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Statement of Research
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I study international security with an empirical focus on China. By focusing on China, my work seeks to explain the foreign policy and security behavior of the most important rising power in the world today. With unresolved territorial disputes and growing military capabilities, China is often viewed as the country most likely to trigger a major crisis or war. My work aims to both enhance general knowledge of the sources of conflict among states and understand the conditions under which China may threaten or use force.

Two principal questions motivate my research: First, when and why do leaders choose to use force or compromise in territorial disputes? As territorial disputes have been the most common issue over which states have gone to war, the answers to this question can improve our understanding of international security more generally. Second, when and why do states pursue major change in their military strategies? By illuminating a state's broader political objectives and how it plans to use force to achieve them, knowledge of military strategy plays an important role in understanding the dynamics of conflict. In addition, my research explores related questions about international security, including how rising powers shape the level of competition in the international system and the effect of domestic political instability on foreign policy.

In answering these questions, I pursue several broader intellectual goals. I seek to enhance the study of international relations by further integrating China into the subfield, using China as an opportunity to test and develop general arguments about the sources of conflict. I also endeavor to bring to light new and original data about China's foreign and security policies from Chinese sources that scholars have not used before. Finally, I hope to inform debate about the implications of China's rise for the U.S. and the Asia-Pacific.

Cooperation and Conflict in Territorial Disputes

Historically, states have clashed and fought over territory more than any other issue. When and why leaders choose to offer concessions and settle disputes or use force and go to war is an enduring question in the study of international relations. Existing research on territorial disputes has focused on the outcomes of these conflicts, identifying which disputes are most likely to be settled or erupt in violence. In a series of journal articles (*International Security* 2005, 2007-08) and a book (*Strong Borders, Secure Nation*), my research takes a step back and examines the decisions that produce these outcomes in a detailed study of China's many disputes.

Three central findings emerge from my work, which provides the first comprehensive analysis of China's behavior in its territorial disputes. First, China is often viewed as a territorially ambitious state because of its military power and legacy of territorial loss during the Qing Dynasty. I find, however, that China has not been highly prone to using force in territorial disputes. Although China has participated in 23 unique territorial disputes since 1949, it has used force in only 6 of these conflicts. China has compromised much more frequently, offering substantial concessions in 17 of its territorial disputes.

Second (and counterintuitively), political instability within a state can create strong incentives for leaders to pursue strategies of cooperation and compromise. Such instability is usually viewed as creating incentives for leaders to "wag the dog" and use force abroad to divert the public's attention from problems at home. When faced with domestic unrest, however, leaders may also trade concessions in conflicts such as territorial disputes for

assistance from neighbors that bolsters their own internal security, such as denying safe havens to rebels. In the 1960s and 1990s, China frequently offered to compromise in disputes with neighboring states to contain and suppress ethnic unrest in its frontiers, especially in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Third, decline in a state's ability to control the territory that it claims can create strong motivations to use force. When a state concludes that its adversary is strengthening its relative position in a territorial dispute, it is more likely to use force to signal resolve to defend its claims or to occupy a portion of contested land. China has demonstrated a keen sensitivity to such decline, using force both against its strongest neighbors such as India and Russia that could limit its bargaining power and in those conflicts where it has occupied little or none of the land that it has claimed, especially Taiwan.

To reach these conclusions, I employed a "medium-*n*" research design. This method includes controlled comparisons of decisionmaking in China's 23 disputes and detailed process tracing of every decision to offer a concession or use force. My research has exploited new and original data from China that other scholars have not used before. I also developed new methods for collecting and validating Chinese language sources on foreign and security policy, including sources available on the internet (*China Quarterly* 2000).

Major Change in Military Strategy

Whereas my first book investigated decisions to use force, my current book project examines how states formulate their military strategies. The study of a country's military strategy can illuminate two broader questions: 1) the content of its intentions and political objectives, and 2) how it plans and prepares to use force to achieve them.

With funding from the United States Institute of Peace and the Smith Richardson Foundation, I ask when and why China has pursued major change in its military strategy. A major change in strategy occurs when a military prepares to wage war in a new way and is identified by shifts in operational doctrine, force structure, and training. Of the eight military strategies that China has issued since 1949, those in 1956, 1980, and 1993 constitute major changes. I show that two factors overlooked by previous research explain the adoption of these strategies. The first is the role of changes in the conduct of warfare in the international system. This can create a motivation for adopting a new strategy if a gap exists between a state's current capabilities and the requirements of future warfare, especially when a state does not face an immediate military threat. The second is the unity of the ruling party in socialist states. This shapes the structure of civil-military relations by creating opportunities for the military to pursue a change in military strategy without civilian intervention. When the ruling communist party is united, it is more likely to grant substantial autonomy for the management of military affairs to senior military officers, who monitor and respond to changes in their state's security environment such as a change in the conduct of warfare.

This research offers several contributions. First, it provides the first systematic and comprehensive study of China's military strategy since 1949 and is the only study that engages the political science literature on the sources of military doctrine and innovation. Second, it broadens understanding of military change by studying a great power whose strategy has not been examined exhaustively before, thus enriching knowledge of China as well as the general understanding of how states change their military strategies. Third, it shows how domestic politics influences the ability of states to respond to changes in the international system. During periods of disunity within the communist party, China has been unable to formulate effective military strategies to meet the threats that it faces because

the military became involved in intraparty conflict. Fourth, it illuminates the content of China's intentions by demonstrating an enduring focus on defending China's homeland territory and sovereignty claims on its periphery, and keeping the communist party in power.

As with my first book, this project draws on unmined, original data from China. These materials include documentary collections, official chronologies, biographies, and memoirs of military leaders as well as professional military writings. These sources not only identify eight different changes in military strategy, some of which were unknown outside of China until recently, but also show that some scholarly characterizations of China's strategy before the mid-1980s were incorrect.

I am currently working to carry this project through the publication phase in a series of articles as well as a book entitled *Active Defense: Explaining the Evolution of China's Military Strategy* (under advanced contract with Princeton University Press). My research on China's nuclear strategy has been published as an article (*International Security* 2010), while my research on China's 1993 military strategy is contained in three journal articles (*Journal of Strategic Studies* 2007, *The Washington Quarterly* 2008, and *Asian Security* 2011).

Rising Powers and Conflict in the International System

The question of how rising powers shape the level of competition and conflict in the international system is taking my interest in international security in new directions. Many scholars who study rising powers often predict a violent future for China as it grows stronger because of the benefits that it could seize through force, such as control over natural resources. In one project (*International Studies Review* 2010), I challenge this argument through a systematic analysis of one potential source of armed conflict involving China, conflict over territory, and demonstrate that it is unlikely in the next two decades. I show that the benefits of territorial expansion are few, while China's ability to project military power from its borders will remain limited to its immediate periphery. By contrast, the costs of using force are high because it would provoke a coalition of states to balance against China.

A second project follows from an international workshop on assessing China's material capabilities and political influence that I co-organized in 2009 with the support from the 21st Century Public Policy Institute. This project questions the common assumption within international relations that rising powers easily convert their capabilities into influence. In one manuscript ("Life on the Great Power Frontier"), David Edelstein and I explore the conversion of capabilities and influence. We argue that the position of a state in the trajectory of its rise, the speed of its rise, and the distribution of power in the international system play key roles in this process. When applied to China, China's political influence should be limited, shaping but not determining the choices of other states. China remains in the middle of the trajectory of its rise, the speed of its rise is moderate, and it is emerging in a unipolar system in which the dominant state is especially sensitive to potential challengers. In a second manuscript ("China's Military Rise"), I examine China's ability to use its growing military capabilities to gain influence over other states. Apart from Taiwan, I find that China has achieved very little political influence, which suggests that scholars and analysts frequently exaggerate what China can gain through its growing military capabilities. *Security Studies* has agreed to review the papers from this workshop for a special issue.

Domestic Politics and International Conflict

I continue to explore the effects of political instability on foreign policy. In one project (*Security Studies* 2010), I examine the conventional wisdom that leaders are prone to using force during periods of domestic unrest to deflect attention from problems at home.

In particular, I test this argument through analysis of two critical cases, including the most widely accepted instance of diversionary behavior, the 1982 Argentine invasion of the Falklands. By tracing the effects of domestic political conflict on leadership decisionmaking, I find little support for diversionary behavior in episodes where it should be most likely to occur, a finding that casts doubt on an important argument in international relations.

In a separate project (*Asian Security* 2011), I examine the effect of economic growth on China's military strategy. Although rising powers often seek to project combat power far from their borders, I find that China since 2000 has emphasized instead non-combat operations inside China, such as disaster relief and counter-terrorism. In a developing and authoritarian country such as China, leaders fear that political instability will derail the continuation of economic growth key to their legitimacy, while the social transformation associated with reform creates new sources of instability, such as growing income inequality. Paradoxically, China broadened its military strategy to address internal threats to regime security in addition to continuing to modernize its forces for traditional military operations. This project shows that leaders have many tools that they can use to manage political instability, which helps explain why they may avoid diversionary behavior.

Teaching

I bring my research interests into the classroom. At the undergraduate level, I have developed and taught courses on the international relations of East Asia and Chinese foreign policy. These courses are designed to encourage students to think analytically about how states make foreign policy decisions, especially those involving questions of war and peace. To stress the contemporary application of the topics being examined, I end each class meeting with a brief discussion of a current event. Students have acknowledged my teaching by rating my performance at 6.2 or higher on MIT's 7-point scale. I have also supervised 3 S.B. theses and mentored 8 students through the Institute's Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, which provides them with first-hand experience conducting research.

At the graduate level, I have developed and offered courses on international relations theory and territorial conflict. Since joining the department in 2004, I have taught the field seminar in international relations theory, a course that all students in the subfield are encouraged to take in preparation for general exams. I also use the course as a venue for discussing all aspects of the political science profession, from conference participation to the peer-review process. Finally, I am committed to graduate training, serving on 8 Ph.D. committees and supervising 3 M.Sc. theses.

Service and Policy Impact

I have been active in the department, the institute, and the profession. Within the department, I have helped to select four classes of graduate students through service on the admissions committee. I have also served as a member of the personnel and undergraduate program committees, as the department's transfer credit examiner, and as a member of an International Relations faculty search committee. Within the Institute, I have participated on the Distinguished Fellowships Committee, which assists students applying for Rhodes and other competitive fellowships. I am also an active member of the Security Studies Program within the Institute's Center for International Studies.

In the profession, I have given 50 invited presentations at 45 different institutions. I have served as a peer reviewer for 22 journals, presses, foundations, and awards. I also seek to broaden exchanges between Chinese and American political scientists. For the 2009 workshop that I organized on China's rise, for example, all discussants were scholars from

China. Since 2009, I have also served as an editor the *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, a journal based at Tsinghua University in Beijing that aims to develop the field of international relations in China. Between 2002 and 2007, I was a founding participant in the Sino-American Security Dialogue, an annual forum of young scholars from both countries.

Beyond MIT, I engage in efforts to influence debate on China's rise and U.S.-China relations. For example, I have contributed to the public discourse through publications in journals such as *Foreign Affairs* and *The Washington Quarterly*. Some of my work has been translated into Chinese and Japanese, and I travel frequently to East Asia to meet with scholars, policy analysts, and government officials. In March 2010, I was named as a Research Associate with the National Asia Research Program, which the National Bureau of Asian Research and the Woodrow Wilson International Center established to promote policy-relevant research on Asian affairs. In May 2011, I was selected as a Fellow with Public Intellectuals Program at the National Committee on U.S.-Relations. On issues relating to Chinese foreign and security policy, I have consulted for U.S. government agencies and departments, including the National Intelligence Council and the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, and have been invited to testify before Congress. My report on Internet data sources for the study of China's military is a permanent reference document on the U.S. government's Open Source Center, a database used daily by intelligence analysts.