

Thanking “Dear PRC Leaders”:  
How Media Control Shapes Chinese Perception of the U.S.-Japan Alliance

**Abstract:** The role of domestic perceptions, as conveyed to the public by the mass media in a state, in shaping international relations is understudied in general and especially in China. Regarding the purpose of the longstanding alliance between the United States and Japan, there has been and continues to be a nearly fundamental perception gap between the U.S.-Japan side and that of possibly its most salient reason to exist, the People’s Republic of China. Given differing levels of information access between the population and ruling party of the PRC, this perception gap exists at different levels of society and cannot be attributed solely to the trilateral “security dilemma”. This paper seeks to show, with empirical evidence from Chinese newspapers and internet “bulletin boards”, that the Chinese Communist Party’s well-known media controls are actually having a positive effect for regional stability in preventing the perception from forming that the alliance is a threat, and denying the country’s actively xenophobic nationalists from making inroads in public discourse on this and other sensitive international matters. This arrangement is tenuous and awkward for all sides and cannot be permanent, but it must be systematically analyzed so that realistic plans for the future of the alliance may be enacted.

The U.S.-Japan Alliance is said to be the “keystone” to Asia’s stability through 2020, yet the authors of this statement, Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye, acknowledge that its truth lies as much in the decisions of these great, enduring allies as much as the waking giant on the Asian Mainland. The importance of this last point is amplified by the fact that our perception of China has not changed as fast as the country itself has, except to label it as a potential and rising threat. While the 2007 Armitage/Nye report was comprehensive enough to be appreciated even by members of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA)<sup>1</sup>, a 2008 update by the Congressional Research Service mentions PRC concerns about an even more “robust” alliance only in passing. Especially given frequent mention of using the alliance<sup>2</sup> to “contain” China, while strengthening ties with others in the region—again including China only as an afterthought—the West exhibits a troubling disregard for what the government of the PRC has done, continues to do, but could easily reverse in terms of regional security and stability.

The PRC of today is aptly described as a “fragile superpower” by Susan Shirk, torn by internal contradictions and held in tenuous stability by restrictions which do occasionally echo a totalitarian past. According to Shirk and others<sup>3</sup>, however, we must no longer view the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as an unaccountable and ideologically constrained dinosaur of a bygone Cold War Era, nor even should our primary concern be its alleged hegemonic ambitions—rather, the stabilizing capacity of the U.S.-Japan alliance must be used to avoid projecting an active threat to the PRC, lest the vast and less latent (more active) by the year Chinese nationalist forces rise up on a scale that the CCP

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<sup>1</sup> See Xiangqun Ren’s article.

<sup>2</sup> The Bush Administration calls the alliance the “fulcrum” of American regional presence. See Chanlett-Avery, pg. 1

<sup>3</sup> Among other IR scholars with an appreciation for the domestic situation in China, apparently few are not Chinese.

could no longer restrain. In this framework, the alliance has an ally it does not appreciate and may never accept: The Communist Party.

This essay seeks to show how the Chinese views and media portrayals of the U.S.-Japan alliance have shifted over time, along with the growth of first state, then popular nationalism, and what the likely consequences would be if these nationalists perceived the alliance as a threat to the Motherland. Some in the West still mistakenly believe that the CCP is behind the recent nationalist displays in China--from anti-U.S., anti-Japan, to anti-West protests, gaining legitimacy from a role in inciting demonstrations to show Chinese power, as a “defender of the nation” in addition to its (economic) “performance legitimacy” base. While the CCP certainly intends to channel its nationalist wave into advancing its own interests, the stability-obsessed Party appears to have crossed into the role of manager and even suppressor, rather than instigator. While the roots of nationalist fervor date to a patriotic education curriculum implemented since the Deng Xiaoping era, and thus directly attributable to the CCP as a self-created “monster”, recent accounts are correct to report that the party is genuinely concerned that such belligerence, directed currently at any perceived threat—or even minor disrespect—to China by foreigners, might one day be directed against the CCP itself. What might cause such an apparently “inward” turn on the “dear leaders” of the CCP? While we in the West might actually be happy if democratization were such a force, it appears more likely that being “too soft” on foreign enemies—or repressing “expressions of patriotism”—might cause “the people” to turn against their guardians in the National People’s Congress.

After a brief consideration of competing IR theories, this paper will undertake an empirical assessment of how the Chinese Communist Party’s media restrictions are actually playing a positive role in promoting world peace in a system which many realists see as veering disconcertingly away from unipolar stability, due to China’s meteoric rise, in the not-too-distant future. History and motivations of key actors, especially the U.S., Japan, the CCP and the influential nationalist contingency of the PRC’s population, will be considered in the contexts of preventing perceptions of mutual threat from forming.

***Theory and Scholarly Opinion.*** In matters of geopolitics and national security, a realist framework remains stubbornly paradigmatic, despite many years in a unipolar world in which the USA, as global hegemon, plays an often thankless role in mitigating the anarchy of the international system. As a positivist social science theory, realism in its various forms seeks above all to predict state behavior with regard to security, and in all cases a rising power is seen as a threat to the polarity of the system. Based on the zero-sum concept of relative gains, this threat is applied both to the status quo powers and, by the fundamental roles of these powers, the stability of the existing world order.

It is often assumed that Asia is the arena for pure realism to play itself out, with the Chinese government being a primary, cold and calculating practitioner. However, this study will provide empirical evidence suggesting not only that “perceptions matter”<sup>4</sup> to the CCP, but also that they can and must be shaped among a state’s population—even in an authoritarian state mistakenly thought by some Westerners<sup>5</sup> to be almost wholly unaccountable to its people. The scholar Jian Yang proposes<sup>6</sup> in his article “Understanding China’s Policy Towards Japan” that there is a growing section of the Chinese population who subscribe to Qinghua University professor Yan Xuetong’s thesis<sup>7</sup> that the currently frigid political relations between China and Japan have less to do with historic conflicts such as WWII, the Nanjing Massacre, or even current territorial disputes than with the belief that Japan (and possibly the USA in collusion) is actively working to prevent China’s development. This last proposition, directed against the country’s two largest trading partners and thus providing much of the economic windfall which sustains performance legitimacy, are precisely the views among the Chinese population, while likely stemming from true love of the motherland, which a government concerned with raising its international status and long-term viability would seek to amplify, limit, or eliminate, according to calculations which vary over time and context.

The People’s Republic of China has for the past thirty years maintained an almost grueling pace of GDP growth, which when paired with an increasingly credible, nationalistic assertion that the Chinese will never again bow before foreign powers, lends a near inevitability to China’s return to a true status as the world’s “center kingdom”. Having seen the previous century and a half as an anomalous blip in which this position was ceded to the West, it is understandable that most Chinese see such a resurgence as at once desirable, justified, and soon in coming. Such a perspective has had a strong effect on how Chinese view the world, itself and other states, and also in the PRC’s international relations.

*The U.S.-Japan alliance and its overlap with Chinese interests.* Although an interaction effect is almost impossible to measure systematically, it is intuitive that the U.S.-Japan alliance constitutes a much greater potential to threaten Chinese interests than either in isolation. Fundamentally, while Sino-Japanese relations are easily the coldest dyad in the region<sup>8</sup> not involving the DPRK or Taiwan, Japan is not currently seen as having the desire or capability to project military force beyond its borders. There is among Chinese, at the same time, a tacit acceptance of the USA as the regional guarantor of security<sup>9</sup>, if not a legitimate global hegemon. The complexity and scale of U.S.-China interdependence almost assures

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<sup>4</sup> Steering the analysis away from Waltz’s neorealism, in which perceptions are irrelevant as states pursue security constantly, above all, and without regard for how such pursuits are perceived by other states.

<sup>5</sup> Particularly those Westerners knowing nor accepting no other regime than a liberal democracy...

<sup>6</sup> See Jian Yang (2007), paraphrasing Yan Xuetong on pg. 266: “Sino-Japanese relations would [not] be improved if China gave up the history issue. [T]he history issue is not at the core of Sino-Japanese conflict. Instead, friction is determined by Japan’s basic strategy of allying with the US to contain China. The history issue is therefore just a manifestation of strategic conflicts between the two countries.”

<sup>7</sup> I have been unable to find the article cited by Jian Yang, listed under Yan Xuetong in the bibliography.

<sup>8</sup> arguably even more so than similarly frigid Japanese-Korean relations, sharing the same colonial antipathy base as China

<sup>9</sup> Jia Qingguo’s “acceptance” of a unipolar world by the PRC may have waned since 2005, though.

that U.S. military capabilities will not be actively employed against China, and if Western strategic statements can be trusted any more than the Chinese, the containment of China as a possible purpose for the alliance did not become salient until very recently in its history<sup>10</sup>.

The Japanese declaration that its position on Taiwan was in line with that of the United States in Feb. 2005 shows this as the most obvious arena in which the interests of the alliance and the PRC conflict. Sutter notes how this alliance-strengthening measure further complicated its Taiwan issue, as relating to its alleged great power ambitions: “Beijing...perceives Taiwan as a security problem; its alignment with the United States and possibly Japan pose a barrier to China’s regional and global influence.”<sup>11</sup>

The region, in sum, is embroiled in a security dilemma placed in more explicit, offensive terms by Western commentators on either side of the left/right ideological divide<sup>12</sup>, with each asserting, with usually subjective evidence, that the other has imperial intentions. Mearshimer’s thesis of offensive realism has at least found a home in the discourse of extremists, and one’s own place on the spectrum can be pinpointed by opining which increasingly hackneyed Deng Xiaoping quotation<sup>13</sup> more accurately describes PRC strategy.

Encirclement and Containment? One strategy to address the rise of China, implied by Mearshimer as best serving U.S. (and likely Japanese) interests, is containment<sup>14</sup>. He suggests what the goal of such a policy would be in explicit terms, suggesting that the USA should take action to slow economic growth “considerably” in the PRC. Any such action would likely be seen by China, however, as openly hostile, with the potential to provoke any number of reciprocal responses, not excluding violence which both sides would much prefer to avoid.

A more subtle strategy which some say China is pursuing against its rising Asian rival of India<sup>15</sup> is encirclement, by which the rival’s adversaries in propinquity and in fact all neighbors are befriended, severely constraining the rival’s choice in trading and strategic partners. In the absence of a formally declared alliance or acknowledgement of a common enemy, to encircle a rival by cozying up to its neighbors may achieve containment without piquing the overt response of the target. Barring a geographic reality akin to South Africa and Lesotho, however, encirclement can hardly be achieved

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<sup>10</sup> Good summaries of the alliance’s history can be found in Chanlett Avery’s report and Deming’s chapter.

<sup>11</sup> Sutter, pg. 424

<sup>12</sup> On the left, the socialist Goldstein portrays China’s military buildup as a justified response to U.S. and Japan imperialist intentions, as has been the revolutionary line for some time. Symonds deserves more credit for admitting China as a “potential” threat to Japan but claims the Bush administration is determined to pursue a stronger alliance despite “catastrophic” costs. Tkacik rallies reliably for the Heritage Foundation, calling for resolute pro-Japan response to Chinese “exploring” an Exclusive Economic Zone, for the sake of U.S. regional credibility as China “probes” the alliance in hopes it will collapse.

<sup>13</sup> These would, of course be the “black cat white cat” pragmatism line for development or the more recently popular 24-character line of “biding our time, hiding our capabilities” favored by realists to unmask an aspiring hegemon in hiding.

<sup>14</sup> Mearshimer, pg. 402, frames containment and engagement as opposite and mutually exclusive strategies, with some disdain asserting that the U.S. policy of engagement is “misguided”. Chanlett-Avery’s 2008 CRS Report shows that the framework for discussing China policy is still in such terms, devoting more of already light analysis to the more hostile containment option.

<sup>15</sup> Luce notes that China appears to be playing this strategy very effectively against India, maintaining close ties with its arch-adversary Pakistan while also outbidding India for natural resources in Myanmar, maintaining close ties with Sri Lanka and Nepal.

unilaterally.

With Japan and Taiwan, the USA already has the beginnings of an encirclement agenda in place which Wachman claims is uncomfortably constraining China's sea power to the "first island chain" off its eastern coast<sup>16</sup>. More expansively, but with rather dubious commitment, is an "evolving 'quadrilateral initiative' or 'arc of freedom and prosperity' between India, Japan, Australia and the United States" suggested by Chietigj Bajpae<sup>17</sup>. Given the high costs and dubious chances of successfully aligning all of China's neighbors against it, an encirclement strategy aimed at China would have to maintain modest goals to have any chance of success. In the sense of arousing Chinese suspicions and nationalist ire, the more liberal-minded would also classify such as both unnecessary and undesirable. By cloaking such alliances in bilateral and normative terms with no mention of China, both realists and neo-liberals in the U.S. can be satisfied with these relationships, and only extremely sensitive Chinese nationalists might perceive a threat.

Encirclement may thus be taken as a more extreme and organized, yet perhaps less overt example of balancing or "bandwagoning" with or against a powerful state. Given China's tie with Russia for the highest number of bordering countries<sup>18</sup> and the unsavoriness of several of them, China may stake a rightful and objective claim as the world's most "unencircleable" state. Yet this may be one notable distinction which China will not accept. There is no lack of scholars who prefer to frame recent Asian geopolitics in terms of the renowned alliance between the U.S. and Japan against China, in an undeclared and incomplete, yet highly effective foundation for an encirclement strategy<sup>19</sup> to prevent China's construction of a "blue water navy"<sup>20</sup>.

Chinese views evolve with the alliance. In light of the Chinese fixation on Japan as its primary strategic competitor, ambivalence toward U.S. hegemony was until recently outshined by a largely positive view of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Perhaps none put it more explicitly than Patrick Cronin in 1996, "in the past 20 years, no country has benefitted as much from the stability provided by the U.S.-Japan alliance as China." And in the *International Herald Tribune* in the same year, a similar attempt to assuage Chinese and international fears of dual-imperialism<sup>21</sup>:

"The U.S.-Japanese alliance is not anti-China but pro-peace. The day may come when the United States and Japan, in cooperation with other Asia-Pacific friends and allies, are forced to conclude that China is determined to pursue a collision course with the rest of Asia and must be contained.

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<sup>16</sup> Wachman, pg. 124

<sup>17</sup> Bajpae, pg. 113-114, notes that this has "emerged as a source of concern to Beijing, especially as the 'value-oriented diplomacy' of these states contrasts with China's 'value-free' foreign policy with 'no strings attached' ...an indication of Beijing's traditional aversion to the U.S.-led alliance structure in Asia."

<sup>18</sup> Tied at 14, but China might take the lead alone if sea neighbors are considered.

<sup>19</sup> Such could only be partial at "best" and would almost certainly have to be declared, given the massive amount of coordination which would be required...not a viable option by Armitage & Nye's assessment, although likely already employed to the extent of the USA's hegemony.

<sup>20</sup> As for China's perception, Wachman, pg. 137, notes that China feels "hemmed in" by the U.S. relations with "capitals" all around the PRC's periphery, while taking American meddling in Taiwan as proof of its aggressive intentions.

<sup>21</sup> See Cossa, *italics added*. In the absence of a formal policy declaration of containment, one is left wondering when this day will officially arrive [though Klare asserts that it did so *de facto* in 2006 as the key to Bush's "grand strategy"]. It would be disingenuous to make such stark statements today.

*But that day has not arrived. The goal should be to prevent it from occurring.”*

That both of these are examples of Westerners and their media directed at establishing objective truth might otherwise be dismissed as typical first-world arrogance if the “majority” of Chinese did not come to the same conclusions<sup>22</sup>.

A clear shift in Chinese perception can be seen from the mid-1990’s to the present, beginning with gratitude for the alliance providing both regional security and especially the protection of Japan, so as to prevent its remilitarization, among the PRC’s greatest fears. The majority of Chinese analysts were actually afraid that conflicting interests would cause the alliance to disband within the decade, leaving Japan to pursue its ultimate goal, unchanged since WWII, of regional dominance<sup>23</sup>. By the turn of the century, with the Clinton administration’s engagement policy to assure the Chinese that the alliance was not directed at the PRC<sup>24</sup>, the greater militarization was increasingly viewed with suspicion but not alarm, and a balance between Chinese optimists and pessimists<sup>25</sup> settled on hopes that the alliance would maintain the status quo, neither strengthening nor weakening greatly. None of these analyses adequately anticipated the policy changes of the Bush administration or the sustained double-digit growth in both Chinese GDP and military spending.

In 2003, Jian Yang noted that the Chinese view was at an important crossroad, and that shaping their perception would be crucial for the future of regional security:

The Chinese tend to agree that the real intention of the United States strengthening its alliance with Japan is to put a lid on Japan’s militarization. Given the fact that many Japanese have become more assertive and dissatisfied with being a junior partner in Japan-U.S. security ties, some Chinese analysts do see it necessary to revitalize the U.S.-Japan security alliance to prevent Japan from becoming too independent in making security policies. The problem for these analysts thus is that China is being made the imagined enemy and Japan is taking the opportunity to expand its military... On the one hand, they would like to see U.S. protection of Japan continue so that the latter will not feel compelled to rapidly build up its own military. On the other hand, they believe China is now being targeted and Japan’s military role is expanded anyway.<sup>26</sup>

And he later claims, with regard to how China should respond to Japan’s military growth: “hard-line policies toward Japan could backfire and strengthen Japan’s willingness to assist the United States in its strategic deployment against China.”<sup>27</sup> This “dilemma” for Chinese analysts was unfavorably resolved in the breaking point around 2005, when Japan adopted the U.S. position on Taiwan, and the alliance began to be seen as spurring rather than preventing Japanese militarization.

Whether this was a convergence with American commentators which encouraged Japan to return to “normal” and shoulder more of its regional security burden<sup>28</sup> is not immediately clear. Recent articles have focused on whether China can live with the new scenario, more hopeful that the alliance will disband or return to the option of integrating

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<sup>22</sup> Garrett and Glaser, pg. 384

<sup>23</sup> Garrett and Glaser do mention China’s fears about “revitalization” of the alliance leading to the same, undesirable result of a more independent and assertive Japan, but these views are said to be in the minority well through the mid-to-late 1990’s.

<sup>24</sup> In a surprisingly conciliatory piece, Wu Xinbo of Shanghai’s Fudan University, waxes almost nostalgic in 2005 of Clinton’s “caution” against revising the alliance and Japan’s constitution, with policies aimed at integrating rather than targeting China into regional security alliances.

<sup>25</sup> This divide in Chinese analytical outlook is framed by Christensen, pg. 57, on predictions of whether the alliance would continue to “check” Japanese militarism or not.

<sup>26</sup> Yang, pg. 309-310

<sup>27</sup> Yang, pg. 314

<sup>28</sup> See Blumenthal, Carpenter, Tkacik, and right-wing perspectives in general.

China<sup>29</sup>. At least superficially, it appears that PRC perception of the alliance, in relation to the threats it perceived from its dissolution to its extension, shifted from fears of the former to the latter in less than ten years.

China is making every effort to appear restrained in responding to the alliance's expansion, even to what it sees as American encouragement of re-arming the national adversary. Its goals in doing so are fairly clear, and they have every incentive to make them clear: China would much prefer a return to past engagement policies, but at very least it wants to avoid any escalation of tensions which might destabilize the region and jeopardize its all-important economic growth. To realists, such behavior may be taken as acknowledgement that military confrontation would not end favorably for China at this juncture, however, its goal of continued growth will insure that one day it might.<sup>30</sup>

*Need for a comprehensive study.* Few studies provide much empirical evidence related to the Chinese perception of the United States and Japan as a unified, if not solitary actor in Asia. Given that this is seen by some scholars as the crucial geopolitical relationship in the East Asia, perhaps even the defining arena of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the paucity of empirical studies on PRC perceptions is worrisome, if understandable for the state's opacity. Much work has focused on what China perceives, but relatively little has shown empirically how the PRC's domestic media strategy is applicable to its international affairs. Such a gaping gap can again be attributed to the difficulty to penetrate Chinese government and society for accurate information, but also to a heinous assumption that, as an authoritarian state, the government is not accountable to its population and thus what the people think is irrelevant<sup>31</sup>.

A media censorship regime is widely accepted as being exercised in the PRC, but data describing it must often be obtained surreptitiously and based on anecdotes. This study will provide evidence of this mechanism which is more open and systematic, relying on the growing use of the internet by Chinese citizens, which by merit of being a much wider medium makes it much more difficult to censor and also more accessible for data collection. It is hoped that this study might fit into literature relating to domestic influences on IR, the effects of mass media shaping public perception, and the emerging field of internet research, especially in the PRC.

**Research Questions.** It may be true that only the Chinese politburo knows exactly what the meaning behind its actions are, regarding geopolitics, but given the unyieldingly strict control over Chinese media<sup>32</sup>, it is possible to glean

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<sup>29</sup> See Ren Xiangqun for a PLA Academy of Military Science students general repetition of official lines and agreement with points of the latest Armitage Report.

<sup>30</sup> Little or no efforts should thus be extended to aid in China's growth, although the universally desired goal of stability and peace does provide the perfect environment for it. Hyper-realists may thus be tempted to take extreme, pre-emptive action while the odds remain against the PRC.

<sup>31</sup> Tong Lam's article in Jensen & Weston's book shows that the government is more and more seeking the opinions of its population, although it often does not like what they find and do not hesitate to conceal it. Lampton concurs that in areas of strong popular opinion, the CCP's options are highly constrained.

<sup>32</sup> Especially for the Olympics and recent Tibetan protests, the Chinese media has received much attention for consistently ranking with unseemly peers as Cuba, Burma, and Eritrea in terms of press freedom. For reports on the state of Chinese state-controlled media, see Freedom House: [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org), International Press Institute: [www.freemedia.at](http://www.freemedia.at) Reporters Without Borders: [www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org).

empirical evidence of Chinese intentions and perceptions by means of carefully analyzing PRC mass media. The primary research question to be addressed here is whether China perceives an active or latent threat to its interests in the close, regional alliance between its nearest, most reviled adversary and the global hegemon<sup>33</sup>. The possibility of no threat perceived whatsoever, an idealism which state propaganda and popular depoliticization in general may seek to nurture, may essentially be ruled out, as only an extraordinarily naïve or indoctrinated PRC comrade can be presumed to hold that the PRC is invincible, or that either Japan or the USA could inflict considerable damage upon it if they so chose. Thus, a *latent* threat will be taken to be perceived if Chinese media reports the alliance's behavior objectively, or less likely, positively. If its statements and actions are portrayed as directly in conflict with Chinese interests, as part of a threatening theme intended to call the government, military, or people to attention, the threat will be taken as *active*.

Secondary questions which should be more observable than ever-slippery perceptions, relate to how the discourse on this topic is managed. Will the media, despite reasonable fear in the CCP that the alliance may act—or may be acting—to contain China, accept and report with approval the American plan to have the alliance endure through 2020? How much coverage will the topic receive, compared to others of similar or more domestically-specialized importance? Will the Western perspective be presented at all?

It is important to note that Chinese media and citizens, especially those with nationalist predilection, may be expected to interpret threatening actions where none were intended by either member of the alliance<sup>34</sup>. It is also entirely possible that events and actions may be entirely fabricated to produce and encourage such perceptions. A prime example of such divergent perceptions, taken from the more familiar reverse side of the equation, is the American criticism of China's reports of military spending, at an ostensibly threatening double-digit pace by the CCP's own admission. American strategists are, not surprisingly, highly skeptical of Chinese claims that such a consistent build-up is for enhancing domestic stability and defense. Not a few go a step further and assert, with little tangible evidence, that Chinese media, as the mouthpiece of a communist party steeped in hard, offensive realism, are deliberately under-reporting the actual spending rate to disguise an active and growing threat.

In addition to this strategic control, the accounts of Susan Shirk and WuXu of the CCP's fragile relationship with the influential hyper-nationalist segment of the Chinese population suggest that it is in the interest of the party<sup>35</sup> to

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Committee to Protect Journalists: [www.cpi.org](http://www.cpi.org) The international press freedom indices from 2002-2007 are best viewed on Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reporters\\_without\\_borders#Worldwide\\_press\\_freedom\\_index](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reporters_without_borders#Worldwide_press_freedom_index) Each has a new report on the Chinese media, focusing on unmet promises and continuing suppression.

<sup>33</sup> For the sake of analysis, it will be assumed that the Chinese do perceive Japan and the USA in these roles, relative to itself. By no means is it assumed that the PRC likes or accepts them as such.

<sup>34</sup> This would be a fundamental part of the "security dilemma", as explained by Jervis, in which a state increases its defensive military capabilities for the explicit purpose of enhancing its military defense; other states, however, may perceive such actions as directed at themselves, offensively, and be sorely tempted to respond in kind, creating a vicious circle.

<sup>35</sup> "biding their time" for realists and projecting the validity of "peaceful rise" rhetoric for idealists



use the media to downplay or leave out facts and opinions which suggest that the alliance is targeting China with a containment strategy. Unless China foresees itself as the ultimate victor of a cold or hot military conflict, be it prolonged or brief, it is in their interest to do everything possible to suggest that outwardly assertive responses to alliance deepening are not necessary.

In combining observed statements in Chinese media with observed behaviors of the states involved, a better sense of the mutual perceptions, especially those of the nebulous Chinese, may be achieved. A problem arises, however, in deciding what conclusions to draw from mass media treatment of a particular issue. This is true in any case, but especially so in international reporting and in a tightly-controlled PRC market, in which there are vast incentives to over or understate points, build rhetorical facades, and otherwise prevaricate. A reader must be ever-cognizant that what is printed is not what in fact the leaders or writers think, but rather what they want the reader to think they think<sup>36</sup>, often a kinder, gentler version if having any basis in truth at all. Despite this hermeneutical snafu, we can be fairly certain that, given the considerable extent of CCP control over all forms of media in the PRC, what is printed in newspapers is *what the party wants its citizens to think*. In extreme domestic and political cases with a clear “party line”, what the media is *allowed to say* may be the only thing the people are *allowed to think*<sup>37</sup>.

**Methodology.** Barring expensive national surveys, there is no better mirror to reflect the hearts and minds of the Chinese government and population than its state-controlled media. This study will examine two PRC media sources, newspapers’ internet sites and internet bulletin boards, to assess the salience of explicit realist principles in the state. By determining the amount of news coverage the U.S.-Japan alliance receives and analyzing its content, one can make an estimate as to the level of threat it is perceived to pose. A further test of this will be to do the same for the PRC’s “cyber-nationalists”<sup>38</sup>, who perceive themselves as the ultimate defenders of the Chinese Motherland against all threats foreign and domestic (but especially foreign!). If this segment of the population, often critical of the CCP for being too moderate, shows indifference toward the alliance, popular perception of threat can be taken to be minimal. Another possibility would be that the topic is restricted from public discussion for being too “sensitive”.

Drawing from an original sample of 177 online newspaper sources, the search terms for many were inexact and thus suspect. As the search term “U.S.-Japan alliance” retrieves more reliable results in Chinese, as 美日同盟 *meiri tongmeng*, only the 40 or so sources in the Chinese language are included in the results and data APPENDIX A.

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<sup>36</sup> Credit to Dr. McCormick for turning this phrase

<sup>37</sup> with those thinking differently being censured, punished, or otherwise compelled to exercise self-censorship and generally not expressing their views

<sup>38</sup> A term if not coined by Wu Xu’s book, at least entitled as such.

**Results and Analysis**<sup>39</sup>. What is initially obvious is that the alliance itself does not receive a lot of coverage, compared to other topics<sup>40</sup>. On the opposite extreme, coverage of the USA and Japan individually—including all articles in which they appeared, most of which have no relation to military affairs—ranked first and third among search term coverage<sup>41</sup>. On average, the alliance appeared in a minuscule .065% of the articles retrieved by the 40 newspapers from which data was collected. The characters for USA and Japan appeared in a much higher mean ratios of 34.8 and 17.2%.

The most telling comparison in this newspaper salience test can be made by noting the rates of coverage in sources one would expect to be replete with international security matters, namely the *People's Liberation Army Daily (PLA Daily)* and *The Global Times*. As the flagship newspaper of the country, data from the CCP mouthpiece *People's Daily* should also be given special attention, actually owned by the same media conglomerate as the *Global Times* but regarded as less inclined to voice nationalist sentiments. Among these, it may be significant that the PLA Daily, while having the most military coverage by far and among the most for the UN, is *below average* in the portion of articles mentioning the alliance, the USA, and Japan. The *People's Daily* covers Japan at a rate far below average, and the slightly above average number of articles mentioning the alliance must be partially offset by its paltry coverage of military affairs, as proxied by the naval measure<sup>42</sup>. Thirdly, the *Global Times* covers international matters generally above the average with odd exceptions of the UN and terrorists.

When split, the USA receives, on average, about twice as much coverage in the PRC press as Japan. Papers which skew heaviest toward news on America are the *People's Daily* and *China News Digest*, while *Dalian* and *Tianjin Daily* cover the USA and Japan on a nearly 1:1 ratio. *The Global Times* also appears to have a ratio closer to Japan than other sources. One might speculate a number of explanations for these patterns, including that newspapers from geographically closer areas to Japan or with closer business relations will mention the country more often. More applicable to the role of the media in shaping perceptions is the possibility that while the USA receives so much more coverage partially because it is a “more important” country in the world and to China, active measures may be underway to keep an enemy which stirs such popular passions farther from the public eye. This latter effect is speculative and would

<sup>39</sup> For the discussion in this section, refer to APPENDIX A, the spreadsheet of search results across the terms “U.S.-Japan alliance”, “USA”, “Japan”, and “navy”.

<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the only term searched which retrieves fewer results is “wicket”, as in the sport of cricket which is probably played even less than baseball in the PRC. Other presumably less-newsworthy terms such as “panda” and which have little or no relation to the PRC such as “Milwaukee” and “tornado” all appeared in newspaper articles at a much higher rate.

<sup>41</sup> The rank in order of coverage of all terms searched was: 1. USA 2. Success 3. Japan 4. Democracy 5. United Nations 6. Navy 7. IPR 8. Human Rights 9. Bribery 10. Terrorist 11. Panda 12. Protester 13. Global Warming 14. Tornado 15. Milwaukee 16. U.S.-Japan alliance 17. Wicket Details of search methods and results can be found in APPENDIX A. Again, it must be emphasized that these rankings are not absolute but relative to the other terms searched.

<sup>42</sup> As shown in the APPENDIX A spreadsheet, *The People's Daily* had only .4% of its articles mention the navy, the lowest of all sources and nearly two full percentage points below an average of 2.25% in PRC newspapers, diametrically opposite the *PLA Daily*, which appears to meet expectations of military and world coverage *other than that relating to Japan and the USA*.

need comparisons against many other countries before proven empirically, and the effects of privatizing media<sup>43</sup>, making it more responsive to the interests of its subscribers than the government, would offset it.

Why would a military publication such as the *PLA Daily* provide less coverage of a military alliance between regional powers on its doorstep, while covering other international topics and naval affairs at a higher rate in general? While a Westerner might expect its military and other media to pay more attention to an alliance with published and easily accessible documents discussing a containment policy against it, in the heavily-regulated PRC, the expectation could be said to be directly opposite, unless public outcry on a massive scale would help the CCP win the conflict. If the audience of such a publication is already interested in military affairs, active repression on the part of the state media regulation agency, GAPP, would help keep the idea of military conflict with major trading partners out of the public's mind. Again this may be evidence that the CCP either does in fact appreciate the stability the alliance has provided and doesn't want to risk shaking it by creating (or amplifying) public rancor against it, or alternatively, targeting the alliance with nationalist hatred has not yet been seen as advantageous to the PRC as it is not (yet) ready to engage in interstate military conflict with the alliance.

On average, PRC newspapers covered the alliance slightly more than those sampled from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Due to the small sample size of non-PRC Chinese language sources<sup>44</sup>, one should be cautious of concluding too much from this finding. Results show a generally wide variance on topics even within the same city, suggesting that what centrally-mandated content control is enforced is done so inconsistently. A more comprehensive future study might be able to provide contrast between sources' coverage of the alliance, especially between those one would expect to be vehicles for nationalism, those which have published the most and fewest articles on it. A cursory sweep of articles suggests that the number of articles dedicated entirely to the alliance may be even smaller than the ratios suggest—it is more often found in the bodies of articles, speculatively tucked among more positive points rather than in the headlines.

While less systematic, bulletin board responses to inquiries on the alliance tell a more graphic, but similar story of self-censorship. My results show that online discontent among 愤青 (*fēnqīng*, or angry young men<sup>45</sup>) is by no means reserved for Japan<sup>46</sup>, and a significant portion of the vitriol aimed at Japan is for being a lackey, or toothless tool, of an aggressive American “wolf”. While no one in China is particularly pleased by close relations between Japan and the

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<sup>43</sup> There is considerable evidence that this is occurring, as government funds to media outlets are being reduced. See Yuezhi Zhao, Zhongdang Pan, and Qinglian He.

<sup>44</sup> Frustratingly, none of the websites for Chinese newspapers in Australia, Singapore, Macao, or the USA included a reliable search engine ☹

<sup>45</sup> Wikipedia's entry on the cyber nationalist phenomenon in China is an interesting read.

<sup>46</sup> See *Renmin Ribao* entry for an article entirely on anti-Japanese BBS postings in China.

USA<sup>47</sup>, there is little sense or worry that they are close with the primary intention of containing the PRC. One respondent notes other goals of the alliance related to Russia and North Korea, while among several there is a sense of resignation bordering on indifference—they are assured that the alliance and its influences, no matter how “villainous”, can only be temporary. Responses to the bulletin board posting, in APPENDIX B, have thus far been disappointingly brief and few in number. It seems there is a preference to repeat slogans (i.e. “Japan is America’s dog.”) over answering specific questions and giving reasoned opinions, though personal anecdotes<sup>48</sup> can be provided to suggest that most citizens do not feel free to voice their true feelings on this and other “sensitive” political topics. In perhaps another evasive post for self-preservation (at least to prevent expulsion from the website), another respondent made the claim that there is “no point” in giving opinions on matters which “all Chinese already know”. That prompted a revelation that the interlocutor, this researcher, was in fact an American curious to know precisely what “all” Chinese know; at least two more circumspect posts resulted, with slightly fewer references to wild animals and chimeras.

Again it must be emphasized that these tests are fairly crude, providing only a partial picture of Chinese perceptions. Nor can they be said to show that the Chinese government does not see U.S.-Japan activities in terms of real interests. It could easily be argued, as consistent with other issues, that the CCP is actively working to prevent popular nationalism from unifying to target China’s biggest trading partners. A sustained, intense nationalist movement against both at once, such as violent acts or a total boycott of Japanese companies and goods, would surely have a detrimental effect on economic development. It would also make the CCP’s peaceful aspirations look much less credible in the eyes of the world community, already skeptical with the scrutiny placed on a host of the Olympic Games.

A qualitative summary of news articles on the U.S.-Japan alliance allow for a clearer story to be told. Most graphic is an article from the Chinese news agency *Xinhua* (like a “Chinese Reuters” or AP) from 2007<sup>49</sup>, the very first result on *Baidu*, considered the “Chinese Google”. The article’s headline proclaims an alliance in “turmoil” over such issues as diverse as North Korea, military bases, and beef, in fact summarizing gleefully in second hand an article from a Japanese newspaper. The first meeting between PM Fukuda and Bush, pictured in a smiling but awkward pose, is

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<sup>47</sup> Several claims that “no Chinese person could see the alliance as a good thing” belie either a lack of historical perspective for the U.S. role in preventing Japan’s remilitarization or an overstatement (perhaps overcredulity in believing their Chinese sources) by Garrett and Glaser on the Chinese appreciation of the alliance.

<sup>48</sup> If a wealth of empirical data may earn a personal anecdote: As a “U.S.-China Friendship Volunteer” strongly discouraged against discussing politics, this researcher made several friends over two years and more but only recently has learned of their political leanings. In a recent conversation, Lemon Zhang revealed without solicitation her strong discontent over Western media coverage of recent Tibetan riots, French assault of the torch (she joined the boycott of France’s Carrefour stores), and asserted herself (though straight from the CCP) that the Dalai Lama is a beastly separatist/terrorist. Unsure if strong political feelings were a recent influence of moving to Beijing, as she had *never once* mentioned politics before, this researcher requested that she and her friends help out on a certain bulletin board which wasn’t getting enough responses to be used for a certain research paper. Days later, she claimed that all of her several friends said the questions were “too sensitive” and she herself “hadn’t decided how she should respond”. Again, this suggests that strong nationalist sentiment, like dissent, is being uncomfortably restrained in public, except when the CCP is caught “off guard” or relents occasionally to “let off steam”.

<sup>49</sup> Author unknown, listed in bibliography under “Xinhua”

portrayed as starting with high hopes for strengthening the alliance further, then spiraling into a tumultuous failure. Two recent articles from an American and Japanese perspective<sup>50</sup> corroborate the 2007 Chinese article, suggesting that the future of the alliance is less assured than in the past, yet neither hints that its continued existence will be in question—let alone pining for bilateral U.S.-Japan conflict.

Two earlier articles retrieved by *World News Connection* mention the issue only in passing. Preceding the 2000 U.S. elections, a Hong Kong scholar interviewed in its CCP-friendly *Ta Kung Pao* was found to be worried about the candidate Bush's plan to discontinue the general policy of engaging China, and especially his promise to strengthen the alliance with Japan<sup>51</sup>. On the less-special PRC side, *Xinhua* did manage to get in some pointed criticism, though tucked away in an otherwise highly optimistic article. A "military expert" named Yang found hypocrisy in concerns about PRC military build-up and American calls for more transparency: "The United States has deliberately made its strategic intentions vague and ambiguous in many major issues," he said, "such as its interference in the Taiwan issue and the scope of the U.S.-Japan military alliance." There is a consistent pattern that, even when playing to a domestic audience eager to support any display of Chinese strength, the media must "play nice" and couch content which might otherwise incite fears and unwelcome nationalist outbursts in a soothing context.

These results generally play into the thesis of Xu Xiaoge, describing the consensus of a 2005 conference on Asian journalism. In open contrast to Western ideals of investigative muckraking, Xu makes a pan-Asian claim that the media's overriding obligation is to enhance the stability of each respective society, providing an environment conducive to economic growth<sup>52</sup>. Most any report which compromises societal stability, such as stoking fears about foreign threats when the government is not in the mood to focus on them, would be in derelict of duty. While this presumably falls short of outright misinformation, highly selective, heuristic reporting fits snugly in regards to PRC media coverage of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Uncontrolled animosity toward one's most important trading partners, as would likely result from more thorough and objective coverage, could only hurt the PRC's economic<sup>53</sup>, as well as political relations. The effective success of information control on perception of the alliance can be seen in that the Chinese media give it little attention, a restriction which bestows little importance, and many perceive it as soon to fade out of existence, even reforming with China against the West—both directly and extremely contrary to U.S. government strategies.

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<sup>50</sup> See Oros and Konishi, who both suggest that alliance uncertainty stems from upcoming elections, specifically the likelihood of a Democratic president allowing U.S.-Japan relations to "drift". Both also note that Japan is largely off the administrative radar in the USA, leading in extremes to an unacknowledged fear of abandonment.

<sup>51</sup> See the interview with Director Wang Jisi in *Ta Kung Pao*. By implication, the candidate Gore was seen to espouse a continuation of Clinton's PRC strategy, apparently seen by many Chinese as aimed far more toward integrating it into Asian security.

<sup>52</sup> Xu Xiaoge goes so far as to say this is an Asian "value" not only in developing countries but also in wealthy Singapore, where the conference was held. It is not difficult to find fault with these claims.

<sup>53</sup> As is evidenced in calls for boycotts of Japanese and now French goods, both derided by the PRC's government and media, having a proportionally small but powerful segment of popular support.

With full or elite access to information, CCP members would be most likely to have seen Japan's alignment with the U.S.'s Taiwan policy as the most threatening action the alliance has thus far taken. Re-militarization, a stipulated requirement of "strengthening the alliance" more prominent in the CRS report than in Armitage/Nye, could also be interpreted as a threat by the Party and its military advisors. What seems doubtful, from the news articles examined here, is that the PRC media would share much of these developments with the public in general unless it wished to use them instrumentally against both countries. The CCP is thus not likely to report news it considers provocative to the population unless either 1) it can be used to strengthen the party's legitimacy or generally the grip on power, as the "defender of the Chinese nation" or 2) by establishing a threat and rousing the population against it, the party believes the threat can be contained or defeated. In restricting the discourse, generally playing down the importance of a topic so central to the U.S. general strategy for Asian security, the CCP may be tacitly admitting that the potential loss of societal and international stability from reporting the alliance's every development—especially as the trend through the beginning of this century has been to strengthen it—outweighs the already de-emphasized value of a well-informed population. The CCP, excluding its minority which sees the alliance (or either of its members) as harboring primarily aggressive intentions, may be said to take the alliance as a latent threat—even in the most pressing arena of Taiwan committed verbally to preserving the status quo. Alternatively, and this becomes less likely by the day, the CCP may perceive the alliance to be an active threat to its interests, yet consider itself no match for the military might of the alliance, even if its entire population were mobilized for full-scale war.

PRC nationalists, by contrast and especially the hyper and cyber versions treated by Xu Wu, appear to have their foreign threat perception permanently "switched on" and would need no media encouragement to mobilize for a Chinese campaign against the U.S.-Japan alliance or any other foreign actor, state, or organization. Rather, media controls serve to deny these extremist voices a public forum to spread their views, coordinate meetings, and recruit other citizens to join in collective actions. An article in an official publication such as the *People's Daily* identifying the alliance as actively threatening Chinese territory or interests would simply be a cue to nationalist forces to take their message to the more moderate masses, to take on a greater role in mainstream media as the vanguard of national defense. No doubt, a campaign such as this would be able to rival the "Red Guards" of the Cultural Revolution.

These extremists and their unshakable views may well have been constructed by the CCP's education reforms in the 1980's, emphasizing China's past victimizations at the hands of foreign military powers, yet the Party now has only limited control over them in restricting access to "coordination goods"<sup>54</sup> such as the media. While many in the CCP may

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<sup>54</sup> See Bueno de Mesquita and Downs for a discussion of "coordination goods". They used the term to represent an authoritarian government which managed to provide economic goods while remaining near-totalitarian in terms of civil and political rights,

rightly fear the de-stabilizing effects which would result from giving hyper-nationalist groups more influence in public discourse and policy, it must be comforting to know that such a large portion of one's population is almost constantly ready to leap to the defense of the nation in the event of an activated foreign threat.

If one believes in the power of mass media to shape norms and interests in the public, the effects of depoliticizing the public discourse, a goal that an authoritarian CCP (rather than a totalitarian one) would want to pursue if it wanted to avoid nationalism from boiling over into other countries, will over time create an idealistic majority which cares little about politics and prefers to focus on improving its material well-being. Despite an emphasis on a nationalist minority, it would be wrong to conclude either that the majority of the population would be so easily called to arms by a nationalist campaign against foreign enemies, or that PRC citizens already live an innocent, apolitical life in which all important decisions are made for them. As this researcher discovered about a naïve girl from an underdeveloped provincial town, anyone can be swept up in nationalist fervor, and the vast majority of the population is reminded daily by the media to be patriotic, but "reasonable".

**Conclusions.** The above results lend support to Susan Shirk's thesis that the CCP is under great pressure to maintain stability for economic growth, especially in regards to threats posed from abroad. China's hyper-nationalists are particularly sensitive and prone to perceive these threats, leading popular and less-publicized official calls for strong responses to threats of which the majority of the population, seeing the world in largely friendly terms (another positive byproduct of Chinese censorship for the rest of the world), is simply not aware. By controlling the media, access to information suggesting an active containment strategy pursued together by the USA and Japan is effectively denied, and this may be to the benefit of the entire region. Limited responses to internet survey questions and rare mention in the media except to hope—or even encourage citizens to believe—that the alliance will soon dissolve suggest that there is no active party propaganda campaign addressing two thirds of Asia's "keystone", largely denying nationalists a safe context in which to discuss it.

Soothing tensions with Japan can only increase regional stability, but raising doubts about the alliance's intentions—or allowing xenophobic nationalists access to influential media in general—would be likely to have an opposite and escalating effect. While empirical evidence can be found to support almost all apparent strategies, no official announcement from top U.S. or Japan leaders has suggested that either country is anything but delighted by China's economic growth, as befits diplomacy and the great complexity of their relations. Withholding such statements, even if actions not kept covert speak them more loudly to some, keeps the CCP from creating propaganda to direct

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preventing a democratic opposition from forming. Were disaffected hyper-nationalists and democracy advocates in the PRC to join forces, the CCP might have a problem on its hands (though if one is well-educated enough to know about democracy in the PRC, one should also know that the hyper-nationalists might hi-jack democracy as a tool to create a hyper-nationalist state).

nationalist ire at the alliance. In fact, such a positive catalyst would not even be necessary. Loosening of the negative censorship mechanism and allowing more nationalist opinion to enter mass media would likely result in a grassroots and growing campaign in this and other international issues. While strict government control of the media is in most cases not in anyone's interests, in this case it appears to be a vital tourniquet on the naturally upward scaling of tensions (and arms) in the security dilemma.

The incentives and terms for peace or at least coexistence between the U.S.-Japan alliance and the PRC are drawn clearly, although recent history has shown that the practical way to abide by them is neither as clear nor clearly applied. Assuming that a formal declaration of containment is still fairly distant and avoidable, each side in the relationship must provide mutual accommodations to the others to discourage perceptions of aggression. For China, this means more transparency in military spending and security relations with its neighbors, allowing for more immediate realization for the rest of the world that China is pursuing regional hegemony at the expense of the current order. Presumably friendlier leadership in Taiwan suggests that all factors will increasingly favor the PRC in the long run goal of reunification, and this should be an opportunity to reduce threats of force against it.

Each of these desirable changes is dependent on the actions of the still-strong alliance between the U.S. and Japan, which shape the CCP's perception, domestic and international strategies. Efforts to strengthen the alliance in areas which conflict with Chinese interests have only resulted in increased tensions and decreased trust, resulting in escalations of the very factors each side intended to counteract. The CCP is actively engaged in efforts to improve political relations with Japan<sup>55</sup>, fully cognizant that it rules over a powder keg of popular nationalism of its own creation. Only a United States in a full-scale containment strategy would not welcome these actions, and attempts to portray them as damaging to the alliance will only add to the growing perception that, despite its long, positive, and evolving purposes in the past, the alliance is now specifically directed against China. As difficult as it may be not to dismiss high rhetoric from a dictatorship, the USA and Japan must give credence to China's desire for peaceful development, if not at face value and while still calling for liberal reforms such as a freer press. Full press freedom should still be a long-term policy goal for the West to press for in China, yet such must be incremental and must absolutely not come in one drastic opening of nationalist floodgates.

As long as China continues to focus on individual issues of WWII history in its relations with Japan, it can be counted on not to display an over-arching sentiment of hostility toward the current Asian order, maintained largely

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<sup>55</sup> The *New York Times* just today (5-8-2008) reprinted a glowing account from the *Daily Yomiuri* of Hu Jintao's first visit by a CCP Chairman to Japan in 10 years, though Jiang Zemin's previous trip set a rather low standard. See the link to Fackler for its own article, suggesting that while an inordinate amount of time was spent resolving issues of ping pong, pandas, and poison dumplings, one must start somewhere.



through the deep alliance between Japan and the USA. The people of China, while understandably confused or unhappy that norm-guided Americans choose to continue military cooperation with such an untrustworthy state, do not see the alliance strictly in terms of balancing against China's rise, much less as preventing its "peaceful development". The consequences of changing this perception, as the CCP must be well aware and have been working to prevent, would be sufficient to renew a massive and open arms race across the Pacific, and an adversarial arms race would likely curtail two of the most productive economic relationships in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or perhaps even all of history. In the absence of explicit threats to vital interests, the USA should continue its efforts, with its allies, to engage and mold China as best it can into a "responsible stakeholder" in the world. Strengthening any regional securities alliances at this point will raise CCP suspicions further that an active strategy of containment and/or encirclement is underway, so any opportunity to integrate China should be seized by both sides. Armitage and Nye frame U.S. strategy in precisely these terms, yet they drastically oversimplify the ease with which alliances, especially with Japan, may continue to be strengthened without arousing CCP fears and nationalist anger. If Armitage and Nye oversimplify, the CRS report takes this recklessly for granted. What is claimed as a "keystone" or "fulcrum" from our Western perspective could ultimately and easily be the match that sets a fireworks warehouse aflame. We do not need a billion and a half more enemies, and we should be thankful to "cooler heads" in the CCP for preventing such enmity from taking root in the majority of Chinese citizenry, though perhaps for precious little else.

The title of this paper is intended to be provocative. No gratitude is deserved for a regime that has been largely an impediment to freedom and understanding, a plague upon its own people for a large portion of its history. Socioeconomic gains do not erase such a legacy, nor is it easy to look upon the CCP of today as a kinder, gentler body as it befriends international pariahs, expands militarily, or reenacts draconian flashbacks of totalitarianism. The intent of this paper, rather, has been to show that media censorship, like most policies, cuts both ways. The positive aspects of such practices had heretofore been largely neglected.

## APPENDIX A: NEWSPAPER SALIENCE TEST

To avoid exorciation from PRC citizens, it should be noted that Hong Kong and Taiwan sources are treated as separate solely for the sake of analysis. Below is an abridged spreadsheet<sup>56</sup> of the sources whose coverage was sampled, along with relevant measures. Note that the alliance ratio has been multiplied by 1000 while the others only by 100 (and thus may be treated as the

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<sup>56</sup> The "full" version includes coverage ratios across all search terms and adds sources in English, Spanish, and Portuguese (done for a different research topic), for a total of 180 sources. As the term "U.S.-Japan alliance" is much more difficult to isolate in search engines in these languages, their highly suspect results are not given in this paper. Numberphiles can contact the author for hot, fresh, raw data around which to wrap sophisticated, statistical analysis tentacles.

percentage of the source's sampled articles which contain the word). Those interested in visiting the sites need only add ".com" or ".com.cn" to the source name or enter the site address in parentheses ( ).

NAME OF SOURCE	U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE RATIO	USA RATIO	JAPAN RATIO	NAVY RATIO
Anhui Evening News (www.hf365.com)	0.290275762	45.44278	24.4691869	3.3272
Beijing Evening News (www.ben.com)	0.214335471	20.20333	9.51006157	1.210
Beijing News (said to be "reformist") (www.thebeijingnews.com)	0.754317263	38.28033	16.6406443	2.41049
Beijing Youth Daily (www.ynet.com)	0.454890826	38.04573	17.7617995	1.43419
China News Digest (www.cnd.org) (PRC newspaper???)	1.527213647	42.01817	13.3589109	1.94609
China Youth Daily (Youth newspaper in PRC) (www.cyol.com)	0.901660231	41.85087	15.9167329	2.0580
Chongqing Daily (www.cqnews.net)	0.357370966	36.07938	16.6012434	1.7944
Dalian Daily News (www.daliandaily.com.cn)	0.574052813	26.8772	26.4283069	3.6864
Farmers Daily (www.farmer.com.cn)	0	35.48176	22.2536745	1.3826
Gansu Daily (www.gansudaily.com.cn)	0.387956322	31.72852	17.5089567	2.40676
Global Times (www.huanqiu.com)	1.587380326	43.54852	26.7021167	6.6468
Guangxi Daily (www.gxnews.com.cn)	0.681371121	29.32743	15.8803543	1.6008
Guangzhou Daily (www.gzdaily.dayoo.com)	0.792958528	56.28395	22.23599	1.82439
Harbin Daily	0.131197836	34.70144	21.2255723	1.4121
Heilongjiang Daily (www.hlnews.cn)	0.220309377	33.54531	19.200354	1.89990
Hohhot Evening News (www.nmgnews.com.cn)	0.372362964	15.35114	6.29563766	0.9805
Jiefang Daily (Shanghai) (www.jfdaily.com)	0.395262497	19.34076	9.42035482	0.6743
Nanfang Daily (PRC newspaper in Guangdong)	1.382115113	24.40722	13.1570166	2.4216
NDDaily (PRC newspaper in Guangdong said to be "questioning")	0.452284034	45.67954	21.637675	1.4142
Ningbo Daily (www.cnnb.com.cn)	2.929817552	45.82116	30.4134623	3.6442
Ningxia Daily (www.nxnet.net)	1.474530831	52.66974	21.6336859	4.4865
People's Daily (Official PRC newspaper)	0.748301872	32.18364	7.06230779	0.4184
PLA Daily (PRC newspaper of the People's Liberation Army)	0.508177648	31.37572	11.6757128	11.035
Sichuan Daily	0.056548292	40.69894	24.4193618	2.8941
Tianjin Daily	1.299328388	33.15557	30.1215183	1.0947
Tibet Daily (www.tibetinfo.com)	0	17.76173	8.0866426	1.3718
Wenhui News (Shanghai) (www.wenhui.news365.com.cn)	0.629564341	36.27958	15.98323	2.1249
Workers Daily (PRC) (www.grrb.com.cn)	0.278603269	37.45369	13.8523244	2.7485
Xiamen Daily (www.xmnn.cn)	0.180344974	34.11194	16.4264488	2.76410
Xinjiang Daily (www.xjdaily.com)	0.253917586	31.21839	14.8184495	1.9362
Xinmin Evening News (Shanghai) (www.xmwb.news365.com.cn)	0.307440049	41.76553	18.7059006	1.6980
Yunnan Daily (www.yndaily.com)	0.699790063	30.84011	10.9419581	0.891
Zhejiang Daily (www.zjdaily.com)	0.64484166	37.4252	16.1143843	1.3134
Zhongshan News (Guangdong) (www.zsnews.com)	0.545224418	28.41927	9.63628114	0.622
AVERAGE (PRC only)	0.648051354	34.83609	17.2089526	2.2505

United Daily News (Taiwanese newspaper) (www.udn.com)	0	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
Liberty Times (Taiwanese newspaper)	1.720125	36.13713	24.1574999	1.290
Mandarin Daily News (Taiwanese children's newspaper)	0	37.36784	19.6160267	0.9460
China News Service (www.chinanews.cn)	0.747058	5.175795	2.49289373	1.7860
Takungpao (HK newspaper)	0.559493	55.71705	21.5775194	1.92248
Apple Daily (HK newspaper) (www.atnext.com)	0.519481	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
AVERAGE (HK, Taiwan, other)	0.591026			

RANK OF ALL TERMS SEARCHED, BY RATIO OF COVERAGE (HIGH RANK=MORE RESULTS):
1. USA 2. SUCCESS 3. JAPAN 4. DEMOCRACY 5. UNITED NATIONS 6. NAVY 7. IPR 8. HUMAN RIGHTS 9. BRIBERY 10. TERRORIST 11. PANDA 12. PROTESTER 13. GLOBAL WARMING 14. TORNADO 15. MILWAUKEE 16. U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE 17. WICKET
FOR COMPARISON, RANKINGS IN USA MEDIA (USA, JAPAN, NAVY NOT SEARCHED, ALLIANCE RESULTS SUSPECT.)
1. SUCCESS 2. TERRORIST 3. MILWAUKEE 4. UNITED NATIONS 5. DEMOCRACY 6. GLOBAL WARMING 7. PROTESTER 8. U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE 9. BRIBERY 10. IPR 11. PANDA 12. WICKET
MOST COVERAGE OF U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE: 1. NINGBO DAILY 2. LIBERTY TIMES (TAIWAN) 3. GLOBAL TIMES 4. NINGXIA DAILY 5. NANFANG DAILY
LEAST COVERAGE OF U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE: (0 ARTICLES) TIBET DAILY, MANDARIN DAILY NEWS (TAIWAN), FARMERS DAILY, UNITED DAILY NEWS (TAIWAN) 5. HARBIN DAILY
MOST COVERAGE OF USA: 1. GUANGZHOU DAILY 2. TAKUNGPAO (HK) 3. NINGXIA DAILY 4. NINGBO DAILY 5. ND DAILY
LEAST COVERAGE OF USA: 1. CHINA NEWS SERVICE 2. HOHHOT EVENING NEWS 3. TIBET DAILY 4. JIUFANG DAILY (SHANGHAI) 5. BEIJING EVENING NEWS
MOST COVERAGE OF JAPAN: 1. NINGBO DAILY 2. TIANJIN DAILY 3. GLOBAL TIMES 4. ANHUI EVENING NEWS 5. SICHUAN DAILY
LEAST COVERAGE OF JAPAN: 1. CHINA NEWS SERVICE 2. HOHHOT EVENING NEWS 3. PEOPLE'S DAILY 4. TIBET DAILY 5. JIUFANG DAILY (SHANGHAI)
MOST COVERAGE OF NAVY: 1. PLA DAILY 2. GLOBAL TIMES 3. NINGXIA DAILY 4. DALIAN DAILY 5. NINGBO DAILY
LEAST COVERAGE OF NAVY: 1. PEOPLE'S DAILY 2. ZHONGSHAN NEWS 3. JIUFANG DAILY 4. YUNNAN DAILY 5. MANDARIN DAILY NEWS (TAIWAN)

## APPENDIX B: BULLETIN BOARD INQUIRY

The following (the Chinese part; not the translation) was posted on about ten out of approximately 30 possible nationalist PRC discussion boards, linked to a leading site cited in Wu Xu's book. Postings were made in early to mid-April, 2008. Selected sites were done so on the possibly random qualification of being able to register an account successfully. Of the ten sites, one has since been blocked completely, and three more appear not to have saved the posting (or are otherwise inaccessible for any reason one could speculate). URL's for the "successful" posts are below, but most have yet to get any response (maybe all the nationalists are still busy fulminating against CNN and BBC over Tibet). It should also be noted that responses after 4-27 were posted after outing myself as a curious American—blowing the cover of my scholarly distance, as it were. Translations are approximate!

你怎么看美日同盟？

非常感谢回答我的问题。请告诉我你同意还是不同意（1，2，3）以及原因，谢谢！

美日同盟是件好事。

美国和日本合作阻止中国发展。

美国和日本想从中国手中夺走台湾。

What do you think of the U.S.-Japan alliance?

Thank you for answering my questions. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the three statements (1, 2, 3) below, along with your reasons. Thank you!

1. The U.S.-Japan alliance is a good thing.
2. The USA and Japan are working together to prevent China's development.
3. The USA and Japan want to take Taiwan away from China.

POSTED ON:

Guangdong Patriot Volunteers:

<http://bbs.gd918.org/topic.php?filename=32481&page=last#postend>

**Responses:** By 怒发冲冠, 2008-04-04 19:49: 美日同盟等于美国蛮牛和日本母狗的禽兽组合,没什么好说的! (The alliance is equal to the beastly offspring of a reckless American bull and a Japanese mother dog [SOB?]. There is nothing good to say about it.)

By 边缘人, 2008-04-05 23:29: 如果美国是蛇,那么日本肯定是鼠。美国是狼,日本是狈。 (If America were a snake, Japan would definitely be a mouse. The USA is a wolf; Japan is in collusion with the wolf/in a difficult position [the writer is using a pun which doesn't translate well].)

By 西域长风, 2008-04-10 11:42: 美日同盟包含不可调和的冲突, 美日同盟将很快走向分崩离析, 日本会与中国在多极化的合作中结成战略同盟。请阅读《国际观察》2005年《美日同盟的裂痕》一文。 The alliance is built on irreconcilable conflicts, the alliance will split in the future. Japan will then form a cooperative, strategic alliance with China. Please read [an article in *International Observer* about the alliance].

By 七一雪, 2008-04-29 17:56: 欢迎您访问广东爱国志愿者网站。

对于你的问题

这个地球是圆, 这个社会也是圆的, 国与国之间的分分合合只是社会进程中的一段小插曲分久必合, 合久也必分。所谓的美日同盟只是美日两国之间的某些利益团体之间的协作, 所能产生的影响是短期和局部的。对于中国人来讲, 这些影响可以说是微乎其微, 中国人只会抱着看猴戏的心态来看待。

对于第三条, 中国人是学儒家思想长大的, 都有一颗怜悯之心, 我们是不会扼杀别人做梦的权利的。 (Welcome to you and your questions for the Guangdong Patriot Volunteer website. Regarding your questions...this is a round world, this society is also round. The divisions and unions between countries are only one small interlude of societies' ongoing cycles of being separate for a long time, thereby needing to unite, and having been united for a long time, needing to separate. The so-called U.S.-Japan alliance is just two countries with circumstantially common interests acting together. Anything it produces or influences will only be in the short term and partial [not whole]. Speaking for Chinese people, these influences can be said to be [unknown idiom]. Chinese people can only embrace them as like a show of performing monkeys [??]. As for the third question, Chinese people have studied Confucianism for a long time, and all have compassionate hearts and won't rob/kill other people's rights to dream.)

### China Popular Diaoyu Protection Front:

<http://www.cfdd.org.cn/bbs/viewthread.php?tid=53556&extra=page%3D1&frombbs=1>

### Online Patriot Alliance:

<http://bbs.1931-9-18.org/viewthread.php?tid=239029>

### China History Web:

<http://www.1history.cn/viewthread.php?tid=172962&extra=page%3D1&frombbs=1>

By **江舟画**, 2008-4-4 11:45 : 中国人都知道的事.还用说原因吗? (Is it worth giving reasons for things that all Chinese people know?)

By **简单**, 2008-4-30 14:47 : 你写的所谓美日同盟，其存在不但是阻止中国的发展，日本是美国在东亚的桥头堡，制衡俄罗斯，遏止朝鲜都是美日同盟的目的，日本也从他美国爸爸那得到实惠，才得以发展到今天这个程度。近来进入青春期的日本更大有逆反情绪，其狼子野心不得不防。至于中国人的态度，其实这个很显然，没有中国人会认为美日同盟是好事，在台湾问题上美日更是司马昭之心，不统不独他们才能得到最大利益。总之美日邪恶轴心的存在严重影响中国乃至亚洲的发展，随着美国和日本的衰落，甚至有可能成为战争策源地。(About what you've written on the so-called U.S.-Japan alliance, it is not only preventing China's development. Japan is America's East Asian bridge fortress, balances Russia, checks North Korea—all are the purpose of the alliance. Japan also receives benefits from its American (Sugar?) daddy—the foundation for Japan's development. Having recently entering a youthful period, "little Japan" has even greater contradictory feelings. This wild, wolfish ambition may not want to, but must be guarded against. [??] As for the feelings of Chinese people, this is actually quite clear. No Chinese person is going to think that the U.S.-Japan alliance is a good thing. In the case of the Taiwan problem, the villainous intent of the U.S. and Japan is obvious to all—neither reuniting nor declaring independence is the only way they can achieve their greatest interests. In summary, the USA and Japan's axis of evil is having a serious effect on China and Asia's development. With the decline of the USA and Japan, these may even be a source for war.)

### Wuchanzhe:

<http://wuchanzhe.ttsite.com/columns.php?action=columns&ttt=>

### Strong China BBS:

<http://bbs.people.com.cn/postDetail.do?view=1&id=85523739&bid=1>

### Resist Japan BBS:

<http://bbs.china1931.cn/dispbbs.asp?boardID=17&ID=8493&page=1>

## APPENDIX C: DETAILS OF QUANTITATIVE SALIENCE TEST METHODS, (THE UNSOPHISTICATED AND OCCASIONALLY UNSAVORY)

This section explains what was done to obtain the data for the quantitative salience test section. For practical and theoretical considerations behind these methods, see APPENDIX D (ASSUMPTIONS) on the following pages.

DATE UNDERTAKEN: March, 2008.

MEDIUM OF SEARCHES: internet newspaper sites with built-in search engines or links through major search engines to search their sites.

**LANGUAGES OF NEWSPAPER SITES:** English, Chinese (Simplified 简体中文), Chinese (Traditional 繁體中文), Spanish, Portuguese. Note that newspaper sites in a language other than the official language of the country where the newspaper is published (i.e. Buenos Aires Herald, Hoy Chicago, Yemen Times, China Daily, etc.) should not be taken to be representative of the mass media in those countries.

**SELECTION OF SITES:** In countries where English is the (*de facto*) official language (i.e. USA, Canada, UK, India, etc.), at least one site based in the national capital and one in another city was taken. This was attempted for all countries, though in developing countries whatever newspaper site had a functional search engine was sampled. USA newspaper sites were randomized by selecting from every other state (from an alphabetical list) and alternating between a state capital paper and a non-capital city. For newspapers in the PRC, an attempt was made to sample official CCP, national, semi-private, provincial, and city papers, though again subject to limitations of websites and search engines. A slight bias is to be expected in favor of newspapers with higher circulations (more influential as news sources and also more likely to have good search engines/full archives online).

**TERMS SEARCHED FOR EACH SITE:** English- U.S.-Japan alliance, democracy, human rights, terrorist, global warming, United Nations, bribery, protester, intellectual property, success, Milwaukee, panda, paella, wicket.  
Chinese (Simplified 简体中文)- 美日同盟, 民主, 人权, 恐怖分子, 全球变暖, 联合国, 受贿, 抗议者, 知识产权, 成功, 密尔沃基, 熊猫, 锦饭, 三柱门。  
Chinese (Traditional 繁體中文)- 美日同盟, 民主, 人權, 恐怖分子, 全球變暖, 聯合國, 受賄, 抗議者, 知識產權, 成功, 密爾沃基, 熊貓, 錦飯, 三柱門。  
Spanish - democracia, derechos humanos, terrorista, calentamiento global, naciones unidas, soborno, en protesta por, propiedad intelectual, éxito, Milwaukee, panda, paella, críquet.  
Portuguese - democracia, direitos humanos, terrorista, aquecimento global, Nações Unidas, suborno, manifestante, propriedade intelectual, suceso, Milwaukee, panda, paella, críquet.

## APPENDIX D: ASSUMPTIONS ON THE NEWSPAPER SEARCH DATA

### QUANTITATIVE SALIENCE TEST:

That the data and analysis of PRC newspapers' coverage of the U.S.-Japan alliance are both relevant and accurate rests on the following ASSUMPTIONS (with comments): 1. Newspapers still matter. (While readership of newspapers is in a decreasing trend, especially among the young, they remain one of the most significant sources of news. Where the internet--and in some cases television-- is less pervasive, i.e. China and developing countries, the influence of newspapers may be assumed to be greater.) 2. Online and paper newspaper content for each company do not differ significantly. (Major differences would create different ratios depending on the newsprint or electronic version.) 3. State-controlled media generally represent the view of the state, to the extent of state control. Articles which criticize the state or diverge from the "party line" on an issue represent what the state will tolerate. (Judgments of the state's position on the alliance in China and elsewhere are based primarily on this.) 4. Searching different ranges of time in different newspaper sites will not have a significant effect, unless the range is very small. (This is both a major and shaky assumption regarding my results. Almost none of the sites in China allowed for a specific date range of articles to be searched, even in the "advanced search" option. The maximum portion of sites archives for which results were illustrative was searched in each case. Where results were capped, an attempt was made to narrow the range of dates until the most numerous search term was below the cap. Where searches by individual year were the widest range available, 2007 was used. In some cases, the range of dates searched was very narrow, and thus assumption 4 becomes very shaky indeed. Thus results in general, with only a moderate sample size, are acknowledged to be crude but still useful.) 5. Measuring "U.S.-Japan alliance" against the other search terms provides an accurate ratio of total coverage within the source, which in turn approximates the salience of the issue for a particular media source. (A better measure would be to divide the number of articles containing the phrase "U.S.-Japan alliance" by the total number of articles, however the standards of newspaper site search engines varied widely. Most did not show the total number of articles in the archive, and none gave the total available when searching only a specific date range.) 6. Search engine function/inclusiveness did not influence results significantly. (A major issue for search terms of more than a single word is whether results are for "any" or "all" of the terms. The vast majority of sites did not allow for this to be adjusted; those that did were toggled to "all" of the words for terms such as "United Nations" and "intellectual property".) 7. Linguistic differences in the search terms did not significantly influence results. (It is hoped that with several terms searched, linguistically-influenced results would "even out", with those used more frequently or with more parts of speech in a language [i.e. 民主 *min zhu* = democracy/democratic, 成功 *cheng gong* = success/successful/successfully/succeed] offsetting those used for less [i.e. A search engine in English, Spanish, or Portuguese would not return articles containing "democratic" if "democracy" was the entered search term]. Geographic, cultural, and political differences, conversely, are precisely those in which this study is interested, and which are expected to be represented in the results for the specific search terms chosen.) 8. Differences in the day of the search will not affect results significantly. (Searches made earlier in the month would have fewer results for "protester" than those done later, as Tibetan protest coverage grew, for example. This would mostly affect sources for which the total number of articles retrieved, due to a limited time range, was smaller.)

In retrospect, other search terms may have been more appropriate to address some of the concerns listed above. To test further the results that PRC news is more positive in general, terms such as “war”, “recession”, “applause”, “surplus”, etc. may have been substituted or added, pending time constraints.

Methodological consultation, with previous studies and experienced researchers, on the soundness of these methods was undertaken post-hoc, unfortunately. If found to be wholly unsound, let this stand as an example of the dangers of reckless research!

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