopts the strategy of superficial friendship, this is not sufficient to improve relations; both parties must play such a strategy to improve ties. After relations between the two

²⁹ Gregory Moore, 'Not Very Material but Hardly Immaterial: China's Bombed Embassy and Sino-American Relations', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2010), pp. 23–41.

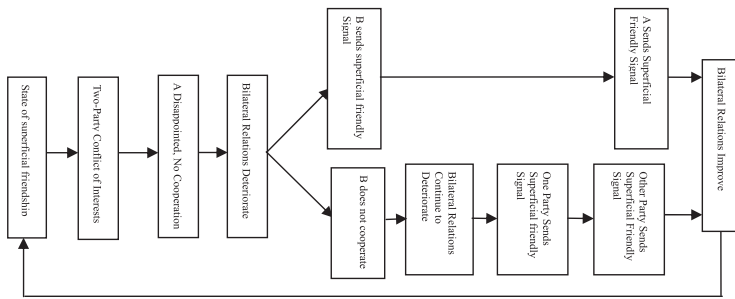


Fig. 1 Logic of Disturbances in Superficial Friendship Relations.

parties improve, and as the characteristics of superficial friendship determine that the parties will inevitably face future conflicts of interest, relations will deteriorate once again. As the parties adopt a superficial friendship strategy towards particular issues and not according to any particular time frame, the duration of each cycle of deterioration and improvement of ties will vary. Obama's 2010 strategy of pivoting back to the Asia Pacific Region will likely cause a prolonged deterioration in ties, but this does not preclude the possibility of the two parties resuming the strategy of superficial friendship in a relatively short period of time, such as that Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping paid a visit to the United States in February 2012.³⁰

Quantitative Analysis of the Character of Sino–US Relations

We characterize Sino–US relations as superficial friendship on the basis of our quantitative analysis of the behavior that this dyad exhibits. Lack of stability in bilateral ties and shifts between periods of positive and negative relations are fundamental features of superficial friendship. This level of instability is much higher than that exhibited by real enemies, superficial enemies, or real friends. The trend line below estimates the frequency and intensity of disturbances in Sino–US relations.³¹ Figure 2 is the basis for asserting that post Cold War Sino–US ties can be characterized by the concept of superficial friendship.

As Johnston does not share our understanding of superficial friendship, he questions whether or not the average score we obtain from the trend line of Sino–US relations from 1989 to present supports our theory of superficial friendship. Johnston argues: '[T]he fitted trend lines show that the average

³⁰ 'China Vice-President Xi Jinping in US Visit', *BBC News China*, February 15, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-17036070>.

³¹ See Yan Xuetong, 'The Instability of China–US Relations', p. 17, Figure 3.

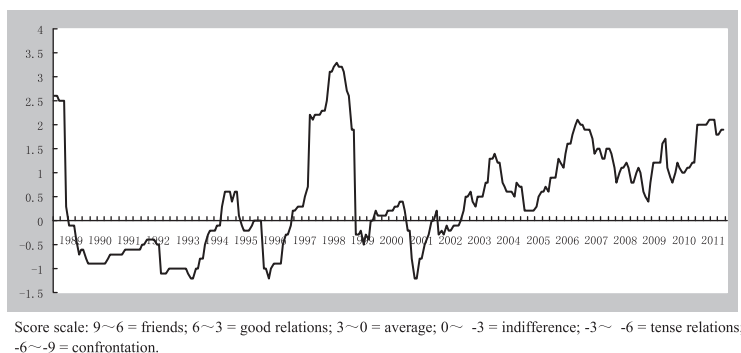


Fig. 2 Ranking of Sino-US Relations (1989–2011).

annual score increases over time and the annual average absolute deviation declines. The monthly disaggregated data shows similar trends. In other words, Sino-US relations improve and the volatility declines.³²

Johnston bases his conclusions on a rising trend in the average score and therefore refutes the nature of changing Sino-US relations as defined by the theory of superficial friendship. Johnston understands superficial friendship as bilateral relations that are continuously deteriorating rather than as highly volatile. Relations between sincere friends and enemies are stable, but in different ways. Regardless of whether or not bilateral relations are improving or deteriorating, as long as bilateral relations do not approximate those of either a sincere friend or enemy, the states can be characterized as either superficial friends or superficial enemies. As such, the average score can only show us the changing trends in Sino-US relations during a particular period, and does not give us a basis for assessing whether or not bilateral relations are characterized by sincere or superficial friendship or sincere or superficial enmity.

To observe instability of superficial relations between China and the United States since the end of the Cold War we must make comparisons with other historical periods. We cannot otherwise discern whether the overall trend in Post-Cold War relations is towards improvement or deterioration. From a statistical perspective, we cannot use differences within a particular set of statistics to assess differences between different sets. That is to say that superficial friends, real friends, superficial enemies, and real enemies can all demonstrate trends towards improvement or deterioration, but trends in the extent of change of characteristics of a relationship cannot tell us what type of relationship it is. In order to assess the character of the relationship we can only compare average scores across the four periods

³² Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Stability and Instability in Sino-US Relations', pp. 15–16.

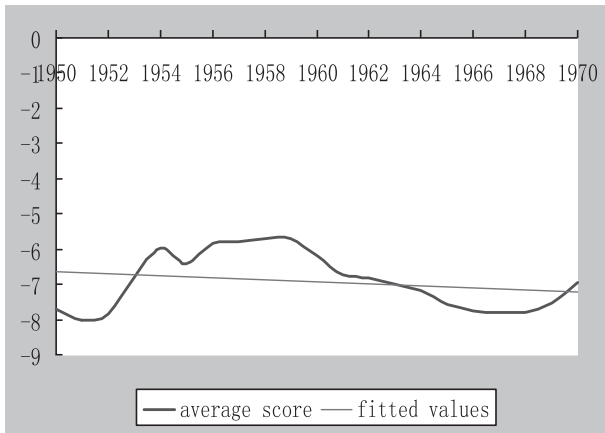


Fig. 3 Real Enemies.

1950–1970 (real enemies), 1971–1977 (superficial enemies), 1978–1988 (real friends), and 1989–2011 (superficial friends). See Figures 3–6.

In Figure 3–6, time is on the horizontal axis and the average value for Sino–US relations is on the vertical axis. As the unit in the database for the value of Sino–US relations is expressed in months, the average value expressed in Figure 1 is the sum of the 12 monthly values divided by 12.

For ease of comparison, the equation used to derive the curve for each period is listed below.³³ In the following equations, y is the average value for Sino–US relations, while x represents the year. The first year in the period is assigned the number 1, and the second year the number 2.

Formula for the curve representing 1950–1970: $y = -0.029x - 6.593$

Formula for the curve representing 1971–1977: $y = 0.593x - 6.362$

Formula for the curve representing 1978–1988: $y = 0.322x - 0.084$

Formula for the curve representing 1989–2011: $y = 0.087x - 0.578$

From Figure 3 we can see that from 1950 to 1970, the average value for Sino–US relations mainly fluctuated between -8 and -5 , with the fitted values trending slightly downward. This is the sole period out of the four exhibiting a downward trend in fitted values. Thus, during the period in which China and the United States were real enemies, the average value for their relationship declined. According to Figure 4, during the superficial enemy period from 1971 to 1977, the score for Sino–US relations hovered between -7 and -2 , with the fitted values during the period trending towards a rise. In Figure 5, which depicts the period of real friendship from 1978 to 1988, the value for Sino–US relations fluctuated between -2 and 3 , with a trend of increasing fitted values. Figure 6 represents the period of

³³ The author derived these equations using SPSS 16.0.

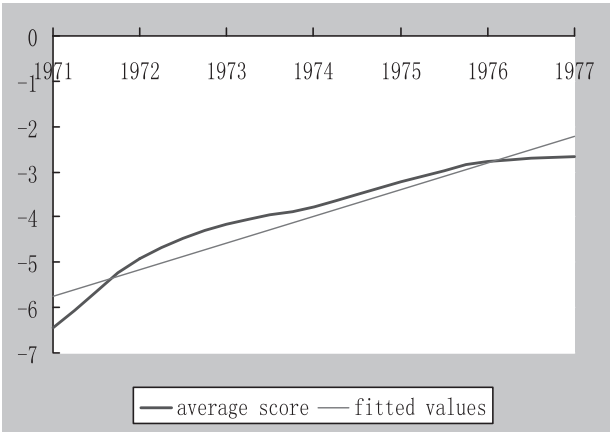


Fig. 4 Superficial Enemies.

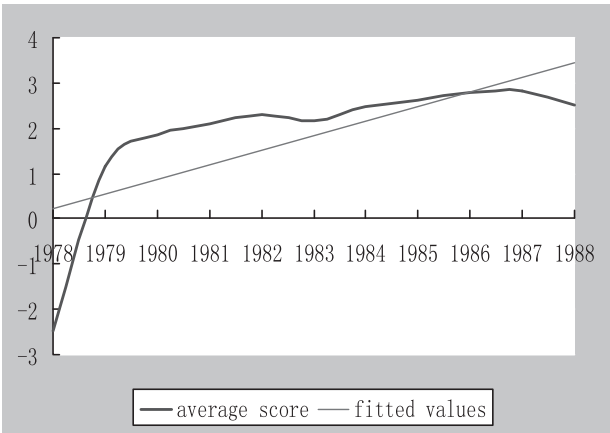


Fig. 5 Real Friends.

superficial friendship from 1989 to 2011, during which the value for Sino-US relations fluctuated between -1 and 3, with a trend towards a slight increase in the fitted values. Starting from 1971, the average value curve shows a rising trend, but with variation in pace of the rise. We observe that during the period of superficial enemies (1971-1977) the coefficient on the independent variable for each year is 0.593—higher than that for any other period. The coefficient on the independent variable for each year during the period of real friendship (1978-1988), is 0.322—second highest of the four periods. During the superficial friendship period (1989-2011), the coefficient on the independent variable is only 0.087, implying negligible, statistically

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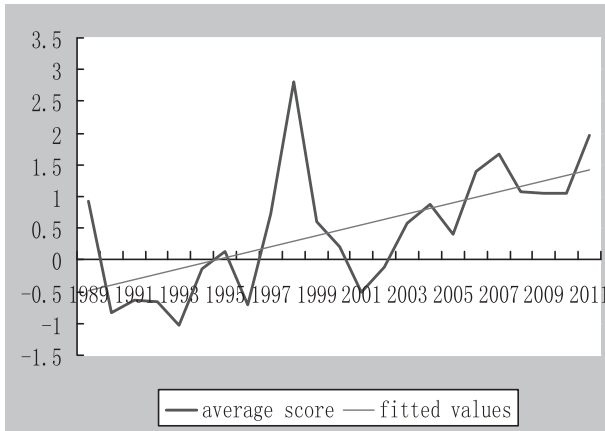


Fig. 6 Superficial Friends.

speaking insignificant improvements in Sino–US relations, slightly higher only than the real enemy period, on which the coefficient is -0.029 , a similarly insignificant difference.

Based on the above analysis, the value during the real enemy period (1950–1970) for Sino–US relations was the lowest. No trend towards improvement could be observed during this period. During the superficial enemy period (1971–1977), although the value for Sino–US relations was low, the change trended continuously towards improvement, and the pace of improvement was most rapid. During the period of real friends (1978–1988) and superficial friends (1989–2011), the extent of change in Sino–US relations was mainly between $(-2, 3)$, trending towards a gradual rise. The pace of improvement during the real friendship period, however, was second only to that of the superficial enemy period, and much higher than that for the superficial friend period. All of this points to obvious statistical support of the assessment that current Sino–US relations exhibit characteristics of superficial friendship.

Johnston also used regression analysis of the absolute deviation to demonstrate that Sino–US relations from 1998 to 2011 have trended towards improvement.³⁴ The regression coefficient on the equation for the standard deviation curve from 1989 to 2011, however, is -0.013 —not significantly different from zero, and thus cannot be used to demonstrate the trend of decreasing instability. Rather, it is an indication of the lack of change in deviation across time. The instability in Sino–US relations thus remained constant. (See Figure 7)

³⁴ Alastair Iain Johnston, ‘Stability and Instability in Sino–US Relations’, p. 17.

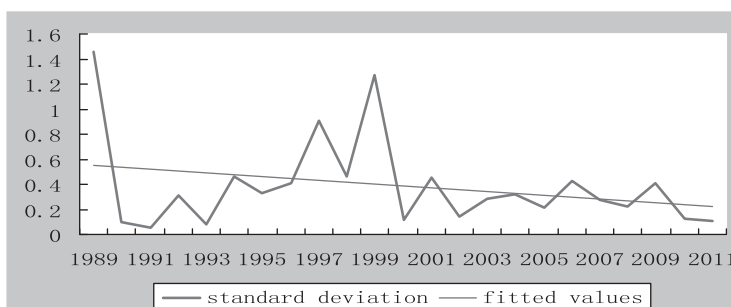


Fig. 7 Standard Deviation of Sino–US Relations Fitted Values (1989–2011).

In Figure 7, time is on the horizontal axis, and standard deviation in the fitted values of Sino–US relations is on the vertical axis. As the unit of data for the value of Sino–US relations is expressed in months, the standard variation in the above figure is computed as the annual average distance over 12 months. According to Figure 7, the equation for the standard deviation curve from 1989 to 2011 is expressed as $y = -0.015x + 0.569$ (where y is the standard deviation in Sino–US relations for a particular year, and x is the year, with the first year assigned the value of 1 and the second year assigned the value of 2).

This section uses analyses of average values to compare four periods in Sino–US relations and finds obvious differences across each period. During the period of superficial friendship (1989–2011), the average value of Sino–US relations displayed any extremely slow upward trend, with a coefficient of only 0.085—lower than that for real friends and superficial enemies. The standard deviation coefficient on the curve is -0.015 , indicating little change in volatility. This demonstrates that during the period of superficial friendship, Sino–US relations closely matched the characteristics of superficial friendship.

Roots of Sino–US Superficial Friendship

There are historical reasons as to why relations between China and the United States have developed into superficial friendship in the Post-Cold War period. After World War II, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union shifted within a short period of time from those of strategic allies to strategic competitors. The war having ended in September of 1945, US President Truman gave a speech in March of 1947 introducing the Truman Doctrine aimed at containing the Soviet Union. This position continued into the nuclear age. After the Cold War Sino–US relations did not, however, repeat the path of US–Soviet

relations. Nuclear weapons hence do not explain why a Cold War between China and the United States has not come about, and nor are they a key variable in explaining the superficial friendship between China and the United States. It is argued here that there are three main reasons why relations between China and the United States have evolved into a superficial friendship. They are: economic globalization, United States' long-term preoccupation with war in the Middle East, and China's strategy of a peaceful development.

Economic Globalization

Economic globalization created a strategic need for superficial friendship between China and the United States. While scholars disagree over exactly when economic globalization began, all agree that it sped up after the end of the Cold War. This is because the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance ended after the collapse of the Soviet Union, resulting in a global market. Meanwhile, the pace of information-flow increased among states, shrinking the size of the globe and leading to popularization of the expression 'global village'. Levels of interdependence have increased along with the growing proximity of international economic relations. That a strategy of complete confrontation can no longer effectively protect national interests is now obvious. It is for this reason that certain scholars argue that there has been a qualitative change in the nature of the security dilemma since end of the Cold War.³⁵ Under the conditions of globalization, interdependence between China and the United States has continued to grow, and for the sake of economic interests, neither is willing to adopt a strategy of all-out confrontation. Economic interdependence, however, will not diffuse the political and security conflicts between the two states. Different interests in different spheres have thus created a foundation for superficial friendship between the United States and China.

Involvement in the globalization process has rapidly expanded China's involvement in international organizations in ever-growing fields,³⁶ within many of which China accepts West-led international norms.³⁷ The country has thus shifted from 'opposing the international order' to 'reforming the

³⁵ Philip G. Cerny, 'The New Security Dilemma: Divisibility, Defection and Disorder in the Global Era', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2000), pp. 623–46.

³⁶ In the book *Zhongguo canyu shijie (China Joins the World)*, Michel Oksenberg offers an introduction and analysis of the eight international institutions and frameworks that China fully joined during the final 30 years of the 20th century (United Nations, Arms Control, Human Rights, Trade, Finance, Telecommunications, Energy and Environmental Protection). Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenburg, eds, *Zhongguo canyu shijie (China Joins the World)*, trans. Hua Hongxun, (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2001).

³⁷ Ann Kent, 'China's International Socialization: the Role of International Organizations', *Global Governance*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2002), p. 359.

international order' to 'maintaining the international order'.³⁸ Globalization has changed not only China's but also United States' behavioral principles. The growth of Sino-US economic interdependence has prompted the United States' adoption of a two-pronged policy of military and political containment and of economic engagement. Its aim is to reduce the risk of a head-on conflict that could considerably damage United States' interests. These contradictory strands of US policy towards China are an indicator of superficial friendship. Under the context of economic globalization, China has also developed economic interdependence with United States' allies. This has reduced incentives to participate in containment of China and also dampened United States' resolve to maintain a policy of complete containment. As a result, certain scholars argue that enhanced levels of interdependence among China and other nations have diminished the probability of China's opting to rise through forceful expansion.³⁹

To be maintained over the long-term, superficial friendship requires that both China and the United States maintain a superficial friendship strategy. China's unilateral maintenance of such a strategy is not sufficient as well as not sustainable. One reason why the United States has maintained a strategy of superficial friendship towards China over the long term is that of liberalist US academics' emphases on economic interdependence between China and the United States under the context of globalization. Some US scholars argue that it is impossible for the United States to contain China under conditions of globalization, and consequently that there is no other choice than to adopt a policy of engagement. For example, Assistant Secretary of Defense under Clinton Joseph S. Nye said that the United States does not need to adopt a policy of containment towards China, and nor is it possible to contain it. The only chance is for China to contain itself. For example, over the past two years, disputes in the South China Seas and over the China-India border have worsened China's relations with its neighbors, resulting in their bringing in US military might to hedge against China.

³⁸ Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Meiguo xuezhe guanyu Zhongguo yu guoji zuzhi guanxi yanjiu zongshu' ('An Overview of an American Scholar's Research on China and its Relationship with International Organizations'), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi (World Economics and Politics)*, No. 8 (2001), pp. 48-53.

³⁹ Kai He argues that because of the high level of economic interdependence among China and the states in the Asia Pacific region, as it rises China will prefer to respond to threats through a strategy of institutional balancing and not traditional military alliances. This will increase the probability of China rising peacefully. Kai He, *Institutional Balancing in the Asia Pacific: Economic Interdependence and China's Rise* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009). For more on the influence of economic interdependence and international institutions on China's peaceful rise see: Thomas G. Moore and Dixia Yang, 'Empowered and Restrained: Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Economic Interdependence', in David M. Lampton, ed. *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 191-229; Alastair I. Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Containment would bring catastrophe, but cooperation could achieve win–win.⁴⁰

United States' Wars in the Middle East

United States' long-term involvement in wars in the Middle East is the reason why the United States lacks the capacity to completely contain China. From 1990, the United States successively involved in the Persian Gulf War, the Somalia War, the Iraq War, the Afghanistan War, and the War in Libya. To concentrate its forces on Middle Eastern wars and to reduce strategic competition, United States needs to utilize a strategy of superficial friendship with China. The containment school in the United States has long criticized the US government for overlooking the need to check China's rise. For example, Mearsheimer warned the US government that catastrophic military conflict between US global hegemony and a rising China is inevitable.⁴¹ Unless the United States changes its policy objective of maintaining global hegemony, its comprehensive national power will inevitably be spread disparately around the globe, making it difficult to maintain resources in the Asia Pacific region sufficient to contain China.

An analysis of relative power can also explain why the United States maintains a policy of engagement towards China in the post Cold War period when maintaining a strategic focus outside of East Asia, and of containment when concentrating on East Asia. In 2001, the George W. Bush Administration adopted a containment policy towards China, and in its nuclear posture review report placed Taiwan on the list of potential contingencies under which it might use nuclear weapons.⁴² In August of the same year, the American Asia Pacific Command war plan for Taiwan was upgraded from a Conceptual Plan to an Operational Plan and became one of three complete US military plans.⁴³ After the 9-11 attacks, the United States set counterterrorism in the Middle East as its primary strategic objective, and resumed the superficial friendship engagement policy. Following the Financial Crisis of 2008, United States' relative capacity dropped sharply. By 2010 this trend had become more obvious, forcing the US government to consider accelerating the scaling-down pace of its operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. With the reduction of its Middle East Strategy, the future centre of the world—the Asia Pacific—became the

⁴⁰ Joseph S. Nye, 'Should China be Contained', July 4, 2011, <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/07/04/should-china-be-contained/>.

⁴¹ John J. Mearsheimer, 'China's Unpeaceful Rise', *Current History*, No. 690 (2006), pp. 160–2; John J. Mearsheimer, 'The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2010), pp. 381–96.

⁴² 'Nuclear Posture Review Report, Submitted to Congress on 31 December 2001', http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/united_states/NPR2001re.pdf.

⁴³ William M. Arkin, 'America's New China War Plan', *Early Warning (Washington Post)*, May 24, 2006.

new strategic objective. United States' China policy then started to develop towards containment. In July and August of 2010, the United States and South Korea held two rounds of military exercises targeted at the Cheonan incident, one of them in China's Yellow Sea.⁴⁴ In July of the same year, the United States and China engaged in a head-on diplomatic conflict at the ASEAN Forum in Vietnam over the South China Seas.⁴⁵ At the end of 2011, Obama announced that the number of troops stationed in Australia would increase to 2500.⁴⁶ In January of 2012, Obama announced a new Strategic Defence Guidance with the Asia Pacific as its centerpiece.⁴⁷

Keeping Low Profile

China's strategy of keeping low profile constitutes the political foundation of the superficial friendship between the United States and China. After 1989, in the face of sanctions and blockades from the West, Deng Xiaoping told Chinese policy makers: 'In short, my views about the international situation can be summed up in three sentences. First, we should observe the situation coolly. Second, we should hold our ground. Third, we should act calmly. Don't be impatient; it is no good to be impatient. We should be calm, calm and again calm, and quietly immerse ourselves in practical work to accomplish something – something for China.'⁴⁸ Deng Xiaoping's counterstrategy was later summed up as 'keeping a low profile'. It was in 1995 that then Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen first introduced this principle of Chinese policy to the world.⁴⁹ In 1998, President Jiang Zemin summarized the policy as 'observe calmly, cope with affairs calmly, never seek leadership, hide brightness and cherish obscurity, get some things done.'⁵⁰ The white paper on China's Peaceful Development issued in 2011 notes that, 'As a responsible member of the international community, China abides by international law and the generally recognized

⁴⁴ 'Mei Han jinriqi zai Ribenhai yu huanghai jinxing xinyilun junyan' ('U.S.-ROK Launch a New Round of Military Exercises in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea'), August 16, 2010, *Zhongguo xinwen wang (China News Net)*, <http://war.163.com/10/0816/04/6E6A2SJ2000146BD.html>.

⁴⁵ 'Yang Jiechi bochi Xilali nanhai wenti yanlun' ('Yang Jiechi Refutes Hillary Clinton's Speech on the Issue of the South China Seas'), July 26, 2010, *Xinwen chenbao (Morning News)*, <http://news.163.com/10/0726/06/6CGGLBIM00014AED.html>.

⁴⁶ 'Obama Visit: Australia Agrees US Marine Deployment Plan', November 16, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-asia-15739995>.

⁴⁷ Public Affairs Section of Embassy of the United States of America, 'Obama Announces New Defence Strategy', *Washington File*, January 6, 2012, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Volume III* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1994), p. 311.

⁴⁹ "Taoguang Yanghui" is often translated as 'hiding capacities and biding time', See Elizabeth Economy, 'The Game Changer: Coping with China's Foreign Policy Evolution', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2010, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Jiang Zemin, *Jiang Zemin wenxuan di'er juan (Selected Works of Jiang Zemin, Volume II)* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2003), p. 202.

principles governing international relations, and eagerly fulfills its international responsibility. China has actively participated in reforming international systems, formulating international rules and addressing global issues. It supports the development of other developing countries, and works to safeguard world peace and stability.⁵¹

The rapid development of computer technology has provided a technological foundation for China's strategy of keeping a low profile. Widespread application of computer technology has accelerated the pace of progress in the sciences, which means that China and the United States need no longer use military force to obtain natural resources. During the Cold War, nuclear weapons prevented the United States and the Soviet Union from engaging in a direct war, but could not prevent them from fighting proxy wars. The main form of competition between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War period was that of proxy wars, which related to the two states' efforts to obtain natural resources. In the 1990s, information technology became primary driver of the global economy. With the rapid increase in the development pace of science and technology, hi-tech products now earn sizeable profits. Exporting hi-tech products has hence become a viable security strategy through which to obtain the natural resources needed to fuel economic development. This has made proxy wars an outdated military strategy, for which reason the United States and China need no longer engage in such wars. As early as 1988, Deng Xiaoping deemed that Science and technology was the primary productive force.⁵² Acknowledging the gap between China and the United States, the Chinese leaders determined a strategy of economic development whose centerpiece was improvement of science and technology. The Third Plenary Session of the 11th Party Congress on December 18 1978, proposed that the main focus of Party work beginning in 1979 should shift to the modernization of socialism. This was the beginning of China's strategy to 'prioritize economic development'.⁵³ The widespread use of computer technology creates a material basis on which the United States and China can maintain a superficial friendship.

⁵¹ Press Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *Zhongguo de heping fazhan (China's Peaceful Development)*(Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2011), http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2011/201109/t1000031_3.htm.

⁵² Deng Xiaoping pointed out, Marx was quite right to say that science and technology are part of the productive forces, but now it seems his statement was incomplete. The complete statement should be that science and technology constitute a primary productive force. *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Volume III*, p. 270.

⁵³ 'Zhongguo Gongchandang di Shiyijie Zhongyang weiyuanhui disanci quanti huiyi gongbao' ('Official Report of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee Meeting of the Chinese Communist Party'), http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2005-02/05/content_2550304.htm.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis of Sino–US relations, our response to the questions raised at the outset of this article is as follows.

1. As the comprehensive power of China and the United States continues towards parity, the character of Sino–US relations as that of superficial friendship determines that conflicts of interests between the two states will continue to be intensified, and that there will be an increasing trend wherein the two compete more than they cooperate. Obama's strategy of pivoting towards the Asia Pacific Region is a product of relative decline in US power and of the increased pace of China's rise. It is only natural for structural conflict between China and the United States to deepen as the relative gap in their national power narrows. As conflicts of interests between the two states grow at a rate faster than that of shared interests, regardless of the outcome of the US Presidency elections in 2012—that is of whether Obama continues to be President or if a Republican enters office—hedge will by necessity be the cornerstone of the US policy toward China. As such, the superficial friendship between the United States and China will continue to tilt towards competition outweighing cooperation, or the development of an adversarial relationship that exceeds one of friendship.

Furthermore, as its comprehensive national power decreases, United States will as a matter of necessity narrow its strategy, and apply its strategic resources to the globe's most vital strategic areas. China's rise has gradually made the Asia Pacific the center of the world, and by narrowing the scope of its strategy, United States can enhance its domination in the Western Pacific. In 2011, when announcing the US naval strategy for the next 10–15 years, US Chief of Naval Operations Jonathan Greenert stated that in the future the United States would place more than one-third of its warships in the Western Pacific.⁵⁴ Such a deployment will undoubtedly increase strategic conflict between the United States and China.

2. It follows from the duality of superficial friendship that Cold War between China and the United States will not ensue before the United States and China abandon their strategy of superficial friendship. As a diplomatic strategy, superficial friendship functions to enhance or moderate bilateral relations. When bilateral relations begin to deteriorate there are two possible outcomes: (i) the party which causes ties to deteriorate will proactively adopt a superficial friendship strategy to improve relations; (ii) the two parties will remain in a deadlock for a period of time before one opts for a superficial friendship strategy to enhance relations (see Figure 1). Since 2010, structural contradictions between China and the

⁵⁴ 'Meiguo haijun buzhen yatai yingdui Zhongguo' ('The U.S. Navy Lines-up Forces in the Asia Pacific Targeted at China'), *Cankao xiaoxi* (Reference Information), January 12, 2012.

United States have deepened, but this does not imply that superficial friendship between them will come to an end in 2012. During the late period of 2011, Sino–US relations can be characterized by the second of these outcomes—that is that neither is willing to adopt a strategy of superficial friendship, which has resulted in a deadlock in bilateral relations. Such a situation will not necessarily escalate into Cold War as after a period of deadlock there remains the possibility that one party will proactively adopt a strategy of superficial friendship to improve relations.

At present, neither the United States nor China has resolved to abandon the superficial friendship strategy. While the Obama administration has determined to withdraw from the Middle East, it will take some time fully to carry out this plan. Even if everything goes according to plan, it will take until 2014 before the United States can completely withdraw from Afghanistan. At the same time, Iran’s nuclear program makes it difficult for the United States to redeploy all of its military forces to the West Pacific. On January 1 2012, a second US aircraft carrier arrived in the Arabian Sea, and it is said that a third is presently being deployed there.⁵⁵ United States still needs China’s support on Afghanistan, Iran, and the Middle East. This is why Obama did not mention China in his announcement of the new Strategic Defence Guidance, and why he sent Geithner to China a few days later to suggest that China participate in the oil embargo against Iran.⁵⁶ Similarly, China maintains its non-alliance principle, and has not assembled an anti-US alliance in response to Obama’s pivot towards the Asia Pacific. As long as China and the United States do not abandon the superficial friendship strategy, China–US relations will continue to bounce back and forth between good and bad periods, but will not deteriorate into Cold War. Specifically, we argue that there will be no substantial change in Sino–US relations in 2012, but anticipate that the downswings in the superficial friendship will last longer, and that tensions will escalate to greater levels.

3. How much longer the United States and China can maintain a superficial friendship depends on two factors: (i) the speed of reduction in the national power gap between the United States and China; and (ii) how much longer China will maintain its non-alliance principle. When comparing the size of their respective economies, China’s gross domestic product may surpass that of the United States within 10 years, but China’s military power will take more than 15 years to catch up with that of the United States. If China changes its non-alliance principle, it might be able to narrow the gap between itself and the United States through the friendships it develops, but

⁵⁵ ‘Yilangren gaohan “yiya huanya”’ (‘Iran Cries Out “An Eye for an Eye”’), *Huanqiu shibao* (*Global Times*), January 13, 2012.

⁵⁶ ‘Mei zhicai Yilang jianyi weihuo Zhongguo daying’ (‘China Has yet to Join U.S. Proposal for Sanctions against Iran’), *Cankao xiaoxi* (*Reference Information*), January 12, 2012.

if this principle does not change, this will be difficult to achieve. In the coming 10 years it is likely that the gap in hard power between China and the United States will continue to narrow, and hence also likely that the US strategy for maintaining its leadership will be to prioritize maintaining its advantage in comprehensive power through politically strengthening and broadening its global military alliance. If China continues the non-alliance principle, China's own growth in power will not be enough to check a US-led alliance. By maintaining this principle, and not providing security protection for other states, it will be difficult for China to expand its international political support. The present situation in the South China Seas demonstrates this point. The future focal point of competition between China and the United States will hence be that of who has the better quality allies. Once China and United States both have established significant networks of allies, superficial friendship between them will be difficult to maintain.

It has been argued that no state is willing to form an alliance with China, and that even with an alliance, China cannot tilt the regional force ratio in its favor. Furthermore, that should both the United States and China create alliances in East Asia, they will enter into a Cold War situation.⁵⁷ The authors argue that there is no support in favor of such arguments and that their logic imbues serious flaws. Outside of China, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization comprises five other member states: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. All maintain multi-lateral joint military exercises with China. In addition, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and North Korea all meet necessary conditions to form an alliance with China. If China forms an alliance with these 12 countries, this will inevitably have an impact on the regional balance of power. Finally, logically speaking, if China abandons the non-alliance principle but still does not change anything, then how can the formation of US and Chinese alliances in East Asia result in Cold War?

4. After 2015, the China and the United States will enter into a period of a new form of strategic competition, but not Cold War. Cold War is a stable form of open strategic confrontation, and China and the United States maintain an unstable form of unspoken strategic competition. Cold War saw the United States and the Soviet Union publicly treat one another as strategic competitors, openly condemn one another and struggle for global hegemony through proxy wars. Such strategic competition is particularly stable, and does not entail any major shifts in bilateral relations. Strategic competition between China and the United States does not involve acknowledgement as enemies, nor do the states condemn one another or attempt to engage in proxy wars. Instead, strategic competition between them is

⁵⁷ Zhu Feng, 'Zhong Mei hui jinru diyuan zhengzhi duikang ma?' ('Will China and the U.S. Start Geo-Political Confrontation?'), *Huanqiu shibao* (*Global Times*), January 13, 2012.

apparent in other areas. As there is no linkage between competition and cooperation in different areas, when competition in one area increases, cooperation in another area might well develop. This results in peaks and troughs in bilateral relations, which are very unstable.

China and the United States are moving towards all-out competition, and in this respect their relationship is similar to US–Soviet relations. The form and scope of competition, however, is quite different. Competition between the United States and the Soviet Union was primarily in the military field, while that between the United States and China includes economics, science and technology, politics, military and other fields. US–Soviet competition involved using military means to maintain regimes in other states of a certain ideological orientation. Future strategic competition between China and the United States will involve expanding respective strategic influence through economic assistance, competition in science and technology, military protection, and competition for moral high ground. This strategic competition will be won by winning support and emulation from the majority of the world's states through the utilization of comprehensive national power. Under the context of globalization, Sino–US strategic competition might be likened to a team game, with winning allies embodying the necessary strategy for ultimate victory. As the classic *Guanzi* text says, 'He who wins the support of majority states under the heavens is a King; he who wins support of only half is a hegemon.'⁵⁸

If we compare competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to a boxing match, we might compare that between China and the United States to a game of football. The former was characterized predominantly by violence, and whereas the latter will involve occasional conflicts, violence is not the primary means. The victor of Sino–US strategic competition will be the state that can increase its domestic power while at the same time maintaining an appropriate foreign policy strategy. Conversely, a major mistake in either of these areas will result in loss and a fate similar to that experienced by the Soviet Union or Japan.

⁵⁸ Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, *Zhongguo xianqian guojiajian zhengzhi sixiang xuandu (Selected Readings of Pre-Qin Philosophy on Inter-State Politics)*(Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2008), p. 2.