CHINESE SPACE PROGRAMME: INFLUENCE OF CHINESE STRATEGIC CULTURE ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

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Know the enemy and know yourself: in a hundred battles, you will never be in peril.
— SunTzu

In recent times, the rapid growth of China and its 'arrival' on the international arena has attracted widespread attention. China's assertive rhetoric has led many observers to identify it as a looming strategic threat to the current world order. Since the Chinese decision to undertake an Anti-Satellite (ASAT) test in January 2007, China's space programme has attracted increasing international attention. China's journey from being a non-participant status to a state operating at the highest level of space activities in the span of a few decades has increased Chinese prestige and status across globe, while raising anxieties amongst some. The question of China's intentions in space has become a subject of worldwide scrutiny and there is considerable speculation regarding its objectives. The Chinese space programme has been described as shrouded in mystery until recently.[1] Although the Chinese government has issued White Papers on its activities in space, due to the opaqueness of the Chinese society in general and the space programme

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1. Quoted in Joan Johnson-Fresse, *The Chinese Space Program: A Mystery Within Maze* (Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1998), p. 2.

in particular, there is very little appreciation of '*why*' the Chinese space programme has developed the way it has. In large part, the difficulty in appreciating the '*why*' is a lack of understanding and appreciation of the influence of the Chinese strategic culture on its space programme. While it is acknowledged that culture has traditionally influenced the way strategists in a particular country think about matters of war and peace, especially in a country like China, with an ancient civilisation and strategic tradition dating back thousands of years, very little attempt has been made to view the Chinese space programme from a strategic cultural perspective.

This essay is an attempt to understand the motivations behind the Chinese space programme to appreciate the influence of Chinese strategic culture on its development. The essay will first encapsulate the prevalent Chinese strategic culture and evidence of its impact on Chinese strategic decision-making post the revolution in 1949. After that, the essay will examine the Chinese space programme through its inception till the present day to find evidence of the influence of the Chinese strategic culture on its development. In the author's opinion, the development of the Chinese space programme has been to a large extent influenced by the *parabellum* strategic culture mediated by flexibility. The motivations behind China's space programme are deeply influenced by a desire to shake off the humiliation inflicted on it by foreigners and attain its rightful place in the world. At the same time, it would be incorrect to apportion any predicative value on the influence of strategic culture on the future direction of the development of the Chinese space programme.

STRATEGIC CULTURE

The idea that culture could influence strategic outcomes was first captured in classic works, from Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, through the writings of Kautilya in ancient India and to Thucydides' commentary of the Peloponnesian Wars. The importance of strategic culture, if not the term itself, was expressed by Sun Tzu when he wrote, "Know the enemy and know yourself: in a hundred battles you will never be in peril." In the 19th century, Clausewitz also acknowledged the importance of culture by identifying war-fighting

strategy as a "test of moral and physical forces." In modern times, since Jack Snyder brought culture into modern security studies by developing the theory of strategic culture, a growing number of analysts have come to accept that national attitudes and behaviour with respect to the threat and use of force are products of distinct cultures. While attempting to understand Soviet nuclear decision-making, Snyder had argued that "it is useful to look at the Soviet approach to strategic thinking as a unique 'strategic culture'."[2] In his work, Snyder suggested that elites articulate a unique strategic culture related to security-military affairs that is a wider manifestation of public opinion, socialised into a distinctive mode of strategic thinking. He, thus, defined strategic culture as the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national community share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy [3]

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Although a lot of debate has taken place on the aspect of strategic culture since its inception, the literature lacks consensus on the concept and some writers use the term in radically different ways from others. Gray defines strategic culture as "modes of thought and action with respect to force, which derives from perception of the national historical experience, from aspiration for responsible behaviour in national terms and even from the civic and cultural way of life."[4] Johnston considers strategic culture is an "ideational milieu that limits behavioural choices" from which "one could derive specific predictions about strategic choice" and, thus, "provides the milieu within with strategy is debated."[5] For Duffield, the overall effect of national security culture is to predispose societies in

2. Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation Report, 1977), p. v.
3. Ibid., p. 8.
4. Quoted in Jeffery S. Lantis and Darryl Howlett, "Strategic Culture," in John Baylis, James Wirtz, Colin Gray and Eliot Cohen, eds., *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2007), p. 86.
5. Ibid.

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general and political élites in particular toward certain actions and policies over others. Some options will simply not be imagined while some are more likely to be rejected as inappropriate or ineffective compared to others.[6]

One such definition identified and used in this essay is *a distinctive and lasting set of beliefs, values and habits regarding the* ***threat and use of force****, which have their roots in such fundamental influences as* ***geo-political setting, history and political culture.*** These beliefs, values and habits constitute a *strategic* culture which **persists over time**, and exerts some influence on the formation and execution **of strategy.**[7]

A study of the literature identifies various sources of strategic culture, encompassing both material and ideational factors. Geography, climate and resources have long been key elements in strategic thinking throughout the millennia and remain important sources of strategic culture today. Scholars agree that **history and experience** are important considerations in the birth and evolution of states, and, hence, the strategic cultural identities that comprise them. Many analysts also regard key texts (like Sun Tzu's *Art of War*; Kautilya's *Arthshastra*) as important factors that shape strategic thought and action. Traditional analyses of peace and conflict have long pointed to the influence of such texts throughout history and in different cultural settings.

Within China, there seems to be widespread recognition that 'deep' history and culture are critical sources of strategic behaviour. Scholars, analysts, and policy-makers in the People's Republic of China (PRC) have frequently asserted that past and present policy and behaviour are conditioned by a distinctive traditional Chinese philosophy of international relations. Some Chinese scholars have used the term "military culture" (*junshi wenhua*) to describe a consistent thread of strategic thought and practice that

6. Ibid., p. 90.
7. Alan Macmillan, Ken Booth and Russell Trood, "Strategic Culture,"in Ken Booth and Russel Trood, eds., *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Great Britain: Macmillian Press Ltd, 1999), p. 8.

was historically developed and inherited. Some Chinese analysts have also suggested that the term strategic culture is best seen as the predominant "strategic value system" *(zhanlue jiazhi guan*) at a particular point in history. This value system provides a society and its military with definitions of interests, and, thus, also places limits on the methods and scope of war. The strategic value system also reflects culturally rooted "thought processes" or "cognitive processes" *(si wei fangshi*) that affect strategic choices.[8] One influential military thinker, Lt Gen Li Jijun, former Vice President of China's Academy of Military Sciences, reasons that:

> Culture is the root and foundation of strategy. Strategic thinking, in the process of its evolutionary history, flows into the mainstream of a country's or a nation's culture. Each country's or nation's strategic culture cannot but bear the imprint of cultural traditions, which in a subconscious and complex way, prescribes and defines strategy making.[9]

CHINESE STRATEGIC CULTURE

Culture has long been considered a critical dimension in China's approach to strategy and warfare and the Chinese society has nurtured a distinctive strategic culture. The country possesses the largest land area in Asia, the largest population in the world, some 5,000 years of continuous history of civilisation, and the conviction of the Chinese occupancy of the Middle Kingdom has had a profound influence on the Chinese approach to life. The enormity of the fact makes it difficult to appreciate the depth of its cultural heritage. The complexity which has characterised China for more centuries than most countries have known histories is compounded by a total lack of understanding and appreciation of the Chinese culture and way of life by the rest of the world. The lack of understanding of language adds an additional layer of difficulty in trying to study China and invariably whatever literature is available is from Western sources—in itself clouded by inherent

8. Alaistair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 25.
9. Andrew Scobell, "China and Strategic Culture" (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), p. 1.

prejudices and miscommunication, either deliberate or unintentional.[10] The complexity of studying China has often been compared to the Chinese strategic game of *Wei Qi.*[11] With the handicaps that it produces, it is very difficult to understand the issue from the correct cultural prism; however, a view through the prism is certainly possible. At the same time, any attempt to understand strategic decision-making of an 'alien' culture must be treated with caution, as Johnston warns.

Done well , the careful analysis of strategic culture could help policy-makers establish more accurate and empathetic understandings of how different actors perceive the game being played… "Done badly, [it] could reinforce stereotypes about the strategic predispositions of other states and close off policy alternatives deemed inappropriate for dealing with local strategic cultures."[12]

Chinese strategic culture can be traced back to classics such as the *Art of War* by Sun Tzu and the *Seven Military Classics*, which stipulate the relationship between political ends and military strategies, the efficacy of use of force and specific military tactics. Some authors claim that China has exhibited a distinctive "cultural style" in war, rooted in the strategic thought of Sun Tzu with a predisposition for stratagem over combat and psychological and symbolic warfare over head-to-head combat on the battlefield. While the term "strategic culture" was not used, conventional thinking was that China's Confucian tradition was a key determining factor in Chinese strategic thinking. There appeared to be an accepted consensus till recent times amongst scholars that the Chinese strategic tradition is uniquely anti-militarist and that Chinese strategic culture stresses non-violent political or diplomatic means to deal with adversaries, or—when force is absolutely necessary—the controlled, defensive use of violence due to heavy reliance on Sun Tzu's oft cited phrase "not fighting and subduing the enemy."

10. There are increasing instances of documents or information being misinterpreted as indicating government views, when they do not, and with mistranslations that confer very different meanings to those intended. Joan Johnson-Fresse, "China's Space Ambitions" (Proliferation Papers, IFRI, Summer 2007), p. 24.
11. In *Wei Qi,* a player has 256 pieces with which to strategise to manoeuvre towards victory as against 16 pieces in the more traditional and common game of chess.
12. Alaistair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 4, Spring 1995, pp. 63-64.

Over the past decade or so, China has been perceived as increasingly belligerent, a perception in direct conflict with its earlier image. Further, the Chinese history is literally a history of war—from the Western Zhou (1100 BC) through to the end of Qing Dynasty (1911), as many as 3,790 wars and rebellions can be identified, and since its inception in October 1949, the PRC has resorted to force as an instrument of foreign policy ten times.[13] The threat and use of force by China cannot be explained by the 'non-militarist' and pacifist image. Recently, analysts have argued that China's strategic disposition cannot be accurately characterised as either pacifist or bellicose. Rather, the country has a dual strategic culture and the main strands are Confucian-Mencian, that is conflict averse and defensive minded; and a *realpolitik* one which favours military solutions and is offensively oriented.

Whereas the Confucian-Mencian view sees the world as harmonious, orderly and hierarchically structured in which conflicts are regarded as largely deviant phenomena rather than the nature of things and should / can be managed through means other than use of brute force, the *realpolitik* view which has come to be called the *parabellum* view of the world, holds that conflicts are perennial and zero-sum, and regards the use of force as the only effective means to ensure security, stability and peace.

Confucian-Mencian Perspective

The Confucian-Mencian perspective forms the core of what is called the *yin* approach to China's external relations, which views the world as harmonious rather than conflictual. The Confucian-Mencian paradigm, assumes essentially that conflict is aberrant or at least avoidable through the promotion of good government and the coopting or enculturation of external threats. When force is used, it should be applied defensively, minimally, only under unavoidable conditions, and then only in the name of the righteous restoration of a moral-political order.

13. Shu Guang Zhang, "China: Traditional and Revolutionary Heritage," in Booth and Trood, eds., n.7, p. 29.

In the Confucian-Mencian view, harmony and order can be maintained through virtuous behaviour. There is a strong aversion to emphasis on, and the immediate application of, purely military means. Since order can be achieved through benevolence, the use of force is unnecessary and should be ranked lower in a statesman's inventory of instruments. There is an understanding that *wu* (warfare or the use of force) and *bing* (soldiers and weaponry) should be subjected to the control of *wen* (civilian rule) and seldom expended. "The resort to warfare (*wu*) was an admission of bankruptcy in the pursuit of *wen*. Consequently, it should be the last resort." When the use of force becomes inevitable, it is *famou* (attack strategy) rather than *fabing* (actual fighting), defensive rather than offensive, that should be preferred. The Confucian-Mencian perspective draws heavily on Sun Tzu's view that the aim of war is to subdue an opponent, to change his attitude and induce his compliance. Hence the idiom: *buzhan er querenzhibing* (subduing the enemy without fighting).[14]

The Confucian-Mencian paradigm of placing virtue, benevolence and accommodation over coercion, violence and confrontation was underlined by a world view that assumed China, "the Middle Kingdom," at the centre of the universe. One of the first Jesuit missionaries to China explained the notion of the Middle Kingdom as follows:

"One must realise that the Chinese, supposing as they do that the Earth is square, claim that China is the greatest part of it. So to describe their empire, they use the word *t'ein-hia,* 'Under the Heavens.' So, with this admirable system of geography, they were able to confine the rest of humanity to the four corners of their square."[15]

This Sino-centric view was reinforced by the fact that from the Xia Dynasty until the mid-19th century, China virtually dominated and reigned over what is now East and Southeast Asia. Being in the centre of the world then inherently meant that everyone else was on the periphery, not as important, significant only in terms of their relation to China. Embedded in centuries of history and generations of thought, the Chinese have described

14. Jing-Dong Yaun, "Culture Matters: Chinese Approaches to Arms Control," in Keith R. Krause, ed., *Culture and Security* (London: Frank Class, 1999), p. 89.
15. Johnson-Fresse, n. 1, p. 12.

themselves as the "first civilisation on Earth," the father of the "noblest people," and "the most fully human people on earth."[16]

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Parabellum Perspective

The non-violent characterisation of Chinese strategic culture has been challenged by scholars arguing that there is a deep-rooted *realpolitik* hard core in Chinese strategic culture. This Chinese realism reflects the *yang* approach to external relations that emphasises diversity over uniformity, conflict over harmony, and economic/military power over moral persuasion.[17] Alastair Iain Johnston refers to this as the *parabellum* or hard *realpolitik* strategic culture that, in essence, argues that the best way of dealing with security threats is to eliminate them through the use of force. This preference is tempered by an explicit sensitivity to one's **relative capacity** to do this…this is consistent with what Vasquez calls an "opportunity model" of *realpolitik* behaviour, where "states need no special motivation to threaten or use force; rather, they are always predisposed to do so, **unless restrained** by contextual variables."[18]

Parabellum stands for the concept *si pacem parabellum* (if you want peace, prepare for war). Linguistically, the phrase has a parallel in Chinese terms, "thinking about danger and threat while residing in conditions of peace" (*ju and si wei*).

The *parabellum* perspective of Chinese strategic culture views the world as conflictual rather than harmonious and that it is due largely to the threatening nature of the adversary. In the zero-sum context, the application of violence is not a choice but rather an imperative for the advancement of the state's interests and survival. The best way to ensure security is to eliminate sources of insecurity which, in most cases, are potential as well as actual adversaries. Since the use of force is inevitable,

16. Ibid.
17. Yaun, n. 14, p. 89.
18. Johnston, n. 8, p. x.

its offensive rather than defensive application becomes paramount. These assumptions generally translate into a preference for offensive strategies.

The *parabellum* paradigm comes closest to Western notions of hard *realpolitik* in statecraft and assumes that the military destruction of the adversary is essential for state security. However, the paradigm is also mediated by the *concept of absolute flexibility (quan bian*[19]*)* that suggests that the offensive application of violence is likely to be successful only if the strategic conditions are ripe. The strategist cannot be constrained by self-imposed political, military or moral limits on strategic choices. As Johnston argues, the notion of *quan bian* in effect results in interpreting the axiom of "not fighting and subduing the enemy" to "respond flexibly to the enemy and thus create conditions for victory." Whereas "not fighting and subduing the enemy" as a decision rule implies a strategic preference in which non-violent methods are preferred, the notion of *quan bian* lifts this restriction.

Scholars lack consensus on the relative impact of the two strands on Chinese strategic thought though most agree that the two paradigms do not have separate and equal influence on Chinese strategic thinking and that the *parabellum* paradigm has been, for the most part, predominant in practice, with military power playing a great role in influencing Chinese strategic thought. Alastair Iain Johnston's analysis of the *Seven Military Classics* shows a consistent emphasis on offensive action mediated by flexibility since ancient times in China.[20] Some authors like Tiezun Zhang argue that Chinese strategic culture is not "realist" but "moralist;" however, even he agrees that use of force is central to Chinese strategic thought although the rationale for it may be "defensive."[21] While studying the Chinese strategic culture, some themes that can be distinctively identified, have played a major role in shaping the Chinese strategic thought: *'place under heaven'*, *mistrust of foreigners and sense of 'inviolability'*.

19. Ibid., p. 102.
20. Ibid.
21. See Tiejun Zhang, "Chinese Strategic Culture: Traditional and Present Features," *Comparative Strategy*, 21, 2002.

History is the primary source of strategic culture but the influence of different historical periods varies. The question, as raised by Michael Hunt, is: which part of the history is more likely to be remembered? It could be argued that "the only past that was meaningful was the recent one, defined…in terms of oppression and struggle over the last century and a half."[22] The experience with foreigners has had an important impact on the development of modern China's perceptions of security and attitudes toward the threat and use of force. The decline of the Qing Dynasty and the onset of "a hundred years of humiliation" when Western cannons opened China's door in 1840 and rendered China from a "Middle Kingdom" to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial vassal state whose very survival was on the line. This shift of status and the consequent struggle for its restoration have created a strong sentiment for, and sensitivity to, independence and sovereignty in the collective Chinese mindset. The "humiliating years" firmly implanted the feeling among Chinese leaders that "internal instability and backwardness invite foreign invasions" and a strong will to ensure China's national interests. As conceived by Xiao Gongqin, "The profound sense of humiliation, including all the setbacks and frustrations that the Chinese have experienced, has planted in the Chinese people a certain complex that is accumulated and settled in the deepest recesses of the Chinese mentality. This complex can be called 'the dream of becoming a strong nation.'"[23]

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As suggested by Rosita Dellios, China's strategic philosophy, past and present, may be interpreted to address two essential needs: one is the attainment of China's 'rightful place under heaven'—the closet approximation in Western understanding being 'destiny' or 'proper place'— and the other is 'inviolability.'[24] National unification is a core value in China's national

22. Yaun, n. 14, p. 92.
23. Zhang, n.21, p. 81.
24. Rosita Dellios, "Chinese Strategic Culture: Part 1 The Heritage from the Past" (Research Paper, Bond University, 1994), p. 6.

security calculus on which no compromise is possible. It is an immutable principle in part because of China's inability to stop exploitation and oppression by foreign powers. According to Li Jijun,

> The most important strategic legacy of the Chinese nation is the awareness of identification with the concept of unification, and this is where lies the secret for the immortality of . . .Chinese civilisation . . . [s]eeking unification . . . [is] the soul of .. . Chinese military strategy endowed by . . Chinese civilisation.[25]

PEACE IS PRECIOUS

While humiliation and 'barbarism' taught China to pay attention to the necessity of acquiring a formidable physical force, the rhetoric of moral order was never relinquished. A deeply-held belief among the Chinese elite is that China possesses a pacifist strategic culture and has never been an aggressive or expansionist state. Although striving for peace is a near universal human desire, what is striking in the case of China is the degree to which this is stressed—to the extent that the Chinese civilisation is viewed as being uniquely pacifist, totally distinct from other strategic traditions of the world.[26] One of the official articulations of this appears in China's 1998 Defence White Paper which states:

> The defensive nature of China's national defense policy springs from the country's historical and cultural traditions. China is a country with 5,000 years of civilization, and a peace-loving tradition. Ancient Chinese thinkers advocated "associating with benevolent gentlemen and befriending good neighbors," which shows that throughout history, the Chinese people have longed for peace in the world and for relations of friendship with the people of other countries.[27]

25. Quoted in Scobell, n. 9, p. 11.
26. Ibid., p. 5.
27. People's Republic of China, Defence White Paper 1998, *China's National Defense*, www.china.org.cn/e-white/5/5.2.htm, accessed 27 April 2010.

Military researchers have traced this stated preference for peace and harmony to history. According to the Gen Xing Shizhong, Commandant of the National Defense University:

> The Chinese people have always dearly loved peace. . . . This historical tradition and national psychology have a profound influence on the national defense objectives and strategic policies of the new socialist China.[28]

Johnston's analysis of the *Seven Military Classics* suggests that the regime must be prepared militarily to seize the initiative, act offensively and preferably through preemptive attack.

ACTIVE DEFENCE

Coupled with the belief of a pacifist strategic tradition is the belief that China's employment of force is always for 'defensive' purposes. Some military scholars insist that virtually all of the approximately 3,790 wars that China has fought in more than 4,000 years (till the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911) have been civil wars or wars to unify the country. The Great Wall is regularly cited by Chinese scholars as an illustration of this defensive tendency.[29] There is widespread belief that, whenever China goes to war, it does so only in "self-defence" and all "military actions" since 1949, have been waged in "self-defence."[30] Chinese scholars argue that whenever Chinese forces have ventured abroad, they have done so for a limited time and for non-expansionist purposes.[31]

This 'defensive' proposition of Chinese military actions may be attributed to cultural or linguistic underpinnings. The Chinese character *wu* (martial art) is a combination of two other characters that is *zi* (stop) and *ge* (weapon). This implies a deeply-embedded wish of using force for stopping aggressiveness.[32] The principle of active defence is central to

28. Quoted in Scobell, n. 9, p. 5.
29. Ibid., 9.
30. Yaun, n. 14, p. 95; Allen S. Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950-96, and Taiwan," *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 2, Fall 2001.
31. Examples often cited to support this interpretation include the voyages of Ming Dynasty Admiral Zheng He.
32. Zhang, n. 21, p. 86.

Chinese strategic thinkers. Johnston's analysis of the *Seven Military Classics* suggests that the regime must be prepared militarily to seize the initiative, act offensively and preferably through preemptive attack.[33] Most thinkers believe this is central to Chinese strategy even today. According to the PLA's officers' handbook, "All military experts, ancient and contemporary, Chinese and foreign, recognise the importance of active defence."[34] In a book edited by Zhang Wannian, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, active defence is considered as the basic military strategy for the present China—with emphasis on "offensive defense" and "deterrence" ("...foundation for deterring war is the capacity of winning war."[35])

Coupled with this is the tendency of researchers and policy-makers in China to broadly define defence as virtually anything, including a pre-emptive strike. China has been able to justify its own initiation of hostilities as 'defensive' by placing itself in the position of the aggrieved party and calling those aggressions "defensive counterattacks." Conflicts, are labelled "self-defence wars" or "self-defence counterattacks" [*ziwei zhanzheng*, *ziwei fanjizhan* or *ziwei huanjizhan]*.[36] Although China invaded Vietnam in February 1979 (triggered by Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia), Beijing officially labelled this war a "self-defensive counterattack" [*ziwei huanji*]. The same reasoning is applied to China's border wars with India (in 1962) and with the Soviet Union (in 1969). The rationale for developing nuclear weapons by China was also described in "defensive" terms.[37]

RIGHTEOUS WAR

The notion of righteous war is prevalent in the Chinese's military texts and seems to be a crucial element of China's traditional approach to war. Chinese strategic analysts tend to stress that Chinese thinking about

33. Johnston, n. 8, p. 105.
34. Scobell, n. 9, p. 12.
35. Zhang, n. 21, p. 85.
36. Scobell, n. 9, p. 12.
37. Zhang, n. 21, p. 43.

just or righteous war (*yizhan)* dates back thousands of years. In Chinese thinking, 'just' wars are those that are fought by oppressed groups against oppressors; unjust wars are the wars waged by oppressors against the oppressed. The righteous use of force meant "sending forth armor and weapons to punish the unrighteous." Once the ends of war are deemed righteous, then any and all means become righteous by themselves. Under the banner of righteousness, the destruction of the enemy is considered both necessary and desirable. In contemporary Chinese thinking, China has been a weak, oppressed country fighting against powerful imperialist oppressors. Thus, for many Chinese, any war fought by their country is by definition a just conflict—even a war in which China strikes first. This might include any war fought to "restore or protect national territory or to maintain national prestige."[38]

The righteous war doctrine mandates that whether one resorts to use of force or not depends on the adversary. It is the enemy's disposition that decides whether one faces a security threat. This disposition to war is, by definition, unrighteous. One's own behaviour, on the other hand, is a reaction to a dangerous situation created by the adversary, hence, one's own use of force, is not only legitimate and necessary, it is also not bound by any moral limits. The use of force under these conditions is considered as 'defensive' and of complete necessity.

CHINESE STRATEGIC CULTURE AND CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE IN PRC

Before proceeding to analyse the impact of the Chinese strategic culture on its space programme, it would be prudent to examine if Chinese strategic policy in the post-1949 period reflects traditional patterns of thought and practice that have been inherited from earlier periods in history. Is it wise to assume an unbroken chain between historical strategic preferences and contemporary policy? Or did the revolution mark a radical departure from the past, with Mao and the Chinese Communist Party bringing a unique approach to Chinese strategic thought?

38. Scobell, n. 9, p. 11.

Tiejun Zhang says it would be incorrect to disconnect linkages between the traditional and present Chinese strategic culture.[39] The traditional strategic culture has, to a large extent, influenced contemporary Chinese decision-making, with the literature often drawing connections between the thoughts of Sun Tzu and Mao Zedong. However, due to fundamental changes in international and domestic circumstances, the contemporary version of the Chinese strategic culture, while retaining certain elements of its traditional counterpart, has adapted itself.

Mao took to heart the *parabellum* strand of the strategic culture and believed that since the enemy can never be expected to *fangxia tudao, lidi chengfuo* (lay down arms and become pacifist monks), the possession of force and a readiness in its execution comprise the only insurance for self-preservation. Mao was quite explicit that war was "the politics of human bloodshed," the objective of which was to "preserve oneself and destroy the enemy." He insisted that "whoever wants to seize state power and intends to preserve it, must have a strong military…We are for the abolition of war, we do not want war. But only through war can we abolish war…" This corresponds very closely to the axiom in one of the *Seven Military Classics*, *Si Ma Pa,* "To use war in order to prevent war, even though it is war, it is permissible." Given that Mao had a virtual monopoly over strategic decision-making in the post-1949 period, and the fact that his strategic thought was largely embraced by his successors, the Chinese security policy post 1949 is largely influenced by the *parabellum* strategic culture.

What Mao most clearly borrowed from traditional strategic thought was the concept of absolute flexibility. While at the perceptual level, Mao's strategic thinking is steeped in the *parabellum* paradigm, at the operational level, it demonstrates sufficient flexibility (*quan bien*). In two of Mao's essays on strategy,[40] he has made explicit reference to the concept of gauging the nature of changing circumstances and exploiting changes in strategic opportunities, i.e., *quan bian.* The dialectic approach to relative capabilities manifested itself in the concept of people's war and a strategy of

39. See Zhang, n. 21.
40. "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War" (1936) and "On Protracted War" (l938a) quoted in Johnston, n. 8, p. 255.

jiji fangyu (*active defence*). Mao displayed a superb sense of maintaining balance between culture and pragmatism. For him, the exact application of one or the other depended on the *relative balance of capabilities*—the rhetoric need not always be carried out if the conditions are not right; however, actions should in all possibilities be justified in rhetorical terms or *just cause*.

Geo-politics, ideology and the historical consciousness of foreign dominance all have played a crucial role in Beijing's threat perception post 1949.

The *realpolitik* theme of the Chinese strategic culture has continued to influence China's post Cold War threat perceptions and guide its security policy. Geo-politics, ideology and the historical consciousness of foreign dominance all have played a crucial role in Beijing's threat perception post 1949. Anti-interventionism and 'anti-hegemonism' as defined by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have governed the way Beijing has continued to perceive threats to the state. The Chinese have also regarded the use—not merely the demonstration—of force as a resort to international conflicts. According to the data set generated by Wilkenfeld, Brecher and Moser, the PRC has resorted to violence in 72 percent of foreign-policy crises it has been involved in since 1949[41] and all have been described as *defensive*, *deterrent* and *constrained*. There seems to have been a tendency of Chinese leaders to define even political/diplomatic issues as a high threat, where force was a legitimate response. Before deciding to shell Jinmen and Mazu in 1958, Mao asserted that the reason why "Dulles looks down upon us [is] that we have not yet completely shown and proven our strength."[42] So the best way to deal with fearsome US imperialists was "to demonstrate our boldness." The features most readily identifiable from China's response to crisis situations post 1949 are that China is very sensitive to the issue of territorial integrity and that the use of force appears to have been related to improved relative capabilities. Indeed, there can be a number of competing reasons as to why China has readily tended to resort to force in crises but if one were to try

41. Ibid., p. 256.
42. Zhang, n. 13, p. 40.

Mao and his comrades were determined that "a new China" should assume "her rightful place" among nations.

to make a strategic-culture argument to explain the frequent use of force, then these outcomes are more consistent with the *parabellum* paradigm than with the Confucian-Mencian paradigm.

China under Mao took as its primary goal the complete liberation of the nation from "imperialist" dominance. Mao and his comrades were determined that "a new China" should assume "her rightful place" among nations. China's development of the nuclear bomb is argued to be aimed at breaking the nuclear monopoly of the superpowers. In a letter to Khrushchev, dated June 6, 1963, Mao declared that, "the Chinese people will never accept the privileged position of one or two superpowers because of their monopoly of the nuclear weapons in today's world." Leaders like Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin have repeatedly argued the need for China to maintain self-reliance as the core in its pursuit of Comprehensive National Power (CNP), especially in the domain of defence strategy. China's self-reliant defence strategy "requires the country …to self-reliantly make decisions and strategies; and to depend mainly on ourselves to develop our defense industry."[43] Some authors have drawn links between the ancient stratagem of "victory without war" and the concept of CNP—the term preferred by the Chinese elites to describe national power. Although the term in itself did not come into existence until the 1980s, it is argued that the concept has ancient cultural roots and "evolved from concept of 'power,' 'actual strength', to 'national power.'" This phrase, as Wu Chunqiu views it, means, "Under certain military pressures, one can coordinate a political and diplomatic offensive, to psychologically disintegrate the enemy forces and subdue them." According to Wu, "victory without wars" does not mean that there is no war at all. The wars one must fight are political wars, economic wars, scientific and technological wars, diplomatic wars, etc. In short, it is a war of *comprehensive national power*.

43. Zhang, n. 21, p. 81.

UTILITY OF USING STRATEGIC CULTURE TO EXPLAIN CHINA'S SPACE PROGRAMME

There are interesting parallels between the Confucian-Mencian (*yin*) and the *parabellum* paradigms (*yang*) of Chinese strategic culture, on the one hand, and the Western approaches to international relations, on the other. To some extent, the *yin-yang* dichotomy is matched by the idealistic (liberalism) and the pragmatic (realist) approaches in the West. It is evident that the *parabellum* paradigm of the Chinese strategic culture does not differ radically from key elements in the Western *realpolitik* tradition. Indeed, the Chinese case might be classified as a hard *realpolitik* sharing many of the same tenets about the nature of the enemy and the efficacy of violence as the advocates of the realist school of thought. If the predictions made by the *parabellum* strategic-culture model, mediated by the notion of *quan bian*, and those made by a structural *realpolitik* model in which historical or cultural assumptions and perceptions are excluded, do not differ much, then, as Johnston argues, can we assume that the elites think of, or perceive, the world in *realist terms*, and that the key determinant of strategic choices is dependent upon the changes in the relative balance of capabilities?

Huiyun Feng says the determinants of a state's grand strategy are not limited to material capabilities, as many realists argue.[44] Just as strategists and their institutions cannot be acultural and continuously perceive and interpret the material realm culturally,[45] a state's grand strategy is also dependent upon how its leaders look at the world through the cultural and historical prisms they represent. Strategic decisions rest on the acquired political and philosophical views and beliefs of leaders over the issues of war and peace. In the Chinese case, a long-term, deeply-rooted, persistent, and consistent set of assumptions about the strategic environment and the best means for dealing with it. The Chinese realism is different because of its unique cultural and historical underpinning. It has developed from a

44. Huiyun Feng, "The Operational Code of Mao Zedong: Defensive or Offensive Realist?" *Security Studies*, 14:4, 2005, p. 640.
45. Stuart Poore, "What is the Context? A Reply to the Gray-Johnston Debate on Strategic Culture," *Review of International Studies*, 29, 2003, p. 282.

cultural hegemony that was Sino-centric and continues a desire to return to, and restore, its supremacy and cannot be merely explained in material terms.

CHINESE SPACE PROGRAMME

China has a history of interest in rocketry going back several centuries. Between 300 BC and 1000 AD, "fire arrows" were used in China and by 1045 AD, gunpowder rockets were important weapons in China's military arsenal. China perceives itself having initiated and once dominated the field of space exploration; with China's Space White Paper 2000 mentioning that China had invented gunpowder, the "embryo of modern space rockets." In modern times, China's interest in space related affairs began even before the dawn of the space age with the launch of the Sputnik.[46] What ultimately emerged as its space programme began in 1956, with the setting up of its first Missile and Rocket Research Institute on October 8, 1956. Hindered by what China calls "technical blockades put in by the imperialist countries,"[47] there was little development until the 1960s, when experiments with liquid-fuel rockets picked up momentum. However, since then, China has made scores of satellite launches, has well-developed launch facilities, carried out ASAT tests and has sent *taikonauts* into space. The difficulty of appreciating China's motivations for its space programme with its unique complexities is further compounded by the inherent 'grey' nature of most space technologies. There are analysts who feel that the pursuit of space technology can be benign and development oriented; others perceive it as inherently nefarious. That China is so large and complex that one can look for proof of any thesis, and find it,[48] complicates the situation.

46. Chen Yanping, "China's Space Policy—A Historical Review," *Space Policy*, May 1991, p. 117; Roger Handberg and Zhen Li, *Chinese Space Policy* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 57.
47. Daphne Burleson, *Space Programs Outside the United States* (North Carolina: Mcfarland & Company, 2005), p. 53.
48. Joan Johnson-Fresse, "Scorpions in a Bottle: China and the US in Space," *The Nonproliferation Review* 11:2, 2004, p. 171.

Thinking About Danger and Threat While Residing in Conditions of Peace

In the modern era, Chinese interest in rocket development owes its origin to military imperatives. While deciding on their space programme, the Chinese did not view space as a goal other than as a medium through which missiles would travel toward their targets.[49] World War II and the Chinese civil war had made Mao and other Chinese leaders aware of the huge military gap between China and the West. China's experience had included a threat by President Eisenhower of a nuclear attack towards the end of the Korean War[50] if a truce was not established. Mao initiated China's nuclear programme in 1955 which, in turn, generated a requirement[51] for long range missiles that could reliably deliver China's warheads to their targets. The missile development programme was inaugurated in May 1956 when the Ministry of Defence established the Fifth Academy for Missile Research. The superpowers' nuclear arms race at that time further accentuated China's sense of isolation and threat. Due to external security threats which China perceived to be credible[52] the development of the space programme was accelerated and placed directly under the leadership of the Party chief and head of government.[53] In March 1956, the State Council passed the Long-Term Plans for Scientific and Technological Development, 1956-1967, in which missile technology was included as a major national priority under the direct leadership of the Central Committee.

Despite major upheavals that tore the Chinese society in the 1950s (the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Great Leap Forward) and 1960s (the Cultural Revolution), the missile and space programmes were insulated due to military and prestige considerations.[54] In both the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Great Leap Forward, the rocket programme was spared the purges and dismissals[55] that affected intellectuals and scientists in other areas, and during the Cultural Revolution, the space programme was placed under

49. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 46.
50. Ibid., p. 57.
51. Unlike the two superpowers who had long range bombers to deliver nuclear weapons, China lacked any delivery mechanism capable of threatening the US or USSR.
52. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 56.
53. Ibid.
54. Michael Sheehan, *The International Politics of Space* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 161.
55. Yanping, n. 46, p. 118.

Under Deng Xiaoping's "four modernisations," pursuit of nuclear deterrence remained the driving force, invigorating China's efforts to build ballistic missiles.

martial law.[56] Although those working in the programme were mainly civilians, the authority of the programme was placed in the hands of the military, which treated the missile programme as a military project and ensured that the civilian staff came under military discipline. During the famine years (1959-61) when an estimated 15-30 million people died due to malnutrition in China, the missile programme continued to receive state support due to the perceived external threats,[57] first from the US and later from the Soviet Union.

Under Deng Xiaoping's "four modernisations," pursuit of nuclear deterrence remained the driving force, invigorating China's efforts to build ballistic missiles. The priority articulated was clear—defence first over all other uses[58]—and the military/space community focussed on the development of reliable Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and Sea-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) technology. The military rationale has remained central to China's space programme since then. Key Chinese space launchers have been derived from modified long range ballistic missiles, rather than from developments arising out of civilian sounding-rocket programmes. The Long March launcher was originally designed as an ICBM (Dong Feng 4 and 5) unlike as a rocket, as the French Ariane was developed. It was the perceived threat from the Soviet Union that prompted China to build its second launch centre, the Xichang Launch Centre.[59] The first White Paper on Space issued by China in 2000 states that the "aims and principles of China's space activities are determined by their important status and function in protecting China's national interests…" The Space White Paper 2006 further elaborates that the aims of China's space activities are "… *national security*…protect China's national interests and rights, and build up the *comprehensive national strength*."

56. Sheehan, n. 54, p. 160.
57. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 62.
58. Ibid., p. 65.
59. Ibid., p. 64.

The Chinese Space White Paper 2006 states that "in light of the country's actual situation and needs, China will focus on certain areas while ignoring less important ones. It will choose some limited targets; concentrate its strength on making key breakthroughs…" It would not be incorrect to assume that this rationale of choosing limited targets to concentrate its strength would have guided the development of the space programme since its inception, so it is fair to assume that the choices made by the Chinese leadership should provide a reliable measure of the motivations and intentions behind the Chinese space programme. The rationale for choosing development of communication satellites over other application satellites during the "four modernisations" is argued to be a requirement for reliable long range military communications for command and control over the large and mountainous country and the ability to use the satellites to target long range weapons.[60] In recent times, for space programmes with military applications, China has made most progress in developing satellite reconnaissance capabilities that are crucial for building information superiority.[61] It was only after the articulation of the White Paper that China demonstrated its capability for targeting satellites in orbit by carrying out ASAT tests in January 2007 and 2010.

Having once experienced nuclear blackmail, the chief strategic rationale for China's space programme today is perceived to be the threat posed by the US and its perceived Asian "allies"[62] to China. The Chinese are understood to have appreciated the importance of space in any future conflict and the present US dominance of it.[63] In response to the stated goal of the US for effective space control,[64] the Chinese White Paper 2006 states that "given the unpredictable security situation in outer space in the 21st century,

60. Sheehan, n. 54, p. 168.
61. James A. Lewis, "China as a Military Space Competitor" Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 2004, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/040801_china_space_competitor.pdf, accessed January 07, 2010), p. 4.
62. China considers Japan and India to be co-conspirators of the US to contain China; see "Journey to the Moon," *Business China*, vol. 33, issue 21, 2007, p. 4.
63. Joan Johnson-Fresse, "China's Manned Space Program: Sun Tzu or Apollo Redux?" *Naval War College Review*, vol. LVI, no. 3, 2003, p. 52.
64. Ibid., p. 52; See US National Space Policy, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/national-space-policy-2006.pd, accessed March 29, 2010.

By the year 2040, China's space force is set to have become fully operational as an independent service directly under the national military command.

China will make efforts to protect its legitimate interests. It will also pay more attention to space security…" China has formed a military research centre whose mission is to study military space technologies and space wars with the long-term aim articulated as "by the year 2040, China's space force is set to have become fully operational as an independent service directly under the national military command."[65]

Overcoming the Superior with the Inferior

Not wishing to leave the US unchallenged in the event of a conflict, Chinese military analysts assert that what the Chinese seek, while upgrading their military capabilities, is an asymmetric advantage—to find areas where the US and its style of warfare is more vulnerable to attack, an approach sometimes captured in a phrase used in PLA writings: "overcoming the superior with the inferior."[66] China seems to have identified space as an area where it could erode the US military advantage.[67] One of the most plausible motivations assumed for the Chinese ASAT test is argued to be building up the capability to neutralise US advantage in space in any future conflict by targeting its space assets. China has also warned that it might consider using micro-satellites to deny the US the use of space in a crisis or conflict.[68] The Chinese recognise the importance of information dominance in a conflict, and their writings articulate that "the securing of information dominance cannot be separated from space dominance. It can be said, gaining space dominance is the root of winning informationalised war."[69] Chinese military writings indicate that the current Chinese concept of space operations is to exploit space for their own ends, while denying it to their adversaries. The Chinese seem to be focussing on damaging and disrupting the adversary's

65. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 115.
66. Lewis, n. 61, p. 2.
67. Ibid., p. 1.
68. Johnson-Fresse, n. 63, p. 64.
69. Davis M. Finkelstein, "China's Space Program: Civilian, Commercial & Military Aspects" (Conference overview, Project Asia, October 2005), p. 11.

decision processes in order to slow their opponents down.[70] The importance placed on space assets in any future conflict can be gauged from the fact that "disabling the more powerful navy by attacking its space-based communications and surveillance systems and even attacking naval units from space" has become a well-accepted strategy [71] in China. The Chinese have tried to convince others that China would be too difficult to defeat and would inflict excessive damage on the aggressor in the process. Although, presently, Chinese space activities are being portrayed as emblematic of its rising power and influence, the military undertones regarding China's ability to inflict damage in any future military conflict are implicit rather than explicitly stated.

Some of the analysts suggest that China does not currently possess a structured, coherent military space programme[72] and that China's militarily space efforts are often more a demonstration of technological prowess across a range of space activities rather than an effort to build an operational military space capability[73] but the number of observers holding such a view is in a minority. There is little disagreement among the majority of analysts on the capabilities and development stage of the Chinese space programme. The Chinese Space White Paper itself states that China considers space "as a strategic way to enhance its economic, scientific, technological and national defence strength."[74] Since their inception, Chinese space activities have fallen under the general rubric of national security. The threats perceived; the choices made by the Chinese leadership in choosing the direction of the development of their space programme; and the strategies employed by Chinese clearly reflect the large influence of the *parabellum* strategic thought. The mistrust of foreigners has led the Chinese leadership to perceive others' space activities as threatening and a resolute belief in self-help has led China to develop space capabilities to protect its national interests.

70. Ibid., p. 12.
71. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 115.
72. Ibid., p. 5.
73. Lewis, n. 61, p. 2.
74. People's Republic of China, Information Office of China's State Council, *China's Space Activities in 2006*, October 2006, http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/183672.htm, accessed December 21, 2009.

Even though there is widespread agreement that the Chinese space programme is primarily motivated by the 'realist' or '*parabellum*' considerations, some analysts do not find any uniqueness in it. As Dolman suggests, it was the "perceived military necessity shouldered for fear of growing power of a potential enemy that ultimately drove development of space programs"[75] during the 'Golden Age' of space. It is often argued that the general pattern of China's military space use is similar to that of Russia and the US, especially with reference on the development of navigation and communication satellites,[76] and that in launch technology, China has followed the same pattern as the United States,[77] initially converting missiles into rockets. Also, the Chinese reasoning for seeking to minimise a space-technology gap with the US is much on the same lines as that of the US subsequent to the Space Commission Report—each feeling that it would be imprudent *not* to prepare and respond.[78] While it is not denied that the general pattern of the development of all the three space programmes has a lot in common, it does not in any way reduce the importance of the realist (or *parabellum*) motivations on the development of the Chinese space programme. It is argued by some analysts that the relationship among space, technology, economics and domestic policies and the political, economic and military benefits to the Chinese in pursuing space activity validate their course of actions as rational policy decisions in terms of theories on state behaviour.[79] As Joseph Nye says, since there is nothing inevitable in how a state would respond to international developments and is largely dependent on the choices made by its leaders, the Chinese space programme *need not* have followed a militaristic path in its development like that of Japan or Europe but the fact that it did can be attributed to the cultural impact on the Chinese strategic thought. While it is beyond the scope of this essay, research into the cultural aspects affecting the development of the US and Russian space programmes may

75. Everett Dolman, *Astropolitik* (London: Frank Class, 2002), p. 91.
76. Sheehan, n. 54, p. 168.
77. Johnson-Fresse, n. 10, p. 9.
78. Johnson-Fresse, n. 63, p. 66.
79. Ibid., p. 57.

also help to determine the influence of their respective strategic cultures on their space programmes.

Rightful Place Under Heaven

In spite of a lack of clear articulation coming from China as to the motivations behind the Chinese space programme, analysts are near unanimous in their opinion regarding the space programme being strongly influenced by prestige considerations. As discussed in the earlier section, China's perception of itself is based on the belief of a "great civilisation that had been robbed of its status by well-armed barbarians."[80] The introduction to the first ever White Paper on space issued by the Chinese government reminds the readers of the "glorious [Chinese] civilization in the early stage of mankind's history."[81] 'Face', as in any Asian culture, is important in the Chinese culture.[82] China is driven by the desire to shake off the memory of its imperialist humiliation and be recognised as a sophisticated and technologically advanced state to regain its place of distinction. The Chinese see "high technology, and particularly the aerospace and nuclear industries, as the key to … recapture of the international position and status that they felt was their national birthright."[83] Conquering space represents an opportunity in what China refers to as mankind's "fourth frontier" to recapture its lost legacy of technological mastery and innovation.[84] Driven by this rationale, China's space programme has the desire to "gain national prestige, and to signal wealth, commitment and technological prowess."[85] Following the launch of the Sputnik in 1957, Mao had declared that "we also want to make artificial satellites." The rationale for launching the first satellite, Dong Feng Hong ("The East is Red") in April 1970 (which broadcast a revolutionary song of the same name for the duration of its 26 days in orbit), was partially believed to demonstrate deterrent ability

80. Rosita Dellios, "China's Space Programme: A Strategic and Political Analysis," *Culture Mandala*, vol. 7, no. 1, December 2005, http://www.international-relations.com/CM7-1WB/ChinasSpaceWB.htm, p. 2.
81. n. 74.
82. Johnson-Fresse, n. 1, p. 35.
83. Sheehan, n. 54, p. 162.
84. Johnson-Fresse, n. 63, p. 52.
85. Lewis, n. 61.

Deng believed that "if it were not for the atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb and the satellites we have launched since the 1960s, China would not have its present international standing as a great, influential country."

and, thus, to enhance China's national prestige. The Chinese practice of naming elements of the space programme, like the Great China Wall Industry Corporation (the Chinese corporation for marketing its launch capacity) and the Long March rocket, to establish mental linkages with heroic or impressive elements of China's past reflects the centrality of national recovery and prestige as drivers of the space programme.

Deng believed that "if it were not for the atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb and the satellites we have launched since the 1960s, China would not have its present international standing as a great, influential country."[86] In the effort of striving to become a major power, the space programme has helped change the backward image of the Chinese in the minds of other people and concurrently enhanced Chinese national pride and self-confidence.[87] China now speaks openly of its ambition to compete at the highest level "to obtain a more important place in the world in the field of space science…"[88] and "has set the strategic goal of building itself into a well-off society in an all-round way, ranking it among the countries with the best innovative capabilities in the first 20 years of the 21st century."[89]

There is a small minority of analysts who tend to disagree that prestige considerations have a major influence[90] in the development of the Chinese space programme, however, as mentioned earlier, the majority agree that prestige has played an important role in shaping the development of China's space programme as the capability to launch any time provides large influence in terms of diplomacy at the United Nations and military affairs.[91] The July 2002 Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China, by the US Department of Defence (DoD), stated, "One of

86. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 99.
87. Ibid., p. 118.
88. People's Republic of China, *China's Space Activities*, November 2000.
89. People's Republic of China, *China's Space Activities in 2006*.
90. Finkelstein, n. 69, p. 21.
91. Johnson-Fresse, n. 10, p. 7.

the strongest immediate motivations… appears to be political prestige…."[92] Some analysts have so far gone to suggest that China's space programme is not about competition with the US or any other country but it is in a race with itself,[93] the end goal of which reaches beyond the US—a manifestation of finding its 'rightful place'."

Learning the Superior Barbarian Technique with Which to Repel the Barbarians

The lessons of the history of the 'betrayal' by foreigners have left a deep impact on both the Chinese leadership and the population. The deep mistrust of foreigners led the Chinese to develop the space programme to the extent possible by indigenous methods and become self-reliant or to at least pronounce it to the world as their own. The successful launch of its first satellite in April 1970 was hailed as a victory for the CCP and the evidence that the Party was "achieving greater, faster, better … preparedness against war with concrete action."[94] China's Foreign Minister insisted that the post launch communiqué include the words, "We did this through our own unaided efforts."[95] The withdrawal of Soviet assistance in the middle of 1960 had come as a big setback to the Chinese space programme; however, the Chinese immediately decided to go it alone, since achievement of self-reliance had always been the goal. Vice Premier Nie (in the October 15, 1956 Report) had stated that while foreign technical assistance should be employed whenever possible, the fundamental thrust of the programme should be self-reliance.[96] The Chinese resolve to develop the space programme can be gauged from the comment of the Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, "We will have to do what it takes to support the missile and nuclear programme, even if this means that we can't afford to wear pants."[97]

92. Johnson-Fresse, n. 63, p. 52.
93. Eric Hagt, "China Space Program: the Quiet Revolution," *Defense Monitor*, vol. 34, issue 6, 2005, p. 6.
94. P.S. Clarke, "The Chinese Space Programme," 200 quoted in Sheehan, n. 54, p. 162.
95. Brain Harvey,"China's Space Programme: Emerging Competitor or Potential Partner?," Centre of Non Proliferation Occasional Paper, no. 12, 50, quoted in Sheehan, n. 54, p. 162.
96. Yanping, n. 46, p. 119.
97. Ibid.

To set up an *independently* operated satellite…" and "to establish an *independent* satellite navigation and positioning system."

The continued Chinese resolve to achieve self-reliance is manifested in the Space White Paper 2000 which stated that "upholding the principle of independence, self-reliance and self-renovation … China shall rely on its own strength to tackle key problems and make breakthroughs…" The development targets articulated in the paper amongst others, are, "to set up an *independently* operated satellite…" and "to establish an *independent* satellite navigation and positioning system." The level of emphasis paced on attaining self-reliance in the space programme is to such an extent that it has led some observers to comment that "China appears to build a satellite in order to show that it can do it rather than to meet an operational need."[98]

There is an argument that a part of the Chinese desire for indigenous development is due to the recognition that true innovation requires understanding the science behind the technology. While the Chinese programme has to a large extent developed through indigenous efforts, whether as a part of a design or due to reasons beyond control, the Chinese have had help in their initial forays into space primarily from the Soviets and subsequently (covertly) from some Western companies.[99] The Chinese have not been shy of accepting help from the outside world to accelerate the development of their space programme. As one observer describes it, the Chinese programme has benefitted from using a three-pronged approach of "borrowing, building and buying."[100] In contrast to Mao's closed door world view for reasons of ideological purity, China had stared breaking out of its isolation by opening its doors to the Western world in the 1970s. The purpose was to acquire technologies and training –there was no official interest in Western political values or views.[101] Deng viewed this opening of China as a

98. Lewis, n. 61, p. 2.
99. Jeffrey Logan, "China's Space Program: Options for US-China Cooperation " (CRS report, Congressional Research Service, September 29, 2008), p. 1.
100. Finkelstein, n. 69, p. 5.
101. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 84.

necessary short-cut to updating China's science and technological endeavours. This flexibility shown by China in interacting with 'foreigners' as a short-cut to develop what it perceives to be "a strategic way to enhance its economic, scientific, technological and national defense strength"[102] is a reflection of the cultural impact of the notion of *quan bien* on the strategic thought guiding development of the space programme. This Chinese willingness to be *flexible* on issues which are considered to be strategic and in China's benefit makes it difficult to predict the future direction with any reasonable assurance.

China desires to be treated either as an equal partner or a competitor—it is unwilling to accept a second-tier status.

The unwillingness of the Chinese state to acknowledge assistance[103] in developing the space programme can once again be attributed to its apprehension of the assistance being perceived as a superior-inferior relationship reminiscent of European semi-colonialism rather than an exchange between equals. For a state that suffered much under colonial status, being the inferior was politically unacceptable. China's opening up in the 1970s was to some extent attributed to its growing confidence to develop technologies, if required, on its own. China was willing to accept cooperation as an equal or not at all.[104]

Forming a United Front Against Foreign Invasions

Chinese disdain for 'foreigners' (especially the West) and the legacy of its space exploration and dominance have had a significant influence on its desire to shape the international space regime. The current international regime reflects a dominant influence of the original (modern age) space participants and China has no intention of ceding outer space to Russian control or to accept America's self-appointed hegemonic dominance of space.[105] China desires to be treated either as an equal partner or a

102. n. 89.
103. The 2006 Space White Paper states that "for half a century China had worked independently in this field."
104. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 84.
105. Johnson-Fresse, n. 63, p. 55.

competitor—it is unwilling to accept a second-tier status. The 2006 Space White Paper states "that international space exchanges and cooperation should be strengthened on the basis of equality…" However, rather than directly confronting the US space hegemony, China has sought to negate it through a policy of encouraging multipolar modifications to the international space regime. The 2000 Chinese White Paper on Space Policy stresses the importance of the UN in shaping the international regime and China's visible efforts at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) represent its desire to participate in it.[106]

The deep antagonism against the West in the Chinese psyche is evident in its approach to promote space cooperation with other developing countries and in its attempt to assert itself as their leader in space activities. The 2006 Space White Paper states that international space cooperation should adhere to the fundamental principles stated in the "Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries" and that while developing international cooperation, China will follow the policy of "reinforcing space cooperation with developing countries …" China has signed cooperative space arrangements with a number of countries[107] and is collaboratively working with some of them.

China has continued to pursue the possibility of joining the International Space Station (ISS) and in the opinion of Luan Enjie, Director of the China National Space Administration, without China's participation, the ISS "is not a true international program." However, till now, China has not been invited to be a partner in the programme whereas Brazil, which has significantly less to offer either in terms of technology or finance has been invited. The US' dominance of the ISS and the perceived politics[108] of the partnership have prompted China to declare its intention to develop a *second* international space station in partnership with other countries. The

106. Eric Hagt, "China's ASAT Test: Strategic Response," *China Security* Winter, 2007, p. 33.
107. China has signed cooperative space agreements with a number of countries, including Canada, Germany, Italy, France, Britain, Russia, Pakistan, India, and Brazil.
108. Johnson-Fresse, n. 63, p. 64.

motivation behind this seems to be to permit states to use space in a way which reduces the American dominance and also provides a role in shaping future international space developments, rather than simply participating in an environment shaped by others. China's development of its own navigation system—Beidou—already operational with three satellites as a regional navigation system (with plans for upgrade to a global system), is also considered as evidence of its disdain for US efforts to sustain sole control through its Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation system. It is likely that the US desire to dominate space and enforce its will on others is perceived by the Chinese as 'oppression' and, thus, any attempt to fight is not only *yizhan* (righteous) but also desirable. The "righteous war" is not only legitimate and necessary but also removes any moral limits on means to be employed.

Some authors contend that there is nothing unique about the desire of the Chinese leadership to counter US dominance. As Kenneth N. Waltz has argued, "As ever, dominance, coupled with immoderate behaviour by one country, causes others to look for ways to protect their interests."[109] It is suggested that the European decision to build Galileo—a satellite navigation system independent of the US—and the growing cooperation within Europe and with China in regard to space technology is driven to some degree by a common wish to 'balance' against the power of the US and is a purely 'rational' decision. While not discounting the realities of relative capabilities and the desire of states to safeguard their interests, the motivations and the choices made must be assessed in the broader context of both structural constraints and cultural aspects. The choice to adopt a confrontationist rather than an accommodationist approach by the Chinese in exploitation of space is a reflection of the impact of the *parabellum* strategic culture.

Anti-Satellite Test

Respond flexibly to the enemy and, thus, create conditions for victory.

109. Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: WW Norton, 2003), p. 149.

The ASAT test laid to rest a lot of the speculation with respect to the way the programme was developing and the level of its sophistication.

Perhaps the most visible and noted event in the development of the Chinese space programme has been the ASAT conducted by China on January 11, 2007.[110] When China blew up its ageing satellite in orbit, it caused mild panic and concern amongst the US, UK and other circles. The test was perhaps, in more ways than one, representative of the Chinese space programme. If there was a bit of uncertainty about Chinese space activities prior to January 2007, due to lack of transparency and reliance on externally many verifiable indicators to gauge intentions, the ASAT test laid to rest a lot of the speculation with respect to the way the programme was developing and the level of its sophistication. However, even though the test was a clear indicator of the direction of development of the space programme, the motivations behind adopting that path are still being debated. Most observers agree that while effectively conceding that its conventional ground, air and naval forces do not yet challenge the US military, China is looking for vulnerabilities where a strategy of asymmetric warfare might be brought into play.[111] One area where the US is clearly asymmetrically vulnerable is its heavy reliance on space assets. Chinese analysts have speculated that "for countries that can never win a war with the US by using the methods of tanks and planes, attacking the US space system may be an irresistible and most tempting choice"[112] (*fighting the superior with the inferior).* Most speculate that China wanted to demonstrate that dominating space through technology was not going to be as easy[113] as implied in the 2006 US National Space Policy. Further, analysts agree that the test was a demonstration of China's unwillingness to lock itself in a position of permanent vulnerability[114] and a clear message that it could not

110. Since then, China has conducted one more ASAT test, in January 2010.
111. Lewis, n. 61, p. 1.
112. Philip C. Saunders, "China's Future in Space: Implications for US Security," *adastra:The Magazine of the National Space Society*, www.space.com/adastra/China_implications_0505.html, accessed April 21, 2010.
113. Johnson-Fresse, n. 10, p. 20.
114. Xinhua News Agency, "China Crusades to Leading Position in Aerospace," Xinhua General News Service, http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1P2-18417040.html, accessed May 11, 2010.

be ignored [115](*its rightful place in the world*).

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Although, the Chinese ASAT test was conducted in January 2007, the Chinese ABM programme has its origin in the "640 Project" set up by Mao Zedong in 1964 to develop defensive measures against a nuclear attack and later Deng Xiaoping's call for a Chinese answer to President Reagan's Star Wars Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) in 1986 (the "863 Project"). The ABM programme was initiated in the 1990s and divided into two branches in 2002, "863-801" and "863-805". 863-805 was the Kinetic Kill Vehicle programme (KKV) which went into the test phase after three years of development and after two unsuccessful attempts in July 2005 and February 2006; the third test on January 11, 2007, was successful. Although, the technology employed was similar to the US technology, some analysts believe that China decided to target a satellite rather than a missile due to the comparatively lower level of difficulty.[116] According to some analysts, China is unlikely to match US space capability and, hence, unlikely to openly challenge US dominance in space in the near future. Although, this would appear to be the most rational argument for any state, it is important not to view these decisions as made by a "generic, rational" man but by a "national (in this case, Chinese), rational" man and once again bears resemblance to the cultural aspect of *"respond flexibly to the enemy and, thus, create conditions for victory"* on the strategic calculus for creating conditions till relative capabilities are favourable.

Most of the analysts agree that motivations for the test were likely multifaceted, including the technical and political objectives. Although most dismiss the argument that the test was to encourage the US to enter negotiations on space weapons, there is an argument that China believes

115. Logan, "China's Space Program: Options for US-China Cooperation," *CRS Report*, Congressional Research Service, September 29, 2008; Gregory Kulacki and Jeffrey G. Lewis, "Understanding China's Anti-Satellite Test," *Nonproliferation Review*, vol, 15, no. 2, July 2008, p. 342.
116. Kulacki and Lewis, Ibid., p. 337.

that the US negotiates based primarily on strength, and without strength of its own, China cannot bring the US to the negotiating table[117] which reveals a strong strain of realism running through Chinese strategic thinking. Kulacki and Lewis[118] have tried to present the argument that the Chinese test was not as a result of strategic requirements to offset US dominance or improve their missiles but more as an experiment to validate a 20-year R&D programme.[119] If a country is developing a capability, sooner or later, it needs to be tested. However, the mere fact that the Chinese leadership had embarked upon the path to develop an anti-satellite capability twenty years earlier is testimony to the impact of the *parabellum* strategic culture on the space programme and the Chinese resolve not to accept any foreign domination. Also, the decision to subsequently undertake one more ASAT test on January 11, 2010, clearly demonstrates China's resolve to enhance its (anti)space capabilities rather than it being solely a "technology demonstrator." The Chinese are also believed to have developed "parasite satellites"[120] that attach themselves to enemy spacecraft for detonation when deemed necessary and are understood to be developing ground-based lasers to target satellites in orbit. Even Kulacki and Lewis agree that the test was a demonstration of Chinese strategic deterrence and that the Chinese desire to *match* US capabilities (as against *counter*[121]); also, that they are looking for assurance to their right to access space and be treated like any other space-faring nation.[122]

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the ASAT test was terming of the same as "*defensive*" by the Chinese government. The statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry called the test "defensive in nature and targeted at no country."[123] In a way, ASAT weapons could be regarded as defensive in nature, in that they may prevent China from becoming vulnerable to a

117. Hagt, n. 106, p. 36.
118. See Kulacki and Lewis, n. 115.
119. Ibid., p. 341.
120. Johnson-Fresse, n. 63, p. 341.
121. Hagt, n. 106, p. 341. Emphasis in original.
122. Ibid., p. 344.
123. Xinhua General News service, "China Reaffirms its Missile Interception Test Defensive," Xinhua General News Service, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2010-01/12/content_12797459.htm, accessed January 14, 2010.

potential attack but, once again, an employment of an offensive capability may be understood as a "defensive" measure culturally by the Chinese (*'wu' and active defence)* rather than the conventional acceptance of the word.

The US Strategic Defence Initiative and European Eureka Plan had reinforced Deng's belief that if China did not participate in high-tech R&D at the beginning, it would become very difficult for it to catch up later.

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENCE

Internal instability and backwardness invite foreign invasions.

In recent years, the factor perceived to be influencing the direction of Chinese space development most is the National Missile Defence (NMD) programme of the United States. China has adamantly opposed the missile defence programme. From its perspective, NMD poses a fundamental challenge to the viability of its strategic nuclear deterrent and alters the balance among nuclear powers,[124] destabilising the international security structure. As per China, when missile defence is joined with US strategic nuclear offensive capabilities, the "shield and sword" created will vastly complicate the objective of reunifying Taiwan with the Mainland. In the PRC's view, the NMD will facilitate the ability of the US to promote its own interests, with little or no regard for the legitimate national security interests of others. China harbours the suspicion that the US seeks not only to dominate the region but to "Westernise" and "split" Chinese territory and weaken PRC influence.[125] The mistrust of foreigners held by the Chinese, coupled with the fact that the US has demonstrated in the past that it does not see itself constrained by treaties and agreements it has signed, if it decides that they no longer serve American interests,[126] has led the Chinese to view assurances by the US that it wishes to deploy only a minimal capability suitable for intercepting launches from 'rogue'

124. Tom Sanderson, "Chinese Perspectives on US Ballistic Missile Defense" (Fellowship Report, Stimpson Centre, 2001), p. 17.
125. Ibid.
126. Sheehan, n. 54, p. 166.

states as not credible. The US Strategic Defence Initiative and European Eureka Plan had reinforced Deng's belief that if China did not participate in high-tech R&D at the beginning, it would become very difficult for it to catch up later. He believed that if China did not develop its own high-tech capabilities, it would be left behind by the Western countries. China's 100 years experience as a semi-colonial society has made the leaders believe that *"internal instability and backwardness invite foreign invasions"* and alert to the possibility of being left behind internationally. Hence, China has guided its space programme so as to not be the victim of 'barbarians' again. Becoming a hostage to another state is an option totally rejected by China. Although the Chinese decision may be viewed as a strategic decision taken by "rational" men, it cannot be denied that these decisions bear a strong cultural imprint of "*learning the superior barbarian technique with which to repel the barbarians."*

Manned Programme

Of all the endeavours of the Chinese space programme, the one on which there is near unanimity amongst the analysts for the Chinese motivation and, to a large extent, in concert with the official Chinese proclamations, is the Chinese manned space flight programme. For most of its history, the Chinese space programme had not emphasised exploration for its own sake, or a manned programme. Human space flight is not militarily or economically relevant[127] and no state at this point of time needs to be involved in it. Military, scientific and commercial space activities can be well accomplished by employing robotic spacecraft. The manned programme was seen as a low priority by the Chinese leadership initially as it did not make a direct contribution to defence development. Although prestige had been an important driver of the Chinese space programme, it was dwarfed by considerations like defence and economics in the initial stages of development. The Chinese leadership considered that diverting human and economic resources necessary for human flight very early would be contrary to China's long-term economic and national interests. But with

127. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 56; Lewis, n. 63, p. 1; Johnson Fresse, n. 63, p. 56.

China having 'arrived' as an important player on the international stage in recent years, the Chinese government is seeking to consolidate its position in meaningful ways and to acquire the trappings of great power status. Of all the human endeavours, manned space flight remains the most dramatic symbol of a vigorous and technologically advanced country and remains the crowning feat of all space programmes. Though instrumented flight has prestige value, the attention and interest of the world are captured much more by manned flight. The international prestige, along with the technological cachet associated with manned space flight, justified forays into it for the Chinese, regardless of the immediate economic and technological benefits.

Although President Reagan (in the 1980s) and then Soviet Leader Gorbachev had extended an offer to fly a Chinese astronaut (on a space shuttle mission and to the Mir space station, respectively), there is no evidence that the Chinese seriously considered their offers; their focus remained on achieving independent human space flight. China wanted to come to the table as an equal[128] and initiated its human space flight programme in 1996 with the first *Shenzou* (divine vehicle) launched in 1999. The Fifth *Shenzou* carried a *yuhangyuan* (traveller of the universe) to space for the first time on October 15, 2003. The launch was reported by the official news agency as it would "strengthen the nation's *comprehensive national strength*, promote the development of science and technology, enhance *national prestige*, boost the nation's sense of pride and cohesiveness." It said, "China deserves a *place in the world* in the area of high technology."[129] Interestingly, official pronouncements made little mention of the benefits of the launch to economic development.

Some observers have questioned the uniqueness of China's motives as they are similar to those that drove Russia and the US[130] to undertake manned missions—to gain national prestige, and to signal wealth, commitment and technological prowess. However, it would be prudent to understand what motivates states to engage in human space flight. Japan

128. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 128.
129. Ibid., p. 117.
130. Lewis, n. 61, p. 1.

The United States Department of Defense Annual Report imputes military motives also to the Chinese space flight and states that "China's manned space efforts could contribute to improved military space systems in the 2010-2020 time-frame."

and Europe have either significantly slowed down their earlier efforts or have effectively stopped development for the present.[131] It is evident that political considerations—which to a large extent are culturally influenced—for a state must significantly outweigh the economic and scientific benefits (as these can be achieved by robotic means). The very strong desire of the Chinese to wipe out the humiliation of "hundred years" and regain their lost place in the world seems to outweigh all economic or scientific benefits. The United States Department of Defense Annual Report to Congress on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China (2000)[132] imputes military motives also to the Chinese space flight and states that "China's manned space efforts could contribute to improved military space systems in the 2010-2020 time-frame. In addition to scientific and technical experiments, Chinese astronauts, for instance, could investigate the utility of manned reconnaissance from space." While the Chinese programme is opaque in almost all respects and the military is certainly involved in the civilian–manned space programme, as well as undertaking space efforts of its own, it would be incorrect to see its manned space programme as primarily motivated by military interests.[133] The Chinese manned programme represents prestige considerations for the Chinese space programme and is about its determination to regain what it considers its deserved place in global, and by default, regional, politics.

Lunar Exploration

Chinese motives for moon exploration are also to large extent driven by the same factors as the human space flight (including parallels between earlier

131. Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 4.
132. Available at http://www.defense.gov/news/Jun2000/china06222000.htm
133. Not likely since both the US and USSR considered it but found robotic remote sensing more useful and less costly: Handberg and Li, n. 46, p. 116.

US and present Chinese decision-making for lunar exploration). The launch of the lunar probe on October 24, 2007, provided a big boost to national pride and observers speculate that China's next aim[134] is to become only the second country (after the US) to pull off a manned moon landing. The Chinese announcement of a planned lunar landing by 2017—ahead of the US plans for a 2018 landing—are seen by some analysts as a direct challenge to the US and an assertation of China's growing confidence and achieving its "*rightful place*."

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION

Most analysts—primarily from the West—tend to concur on the direction of development of the Chinese space programme i.e. guided by external threats, asymmetric response, means for active defence, opposition to US dominance, prestige considerations, attempt to shape the international space regime and opposition to missile defence. However, most attempt to explain the motivation behind the path chosen in terms of rational strategic decisions, in part influenced by a tendency to view it from their own prisms. While attempting to understand the development of the Chinese space programme without considering the influence of culture on Chinese strategic thought, we would be making the same mistake Snyder had first cautioned about while introducing the concept of strategic culture—to assume that others will act like some "generic, rational man" would. As Fresse argues, it might be possible to grasp the mechanics of the Chinese space programme without the benefits of historical information, but the likelihood of understanding the policy aspects without it is significantly less.[135] Alexander Wendt argues that there is nothing intrinsic within the anarchical structure of the international environment to produce self-help behaviour exhibited by states. While there may be many valid reasons for states to acquire certain identities and to act in a self-help manner, this is not preordained by some unseen force.[136] If there is nothing preordained in how states would react in any strategic

134. "Journey to the Moon," *Business China*, vol. 33, issue 21, 2007, p. 4.
135. Johnson-Fresse, n. 1, p. 11.
136. John Glenn, "Realism versus Strategic Culture: Competition and Collaboration?," *International Studies Review*, 11, 2009, pp.523-551.

environment, it is important to view it from the Chinese perspective to understand why the Chinese space programme developed the way it did. Several observations can be made from the preceding discussion on China's space programme as it relates to the influence of Chinese strategic culture. First, the way in which Chinese decision-makers define their national security interests remains strongly influenced by the *parabellum* conception of threats, inter-state conflicts and national security, and their historical and social experience. This has, in turn, has guided the evolution of the Chinese space programme, especially in the initial phases, towards an emphasis on military aspects. The experience of humiliation and exploitation by foreigners has shaped China's desire to be a strong nation and the same manifests in its plans for the development of its space capabilities to reach a sufficient level of competency so as not to "invite foreign invasions". A situation where China may be exploited again or suffer a loss of 'face' is not acceptable. Mistrust of foreigners—although China is flexible enough to use 'foreign' assistance to further national interests—a sense of pride and a strong belief in self-help as the only reliable assurance for nation's fundamental security interests have shaped the Chinese desire to be develop their space programme indigenously and be self-reliant.

Second, although the Chinese space programme has its origin in military requirements, it is strongly influenced by the holistic approach to national strength. China's development of the space programme seems to be a part of a larger strategy to "protect China's national interests and build up the *comprehensive national strength*."[137] The Chinese believe that the next war need not be a military conflict—it could be in any sphere. Science and technology is an important aspect of a nation's power and the potential of the space programme to generate advances in cutting-edge technology has shaped the development of the space programme to achieve a position which is not inferior to anyone. The impact of deep-rooted strategic beliefs also has a clear influence on the Chinese strategy to counter space-dominance by others. Realising that China cannot challenge others' dominance in space by similar means only and, hence, the choice of developing offensive capability and

137. n. 88.

giving priority to the development of satellites with military applications over others shows a preference for a strategy of "fighting superior with inferior" and "to respond flexibly to the enemy and, thus, create conditions for victory."

The impact of Sino-centric cultural prominence on the Chinese strategic culture and a desire to return to, and restore, its supremacy in space, has had a large impact on the direction in which the Chinese space programme is developing.

Third, the impact of Sino-centric cultural prominence on the Chinese strategic culture and a desire to return to, and restore, its supremacy in space, which China believes it initiated and once dominated, has had a large impact on the direction in which the Chinese space programme is developing. The pursuit of prestige and a position of eminence in space have guided the development of the Chinese space programmes like manned space flight and lunar exploration. China wishes to attain what it believes is its *"place under heaven"*. It is a measure of the significance attached to the symbolic value of prospective domestic, regional and international prestige that flows from a successful space programme by the Chinese that a country that faced daily challenges to keep its population fed contributed significant resources in the development phase of the programme, even when the pay-offs were questionable.[138] The prestige and its contribution to military capabilities that would prevent a return to imperialist exploitation have been central to the government support for the missile and space programmes right from their inception.

Fourth, China's attempt to lead the developing world to counter the dominance of space by some and shape the space regime to address the interests of all not only shows a deep mistrust of the West but is perhaps perceived as a weak, oppressed country fighting against powerful "imperialist oppressors". The "just war" against an "oppressor" seeking to impose its will on others removes political, military or moral limits on strategic choices and the use of force is considered legitimate. The Chinese attempts to change

138. Yanping, n. 46, p. 128.

While it is true that the development of the Chinese space programme may have been influenced by geo-political realities and pragmatic strategic choices, what matters is the impact of culture in shaping those choices.

the space regime either through multilateral negotiations via the UN or by demonstrating offensive capabilities is a reflection of the nature of changing circumstances, and exploiting changes in strategic opportunities (*quan bien*). The just war also provides for justification for all actions in rhetorical terms. Further, the Chinese belief in the righteousness of the cause and interpretation of even a preemptive use of force (active defence), especially in a "just war" as "defensive" can explain the development of offensive capabilities by the Chinese in space.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of China onto the world stage and its perceived assertive behaviour has brought the motivations of the Chinese leadership behind their decisions into sharp focus. The anti-satellite test conducted by China in 2007 focussed the world's attention on the Chinese space programme and many analysts have attempted to explain the rationale behind the Chinese actions in pure strategic, rationale terms. For a country as vast and complex as China, it would be incorrect to underestimate the influence of culture on strategic thought. The Chinese strategic culture has been shaped by a long, continuous civilisation, centrality of the "Middle Kingdom," recent historical experiences and ideology. The strategic culture shaping the Chinese strategic choices comprises a realist world-view and willingness to use force as a policy option.

While it is true that the development of the Chinese space programme may have been influenced by geo-political realities and pragmatic strategic choices, what matters is the impact of culture in shaping those choices. A brief look into the Chinese space programme from the cultural prism makes it evident that the programme bears an indelible impression of the *parabellum* strategic culture. The initial development of the Chinese space programme shows distinct characteristics of the realist strategic thought

shaped by the threat perceptions of the Chinese elites and influenced by their deep mistrust of foreigners. The programme has shown a remarkable resilience, regardless of political, economic, or social forces operating at different times in history. The major underlying theme of the development of the Chinese space programme in the present times is national prestige, to shake off the memory and image of a humiliated China and to achieve its rightful place in the community of nations. The space programme represents the rebirth of China as "*the Celestial Kingdom*," this time in the practical as well as figurative sense and its emergence as a space power cements its status in the post-modern age. The Chinese belief in self-help has led the Chinese space programme to be a strategic part in developing its *comprehensive national power*. While the Chinese space programme does show distinctive impressions of the various factors influencing the Chinese strategic culture, it is not the argument that the future development of the Chinese space programme can or should even be attempted to be predicted on the basis of purely cultural influences, for the one thing that has the most influence on the Chinese strategic culture is the concept of absolute flexibility.