The Rise (and fall?) of China

Six Dragons Imperiling China in the Year of the Horse
“Human rights issues are not only a domestic concern. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action¹ reaffirmed that human rights are a concern of the international community. Far from being an internal affair, human rights issues engage the international interests and responsibilities of every state. The promotion of human rights should therefore be made a key part of every country’s foreign policy.”

¹Adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, Austria, June 1993
The country that shall not be named

Voldemort?
The argument

- The defining geostrategic event of the post-Cold War era has been the rise of China.
United States approach to China following the launch of "gaige kaifeng" falls roughly into three phases:

- welcoming and facilitating;
- Exploiting and capitalizing; and more recently...
- Hedging.
Answer me these questions three...

- What is the air speed of a coconut-laden swallow?
- Is the US embarked on a more confrontational path? (The “PIVOT”)
- Will Human Rights Issues ever trump “traditional” strategic issues of security and trade?
- Will a rising Chinese middle class try to renegotiate their social contract with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)?
Assumptions that may lack “truthiness”

- China will sustain robust (6-8%) economic growth.
- The CCP will remain cohesive and united behind the leadership of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang.
- China will maintain adequate social stability.
- Taiwan will remain trapped in “China’s Orbit.”
Parameters of China’s Soft Power Rise

- Three decades of sustained 10% economic growth lift 400 million people out of poverty;
- China replaces the United States as the largest trading nation.
- Chinese banks overtake Western banks in capitalization.
- Signs of modernity are visible even in China’s most remote regions, including Gansu and Qinghai.
- More miles of Grade A superhighway than the U.S.
- More than 120,000 Chinese students are enrolled in U.S. universities.
- Confucius Institutes springing up around the world, now more than 350.
Parameters of China’s Military Rise

- A decade of sustained 15-20% growth in military spending.
- Modernized military doctrine – no more “people’s war”
- Training advances bring an element of “jointness” to the PLA and much-enhanced readiness.
- Modern equipment – road-mobile ICBMs, surface-to-air missiles, airborne radars, stealth fighters, aircraft carrier, nuclear-powered submarines – closing the qualitative gap.
What comes next?

- China’s Rise cannot be perpetual.
- Already there are warning signs of a slow-down..
- Environmental degradation exacting huge cost on public health and safety.
- China’s resilient authoritarianism, combined with the Great Fire Wall and constraints on the free flow of information, appear incompatible with the knowledge economies of the most productive 21\textsuperscript{st} Century states.
Six Dragons Endangering China’s Rise

- **Environment** – 19 of world’s 20 most polluted cities, 500,000 premature respiratory deaths/yr, 50% ground water unfit for human or animal use.

- **Energy** – reliant on dirty coal for 70% of energy. World’s largest oil importer (for the first time ever in September, 2013): 6.3 million barrels/day and rising, compare with US 6.2 mbd, and falling.

- **Demographics** – male-female ratio 120-100 births (2006); aging population may get old before it gets rich, with 480 million over-60s by 2050.

- **Income Inequality** – Richest provinces 10 times income of poorest (compare 2-1 USA), more billionaires than any country other than USA, net worth of average NPC members exceeds net worth of average member of Congress.

- **Ethnic Unrest** – 90% Han, but 130 million minorities. Tibetans and Uighurs 5% of China’s population, but occupy 25% of the land mass. Headwaters of seven great rivers: Yellow, Yangtze, Mekong, Salween, Irrawaddy, Brahmaputra, and the Ganges.

- **Corruption** – Land expropriation, injustice, official malfeasance. Bo Xilai reveals what can happen when one threatens CCP orthodoxy. Cheng Guangcheng and other lawyers just the tip of iceberg.
The Six Dragons threatening China’s rise cannot be defeated without improvement in China’s adherence to global standards of human rights – a more accountable, transparent, responsive government committed to rule of law, a free press, freedom of information, and an independent judiciary.
Chinese People Stand Up

- People of China are standing up for their rights today as they did during the May 4th movement and the birth of the Communist Party.
- Amnesty International report on forced evictions – Standing Their Ground – documents just one dimension of the phenomenon. But thousands of actions annually, on all manner of issues – worker rights, child safety, the environment, corruption.
- Technology and Chinese language make new kinds of activism possible.
Now more than 590 million internet users in China (US has 254 million). >1 Billion cell phone subscribers.

Source: CINIC
Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Uighur Activist, Entrepreneur, Rebiya Kadeer
Lawyer, Houdini Escape Artist, Chen Guangcheng
President Hu Jin-tao, aka “The Harmonizer”
“Grass Mud Horse (Alpaca)” and “River Crab”

草泥馬 Căo Ní Mã

河蟹 Hé Xiè
Rahm Emanuel, ex-White House Chief of Staff

Bad Mother $*#@&!

Or

Cào Nǐ Mā
和谐 (Hé Xié) Building a “harmonious society”
河蟹  Hé Xiè are delicious...
“Mad Men,” meet Chinese dissidents...
Possible agenda for action

- Do not demonize, but do not sanitize.
- Raise profile of human rights agenda, and integrate it into the S&E Dialogue.
- Ground concerns in commitment human security, to include workers’ rights, public health, education, and environmental protection.
- Anchor requests for information and cooperation in China’s international commitments and obligations under relevant UN conventions, rather than appeal to “U.S. Values.”
- Deploy technology and eye-witness accounts to educate the people of China and the world about what’s going on inside the Middle Kingdom.