

## ABSTRACT

Two Eagles, One Dragon:  
Asymmetric Theory and the Triangular Relations between the U.S., China and Mexico

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The United States is a major source of asymmetry within the world, especially in its relations to China and Mexico. China is the rising political, military and economic contender to U.S. power projection, especially with its attractive diplomatic influence towards the non-developed world, growing military strength and emergent power in the global market. Mexico is immediately relevant to the domestic, regional and global policies of the U.S. despite the latter's historical inclinations of dominance and ignorance towards the former. This thesis will analyze the triangular relationship between the U.S., China and Mexico noting its asymmetric nature by means of evaluating the three integral bi-lateral relationships within the political, military and economic spheres. This assessment will serve the objectives of the U.S. national security community by providing a contextual basis for understanding the salience of this asymmetric triangular relationship as it applies to present- day U.S. international relations objectives.

Two Eagles, One Dragon:  
Asymmetric Theory and the Triangular Relations between the U.S., China and Mexico

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies

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For my Father and my Mother

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### *Background*

The United States is a major source of asymmetry within the world, especially in its relations to China and Mexico. China is the rising political, military and economic contender to U.S. power projection, especially with its attractive diplomatic influence towards the non-developed world, growing military strength and emergent power in the global market. Mexico is immediately relevant to both the domestic and regional political, military and economic framework of the U.S. despite the latter's historical inclinations of dominance and ignorance towards the former. Relations between China and Mexico, although under-developed and tense in certain aspects, should nevertheless be monitored for the benefit of a more well-informed U.S. national security community.

The relevance of this topic to U.S. national security must first begin with a brief reflection on its origins. The early twentieth century was a period of major transition for the world, especially for the U.S., China and Mexico. U.S. power projection received serious merit after the days of the Spanish-American War as its industrial base and its relevance as a major global power grew, especially following the two world wars. In China, imperial rule ended and Western colonialism, primarily European and Japanese, had split the country into pieces subjecting China to a one hundred year period of foreign rule despite the development of a republican government. Mexico endured its revolution replacing the autocracy of Porfirio Díaz with a practically isolationist government.



After World War II and with the onset of the Cold War, the three nations found themselves in relatively different sides of international relations policy. The U.S. became the leader of the “free world” engaged in primarily bi-polar conflict with the Soviet Union for dominant international influence. China concluded its own revolution with a communist victory essentially forming enmity with the U.S. and the West in the early years of the new regime with evolving diplomacy between the U.S. and the Soviet Union over the following decades. Mexico continued its policy of international isolationism focusing on relations with the U.S. and modest interaction with the rest of the world.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the relations between all three nation-states became dramatically more prominent. The U.S. emerged from the Cold War as the only global superpower and began its campaign of “benevolent hegemony” re-structuring the global order to promote and provide democracy and neo-liberal economics to nation-states who wanted or needed it. Meanwhile, China’s “market socialism” began to enhance its economic and diplomatic proficiency in foreign relations, especially towards the U.S. until imprudent actions, such as the Tiananmen Square incident, limited U.S. support for China’s reforms. In the midst of and following the Latin American economic crisis of the 1980s, Mexico opened its doors to increased diplomatic interaction and economic integration with the U.S. despite limited gains for Mexico in both respects.

The events of September 11, 2001 radically changed the national security priorities of the U.S. as well as for most nation-states in the world. The maintenance of hegemony and the minimization of terrorist actions still concern the U.S. national security community to this day. China’s regional power and global influence

significantly improve with each passing year implicitly offering an alternative or challenge to the welfare of other nation-states. Mexico continues to struggle with domestic political and economic woes as the U.S. focuses its attention to matters elsewhere.

The future is not clear with the ending of the two U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, China's active diplomatic and economic expansion and Mexico's domestic violence situation represent only a few serious factors in developing relations between these three nation-states. The developments of the twentieth century in regards to each nation-state certainly hold significance for their respective foreign policy initiatives as well as for bi-lateral and tri-lateral relations with their peers. The agreements and the conflicts involved in the past will especially hold relevance for the potential amity and enmity that may result in future relations that the U.S. national security community will have to anticipate.

### *Hypothesis*

Asymmetric theory shines light on the great complexities of international relations and the triangular relations component of this "asymmetric tri-lateralism" approach clarifies the importance of relations between the U.S., China and Mexico. Asymmetric theory is a practical structural approach to international relations theory that addresses the fundamental reality of unequal power amongst nation-states from which to build more stable relations. When analyzed in conjunction with triangular relations, the nature of international relations becomes increasingly complex as well as comprehensive, especially in understanding the implications of domestic and foreign actions in one

nation-state as it affects the infrastructure and perspectives of another nation-state. The importance of China and Mexico to U.S. national security warrants an attempt to analyze the spirit of relations among the three nation-states as parts and as a whole and to what extent the U.S should regard the former as challenges to its national security.

Lowell Dittmer's seminal work on triangular relations stands as a principal component in the analysis of this paper. Dittmer first outlines the use of game theory in assessing the initial relationships between two nation-states outlined as symmetric or asymmetric and positive or negative with likely relationship dynamics included. He further conceives of three possible patterns of exchange relationships, such as "*ménage à trois*," "a romantic triangle" and a "stable marriage." The article also introduces the concept of a "strategic triangle," a situation in which the salience of all three nation-states are recognized by all three participants and that a relationship between any two of them will influence and be influenced by their respective relationships with the third participant. Although the focus of the article is on U.S.-Soviet Union-China relations, the article is no less important in understanding the dynamics within triangular relations.

Brantly Womack's two concepts of asymmetric triangles and acknowledgment-for-deference (AFD) constitute the core of analysis for this thesis. Womack adapts Dittmer's triangular relations approach to the post-Cold War world where the salience of strategic asymmetry carries more significance and better explains power disparity within triangular relations. Acknowledgment-for-deference addresses the reality of power disparity asserting that "negotiated hierarchy" as opposed to immediate dominance and subservience is the most stable norm that preserves a balance of recognition for

compliance among autonomous nation-states. Womack also recognizes the possibility that “strategic triangles” may be a developed matrix of bi-lateral relations rather than a fully evolved “strategic triangle.” Therefore, it is that much more important to understand the complexities that follow an analysis of asymmetry in triangular relations.

Juan Gabriel Tokatlian briefly applies the principles of asymmetric tri-lateralism onto the U.S.-China-Latin America relationship(s). Considering the number of individual nation-states and various national priorities that exist in Latin America, Tokatlian points out the nature of the relationship as asymmetric, but not necessarily strategic in the Dittmorean sense. Tokatlian also points out the relevance of Latin America’s historical policy subordination to that of the U.S. as well as the modern divisions within the region. However, China’s foreign policies often attract Latin American countries to Chinese business and joint projects: a facet of international relations the U.S. cannot ignore.

In regards to the specific asymmetries between the participating nation-states, each case study opens with authors who address asymmetric frameworks relevant to the U.S., China and Mexico in their bi-lateral contexts. In his book, Womack addresses the U.S.-China asymmetric relationship by drawing attention to China’s process at becoming a modern nation-state, the inheritance and policy pioneering of the U.S. post-Cold War and the likely consequences of mirror-imaging and misperception as they contribute to alarmism if not properly addressed. Krystof Kozak writes on the U.S.-Mexico relationship with emphasis on international preconceptions of asymmetry, historical shifts in the nature of relations between the U.S. and Mexico as well as the dangers of ignoring the veracity of asymmetric theory. Finally, Jorge I. Dominguez approaches China’s

relations with Latin America, especially Mexico, by noting China's awareness of Latin America's "backyard" status to the U.S., the positive and negatives in political and economic relations between China and Mexico and the public opinion of relations between the two nation-states.

The case studies selected are of present and future importance to the U.S. national security community. The more immediate foreign concern for U.S. national security in the future is that of China. China is the primary peer of the U.S. that has the skillful intent and emerging capabilities to challenge U.S. power projection in Asia despite the regional powers that surround it. China will likely be the main nation-state challenge to U.S. influence around the world in the future and the U.S. national security community will have to prepare accordingly.

The well-being of Mexico is of immediate foreign as well as domestic importance to U.S. national security. Current economic relations with the U.S., the social disharmony along the shared U.S.-Mexico border and the common history surrounding both nation-states illustrate the importance of this nation-state to U.S. affairs. Mexico assists in area stability for Latin America, it is a source of indispensable commerce, it holds stake in the regional security of the U.S. and entire families have roots throughout the cross-border area.

The status of the U.S. itself is also important. In order for the U.S. to maintain its levels of influence, if not develop them further, the U.S. national security community must be ever aware of the happenings outside of its borders, both remote and nearby.

This reality holds even more truth if the U.S. believes it is in its best interest to act upon such occurrences by whatever means are deemed acceptable by the leadership.

The factors establishing the evaluation of the relationships are three-fold. Political structures and socio-cultural influences provide insight into the roots of policy-making and strategic culture. Observance of the structure, values and objectives of a people in a nation-state permit the development of better prepared foreign policy that is conducive to improved relations between nation-states. Such adaptations can also improve advantages in the construction of agreements, whether shared or self-interested.

Military doctrine outlines a basis from which the military will operate and shows what values are important to the citizenry and what they'll defend. The military capabilities of peers also provide perspective as to the value of completing objectives considered important to a nation-state. Military relations also represent a more tangible measure of political commitment towards cooperation or conflict.

In many ways, economics, the proverbial "treasure" chest, will determine the efficacy of a nation-state accomplishing its objectives, from funding specific development projects to the trading of goods and services. The vast possibilities that come with active trade between nation-states can introduce them to new goods and services that can develop a nation-state's infrastructure and social well-being. At the same time, unsupervised economic action can result in a nation-state operating on the wrong side of national growth.

### *Theories for Comparison*

Neo-realism and neo-liberalism will also be introduced as alternate theories by which to compare to asymmetric theory and its association to asymmetric tri-lateralism. Proponents of these theories include Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer and Joseph P. Nye and their theories will address the characteristics of the U.S.-China-Mexico relationship. In this thesis, the general findings will then be compared to asymmetric tri-lateralism and then critiqued so as to illustrate the practical alternative that is asymmetric tri-lateralism to international relations theory, especially within the U.S.-China, Mexico triangular relationship.

Kenneth Waltz first proposed structural realism, or neo-realism, as an adaptation of traditional realist theory. This approach advocates the following: the international order is anarchic, sovereign states are the principal actors, all these states are rational actors that seek to maintain their own survival and, as a result, inevitably create a security dilemma for themselves. The systemic goal for nation-states ultimately lies in maintaining a balance of power which can be done via “balancing” against the strongest power or “band-wagoning” with it as conflict develops in the greater international system.

John Mearsheimer, whose theories created the “Offensive Neo-Realism” school, takes a different approach to the predominantly “defensive” framework of Waltz. For Mearsheimer, power is a means and an end for the sake of maximizing power. Offensive neo-realism believes it foolish for a nation-state to not seek hegemony now when it believes that it already has sufficient security. Mearsheimer believes the goal is

not to achieve the means to defend a nation-state's own survival but rather to achieve the maximum level of power possible.

Neo-liberalism, as espoused by Joseph S. Nye, sees the world as rooted in complex interdependence. This theory accepts the international system as benign and the primary focus of analysis. Power is seen solely as a means and not an end. As such, nation-states must use power to foster interstate cooperation for the spreading of absolute gains and, if possible, a respectful means to unify nation-states under effective and beneficial global government. Utilizing a plurality of channels, such as multilateral institutions, transnational cooperation and trans-governmental agencies, can improve international relations as well as cultivate trust within multilateral initiatives if only to clarify the how much nation-states must rely on each other to live peacefully. The promotion of democracy, law, free markets, human rights and minimization of conflicts are also major goals this school seeks to share with the rest of the world.

Assuming these approaches to the topic at hand are the underlying basis of any further development of argument, there are several problems with these approaches. Observing from the perspective of international system patterns, Waltz assumes the structure of the international system will not allow the advanced level of U.S. power to exist unchecked for long. According to this logic, Mexico would either "balance" with China against the U.S. for past transgressions or "band-wagon" with the U.S. out of fear for its own survival. However, asymmetric tri-lateralism shows the U.S. and Mexico are engaged in a relatively structured hierarchy of power disparity that the theories of scholars, such as Dittmer, Womack and Tokatlian, will explain later in this thesis.



In regards to Mearsheimer, U.S. advancement of hegemony without concern for the opinion of other nation-states will only serve to aggravate relations with its peers. Such an instance would rally more nation-states to oppose the U.S. and challenge its claim to hegemony if not simply cooperate for the accomplishment of mutual aims. Furthermore, Mexico is not extraneous because of its shared stake in U.S.-provided regional security. In order to advance its own hegemony, the U.S. must ensure there is more than adequate protection at home, especially via *proximate* international relations.

Some contentions surround the approach of neo-liberalism and Nye towards the realities of power disparity in the international system. Although a truly egalitarian world in terms of power and influence is admirable, power disparity does exist and asymmetric theory has a practical solution to offer that will be further expounded upon later in this chapter. Also, the maximization of “soft power” has its limits. There are many cultures with many narratives, including those of the U.S., China and Mexico, which hold many different perspectives on the same absolute gains the neo-liberal school wants to promote. Some nation-states with certain cultures hold a position of power over others and the mitigations of conflict can only last so long, especially when the solutions of the neo-liberal school may seem far-fetched.

### *Conclusions*

This thesis discusses the effect of asymmetric theory on U.S. national security within a U.S. – China – Mexico triangular relationship. Womack’s “acknowledgement-for-deference” model is a practical and stable, though delicate, option towards understanding the depths of asymmetry between nation-states and the need to accept the

reality of power disparity within the implicit egalitarianism of the international system before any such disparity can be minimized or relations stabilized.

U.S.-China-Mexico triangular relations are certainly more practical and salient when applied in Womack's asymmetric triangle adaptation despite its incompatibility to Dittmer's "strategic triangle." The mere proximity of Mexico to the U.S., as the sole superpower motivated by full-spectrum dominance in all governing spheres, may well raise the salience of the U.S.-China-Mexico triangular relationship in the future. The lack of developed relations between China and Mexico is prominent now, but it is unlikely to be the case later, especially if China's increasing engagement with Mexico shapes a solution to their commerce tensions.

Given the rise of China's overall growth in national and international power as well as the socio-economic angst and security issues of Mexico, the U.S. national security community requires diverse, but singularly important engagement strategies for both countries in a bi-lateral context as well as for a developing tri-lateral situation. Also, the U.S. national security community must also monitor the evolution of relations between both China and Mexico. Although, relations between these two countries are underdeveloped, the U.S. national security community cannot ignore the possibility of a multi-lateralizing world where Mexico, as just one of many more international "nodes," could rise in prominence while nation-states, like China, do the same.

This thesis will build off the theories and analysis provided by Blank, Dittmer, Womack and others as it seeks to utilize a comprehensive framework on asymmetry and triangular relations and apply it to the triangular relationship between the U.S., China and

Mexico. However, because little research exists on this topic as an integrated whole, this thesis is a modest introduction to a voluminous topic of pressing importance to U.S. national security, especially in our multi-lateralizing and regionalizing world.

It is also important to note the complementary nature of both neo-realism and neo-liberalism with asymmetric theory and the limits to establishing theoretical boundaries. Neo-realism's focus on the realities of power disparity and the motivations for acquiring balance or advantages over another nation-state in a relationship is a central systemic theme in asymmetric tri-lateralism. Also, neo-liberalism's focus on interdependency does influence Womack's "acknowledgment-for-deference" (AFD) hierarchy system. However, asymmetric theory discusses the impact of power variables and not just the overall summary of power while noting that interdependency does not equate to pure egalitarianism in the truth that is international relations.

Even though Womack's "asymmetric triangle" approach adapts Dittmer's "strategic triangle" into more practical and flexible options, relations between China and Mexico are considerably underdeveloped. The fundamental essence of Dittmer's "strategic triangle" between the U.S., the Soviet Union and China is predicated on sufficient and contemporary interaction among the world's leading powers, especially in the political and military spheres; a level in which Mexico has not quite reached while the nature of China's attention to Mexico and Latin America as a whole before 2004 has been quite marginal.

The scope of comparison will focus on the dynamics within the three bi-lateral relationships and the details of the conclusion will be based on the application of theory

within these bi-lateral relationships as they relate to triangular relations. It is important to note that asymmetries and relations between nation-states are fluid and dynamic rather than static. This paper will present asymmetric relationships as a genuine reality that must be recognized and reduced for the sake of stable relations between nation-states.

The nature of the U.S.-China-Mexico triangular relationship today is hardly lucid and it is even less so for the future, especially given the salience of China's rise in the international community as well as the domestic unrest within Mexico's borders. The global balance of power is in a mode of transition. China and Mexico recognize that even though they may not ever match the power projection of the United States today, the gradual re-distribution of power across various geopolitical "nodes" may compel the U.S. to moderate its attraction for unilateralist measures in favor of multilateralism.

It is this reality that illuminates the importance of asymmetry studies and multilateralism studies for U.S. national security, especially within a triangular relations framework. The thoughts and suggestions of scholars on area studies, asymmetric theory, multi-lateralism and various spheres of nation-state interaction (i.e. political, military and economic) from around the world are relevant in this case. The incorporation of these ideas and opinions into a comprehensive presentation will combat the dangers of mirror-imaging providing candid viewpoints and clarifying underlying loyalties that can only better serve the U.S. national security community as indispensable information.

Ultimately, national security is *predicated* on foresight and this paper asserts this issue will be of increasing importance in the years to come.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

Little work has been done on this topic as a cohesive whole; however there exists a sufficient theoretical basis from which to draw conclusions and generate a structural analysis along the lines of asymmetric tri-lateralism. This theoretical basis will support the details of asymmetric relations in the case studies of the next chapter. Neo-realism and neo-liberalism will also be introduced as alternate theories by which to compare to asymmetric theory and its association to tri-lateralism. This chapter will also briefly engage the theoretical approaches of Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer and Joseph P. Nye as well as how their theories address the U.S.-China-Mexico relationship. Asymmetric tri-lateralism as espoused by Womack and supported by other scholars on asymmetry and triangular relations follow brief critiques of the three theories.

#### *Neo-Realism*

Realist theories primarily focus on power and its uses to establish a nation-state's dominance over its peers in one form or another. The outlook on human, and thus nation-state, relationships is often pessimistic asserting that only relative benefits can be gained in any diplomatic engagement. The self-interest and security of the nation-state takes precedence over morality and idealism in ensuring the nation-state's ultimate objective is its own survival. For realists, it is quite unlikely any multilateral institution could mitigate the reality that is an anarchic world order.

Kenneth Waltz first proposed structural realism, or neo-realism, as an adaptation of traditional realist theory. This approach advocates the following: the international order is anarchic, sovereign states are the principal actors, all these states are rational actors that seek to maintain their own survival and, as a result, inevitably create a security dilemma for themselves.<sup>1</sup> Despite the several variants that relate to neo-realism, Waltz focuses on power as a means and not an end of which the goal is to achieve a sufficient amount of power to balance against the dominant power in the international system.<sup>2</sup> The systemic goal for nation-states ultimately lies in maintaining a balance of power which can be done via “balancing” against the strongest power or “band-wagoning” with it as conflict develops in the greater international system.<sup>3</sup>

John Mearsheimer, whose theories created the “Offensive Neo-Realism” school, takes a different approach to the predominantly “defensive” framework of Waltz. For Mearsheimer, power is a means and an end for the sake of maximizing power. Offensive neo-realism believes it foolish for a nation-state to not seek hegemony now when it believes that it already has sufficient security. Mearsheimer believes the goal is not to achieve the means to defend a nation-state’s own survival but rather to achieve the maximum level of power possible.<sup>4</sup> However, Waltz would agree that action must be

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 1979), 69, 77

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 81

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Mearsheimer, John. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company Ltd., 2001), 30-32

taken when survival is at stake as Mearsheimer would agree that a nation-state may not always seek hegemony because of systemic constraints.

Neo-realism's approach to this paper involves analysis into the degree of power of the respective nation-states as well as the unique priorities that shape their self-interest and survival strategy. A strict interpretation of Waltz would suggest Mexico balance against the U.S. given the great power disparity as long as other nation-states would follow suit as to improve the chances of Mexico's own survival in a conflict.

Mearsheimer would encourage the U.S. to defeat China and advance its own hegemony. Mexico would be an irrelevant issue to U.S. interests unless it directly affects this goal.

Assuming these approaches to the topic at hand are the underlying basis of any further development of argument, there are several problems with these approaches.

Waltz assumes the structure of the international system will not allow the advanced level of U.S. power to exist unchecked for long. According to this logic, Mexico would either "balance" with China against the U.S. for past transgressions or "band-wagon" with the U.S. out of fear for its own survival. However, asymmetric tri-lateralism shows the U.S. and Mexico are engaged in a relatively structured hierarchy of power disparity that scholars, such as Womack, Dittmer and Tokatlian, will explain later in this chapter.

A few other factors play significant roles in U.S.-Mexico relations. Geographical proximity and cross-border socio-cultural integration contribute to the increased need for cooperation. The economic interaction between both the U.S. and Mexico are foundational in their relationship as trading partners. In several respects, China

represents an economic “threat” to the U.S.-Mexico economic relationship, although this view is more one-sided than Mexico would like to admit.

In regards to Mearsheimer, U.S. advancement of hegemony without concern for the opinion of other nation-states will only serve to aggravate relations with its peers. Such an instance would rally more nation-states to oppose the U.S. and challenge its claim to hegemony if not simply cooperate for the accomplishment of mutual aims. Furthermore, Mexico is not extraneous because of its shared stake in U.S.-provided regional security. In order to advance its own hegemony, the U.S. must ensure there is more than adequate protection at home, especially via *proximate* international relations.

### *Neo-Liberalism*

A strand of the idealism approach to international relations theory, liberalism advocates the importance of multilateral institutions and the analysis of a nation-state’s intentions as the primary motivations of international relations seen through the lens of “Westphalian” international egalitarianism. Optimistic by nature for the sake of absolute gains (i.e. justice, liberty, peace, etc.), liberalism campaigns for mutual progress and peace as these two characteristics permeate the actions of liberal international relations theorists and actors. Morality and shared ethics across nation-states are considered the best way to maintain global, regional and local stability. To this school, the underlying basis of interdependency manifested in multilateral institutions help alleviate the risks that come with an anarchic world order.

Neo-liberalism, as espoused by Joseph S. Nye, sees the world as rooted in complex interdependence. This theory accepts the international system as benign and the



primary focus of analysis. Power is seen solely as a means and not an end. As such, nation-states must use power to foster interstate cooperation for the spreading of absolute gains and, if possible, a respectful means to unify nation-states under effective and beneficial international government. Utilizing a plurality of channels, such as multilateral institutions as well as transnational and trans-governmental agencies, can improve international relations as well as cultivate trust within multilateral initiatives if only to clarify the how much nation-states must rely on each other to live peacefully. The promotion of democracy, law, free markets, human rights and minimization of conflicts are also major goals this school seeks to share with the rest of the world.

Joseph Nye's advocacy for neo-liberalism and interdependency is evident in his theory on "soft power" first mentioned in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead*. Nye's theory calls for a universalism in U.S. culture towards co-optation's two main elements: "agenda-setting" and "attraction." To focus on these two measures rather than co-optation's complement, command, will allow the U.S. to create institutions that will promote their ideals and appeal to the rest of the world instead of just "hard power."<sup>5</sup> However, Womack observes that Nye's recent literature on "soft power," his 2004 book with the same title, has moved away from this definition of "soft power" to one that focuses on "the ability to get what you want through attraction," in effect eliminating

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 31-32.

“agenda-setting” from the definition shifting attention towards, “the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals and policies”<sup>6 7</sup>

In “*Soft Power*”, Nye presented his thoughts on the relevance of transnational and trans- governmental actors as well as over-reaction in international relations. Nye asserts that the structure of power and control in international relations shares commonality with a three-dimensional chessboard<sup>8</sup>. U.S. military power, located on the top level, leads the rest of the world in capabilities and the hold by the U.S. will remain for at least another twenty years. In relation to economic advantage, the second level, power is dispersed across the globe allowing for economic multi-polarity. However, a third dimension of relevance, the transnational and trans-governmental realm, encompasses various forces that affect international relations dynamics daily from pandemics and climate change to terrorists and non-governmental organizations. Power is chaotically distributed at this level, but is nevertheless important.<sup>9</sup>

Nye would provide several points to address the asymmetric relationships between the U.S., China and Mexico. First, the U.S. needs to seriously improve its use of “soft power” in its relations with Mexico. Mexico is an equal partner in the global democratic process and should be respected as such. Second, the U.S. does not need to fear China lest the U.S. over-reacts. For example, even if China surpasses the U.S. in

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), x

<sup>7</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 64.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books Group, 2004), 4

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

economic strength, it is very important to consider the *composition* of China's economy and its per capita rates because they may not actually be efficiently promoted or at high enough levels to be considered "threatening" to U.S. interests.

Finally, the U.S. will not lose power in using multilateral institutions especially if still predicated on the implied Westphalian nature of international order. Nye would argue that by leading multilateral institutions and allowing a little more power distribution could go a long way in cultivating stronger international relations. Multiple narratives can win rather than just one over-arching one that may not correspond well with others, especially if imposed

Some contentions surround the approach of Neo-liberalism and Nye towards the realities of power disparity in the international system. Although a truly egalitarian world in terms of power and influence is admirable, power disparity does exist and asymmetric theory has a practical solution to offer that will be further expounded upon later in this chapter. Also, the maximization of "soft power" has its limits. There are many cultures with many narratives, including those of the U.S., China and Mexico, which hold many different perspectives on the same absolute gains the neo-liberal school wants to promote. Some nation-states with certain cultures hold a position of power over others and the mitigations of conflict can only last so long

Overall, Womack poses concerns over the nature of "soft power." "Soft power" involves three elements: attention, attraction and persuasion, yet there exists some confusion as to the applicability of these elements and its success without consideration for "hard power." The first concern is whether or not "soft power" is really a separate

phenomenon from “hard power.”<sup>10</sup> “Soft power” relies on attraction, but attraction can also come from the respect or the fear of a response to the “hard power” of another state actor, such as with the first U.S. invasion of Iraq in 1991 and the awesome demonstration of U.S. military superiority witnessed by the world.

Second, there is concern for the effects of “soft power.”<sup>11</sup> Nye encourages “voluntary compliance” in that other nation-states are willing to participate in a political, military or economic operation without reward or sanction. Womack asks whether “soft power” is just an obstacle to the capability of a nation-state’s “hard power” to complete their objective allowing peripheral opinion to go about its way. However, if the end to diplomacy and international relations were as simple as even Womack asserts, then perhaps the concepts of negotiation, diplomacy and cooperation for the sake of maximizing successes beyond a certain level of ability, similar to the economic concept of expanding a production possibilities frontier (PPF), would be irrelevant as well.

Third, according to Womack, the structure of “soft power” does not treat attention, attraction and persuasion as distinct elements. Simply put, increased attention does not directly correlate with increased positive feelings of attention, assuming that is the goal of a nation-state in its “soft power” campaign, but, “...persuasion is the bottom line of soft power.”<sup>12</sup> Since the U.S. does not face the threat of a state stronger than itself, this artificial sense of security leads many Americans to view the rest of the world as an

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<sup>10</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 65

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 67

“audience” rather than “partners” only exacerbating the sensitivities of weaker states to the actions of the U.S. hampering international cooperation.<sup>13</sup> Such a mentality is dangerous in an asymmetric relationship, especially with a strong power trying to involve itself to some degree in the bi-lateral affairs of other nation-states.

Ultimately, it is fair to say that the theoretical approach that is asymmetric tri-lateralism is not without limitation in its conception and application as it relates to these two theories. Neo-realism’s focus on the realities of power disparity and the motivations for acquiring balance or advantages over another nation-state in a relationship is a central systemic theme in asymmetric tri-lateralism. Neo-liberalism often focuses on the salience of interdependency and Womack’s “acknowledgment-for-deference” (AFD) framework relies on this principle to function. However, neo-realism focuses too much on the overall summary of power disparity and status in the international system rather than the potential impact of the power variables that constitute such ranking. Neo-liberalism’s marriage of interdependency to the necessity for absolute egalitarianism has little basis in real international relations often negating the reality of power disparity that exists even in the most proximate of international relationships.

### *Foundations of Asymmetrical Tri-Lateralism*

*Lowell Dittmer*

Lowell Dittmer’s seminal work, “The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis,” centers on the nature and impact of strategic triangles in

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<sup>13</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 67

international politics. Dittmer's analyzes the international relations between the U.S., the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1978 tracing the evolution of their triangular strategic relationship over most of the Cold War. His study sought to explain how changes in the international relations between the three subjects came about as well as localize fundamental aspects of the strategic triangle framework so as to be adapted to future, international triangular situations between nation-states.

Dittmer defines a "strategic triangle" as a sort of transactional game among three players incorporating Wittgenstein's observation that a great variety of games exists, such as those that are in effect cooperative, hierarchical, competitive and ostracism-redemption related.<sup>14</sup> Although subjects within the game may not be aware they are playing a game, "...as long as they remain *in the situation described by the game*, their foreign policy options will to some degree be circumscribed by its constraints and opportunities"<sup>15</sup>

The rules of the game are rooted in exchanges within a game theory matrix. Dittmer poses the question: "Why do states fall into patterned relationships with one another in the first place, and of what do such relationships consist? [answering that]... states experience needs that cannot be adequately satisfied at the domestic level, leading them to enter into contact with those countries that dispose of the pertinent values."<sup>16</sup> Here is where exchanges enter into the game. These exchanges can be in the form of goods and services, population movements, information and even money. However, such

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<sup>14</sup> Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis," *World Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 1981): 485

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 486

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

exchanges can be viewed as *benefits* or *sanctions* depending on the priorities and interests of the parties involved (italics original). Dittmer further explains that “*Exchanges are in the normal course of things reciprocal...but they may or may not be symmetrical*”<sup>17</sup>

Thus, we move to the game theory matrix. In reference to international relationships, Dittmer puts forward stability and durability as two foundational standards for the four logically possible “pure” types of these “exchange relationships.”<sup>18</sup> In the ideal situation, he assumes symmetrical and positive relationships are easier to sustain than asymmetrical and negative ones. The evaluation of the four types of relationships as they relate to bi-lateral relations within a “strategic triangle” is as follows:

1. Symmetrical Positive – cater to the interests of both participants (i.e. balanced trade)
2. Symmetrical Negative – self-sustaining if passive; unacceptable costs of action (i.e. deterrence or stalemate)
3. Asymmetrical Positive – prolonged if chief beneficiary continuously deludes or coerces lesser beneficiary (i.e. economic dependency)
4. Asymmetrical Negative – costly and brief in duration; exacerbation of symmetry between strong and weak (i.e. conquest)<sup>1920</sup>

Dittmer also notes the two variables of *value* (positive/negative or rather “amity”/“enmity”) and *symmetry* affect the type of exchange in association with a third variable: each player’s relationship with the third player<sup>21</sup>. The nature of the

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<sup>17</sup> Lowell Dittmer, “The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis,” *World Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 1981): 486

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 487

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>21</sup> Lowell Dittmer, “The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis,” *World Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 1981): 488

relationship between two participants in the game can be marginally or fundamentally altered by interaction with the third player. It is at this point where Dittmer's "strategic triangle" variants become most relevant. There are three systemic *patterns* of exchange relationships, as Dittmer puts it:

1. *ménage à trois* – symmetrical amities among all three players
2. romantic triangle – amity between one "pivot" player and two "wing players, but enmity between each of the latter
3. stable marriage – amity between two of the players and enmity between each and the third<sup>22</sup>

A fourth kind, a "unit veto" as put forth by Womack, is a relationship of enmity between all three players.<sup>2324</sup>

However, in order for a tri-lateral game to represent a "strategic triangle," two conditions must be met: "[First,] all participants must recognize the strategic salience of the three principals... [and, second,]... the relationship between any two participants will be influenced by each player's relationship to the third."<sup>25</sup> Dittmer also notes that in "triangular diplomacy, [nation-states] must avoid the impression that it is 'using' either of the contenders against the other; otherwise one becomes vulnerable to retaliation or blackmail."<sup>26</sup> In Dittmer's opinion, in inverse order of stability and durability, "stable marriages" tend to be the least stable followed by "romantic triangles" and then

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<sup>22</sup> Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis," *World Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 1981): 488

<sup>23</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 377

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix B

<sup>25</sup> Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis," *World Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 1981): 491

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



the *ménage à trois*. However, since World War II, it seems that “stable marriages” are the norm while the *ménage à trois* has yet to evolve.

*Brantly Womack*

Dittmer’s triangular theory is fundamental to conceptualizing the U.S.-China-Mexico relationship in a stable framework, however Brantly Womack’s book, “China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia,” actively modifies Dittmer’s approach to international relations onto an asymmetric theory framework. He cautions Western international theorists not to view asymmetric theory as a static problem that must be fixed. He also emphasizes that normal relations in the realm of international relations are not either symmetric or hegemonic, but a comprehensive matrix of agreements where autonomy and deference are often exchanged in increments rather than complete structural shifts. Womack’s approach can easily be applied as a means to assess the triangular relations between any set of three nation-states, especially because of the adaptation to Dittmer’s strategic triangle that includes recognition of asymmetrical realities.

In Chapter 15, Womack questions whether or not it is possible to apply triangular analysis, put forth by Dittmer, onto asymmetric theory and vice versa. Womack explains that given the changes in international relations since the Cold War, modifications are necessary to Dittmer’s original proposals.<sup>27</sup> Multilateral relations always add a level of complexity to the foreign relations of a nation-state, especially if the third party

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<sup>27</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010),372-373

has influence within the relationship. To Womack, “the key feature of triangular relationships in contrast to bilateral ones is the indeterminacy of simultaneous interactions...” as well as the impact on conceptions of relative power that result from the addition of asymmetry.<sup>28</sup>

As a result for this need to address the interaction between triangular analysis and asymmetric theory, a modified strategic triangular analysis is proposed by Womack. There are four relationship orders possible between the three triangular players vis-à-vis the power ratio with X symbolizing the most powerful player, Z the least powerful player and Y as the intermediate power.<sup>29</sup>

1. “Symmetrical Triangle”:  $X=Y=Z$
2. “Single-head Dual Asymmetrical Triangle”:  $X>Y=Z$
3. “Twin-head Dual Asymmetrical Triangle”:  $X=Y>Z$
4. “Triple Asymmetrical Triangle”:  $X>Y>Z$

In regards to the U.S.-China-Mexico triangular relationship, a triple asymmetrical triangle is the most fitting theoretical construct for this relationship, however the remainder of this thesis will present evidence as to the strategic salience of this triangle for today and for the future, especially for the sake of U.S. national security priorities.

The concept of power asymmetry explains Womack’s assertions that “acknowledgement-for-deference” (AFD) is the most practical approach for evaluating the reasoning behind asymmetrical relations. In regards to assessing the nature of the relationship between a “stronger power” and a neighboring “weaker power,” “...the theory of power asymmetry [holds that] asymmetrical relationships between a dyad of

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<sup>28</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010),402

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 379

geographically bound countries has its own way of evolution” often constructing an AFD paradigm.<sup>30</sup> Essentially, “the strong is more resourceful but less committed to bringing about [a] specific outcome in the bilateral relationship, while the weak is more vulnerable and therefore more alert to threat and committed to survival,” especially in a warfare scenario.<sup>3132</sup>

Womack then argues, “if [AFD] is the equilibrium in an asymmetric relationship, then presumably a triple asymmetrical triangle ( $X > Y > Z$ ) is fully equilibrated when all the three relations reach AFD. However, within the workings of the triangular relationship, X, Y, and Z have key roles that can change at any moment since, “...both Y and Z defers to X, X is in a position to set the range of permissible actions for both Y and Z” with each other and with X. The basis of X’s power is that, “...it recognizes the autonomy of Y and Z, and autonomy implies negotiated cooperation rather than imposed compliance.”<sup>33</sup> To that end, Womack believes, “...realism’s assumption that relative power decides all...” is inaccurate and that power and order are the result of “negotiated hierarchy” rather than outright domination; “structured by interaction as well as by power.”<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Womack structured the AFD dynamic to a U.S.-

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<sup>30</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 384

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> John Geis, “The Strength of Weakness: Why the Weak Win in Asymmetric Conflict,” *Presentation at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference* (April 2008): 52-53.

<sup>33</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 403

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

China-Taiwan strategic triangle, yet a modification of analysis establishing X and Z in the same geographical situation with Y as the potential “pivot” instead of the stronger X provides a better understanding of the U.S.-China-Mexico relationship.

Womack first clarifies the approach to the salience of asymmetry in triangular relationships via the conceptualization of regional powers in Chapter 4. It is difficult to define the boundaries of a region when opinions on the subject vary in criteria and overlap in location. However, Womack asserts the necessity to limit to scale and focus on the scope of influence to better identify regional powers. Although regional power often holds equal or greater power to that of its neighbors, the regional power may not be a global power, thus the regional power finds itself into possible subordination to a much larger power. Essentially, “...as an intermediate power, a regional power is in the apparently contradictory position of being more powerful than some and less powerful than others.”<sup>35</sup> As a global power, the U.S. does not often have the level of influence that only comes with deep intimacy of cultural and historical relationships with intra-regional nation-states that regional powers enjoy.

Centricity plays a large role in defining regional power structures. Womack defines a regional power, and only a regional power, as: “a state [that] must be on the strong end of bilateral relationships with all or most of its neighbors, and have a different relationship to the situation beyond its neighborhood.”<sup>36</sup> It is important to note that Mexico is in a unique position with Central America and the Caribbean because of the

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<sup>35</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 78

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

regional primacy of the U.S. even though Mexico holds more socio-cultural and local political salience with these two regions than the U.S. Since a region is a “matrix of located relationships between states of different capacities located in a larger political environment [often with one or two larger powers within the matrix],...there is not a fixed number of regions, nor are regions necessarily mutually exclusive”<sup>37</sup>

Considering the priority of bi-lateral relationships within a region to the regional power and the natural arrangement of becoming a “hub” or “node” for regional communications, political order and economic interaction, the regional power becomes the center of attention for the region. In line with Joseph Nye’s theory on “soft power,” the regional power commands attention, attraction and persuasion because of its centrality *and* its quality of leadership more so than the “capacity to dominate the rest of the region”<sup>38</sup> Chris Marsh further emphasizes the geopolitics and market framework of a nation-state can have a profound effect on its relations to its peers, especially for regional powers.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, in Chapter 16, Womack applied his modified strategic triangular analysis to U.S. relations with China and Vietnam with emphasis on the latter two’s relationship. After explaining the history of U.S. perception of the Sino-Vietnamese relationship and the actions of the U.S. towards the former two for the better part of the Cold War, it turns out that, “American policy with regard to both China and Vietnam [was] governed

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<sup>37</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 86

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 89

<sup>39</sup> Christopher Marsh, “Ties That Bind: Social Capital and the Persistence of Soviet-Era Patterns of Interaction”: 9

primarily by bilateral or global interests and concerns rather than by triangulation.”<sup>40</sup>

The U.S. often dismissed the relevance of Vietnam in international relations short of slowing the spread of Communism in the area and rather decided to associate the Sino-Vietnamese relationship as one of mutual hatred and subordination.

The U.S. war in Vietnam only brought China and Vietnam together for the purposes of repelling U.S. influence in the region. For the longest time, including today, Vietnam has not been and is, “...not a conduit for Chinese regional influence or unusually close to China.”<sup>41</sup> In regards to the greater topic, this notion is important to understand for the U.S.-China-Mexico relationship in that China currently views Mexico primarily as an intermediary to the U.S. market with political and military ties only gradually becoming salient.

Remoteness, status and asymmetry can all affect the perspective of a player in a triangular relationship as explained by Womack in his approach to the American perspective in Sino-Vietnamese relations. Remoteness from the proximate relationship of the two other players decreases the salience of either one player in the relationship or the entire relationship by the remote player.<sup>42</sup> Womack also notes “...remoteness reduces the urgency of learning from mistakes,” as well as prioritizing remote concerns with proximate ones, such as the U.S. in its war with Vietnam or the likeliness of Chinese

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<sup>40</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 411

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 415

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 416

interaction with Mexico, respectively.<sup>43</sup> Status, especially as a global power, will often mix national interests with global interests and may often assume that the combination is a mutual policy goal for other nation-states. Finally, asymmetry exacerbates the reality of a “weaker power’s” exposure to a “stronger power.” AFD is often a practical and stable alternative to prolonged warfare and frustration in international relations.

*Juan Gabriel Tokatlian*

In his article, “The Relations Between Latin America and China: A Focusing Approach,” Juan Gabriel Tokatlian reinforces Dittmer’s foundational theories of triangular relationships and Womack’s inclusive adjustments of asymmetric theory by inputting the U.S., China and Latin America triangular relationship into Womack’s asymmetric triangle model. He writes on the links between Latin America, China and the U.S. from the perspective of regional interests for Latin America. Although Tokatlian focuses on Latin America as a region, many of his arguments are relevant to Mexico; especially given the latter’s close proximity to the U.S. Tokatlian also stresses throughout the article that although the triangular relationship between the U.S., China and Latin America is asymmetric, such asymmetry does not necessarily lead to conflict, but can lead to cooperation if managed correctly between the three actors in this relationship.

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<sup>43</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 416

The article presents six points that outline a framework that can assist the U.S. with appropriate engagement within the China-Latin America relationship. First, the relationship between the U.S., China and Latin America are part of a “dynamic asymmetry.”<sup>44</sup> Tokatlian adapts Womack’s theories on asymmetry in international relations making note that two axes of structural asymmetry exists: one between the U.S. and China and one with the U.S. and Latin America with China essentially “closing” the gap between the U.S. and Latin America as the latter’s relationship continues to widen. As a result of the responsibilities, challenges and privileges that come with “global power” status, the U.S. often looks at Latin America, especially Mexico, as a “safe” area that can be neglected, to a degree, in lieu of more important matters. This leads to the attitude of what Tokatlian calls “frustrated superpower syndrome” that often affects Mexico and the rest of Latin America.

Second, the triangular relationship between the U.S., China and Latin America is not a strategic one in the Dittmerean sense.<sup>45</sup> Essentially, “...the United States and China are two independent unitary actors who can identify better and more secure their national interests.”<sup>46</sup> Tokatlian identifies Latin America as a “mosaic” of countries with relative degrees of autonomy. By Dittmer’s definition of a strategic triangle, Tokatlian argues the significance of the U.S.-China relationship to each other,

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<sup>44</sup> Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, “Relaciones Entre Latinoamérica y China: Un Enfoque Para Su Aproximación,” *Análisis Político* 20, 0121-4705, no. 59 (March 2007): 47

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*



both positive and negative, outweighs their respective relationships to Latin America given the variance in scope, intensity and complexity of those relationships.<sup>47</sup>

Third, the strategies of each player are different within the triangular relationship. According to Tokatlian, the U.S. focuses on “primacy,” China on “promotion,” and Latin America on “diversification.”<sup>48</sup> In other words, the U.S. will not tolerate a peer competitor, China wants “to facilitate its consolidation as a regional power...and its future projection as an influential global actor,” while Latin American countries vary on their respective positions to either align or distance themselves from the U.S.<sup>49</sup>

Fourth, geography counts. In relation to Latin America’s “frustrated superpower syndrome,” the countries south of the U.S. border noticed their relative importance to U.S. policy in the western hemisphere in the past 50 years was reduced during the Cold War, low in the immediate post-Cold War and even lower in the period after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. .<sup>50</sup> However, such a perspective was fueled by the ability of the U.S. to project its power more readily in the Latin America “power vacuum” confident no other foreign power would encroach upon its Monroe Doctrine.<sup>51</sup>

The same could not be said of most of Western Europe’s history as well as contemporary East Asia. Tokatlian notes that the multi-polar environment of the region impedes China’s ability to become the hegemon of the region when other nation-states,

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<sup>47</sup> Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, “Relaciones Entre Latinoamérica y China: Un Enfoque Para Su Aproximación,” *Análisis Político* 20, 0121-4705, no. 59 (March 2007): 48

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 49

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 50

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

such as Russia, Japan and India, geographically surround China. By necessity, China would have to develop multiple counter-measures to such influence as Tokatlian argues against China's ability to become a mature rival to the U.S. in its own hemisphere.

Fifth, Tokatlian points to the current de-institutionalization and fragmentation in Latin America. The concept of "lost decade" for Latin America is often attributed to the economic crises of the 1980s in the region with low growth, high debt and market volatility. However, Tokatlian's "de-institutionalization" argues for multiple "lost decades": politically in the 1970s (i.e. the prevalence of military authoritarianism in government and violation of human rights), socially in the 1990s (i.e. deepened inequality and class and ethnic conflict) and historical perforations in the new century unique to sub-regions within the Latin America region.<sup>52</sup>

In terms of "fragmentation," Tokatlian states it is more appropriate to consider North America, including the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, as a politically and economically U.S.-centric region while treating South America, from Colombia to Argentina, as a "distinct geopolitical unit" while remembering the main sub-regional differences within South America, such as the Southern Cone, the Andean region and Brazil.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, values matter greatly. Tokatlian argues the Chinese foreign policy model appeals to Latin America, but not necessarily the domestic model. Arguably, since military authoritarianism of the 1970s profoundly affected much of Latin America, the

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<sup>52</sup> Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Relaciones Entre Latinoamérica y China: Un Enfoque Para Su Aproximación," *Análisis Político* 20, 0121-4705, no. 59 (March 2007): 51

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

sometimes limited emphasis on human rights, pluralism and rule of law have become more important; three priorities that are not seen as highly prominent in the Chinese domestic policy model<sup>54</sup>. However, the Chinese foreign policy model emphasis on multi-polarity, multilateralism, non-interference, soft power, pragmatism, collaboration and persuasion are quite attractive qualities to many Latin American countries.<sup>55</sup>

To better understand the adaptation of Tokatlian's article to that of the Mexican reality, it is important to note several points in regards to this article. Mexico is a mature secondary regional power despite its proximity to the U.S. as a factor that affects its level of autonomy. Given Mexico's location and unique history with the U.S., Mexico would most likely want to align with the U.S. in any conflict between the U.S. and China, however it will constantly insist on its autonomy to show that Mexico is aligning by choice rather than by default circumstances.

Hypothetically, if China were to develop political and military relationships with various powerful Latin American countries, whether as supporters for China or even as catalysts to start tension in the region to pressure the U.S. to redirect its attention, China *could* help build some Latin American countries into strong powers that can project upon the U.S. in slightly more relevant levels to "resist" policies of the U.S. If such a case happens with Mexico, the U.S. will have a major problem even without the "threat" of Chinese sea or land basing.

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<sup>54</sup> Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Relaciones Entre Latinoamérica y China: Un Enfoque Para Su Aproximación," *Análisis Político* 20, 0121-4705, no. 59 (March 2007): 52

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

For most of the history Tokatlían references, Mexico was under a one-party system until 2000; the economy was affected but a transition to neo-liberalism helped during that time; social inequality and limited health and education are two things Mexico has dealt with for most of its history; and historically, Mexico has been its own unique Latin country given proximate relations with U.S. and its distance from South America

Mexico did not exactly undergo the same experiences as the rest of Latin America, yet Mexico is often a proponent of democracy and pluralism, though its support for human rights in the American sense is often ambiguous. Mexico also supports the rule of law, but culturally supports a rule of man with a strong leader directing the country fairly opposed to China with its cultural emphasis on rule of man but with a communist twist of a large legislature as the ultimate authority.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Case Studies

The case studies selected are of present and future importance to the U.S. national security community. The more immediate foreign concern for U.S. national security in the future is that of China. China is the primary peer of the U.S. that has the skillful intent and emerging capabilities to challenge U.S. power projection in Asia despite the regional powers that surround it. China will likely be the main nation-state challenge to U.S. influence around the world in the future and the U.S. national security community will have to prepare accordingly.

The well-being of Mexico is of immediate foreign as well as domestic importance to U.S. national security. Current economic relations with the U.S., the social disharmony along the shared border U.S.-Mexico border and the common history surrounding both nation-states illustrate the importance of this nation-state to U.S. affairs. Mexico assists in area stability for Latin America, it is a source of indispensable commerce, it holds stake in the regional security of the U.S. and entire families have roots throughout the cross-border area.

The status of the U.S. itself is also important. In order for the U.S. to maintain its levels of influence, if not develop them further, the U.S. national security community must be ever aware of the happenings outside of its borders, both remote and nearby. This reality holds even more truth if the U.S. believes it is in its best interest to act upon such occurrences by whatever means are deemed acceptable by the leadership.

The factors establishing the evaluation of the relationships are three-fold.

Political structures and socio-cultural influences provide insight into the roots of policy-making and strategic culture. Observance of the structure, values and objectives of a people in a nation-state permit the development of better prepared foreign policy that is conducive to improved relations between nation-states. Such adaptations can also improve advantages in the construction of agreements, whether shared or self-interested.

Military doctrine outlines a basis from which the military will operate and shows what values are important to the citizenry and what they'll defend. The military capabilities of peers also provide perspective as to the value of completing objectives considered important to a nation-state. Military relations also represent a more tangible measure of political commitment towards cooperation or conflict.

In many ways, economics, the proverbial "treasure" chest, will determine the efficacy of a nation-state accomplishing its objectives, from funding specific development projects to the trading of goods and services. The vast possibilities that come with active trade between nation-states can introduce nation-states to new goods and services that can develop a nation-state's infrastructure and social well-being. At the same time, unsupervised economic action can result in a nation-state operating on the wrong side of national growth.

The extent to which these three spheres of influence contribute to the overall power of these three nation-states respectively cannot be so easily measured. However, it does help the U.S. national security community to conceptualize the demographics, military budget and overall economic production as reference points towards

understanding the comparisons and contrasts between these three nation-states.<sup>1</sup> From these sources, the particular cases of asymmetry that exist within these three bi-lateral relationships can provide a much clearer image as to the benefits and limitations that come with asymmetry's effect on a triangular relationship.

### *United States – China*

#### *Basis of Asymmetry*

Womack focuses on unique qualities that China and the U.S. possess that provide insight into their respective approaches to asymmetric leadership. Historically speaking, China has experience as a regional leader in Asia. Traditional imperial China considered itself a culturally and morally superior leader of Asia whose principles were universally applicable to other nation-states. However, after Western powers colonized and divided China during the “Century of Shame and Humiliation” (1840s to 1940s), Chinese communists acquired control of China and revealed their collective potential to be an influential power once again.

“Revolutionary activism” and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the two major strands of foreign policy that were born from the trauma of the previous one hundred years, became the foundation of China's relations to the rest of the world even into the new century.<sup>2</sup> The initial reforms of the late 1970s and early 1980s redirected

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>2</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 331

China once again onto a path of economic modernization and political inclusiveness that significantly improved China's relations to its neighbors.

China has also demonstrated its influence in economic matters during times of crisis. China did not decide to devalue its currency during the 1997 Asian financial crisis as a means to prevent a "currency devaluation war in Asia."<sup>3</sup> The action implied that China was willing to undergo short-term losses to keep stability in the region lest instability spread to China: a grand strategic option China could not afford. It is no surprise then that China's actions in the recent global financial crisis were any more different than they were ten years prior.

China remains active in its foreign relations despite the complexities within the region. Japan's close relationship with the U.S. is of constant concern to China despite the already tense relationship it shares with Japan. Although Russian and Chinese relations are improving as they both see the U.S. as a common competitor in the region, that does not mean both nations are likely to become allies anytime soon. China's relations with Taiwan are always a point of incessant contention, especially with a U.S. presence close by as well as a conflictual history. Overall, China has been successful in keeping the peace, but U.S. presence definitely has an influence in the regional dynamic.

U.S. power after the Cold War and its resulting uni-polarity carries significant advantages as well as disadvantages as being the first and only global superpower in world history. The size of the disparity towards nation-states within its respective region and throughout the rest of the world is great. The U.S. brings an institutionalized, though

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<sup>3</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 332



often ambivalent, asymmetry to all of its foreign relations with nation-states that almost expects deference at the risk of concentrated rebuke. However, “[t]he problem of being a ‘hyperpower’ is that it can become convenient to maximize one’s own interest and to dismiss the growing alienation of other countries as mere peripheral noise.”<sup>4</sup>

The Cold War educated the U.S. in how to be a leader outside of its own region. Established U.S. leadership during the Cold War carried over into the post-Cold War world where its influence expanded into previously non-aligned areas while reinforcing its leadership among its allies. The absence of a large and influential opposition can restrict justifications for certain U.S. actions and policies that were once understood as necessary. Thus, there is a shift in perspective where the international community now views U.S. procedures as unilateral campaigns against weaker nation-states that attract the world’s sympathies by default.<sup>5</sup>

The U.S. mostly conducts its foreign relations within the framework of universal principles. Freedom and democracy have always been the motivation behind many U.S. foreign relations campaigns advocating a transcendent value system from which all people are guaranteed the “certain inalienable rights” that Jefferson put forth at the founding of the U.S.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the “Asian values” framework has existed in the region for much longer and non-Western peoples abroad often interpret the presence

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<sup>4</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 332

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 337

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

of the internationalist American lifestyle as an imposition of the U.S. values system.<sup>7</sup>

Truly, the asymmetric advantages of the U.S. model project political strength and ethical growth, but abuse of justification for unilateral action can also distance the U.S. away from its neighbors.

Womack notes that in an asymmetric relationship, misperception and mirror-imaging can lead to dire consequences if mismanaged. If the U.S. views China as a smaller version of itself, then the U.S. will often see China as vying for global hegemony. Although China is and will gain considerable influence in Asia and the rest of the world, China's capacities will hardly fill the "[U.S.] need for a new Cold War enemy," especially given the rise of relative strength in other nation-states within Asia.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, if China views the U.S. as itself in a larger context, than China may believe the U.S. is focusing more attention to China than is actually given. China often perceives (or misperceives) any actions by the U.S. in Asia as part of a larger plan of containment provoking reactions by Chinese leadership that "extrapolate the pattern [as] a mortal threat."<sup>9</sup>

Misperceptions can foster alarmism within both nation-states; however such alarmism can also be justified. Womack notes that if Chinese deference to the U.S. seems to compromise the former's autonomy, then China will be more confrontational. However, if such demands for autonomy are seen to preclude U.S. interests for

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<sup>7</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 337

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 339

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 340

maintaining global leadership, then the U.S. will assert its dominance.<sup>10</sup> In general, the U.S. and China also have the capabilities to unwittingly damage their own relationships with their peers if they allow misperception and mirror-imaging to continue without consistent regard for their neighbors as well as the dynamics within asymmetric theory.

### *Foreign Policy*

*Interests.* Several fundamental differences exist between U.S. and Chinese overarching cultures that shape contemporary obstacles to the foreign relations between the two nation-states. Bates Gill notes American culture often focuses on linear progress and the relevance of human agency, if not an ultimate agency, to affect surrounding conditions. Chinese culture recognizes change as the only constant by which man is the ultimate agency and that life and action move in cycles rather than towards linear ends.<sup>11</sup> Both the U.S. and China hold strong views on the righteousness of their values and the proliferation of these ideals beyond their respective borders.<sup>12</sup> Whereas the world witnessed a linear evolution of the U.S. from a post-colonial nation-state to a superpower in two hundred years, China experienced “a dip” losing its imperial status to foreign occupation only to return as a revolutionary state on its way to a strong power.<sup>13</sup> Today, the U.S. remains a global power with strong alliances and overwhelming military power

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<sup>10</sup> Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 340

<sup>11</sup> Bates Gill, “Contrasting Visions: United States, China and World Order” (testimony, U.S.-China Security Review Commission, Washington, D.C., August 3, 2001), 2

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 3

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

whereas China has become a significant regional power with no formal military ties, no troops stationed abroad and with modest military development to that of the U.S.<sup>14</sup>

Marsh further specifies these cultural differences by first noting that Americans emphasize individual rights and freedom manifested in predominant ideals such as free market enterprise, democracy and the separation of church and state.<sup>15</sup> Such ideas have little similarity to other non-Western cultures, such as China. On the other hand, China emphasizes collective interests and stability focusing on the promotion of central control, regulation and lateral governance.<sup>16</sup> Since Western culture stands primarily embodied in the vast symbolic and actual power of the U.S and the fact that many non-Western nation-states do not subscribe to the same principles highlighted by Marsh, the source of much discontent in international relations with the U.S. often starts at the socio-cultural plane of analysis.

It is worth mentioning that after thousands of years under the guidance of imperial dynasties, the “Mandate of Heaven” and the concept of *tian xia* (天下), China’s “Century of Shame and Humiliation” (1840s-1940s) shattered its view as the “center of the universe” and a superior cultural and political power to its surrounding Asian nation-states. Foreign powers sought to colonize China seizing over a million square kilometers of land while more than one thousand treaties and agreements were forced upon China,

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Bates Gill, “Contrasting Visions: United States, China and World Order” (testimony, U.S.-China Security Review Commission, Washington, D.C., August 3, 2001), 4

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Marsh, “The Crux of the Matter: Religion as a Complicating Factor in US-China Relations” (lecture, People's University, Beijing, People's Republic of China, July 28-30, 2004): 4-5

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

including its present national borders.<sup>17</sup> This century gave birth to the “victim mentality” actively utilized by Mao and the Chinese Communists as it continues to exist as a subtle, but profound historical reminder and nationalist concept for Chinese to this day.

*Threats.* The U.S. is concerned with the potential loss of primacy to multilateralism, especially to China. In many respects, China is becoming a “possible alternative” and peer to the U.S. However, there is a danger for the U.S. in submitting itself and China to the relational framework of “enemy deprivation syndrome.”<sup>18</sup> This state-of-mind essentially justifies an aggressive approach to political, military and economic acquisitions for the purposes of preparing for conflict with a potential enemy that can replace a previously defeated or withdrawn enemy. Although such a situation may be valid, it can also narrow possible inroads towards the fostering of positive diplomatic relations if not careful.

The inability of the U.S. to “contain” China proves to be a real and sobering situation for U.S. national security. Former U.S. Ambassador to China Chas W. Freeman Jr. believes the U.S. must reassess several factors concerning its own perceptions of China’s rise.<sup>19</sup> The U.S. cannot stop China’s rise within rational means, especially in a globalizing world where major opportunity and momentous returns are always around the corner. To attempt to stop China will only promote mutual enmity as well as isolation of

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<sup>17</sup> Jijun Li, “Traditional Military Thinking and the Defensive Strategy of China” (lecture, United States War College, Carlisle, PA, August 1, 1997)

<sup>18</sup> Chas W. Freeman Jr., “A China Policy For the Twenty-First Century,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 25

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

the U.S. from its allies, especially those in Asia who would not want to incur the risks of such a lofty endeavor. Asian nation-states also do not want to see the U.S. as the sole balancer of China but rather a partner for a regional and global balance. Such manifestations of policy can and will occur, especially if the situation involved a “hot war” with Taiwan in the middle.

For China, the continuation of U.S. unilateral foreign policy and the U.S. encroachment upon China’s sovereignty hold immediate relevance. The continued minimization of China’s philosophical influence into the international order by U.S. foreign policy stands as an obstruction towards the diplomatic relations between both nation-states. The authority of western culture in the international order far outweighs those of any other major regional culture. China’s measures to revise this reality in favor of injecting Asian-inspired philosophy into international diplomatic structures will continue to be a priority for China’s foreign policy elite.

Some analysts and policy-makers believe that friction in U.S. and Chinese relations could push China into the construction of official “anti-American” alliances, especially with Russia. Despite the diplomatic negativity surrounding Russian’s history with the U.S., such a thought is “premature.”<sup>20</sup> Like other nation-states in the Asia-Pacific region, Russia is concerned with China’s growing influence, especially its political campaigns, its past weapons purchases from Russia and economic vitality.

*Means.* The “New Security Concept, elaborated by China’s former President Jiang Zemin in the late 1990s, called attention to the state of affairs in the international

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<sup>20</sup> Christopher Marsh, “Russia Plays the China Card,” *The National Interest*, Nov./Dec. 2007, 71.

order that still exists today if only in the minds of Chinese foreign policy elites. This approach advocates what is known as the “Three No Changes” and the “Three New Changes.”<sup>21</sup> The “Three No Changes” state that peace and development remain the core trend in international relations, the movement toward a multi-polar world continues and economic globalization continues to increase and the world still tends toward a relaxation of international tensions. However, the “Three New Changes” highlight the increasing hegemonism and power politics concentrated in the foreign policy of the U.S., the increasing tendencies toward military interventionism and the increasing gap between developed and developing countries.

Given the importance of Chinese leadership and profound historical influence to the Asia-Pacific nation-states, the U.S. must commit to a reaffirmation of alliances and campaign to increase global support for U.S. political influence in the region. The U.S. will have to continue promoting itself in Asia and globally as a much more valuable option for business and political relations than with China paying particular attention to allies in Asia, including Japan, Thailand, the Philippines and Australia, while unofficially supporting Taiwan’s status as a minor geographical check to China.<sup>22</sup> Citations of past diplomatic successes with Asian nation-states and current political strengths shared among the U.S. and its allies can be a source of diplomatic development with other Asia-Pacific nation-states.

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<sup>21</sup> Bates Gill, “Contrasting Visions: United States, China and World Order” (testimony, U.S.-China Security Review Commission, Washington, D.C., August 3, 2001), 9-10.

<sup>22</sup> Phillip C. Saunders, “China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools,” *Institute for National Strategic Studies* no. 4 (June 2006): 8.

In relation to the U.S., a primary objective of Chinese foreign policy concerns the protection against any U.S. containment strategy. Saunders explains that geography and relative power will determine China's efficacy towards this objective. At the same time, China wants to improve and multiply its international relations network by seeking to introduce Asian values into the international relations framework primarily influenced by American-European values. Increasing resource acquisition by emphasizing "strategic partnerships" and other cooperative agreements can often be vague in their declarations, but China sees itself as a "champion" for Asian nation-states and the idea to pursue an Asian-inspired reform within the international system.<sup>23</sup>

### *Military Capabilities*

*Interests.* Overall U.S. military doctrine continues to hold a foreign orientation in its operations. The U.S. Navy stands as a major military branch that embodies U.S. military power and its respective doctrine reflects the initiatives of U.S. national security strategy. As a subscriber to "post-modern" naval theory, the U.S. advocates the security of a system over a state and cooperation to foster a multi-national naval partnership.<sup>24</sup> Arguably, this approach also presents a more comprehensive solution towards maintaining U.S. military hegemony with the help of its peers rather than with their resentment. Till further describes the present era of globalization as a promotion for

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<sup>23</sup> Phillip C. Saunders, "China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools," *Institute for National Strategic Studies* no. 4 (June 2006): 15

<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey Till, "Globalization: Implications of and for the Modern / Post-modern Navies of the Asia Pacific," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies* no.140 (15 October 2007): 7



post-modern naval activity given the advocacy for a borderless world, dynamism in business and commerce, and the free flow of trade at sea.

Post-modern naval theory seeks four outcomes: sea control, expeditionary operations, good order at sea and maintenance of a maritime consensus. Sea control focuses on security along the coast rather than on the high seas. Ideally, nations “supervise” and “make [the sea] secure” for everyone rather than “securing” the high seas for its own purposes.<sup>25</sup> Expeditionary operations endorse engaging in battle away from home rather than allow conflict to come home. Options that minimize loss of life, such as off-shore balancing, are more readily considered rather than options involving continental commitments.<sup>26</sup> Good order at sea promotes the international activity of “making the sea secure” around national coasts and disseminating responsibility to all nations, essentially transforming an armed navy into a “coast guard.”<sup>27</sup> Maintaining a maritime consensus for Till involves investment in the people, the biggest commons of all.<sup>28</sup> Agreement amongst national and naval leaders can foster international agreement over the necessity to police the maritime commons.

Meanwhile, the domestic-likely changing to-foreign orientation of the Chinese military takes a different approach to naval theory. China’s “modern” naval theory places the security of the state over the system dictates maritime strategy and competition

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<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey Till, “Globalization: Implications of and for the Modern / Post-modern Navies of the Asia Pacific,” *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies* no.140 (15 October 2007): 8

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 12

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 13

fuels self-sufficiency and modest naval diplomacy.<sup>29</sup> Modern naval theory holds four outcomes of its own: fleet-to-fleet engagement, low interventionism, exclusive and adjacent order, and autarky and economic self-sufficiency. Fleet-to-fleet engagement promotes the independence of action not necessarily opposed to moderate assistance in maritime security as long as it did not interfere with a nation's naval sovereignty. Nevertheless, a nation's navy must be ready to engage in warfare if necessary.

Low interventionism states that except in areas of great national importance, a nation's navy will focus its efforts at home rather than subscribe to liberal interventionism abroad. Till includes Lord Melbourne's note that assisted nations will be resistant to a stronger power's advice to prove they are not under the stronger nations' "influence."<sup>30</sup> Exclusive and adjacent order insists the navy must focus on its own interest and security without the need for foreign aid or influence except, perhaps, in the most dire of situations. Finally, autarky and economic self-sufficiency emphasizes bilateral and issue-specific naval diplomacy.<sup>31</sup> Multilateralism and issue-general naval diplomacy would be a weakness to modern naval theory and could end up as a concentrated threat.

*Threats.* The chief military concern of the U.S. involves China's growing military power projection and its challenge to the global status quo, especially in Latin

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<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Till, "Globalization: Implications of and for the Modern / Post-modern Navies of the Asia Pacific," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies* no.140 (15 October 2007): 19

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 21

America. Such growth can only serve to provoke other regional powers to increase their own military power. The U.S. would then have to concern itself with maintaining if not restoring a peaceful status quo to regional tensions at the risk of entering into the same kinds of conflict its presence in the region was supposed to prevent in the first place. Meanwhile, Chinese cooperation with Latin American nation-states also provides opportunities for some nation-states to share U.S. military technology, tactics and intelligence with China.<sup>32</sup> This is not to say all Latin American nation-states would be so bold as to act on that idea, especially if nation-states hold some negative views towards China's presence in the region, such as Mexico and Colombia.

China's rising strength also affects U.S. agreements with allies and specific control points in the region, including Taiwan. Taiwan stands as the most foremost issue in China-U.S. relations. Taiwan holds historical, cultural, political, economic and military significance for China. The issue itself is highly emotional for Chinese citizens hopeful for a reunification with "the Mainland."<sup>33</sup> Essentially, China wants to "wrest" Taiwan away from Japanese and U.S. influence. The U.S. supports Taiwan as a nation with the right for sovereignty. However, to declare so would strain relations with China to an almost irreconcilable end. The Chinese government effectively made Taiwan a new military "hotspot" when it declared that *any* Taiwanese declaration of independence in *any* form would be a cause for war.

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<sup>32</sup> R. Evan Ellis, "The Military-Strategic Dimensions of Chinese Initiatives in Latin America," *University of Miami Center for Hemispheric Policy – China-Latin America Task Force* (February 16, 2007): 9-10.

<sup>33</sup> Guangqian Peng, "Peace or War: Taiwan at a Critical Juncture," *China Security* 4, no. 1 (2008): 63

Meanwhile, China's security dilemma provides context as to why China's military development continues to be a strategic priority to the Chinese. Similar to any other state, China seeks security; however its priorities are unique unto itself. the country has a long and vulnerable border, especially with Russia, there are many potential threats, near and far, the political system is marked by high elitism and weak mediating institutions and China holds itself to a "great power" self-image.<sup>34</sup> This security dilemma has prompted modern changes to China's approach to non-coercion as it primary and ideal cultural means of engagement, such as recognizing the existence of significant threats from a distance (i.e. nuclear weapons, cruise missiles, aircraft) muting the reliability of physical borders, realizing outside nation-states possess superior material, organization and ideological capabilities and qualities that can threaten Chinese superiority as a great power, egalitarianism is heavily prominent in the international system running contrary to the Chinese cultural appeal of hierarchy and "one head" as well as the fact that the "victim mentality," rooted in the "Century of Shame and Humiliation," has gained momentum as a result of Chinese nationalism.<sup>35</sup>

*Means.* To address the military concern that is China, the U.S. will continue to rely on "full-spectrum dominance," or the ability of the U.S. military to develop comprehensive strength across all avenues of science and technology that hold potential and actual defensive and offensive strategic value to be used in a combat situation. The hyper-capabilities of the U.S. military, especially in high-technology sectors involving

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<sup>34</sup> Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future (Project Air Force Report)*, 1st ed. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2000), 9.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

cyber security, satellites and signals intelligence, represent the backbone of U.S. military hegemony and its “aggressive defense” posture. Much of this technology exists in U.S. naval vessels from which the various fleets operate under the command of the U.S. Navy.

In addition, the U.S. will also rely on its basing strategy. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has been involved in a global strategic basing strategy. At face value, the purpose of the strategy was to ensure the Axis powers (Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan and Fascist Italy) did not undergo a national revival that could bring the world back into another war. Yet, the underlying rationale also included a means to address the rise and aggression of any other power vying to challenge U.S. regional hegemony (including the Soviet Union, China, India and others). The Soviet Union is gone, but China remains. China sees the current U.S. basing strategy as an impediment to the growth of its regional influence. The fifty year plus presence of the U.S. Navy’s Seventh Fleet, based out of Yokosuka, Japan, ensures U.S. naval dominance in the region. The U.S. Navy is militarily superior in almost every way and, as a result, China cannot outright challenge the Seventh Fleet. The fleet also enjoys close support from various U.S. military bases located in South Korea, Japan, the Philippines and Australia.

Well aware of its situation, China is in the process of developing the “Assassin’s Mace” program. The “Assassins Mace” is a unifying term for China’s plan to modernize its military and close any capacity gaps with other advanced militaries. Practically, however, this program integrates “net-centric *denial*” measures, or rather actions that can blind an adversary’s radar, communications and even command and control functions during engagement, into a “digital kill-chain” process that can result in an electronic

nightmare for heavily technologically-dependent navies.<sup>36</sup> Although there is no evidence suggesting Chinese ships have installed such advanced technology onto every ship, this system remains a serious matter of concern for US interests and its own reliance on high technology to prosecute a war.

“Jointness Doctrine,” another essential element of the “Assassin’s Mace” program, reflects a revolutionary shift in Chinese military operations. Historically, China separated its People’s Liberation Army (PLA) forces into their respective missions without comprehensive goals. Just being in the same area as another PLA unit was considered “jointness.”<sup>37</sup> However, since the 1990s, China and the PLA have had sufficient time to improve its mission coordination between its forces much like the US and other Western nations. For example, Shambaugh notes post-1996 trends that saw increases in “submarine versus submarine” techniques, rapid reaction units, terrain-specific units (such as soldiers in Chengdu province training in the high altitudes of Tibet) as well as the creation of “anti-weapons.”<sup>38</sup>

China’s “Island Chains” strategy, essentially a “counter-basing” approach to the U.S., will enhance China’s influence on the Taiwan issue while promoting a *de facto* defensive perimeter around China’s maritime periphery. There are three island chains considered within this strategy. The first chain encompasses the South China Sea and its islets, Korea *and Taiwan* as well as runs along the borders of Vietnam, Malaysia, the

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<sup>36</sup> David Lei, “China’s New Multi-Faceted Maritime Strategy,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (2008):48

<sup>37</sup> David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects (A Philip E. Lilienthal Book in Asian Studies)* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 99.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-104.

Philippines and Japan. This immediate strategic line of defense ranks first and foremost in this strategy. Taiwan is crucial to the integrity of this island chain. Taiwan's absence would make this strategy irrelevant.

The second chain encompasses the Philippines, eastern Malaysia and parts of Indonesia and Japan as well as run along the middle section of Japan to the far eastern end of Indonesia. China would like to have a maritime presence in this area if only in the form of submarines. Although the third island chain does not enjoy the recognition shared between the first two island chains, Western analysts suspect China's third delineation would stretch from Kamchatka in Russia to the Marshall Islands to the eastern side of Australia.

If this third chain becomes a "more official" party of the "Island Chain" policy, U.S. China relations would be significantly strained. At the very least, it seems China would be satisfied if it held profound "soft power" influence up to this island chain rather than a tangible naval presence. While the US declares this strategy as an aggressive approach for increased sea control, the Chinese PLA Navy (PLAN) notes the U.S. has held a "system of bases" throughout the region from Korea to Australia ever since the end of World War II calling into question the legitimacy of challenging China's actions.<sup>39</sup> The U.S. national security community must understand that China's military power will be symbolically traditional, embodied by aircraft carriers and radar systems, but practically asymmetric with a strategy that employs anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM) and other electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) weapons as part of the Assassin's Mace program.

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<sup>39</sup> Steven L. Horrell, "China's Maritime Strategy: Peaceful Rise?," *US Army War College - Strategy Research Project* (2008): 21

## *Commerce*

*Interests.* The U.S. wants to remain the central economic influence in the world and in Asia. As a global influence in the world market and economic success among its peers, the U.S. promotes itself as a source of commercial strength and a sure model for nation-states to make serious progress in their own economic developments. As a primarily consumer-oriented economy, the U.S. is a foremost customer of foreign goods and services. Any decrease in U.S. demand in any sector can have profound impacts on the export sectors of foreign economies giving the U.S. business and trade advantages that translate into influential policies. This overwhelming capacity to affect the global market also supports U.S. currency primacy in convincing the world that close association of foreign currency to the U.S. dollar will guarantee trade currency stability.

China would like to improve its own status as a global economic power, but its primary concern is to become the central economic “hub” for the Asia-Pacific region. The global financial crisis reaffirmed China’s evolving status as an independent economic power. Also dependent on its export-economy for growth and stability, China came out of the 2008 global financial crisis with short term losses, but long term gains, especially in political status with its Asian peers. The purchasing of foreign goods, consistent market access and foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing countries, including those beyond Asia, allows China to use trade as a significant diplomatic tool.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Phillip C. Saunders, “China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools,” *Institute for National Strategic Studies* no. 4 (June 2006): 13



China also seeks the independence of its currency, the *renminbi* (RMB), from the U.S. dollar if only to reaffirm its status as an economically autonomous nation-state.

*Threats.* In matters of trade, it is quite likely economic tensions between the U.S. and China are unlikely to settle. The U.S. trade imbalance with China remains a prime economic dilemma that causes side-effects evident in their shared foreign relations. The U.S. is gradually becoming less dependent on China's financing of its trade debt as overall savings has risen moderately, if not primarily, motivated by the 2008 global financial crisis. However, low savings rate in the U.S. in comparison to China may spur a decrease of U.S. investments abroad, even if such a decision could reduce the trade deficit in the medium-term.<sup>41</sup> However, if the U.S. does achieve a trend of increasing savings, then China will have to adjust with increased spending to balance the trade account or risk the brunt of future unemployment numbers to increase in China.<sup>42</sup>

Eswar S. Prasad outlines a possible threat scenario that impacts the U.S., China and the global economy overall:

As the U.S. recovery strengthens, imports are likely to rise, leading to a further deterioration of the U.S. overall trade deficit as well as its bilateral trade deficit with China. China's overall current account balance is likely to continue to increase and, as the global economic recovery progresses, China will continue running large trade surpluses and accumulating foreign exchange reserves at a rapid rate. Thus, we could be in for a repeat of the global current account imbalances in 2006-07, typified by large U.S. current account deficits and Chinese current account surpluses.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Pettis, "U.S.-China Trade Relations—the Next Dispute?" (lecture, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., February 17, 2010), <http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=30975> (accessed January 20, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Eswar S. Prasad, "The U.S.-China Economic Relationship: Shifts and Twists in the Balance of Power" (lecture, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2010), 6

The U.S. also faces a currency trap. Any currency value change in the world will most likely be against the dollar and the U.S. can only effectively challenge valuations with other major Western currencies, such as the *euro* and the pound-sterling, so if the U.S. needs to balance out the trade economy, then import tariffs will most likely rise.<sup>44</sup> If the U.S. engages in aggressive trade protectionism over China's unwillingness to change its own currency values and trade rules, then much of the rest of the world will likely follow suit endangering the stability of the global economy rather than just two nation-states.<sup>45</sup>

China is the principal challenger to U.S. influence in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the U.S. must consider new difficulties that come with this situation. The U.S. Trade Representative will have to consider how to acquire transparency from a non-transparent nation-state such as China, the fact that products from China are often not luxury products and that many of the benefits of U.S. trade with China is the result of the latter's business with U.S.-based multinational corporations.<sup>46</sup> In essence, any U.S.-inspired confrontation or damage done to China's export-market will backfire on the U.S. limiting options to practically dispute with China in this sector.

Meanwhile, according to Pettis, "... Chinese production is growing faster than Chinese consumption and so the gap between the two is increasing."<sup>47</sup> Since national

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Pettis, "U.S.-China Trade Relations—the Next Dispute?" (lecture, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., February 17, 2010), <http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=30975> (accessed January 20, 2011).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Chad P. Bown, "U.S.-China Trade Conflicts and the Future of the WTO," *Tufts University - The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 33, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2009): 38, 39

<sup>47</sup> Michael Pettis, "U.S.-China Trade Relations—the Next Dispute?" (lecture, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., February 17, 2010), <http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=30975> (accessed January 20, 2011).

incomes is growing much faster than household disposable income, the Chinese government must respond by either successfully selling more of its products or give more nationally earned profit back to the people. Considering China is a “trade surplus country,” China is in a vulnerable position in the globalized economy. If there is ever a “contraction in global demand,” then China will have to restructure its economy.<sup>48</sup>

China’s more immediate threat, its “security of supply,” stands at risk of disconnect by the U.S. The Strait of Malacca is a narrow passage between Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore where approximately 25% of world trade (over \$50 billion worth of oil in 2007) pass through between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.<sup>49</sup> Resources pass through this supply line to fuels China’s economy, including the economies of India, Japan and South Korea; China’s major regional competitors. The Strait of Massakar, an almost equally important commercial strait, runs through the middle of the Indonesian islands, as well. Both exist as chokepoints for China’s resource flow, especially given their proximity to India and Singapore. Malacca is Asia’s *de facto* Panama Canal.<sup>50</sup> To control Malacca is to have a “stranglehold” on the energy flow to South and East Asia.

*Means.* Although the U.S. and China share economic tensions, they are also compelled to intensify positive relations with each other for the sake of China’s need for

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<sup>48</sup> Michael Pettis, “U.S.-China Trade Relations—the Next Dispute?” (lecture, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., February 17, 2010), <http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=30975> (accessed January 20, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, “China and the United States in the Indian Ocean: An Emerging Strategic Triangle?,” *Naval War College Review* 61, no. 3 (2008): 44

<sup>50</sup> David Lei, “China’s New Multi-Faceted Maritime Strategy,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (2008): 144

export growth and the U.S. need to finance and eliminate its trade deficit. On the other hand, both nation-states, including affected peers, have long prepared for such trade conflicts to occur and such instances are hardly sudden and without previously considered options for engagement. The U.S. has been supportive of China to assume high status in the global economy. By doing so, the U.S. tests China's commitment to a multilateral world in which China must assume shared responsibility for its economic actions and the consequences that may or may not result. The U.S. should further convince other nation-states to encourage China to adapt its economic policy to diversify China's economy rather than rely solely on the export market.<sup>51</sup> China can also continue to buy U.S. treasury bills or submit to adjusting their currency. China must rebalance its growth by increasing private consumption in complement to increasing investment measures as well as promote higher employment growth to maintain social stability.<sup>52</sup>

It is important that mediation in trade disputes proliferates. Most of the instigations put forth in the WTO between the U.S. and China all occurred within relatively peaceful times.<sup>53</sup> In truth, the U.S. and China will not settle all their trade disputes through the WTO for several reasons: both have differing views on the nature of market access and legal precedents; the long processes of appeals provide convincing political cover for both nation-states to continue their trade practices; and the underlying

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<sup>51</sup> David Lei, "China's New Multi-Faceted Maritime Strategy," *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (2008): 144

<sup>52</sup> Eswar S. Prasad, "The U.S.-China Economic Relationship: Shifts and Twists in the Balance of Power" (lecture, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2010), 5

<sup>53</sup> Chad P. Bown, "U.S.-China Trade Conflicts and the Future of the WTO," *Tufts University - The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 33, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2009): 30

issues, including the bilateral trade deficit and the RMB's dependency on the dollar, will not be resolved anytime soon.<sup>54</sup>

China can also choose to go on the offensive in WTO disputes rather than keeping quiet as it has been since ascending into membership in 2001. Such action will also benefit local Chinese society by showing that China has the courage to challenge the predominantly western system while saving face in regards to any setbacks or perceived weaknesses.<sup>55</sup> Chinese public opinion could even be so strong as to call for a withdrawal from the WTO to highlight what China may see as "unfair practices."<sup>56</sup> This situation would cause a great disturbance in the global trade system and political perceptions from which conflict is to be expected.

To protect its "security of supply," China will employ its "String of Pearls" strategy and promote its "Charm Offensive." Strategic port agreements allow China options to push its energy policy and project its power in South, East and Southeast Asia to fuel its economy and employ its military infrastructure against potential competitors, such as India and the U.S.<sup>57</sup> The Gwadar port itself, located in Pakistan, provides a maritime buffer zone, a link between the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian heartland as well as a channel for stronger diplomatic relations with the Muslim communities in the Middle East.

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<sup>54</sup> Chad P. Bown, "U.S.-China Trade Conflicts and the Future of the WTO," *Tufts University - The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 33, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2009): 30

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 43

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Lee, Itamar Y. "Deepening Naval Cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing." *The Jamestown Foundation: China Brief* 9, no. 13 (2009): 11

In regards to the “Charm Offensive,” China seeks to positively develop economic and diplomatic ties with regional organizations, such as ASEAN, ASEAN plus three, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to expand its influence. This desire to improve economic and diplomatic relations may also be a maneuver to subtly usurp U.S. *primus enter pares* status.<sup>58</sup> China is also building close economic military and infrastructure ties with Pakistan, Iran and Egypt as well as mineral extraction and gas exploration in Central Asia and in the Sudan.<sup>59</sup>

### *United States – Mexico*

#### *Basis of Asymmetry*

Social frustration and lingering bitterness permeate U.S.-Mexico relations. Although cross-border relations have improved over the last decade, the U.S.-Mexico relationship is not without a rough past. Military interventions, political divergence and economic inequity illustrate the typical perspective on Mexican historical relations with the U.S. However, with the illumination of new threats in the post-September 11 world and the greater opportunities that come with shared prosperity closer to home, the U.S. and Mexico are reassessing their relationship and the importance of cooperation for the sake of their own survival. Increased political dialogue, security initiatives and economic integration are approaches that both nation-states are improving with respect to each other. Yet, it is important to note that structural limitations exist amidst agenda priorities

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<sup>58</sup> Steven L. Horrell, “China’s Maritime Strategy: Peaceful Rise?,” *US Army War College - Strategy Research Project* (2008): 27

<sup>59</sup> David Lei, “China’s New Multi-Faceted Maritime Strategy,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (2008): 149, 150

and historical bias that affects the AFD balance and minimizes the positive tangible results Mexico hopes for in its relationship to the U.S.

Krystof Kozák's "Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations" provides a thorough framework for analyzing the U.S.-Mexico asymmetrical relationship. To begin, Kozák critiques the status of the relationship today noting that "...in spite of growing integration and cooperation,, the persisting asymmetry leads U.S. policy makers to continue regarding Mexico as a distinct alien and potentially subversive entity..."<sup>60</sup> A negative spirit of "otherness" towards Mexico continues to pervade cross-border relations, including security coordination, economic integration and social tensions. As a result, this asymmetry in relations perpetuates the mentality that Mexico lies outside the U.S. framework of immediate priorities when, in fact, it should be one of the highest.

Accordingly, "[t]he asymmetry serves as the source or engine of the dynamic cross-border processes," including drugs and weapons trafficking, illegal immigration, fence construction and even border violence.<sup>61</sup> Asymmetry can be found even in a social or economic context, such as market participation, gender and family relations and minority-versus-majority statuses. To promote a stable asymmetric relationship, it is the responsibility of the stronger power to minimize misperception and increase involvement in its relations to the weaker power to promote voluntary deference rather than resistance.

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<sup>60</sup> Krystof Kozák, "Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations" (lecture, International Studies Association 2010 Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, February 16, 2010), 5

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

However, Kozák points out that asymmetric theory sheds lights on a most uneasy dialogue point. He asserts that, “international law is based on the premise that independent states are all sovereign and equal in their status and rights, thereby suppressing notions of any underlying asymmetry.”<sup>62</sup> To engage in such rhetoric only makes nation-states more sensitive to existing and future disparities that can fundamentally alter the political, economic and military agendas between nation-states. Kozák notes stronger states shy away from such rhetoric so as to minimize any greater share of responsibility in extra-state outcomes while asymmetric rhetoric only draws more attention towards the “lesser significance and limited options” of weaker states.<sup>63</sup>

If the U.S.-Mexican relationship is inserted into Kozák’s “asymmetric option model,” then we can better understand the interplay between these two nation-states.<sup>64</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. chose “domination” and Mexico chose “open.” The U.S. was successful in its interventionist policies, especially during the Porfiriato period, but it also succeeded in antagonizing the Mexican population. During most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. continued to push its “domination” agenda while Mexico decided to “close” as the ruling Institutional Revolution Party (PRI) sought to protect Mexico from suffering foreign intrusion as it did for most of its history, especially from the U.S., France and Spain. It was during this period that Mexico began its persistent principle campaign for non-intervention and sovereignty.

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<sup>62</sup> Krystof Kozák, “Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations” (lecture, International Studies Association 2010 Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, February 16, 2010), 7

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> See Appendix D



During the Cold War, the U.S. chose to “ignore” Mexico as the latter remained “closed” for most of the Cold War only maintaining cooperation against communist influence in the region. Eventually, the 1980s arrived as well as the economic crises in Latin America and the prevalence of human rights organizations. Mexico decided to “open” up to neo-liberalism economics after more than half a century of isolation. The U.S. would “open” up to Mexico in the 1990s, but mostly economically. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was born in this process as did larger waves of immigration and drug trafficking. However, after the events of September 11, the U.S. chose to “ignore” Mexico once again as it prosecuted the “Global War on Terror.” Mexico continued to remain “open” while hoping NAFTA would improve the economy and bring Mexico to a more prominent status. Disenchantment to neo-liberalism and dwindling support for leadership that favors U.S. partnership, as evident by the narrow margin of victory of Felipe Calderón, the conservative PAN-president, during the 2006 Mexican national election, may encourage a return to a “closed” relationship to the U.S.

In relation to asymmetry and socio-cultural effects, Kozák notes asymmetry itself has an effect of “superiority” and “exceptionality” on the U.S. mentality, especially by conservatives. What results is utter disregard for Mexican opinions towards U.S. foreign policy actions as well as xenophobia that often demonizes Mexicans as...’ poorer,’ ‘less developed’ and generally ‘worse’ than people within the U.S.” despite that fact that millions of Mexicans and other various Hispanic descendants live in the U.S. today.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Krystof Kozák, “Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations” (lecture, International Studies Association 2010 Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, February 16, 2010), 16

At the same time, Mexico often disregards the asymmetry that has existed with the U.S. to its own detriment. Acceptance of this reality eventually led to policies that promoted a relabeling of immigrants to the U.S. from “traitors” to “heroes” as they often sent remittances back to their families while allowing job growth in Mexico.

Examples of asymmetry most definitely lie within the three specific areas of immigration, narcotics and trade. Immigrants often live at the mercy of suspicious U.S. businesses as undocumented workers and customs officials if they are caught damaging their livelihood and that of their family back in Mexico.<sup>66</sup> While Mexico works close with the U.S. with respect to narcotics control, U.S. interests are more often fulfilled at the expense of Mexican budget lines and increased violence.<sup>67</sup> If anything, NAFTA has increased the asymmetry between the U.S. and Mexico as U.S. companies are able to take advantage of cheaper labor provided by Mexico and its overwhelming dependency on U.S. business practices.<sup>68</sup>

As a whole, there are dangers to variance in perspectives when it comes to asymmetry. Kozák agrees that it is a source of moral responsibility for stronger powers to assist their weaker neighbors for a more comprehensive and interdependent relationship. Reliance solely on the market forces and political direction of liberalization is inadequate without diplomatic dialogue and joint progress to minimize polarization.

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<sup>66</sup> Krystof Kozák, “Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations” (lecture, International Studies Association 2010 Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, February 16, 2010), 16

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 17

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

However, there exists a natural stable quality to asymmetric relations despite the inclination to label it “inherently wrong.” For one thing, asymmetry cannot be completely annihilated and it will exist to some degree in some relationship aspect. The minimization of asymmetry is a more practical and realistic approach to normalizing bilateral relationships. Kozák points out that it is important to recognize that the practical and theoretical impositions of equality and symmetry among states are actually severe impediments to analysis in two ways:

First, it tends to exonerate stronger parties...when they pursue actions harmful to the weaker party, as both parties are presumed to have similar capabilities and options...It also often tends to shift blame for specific problems associated with the relationship disproportionately on the weaker party by underestimating the extent to which the stronger party is responsible for the outcome [or act as a cover for the weaker party to push a “victim-mentality” agenda further complicating cooperative relations with other nation-states].<sup>69</sup>

### *Foreign Policy*

*Interests.* U.S. and Mexican foreign policies contrast each other in important respects. Primacy and internationalism underlie most U.S. foreign policy today, from the influences of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton to Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan. As a primacist nation-state, the U.S. is sensitive to the ascension of power and status of any peer in the international system. U.S. primacy requires a degree of power disparity that separates itself far from the operational levels of other nation-states to ensure that any challenge to the U.S. is a difficult endeavor indeed. Whereas the actions of the U.S. will often bring stability to itself as well as various parts of the world, this

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<sup>69</sup> Krystof Kozák, “Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations” (lecture, International Studies Association 2010 Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, February 16, 2010), 20

asymmetry of power also carries with it the misfortune of resentment from its peers, some of whom seek the reduction, if not destruction, of profound U.S. influence in the affairs of other nation-states.

To that end, U.S. foreign policy often encourages American sentiments towards positive public diplomacy to reduce the perception of any political and socio-cultural asymmetries that are associated with such power disparity. The predominant adages of “American exceptionalism,” “manifest destiny,” and “a city upon a hill” all capture a prevalent and fundamental perspective of what the world should be like for many Americans. This same group of Americans often believes as the U.S. is the only global superpower, it has a moral and realistic obligation to engage the world and bring to it the benefits of democracy and the inspirations of modernity. For these reasons, as well as consideration for the serious magnitude and revisionist capability of U.S. power projection, Americans encourage the rest of the world to rally behind U.S. policies and incentives for the sake of national and international progress in the American tradition.

Mexico’s has a tendency for isolationism in international politics. Although Mexico is *culturally* a Latin American nation-state, it does not operate as one meanwhile it fears and rejects the actions of the North. Arguing for its strategic independence does not negate the fact that Mexico operates in what Benitez-Manaut calls a *labyrinth of solitude*.<sup>70</sup> In greater perspective of its history, Mexico endured the whims of foreign monarchical rule as well as constant foreign interventions, primarily from the U.S. and France, all within a span of one hundred years before its early twentieth century

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<sup>70</sup> Raúl Benítez Manaut, “Mexico's Security Dilemma: Between Nations, North America and Latin America; The Labyrinth of Solitude,” *North American Center, UNAM* (2007): 1.

revolution. Since its revolution, Mexico has lived under single-party rule for the better part of the century dogmatically following a “revolutionary nationalism” ideology that was inconsistent in its practices of reform.<sup>71</sup> The national elections in 2000 produced a formal change in party and ideological leadership transferring responsibilities to Vicente Fox and his eventual successor, Felipe Calderon.

Given the history of interventions and party limitations brought upon the Mexican people, the concepts of non-intervention and sovereignty act as fundamental concepts in the post-revolutionary and post-2000 Mexico. These two ideas formed the basis of the 1917 Mexican Constitution promoting and preserving a unique Mexican identity that colors much of Mexican foreign policy even to this day.<sup>72</sup> Former Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid declared during the Mexican State of the Union address of 1983 that these two concepts are “inseparable.” His remarks embody the common social belief that Mexico’s utter survival depends on its ability to affirm and defend these two grand strategic ideals.<sup>73</sup>

Diversification also structures the foreign policy of Mexico to promote a distribution of power across nation-states as well as ensure systemic constraints on unilateral actions. Mexico’s foreign policy strategy has changed over the twentieth century once supporting near-full isolation and anti-Americanism principled on

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<sup>71</sup> George W. Grayson, “Evolution of Mexico and Other Single-Party States,” *International Studies Review* no. 9 (2007): 324-25.

<sup>72</sup> Ruoyan Sun, “The Legacy of the Revolution: On Mexico’s Traditional Diplomatic Thinking,” *Journal of Shandong Teacher’s University* 47, no. 6 (2002): 103, East View Online. [http://online.eastview.com/login\\_china/index.jsp](http://online.eastview.com/login_china/index.jsp) (accessed October 18, 2010).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

independence and the absolute fulfillment of revolutionary ideals in exchange for openness that is pro-American recognizing the importance of interdependence as well as pragmatic and realistic policy.<sup>74</sup> The economic crises of the 1980s and of the early 1990s contributed to such a change in perspective. However, the two revolutionary principles still permeate Mexican foreign policy. The Mexican government continues to advocate for the distribution of power across multiple geopolitical nodes to ensure those nation-states with lesser power projection in comparison to the U.S. still have international support against unilateralism. Mexico's foreign policy stance often acts as "a mediator" in U.S.-Latin American relations, as well as in its own relations to the U.S., ensuring all agreements and policies coincide with the spirit of the two principles.<sup>75</sup>

*Threats.* Much of the threat perception from both the U.S. and Mexico, with respect to each other, stems from their foreign policy orientations. The U.S. is an externally-focused nation-state viewing the domestic violence in Mexico as a proximate danger that can spread significantly beyond the border. The desire for stability around its periphery and the minimization of terrorist immigration through Mexico also motivates the U.S. to help. However, the internally-focused Mexico may often view U.S. assistance as an infringement upon Mexican policy and yet another "intervention" by its powerful neighbor to the north. A history of U.S. interventions towards Mexico often generates

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<sup>74</sup> Shicheng Xu, "The Changing and the Unchanged in Mexico's Post-Cold War Foreign Policy," *Journal of Latin American Studies* no. 95 (April 2007): 77, East View Online. [http://online.eastview.com/login\\_china/index.jsp](http://online.eastview.com/login_china/index.jsp) (accessed October 12, 2010).

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

some degree of suspicion towards U.S. foreign policy for many Mexicans despite its seeming insignificance to the average American.<sup>76</sup>

According to Taylor, the events of September 11 only illuminated the tendency of U.S. foreign policy towards Mexico and the rest of Latin America to be determined by events happening elsewhere around the world. Initially, Presidents Bush and Fox planned to usher in significant immigration reform, but instead focused on border security at the behest of the U.S. government ignoring opposition from Mexico and the rest of Latin America.<sup>77</sup> Concern also surrounds the inclinations of the U.S. to involve itself in matters within Latin America where the U.S. is not considered a central player. Taylor includes the issue of Latin American representation on the United Nations (UN) Security Council, including regional objections to which country would occupy a seat.<sup>78</sup>

Also, U.S. influence in Mexico and towards Latin America has gone predominantly unchallenged for two centuries, but the changing nature of Mexican and Latin American interactions towards the rest of the world seem to be slowly stifling U.S. claim for dominance. Chinese commercial activity continues to worry the U.S., but many nation-states in Latin America, including Mexico, stress relations are primarily of an economic nature and that the U.S. should reduce its external pressures.<sup>79</sup> Although originally applied in the framework of Russian social capital in Eurasia, Marsh notes

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<sup>76</sup> Paul D. Taylor, "The Outlook For U.S. Foreign Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Challenges of Transforming Goodwill Into Effective Policy" (lecture, William B. Ruger Chair of National Security Economics Papers, Newport, RI, 13-15 May 2009), 85

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 87

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 88

regional disintegration and the reduction of influence by a major socio-cultural and business “hub” within that region occur when security cooperation and economic reliance of the surrounding nation-states within the region shift to an outside actor.<sup>80</sup> The foreign policies of most Latin American nation-states, including Mexico, has signaled a reduction in classical influence by the U.S. as they search for new alternatives for relations outside the confines of the “backyard” of the U.S.

*Means.* The opportunity for cooperation continues to hold great potential for developing relations between both nation-states. Realistic and pragmatic policy on the part of an “open” Mexico, the benefits of leadership that comes with the concentration of U.S. power and the salience of cross-cultural “bridge” that Mexican nationals and Mexican-Americans in the U.S. naturally provide can all lend themselves to increased cooperation between the two nation-states.<sup>81</sup> Periodical presidential meetings, bi-national committee meetings and their subsequent working groups as well as congressional delegations interactions are only a few of the various mechanisms and consulting channels the U.S. and Mexico employ to bolster positive collaboration.<sup>82</sup>

The approach to constructing an international order currently favors the nature of U.S., as well as overall Western, foreign policy. This is an advantage the U.S. will not give up lightly if merely for the sake of preserving the American lifestyle as well as

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<sup>80</sup> Christopher Marsh, “Ties That Bind: Social Capital and the Persistence of Soviet-Era Patterns of Interaction,”: 10-11.

<sup>81</sup> Yuanting Chen, “Mexico's Relations with the U.S.: Changes and Prospects,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 29, no. 3 (June 2007): 26 East View Online. [http://online.eastview.com/login\\_china/index.jsp](http://online.eastview.com/login_china/index.jsp) (accessed October 12, 2010).

<sup>82</sup> K. Larry Storrs, “Mexico's Importance and Multiple Relationships with the United States,” *CRS Report for Congress* (January 18, 2006): 4.



security for its people around the world. Given the more recent positive relations with the U.S., Mexico represents a natural partner from which to promote the benefits of continued U.S. leadership in the western hemisphere in the highly globalizing world. The diplomatic weight of Mexico also supplies leadership and a catalyst for change towards the rest of the Latin American region that the U.S. can also use to its advantage.<sup>83</sup> But ignorance of Mexico's objections and the underlying reasons for said objections to specific U.S. foreign policy actions, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003, will only setback mutual relations even farther than desired. The principles of non-intervention and sovereignty are two principles which Mexico will not yield for the sake of clear advantages that favor a historically suspicious colleague.

### *Military Capabilities*

*Interests.* U.S.-Mexican military cooperation operates within a sensitive operational framework. Many Mexicans remain mistrustful of any local U.S. military interaction. The Texas-Mexican War, the Mexican-American War, the Veracruz invasion of 1914 and the U.S. Punitive Expedition into Mexico in 1916-1917 are four disastrous moments in U.S.-Mexican affairs and are not so easily forgotten, especially by the older generations.<sup>84</sup><sup>85</sup> However, the increasing domestic violence in Mexico as well

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<sup>83</sup> K. Larry Storrs, "Mexico's Importance and Multiple Relationships with the United States," *CRS Report for Congress* (January 18, 2006): 1

<sup>84</sup> Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico: Uneasy Past and Challenging Future," *The JSOU Press* 10, no. 2 (2010): 5

<sup>85</sup> Craig A. Deare, "U.S. - Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," *Strategic Forum* 243 (July 2009): 2

as the changing security paradigm of the post-September 11 world provide incentive for both nation-states to engage threats to their respective and mutual national security.

Deare notes, "...the tradition of Mexican military noninvolvement (supported by Article 89 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution) in external military actions is as ingrained as the U.S. military noninvolvement in domestic law enforcement as proscribed by *posse comitatus*, and for a similar reason: national law."<sup>86</sup> For the U.S., the military operates "outside" while law enforcement operates "inside" U.S. jurisdiction. The military trusts law enforcement to keep the borders safe at home while the military "secures" U.S. interests abroad. Theoretically, both work in a synergistic relationship of securing resources and services and protecting what is acquired.

The Mexican military holds a purely domestic orientation operating as a sort of "vanguard" for the sake of social and political stability. It assumed this responsibility since the years after the Mexican Revolution effectually symbolizing the "founding fathers" of modern Mexico.<sup>87</sup> What stands out most of the institution that is the Mexican military is its relatively peaceful transition to civilian order and the limitations of military influence in politics as Mexico restructured its political system post-revolution only intervening when destabilization was imminent.<sup>88</sup> The Mexican military often remains at "the margins of politics" obeying civilian leadership reinforced by organizational and

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<sup>86</sup> Craig A. Deare, "U.S. - Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," *Strategic Forum* 243 (July 2009): 2

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

“corporatist mechanisms” which cannot be said for many other single-party states.<sup>89</sup>

However, the specialization of the military and the end of PRI’s seventy-plus years of rule has required the military to allow non-governmental institutions and other agencies to handle social and national security issues that once concerned the military.<sup>90</sup>

*Threats.* The Mexican military still operates in a PRI inspired government order. The Mexican military, as well as Mexican nationalists, still has trouble adapting to a “shared security” concept that recognizes the importance of security beyond a nation-state’s own borders.<sup>91</sup> The existence of two independent defense ministers, the Secretary of National Defense and the Secretary of the Navy, SEDENA and SEMAR respectively, limits interoperability. Military doctrine remains domestically oriented subscribing to international law for its external policies impeding U.S. cooperative security measures if only for its own self-interest.<sup>92</sup>

The events of September 11, 2001 demonstrated how much the U.S. and Mexico hold a stake in each other’s national security. In 2002, however, Mexico struck a serious blow to U.S. security cooperation a few days before the first anniversary commemorating the events of September 11. Mexico withdrew from Rio Pact, the western hemisphere’s equivalent to NATO and a symbolic union of all American countries during the Cold War,

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<sup>89</sup> George W. Grayson, “Evolution of Mexico and Other Single-Party States,” *International Studies Review* no. 9 (2007): 325

<sup>90</sup> Raúl Benítez Manaut, “Mexican Security and Defense Doctrines: From the 19th to the 21st Centuries,” in “Creating Community,” special issue, *Woodrow Wilson Center Update on the Americas* no.9 (November 2002): 3.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

as it anticipated the coming Iraq War.<sup>93</sup> The U.S. did not fully expect the departing of Mexico as the U.S. interpreted the lack of even symbolic unity in the face of western hemispheric security issues. Turbiville points out that Mexicans felt insulted when many Americans seemed to identify Mexico's domestic unrest as a medium for which terrorists can travel into the U.S.<sup>94</sup> When the U.S. created USNORTHCOM, a unified command area encompassing all of North America, in response to terrorist attacks on September 11, Mexico perceived a reduction in its own sovereignty.<sup>95</sup> To many Mexicans, this action symbolized a mechanism that would only benefit U.S. interests rather the whole continent.<sup>96</sup>

Mexico's own domestic insecurity plagues government authorities into establishing a broader national order. Turbiville notes that the "unholy trinity" of Mexico's domestic violence encompassing killings, kidnappings and home invasions, only touch upon the worsening security situation in Mexico.<sup>97</sup> Aid from the U.S. in terms of training (which has increase over the past decade) and money directed through the Mérida Initiative has done much in Mexico. However, these instances of violence are

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<sup>93</sup> M. Delal Baer, "Mexico at an Impasse," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 1 (January/ February 2004):111

<sup>94</sup> Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico: Uneasy Past and Challenging Future," *The JSOU Press* 10, no. 2 (2010): 26

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 27

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 28

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 38

a matter of survival for Mexico as it tries to avert the label that some observers are concerned will have to bestow upon Mexico: that of a “failed state.”<sup>98</sup>

Organized crime, illegal immigration and human trafficking as well as terrorism and rebel insurgencies constitute three major sections of social disorder and domestic violence in Mexico. Organized crime has infiltrated all levels of the Mexican government. Such power provides opportunity to project its business across the border and into the U.S.<sup>99</sup> Organizations specializing in drug trafficking and weapons trafficking, embodied in several major cartels, also obstruct Mexican domestic and military actions in bringing stability to most of Mexico.

Illegal movement to the U.S. from Mexico deeply concerns U.S. authorities. Whether as a medium for illegal human trafficking and immigration from its southern border with Guatemala or from within its borders, Mexico often combats the prevalence of this offense as it is also conducive to the expansion of business for organized crime.<sup>100</sup> Terrorism and rebel activity also concerns Mexico’s government elite. Despite the popular conspiracies of al-Qaeda using Mexico as a medium for terrorist transport into U.S. territory, it is unlikely criminal organization would want the publicity that comes

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<sup>98</sup> Craig A. Deare, “U.S. - Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface,” *Strategic Forum* 243 (July 2009): 1

<sup>99</sup> Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Benjamin Bahney and K. Jack Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 21

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

with the risk of smuggling terrorists.<sup>101</sup> However, domestic rebel groups cause enough mayhem along business and manufacturing lines to occupy the Mexican government.<sup>102</sup>

*Means.* There are several immediate obstacles that require remedy within the U.S. and Mexico. Mexico needs to reconcile or consolidate the power of two military heads of the defense ministry, re-appropriate the military budget and rebuild the public's trust in law enforcement as well as the alleged and real abuses perpetrated by the armed forces.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, the U.S. needs to invest in several changes of its own. The U.S. needs to increase its attention towards Mexico and Latin America, realign its military relations structure and recognize the similarities in security goals and aims with Mexico.<sup>104</sup> However, Renuart and Baker contend several of the points made by Deare. Mexico's SEDENA and SEMAR already work closely with USNORTHCOM, President Calderón is in the process of re-appropriating funds to the military and more civilian and military units are increasing their proficiency and ethical training than in the past.<sup>105</sup>

The institution of the Mérida Initiative in the last decade went far in limiting drug and weapons trafficking and terrorism within Mexico and across its border with the U.S. Although critics argue this "Plan Mexico" is just an adaption of "Plan Colombia," the increasing pressure on drug-trafficking and weapons-trafficking organizations (DTOs and

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<sup>101</sup> Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Benjamin Bahney and K. Jack Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 27

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Craig A. Deare, "U.S. - Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," *Strategic Forum* 243 (July 2009): 5

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

<sup>105</sup> Victor E. Renuart, Jr. and Biff Baker, "U.S. - Mexico Homeland Defense: A Compatible Interface," *Strategic Forum* 254 (February 2010): 5-6

WTOs) are evident, though not necessarily sufficient enough to completely eradicate such highly organized violence. Mexico is gradually increasing its military cooperation and urban warfare tactics support with the U.S. as a means to combat widespread violence and threats to its own national security. Meanwhile, Mexico continues to carefully tread along with its two principles as its organic conscience.

There is something to be said about symbolic relations recovery in cross-border military relations. In order to promote positive military relations between the two nation-states, an unofficial tradition of U.S. Department of Defense personnel, including Robert Gates and Admiral Mike McMullen, involves a wreath-laying on the memorial of the 201<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron commemorating those Mexican pilots who died in service to the Allied powers in World War II.<sup>106</sup> Suffice it to say the Mexican Armed Forces took these actions to heart as the U.S. recognized the great contributions Mexico has made on the behalf of the U.S. war effort in the past. Renuart and Baker point out that Mexico helped the U.S. in several major events, including World War II, aid during the events of September 11, the short-lived Security and Prosperity Partnership, the disaster of Hurricane Katrina and the practical policy actions of the Calderón administration<sup>107</sup>. There is still hope for improved military relations between these two nation-states despite past grievances.

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<sup>106</sup> Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico: Uneasy Past and Challenging Future," *The JSOU Press* 10, no. 2 (2010): 32

<sup>107</sup> Victor E. Renuart, Jr. and Biff Baker, "U.S. - Mexico Homeland Defense: A Compatible Interface," *Strategic Forum* 254 (February 2010): 3

## *Commerce*

*Interests.* The U.S. remains interested in its own economic primacy in the region as well as in the world. As a successful and vast neo-liberal economy, the U.S. holds the functional advantage to buy which ever good or service from any nation-state with relatively little cost to the greater national economy. In terms of type and quantity, such great economic influence and power allows the U.S. to enjoy the fruits of trade friction between China and Mexico since both offer the same products. This desire for economic leadership in the region extends to its role in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). As per the articles within this large trade agreement, Mexico provides the U.S. with oil, natural gas and manufactured goods, including automotive parts, textiles and toys while Mexico receives coal and electricity from the U.S. as energy options.<sup>108</sup>

U.S. FDI also provides for cheap labor and the sustaining of remaining *maquiladora* sectors along the border in Mexico. Mexico has become a much more significant trading partner after NAFTA than before and the U.S. wants to make sure it benefits from that status. Proximity and familiarity with Mexico helps with investment returns a lot faster than with many other nation-states beyond the borders of the U.S. So far, the increased FDI that has followed the implementation of NAFTA has led to improvements in business practices, investor confidence, and modernization of management.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Victor E. Renuart, Jr. and Biff Baker, "U.S. - Mexico Homeland Defense: A Compatible Interface," *Strategic Forum* 254 (February 2010): 3

<sup>109</sup> Gustavo Vega Canovas, "The Future of Mexican-U.S. Economic Relations: Is the EU a Model for North America?" *Jean Monnet/ Robert Schuman Paper Series* 5, no. 16 (July 2006): 9,10



Mexico is interested in the improvement of its own economy as well as greater autonomy from the U.S. economy as a means to enhance its own sovereignty. Mexico's neo-liberal economy continues to struggle out of its neo-developmental economic model guided by the PRI for most of Mexico's post-revolutionary years.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, Mexico seeks greater profit shares from NAFTA. The U.S. and Canada obviously benefit more from the regulations within NAFTA despite Mexico's trade imbalance and immediate relevance as a prime source of trade for the U.S. Mexico continues to be economically dependent on the U.S., but this dependency has been gradually diminishing as Mexico engages trade opportunities with other nation-states, including the European Union and the Asian-Pacific via the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).<sup>111</sup> However, Mexico remains an economic "appendage" of the U.S. clear after the reduction in trade and the contraction of the economy during the 2008 global financial crisis.<sup>112</sup>

*Threats.* A similar threat the U.S. and Mexico share at this time would be further integration of the U.S., Mexican and Canadian economies into one "economic union." The U.S. would have less to fear given its economic primacy in the region, but Canada and, especially, Mexico would not sacrifice their sovereignty for a few dollars more.<sup>113</sup> Uniformity in commercial as well as legal regulations would only further entrench

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<sup>110</sup> M. Angeles Villarreal, "NAFTA and the Mexican Economy," *CRS Report for Congress* (June 3, 2010):1,2

<sup>111</sup> M. Angeles Villarreal, "U.S.-Mexico Economic Relations: Trends, Issues, and Implications," *CRS Report for Congress* (November 9, 2010): 16

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>113</sup> Gustavo Vega Canovas, "The Future of Mexican-U.S. Economic Relations: Is the EU a Model for North America?" *Jean Monnet/ Robert Schuman Paper Series* 5, no. 16 (July 2006): 5

Canada and Mexico into an agreement that will likely be most advantageous for the U.S. In addition, the wide income disparities between the members of NAFTA would disproportionately burden the citizens of all three nations given the sheer differentials in the sizes of their respective economies. Perspectives could change in the future, but sovereignty remains a fundamental cornerstone to Mexico's economic policy.<sup>114</sup>

If anything, the events of September 11, 2001 put any calls for further economic integration to rest. Although further economic integration via NAFTA could theoretically create a much more powerful economic bloc, the post-September 11 world minimized the resolve of the U.S. to open its borders any further even to its neighbors. The events of that day essentially narrowed Mexico's options for immediate future relations with the U.S.: either deeply integrate with the U.S. to be covered by its security umbrella or be left outside the wall that is the border both metaphorically and literally.<sup>115</sup>

Mexico's economic instability, although less worrisome than in the past, remains a proximate concern to the U.S. The 1980s Latin American financial crisis and the 1995 Mexico *peso* crisis motivated the U.S. to financially intervene on behalf of Mexico. Although the former impelled Mexico to convert to neo-liberal economic policy and the latter resulted from the after-effects of joining NAFTA, U.S. FDI is essential to Mexico's economic growth, both nation-states are interdependent on the production of capital, but Mexico still tries to reconcile its naturally labor-intensive economy with capital-

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<sup>114</sup> Gustavo Vega Canovas, "The Future of Mexican-U.S. Economic Relations: Is the EU a Model for North America?" *Jean Monnet/ Robert Schuman Paper Series* 5, no. 16 (July 2006): 6

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 18

intensive economic objectives.<sup>116</sup> The low currency value, the prevalence of poverty and regional “discrimination” in terms of proposals for development projects also factor into Mexico’s ability to develop the economy.

Mexican trade limitations also promote frustration among its elite and citizenry. For example, energy policy, embodied in Mexico’s large possession of oil, is a symbol of strength for its citizens given the post-revolution nationalization of the oil industry. However, the prohibition of private ownership in the energy sector and the diplomatic requisite that Mexico must buy its natural gas from the U.S. (despite its large domestic share) locks Mexico into energy business gridlock.<sup>117</sup> Finally, China’s substitution of Mexico as the primary nation-state for U.S. trade arises concern that Mexico’s relevance as a trade source will be marginalized given the similarities of their trade economies.

*Means.* As a means to adapt to the globalizing world and to the prevalence of neo-liberal economics, Mexico had to change directions and find new justifications for “deviating” from the revolutionary path established by the PRI more than half a century ago. Mexico “lowered its tone” of anti-American nationalism in favor of Third World solidarity in the midst of the 1980 financial crisis.<sup>118</sup> This decision encouraged the U.S. to invest heavily in Mexico to prevent a possible financial collapse. This was a major step in the improvement of U.S.-Mexico relations and a basis for the creation of NAFTA

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<sup>116</sup> Huafei Qiu, “NAFTA and U.S.-Mexico Relations,” *Journal of Historical Science* no. 2 (2002): 101, East View Online. [http://online.eastview.com/login\\_china/index.jsp](http://online.eastview.com/login_china/index.jsp) (accessed October 18, 2010).

<sup>117</sup> M. Delal Baer, “Mexico at an Impasse,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 1 (January/ February 2004):107

<sup>118</sup> Xiaoyuan Zuo, “Evolution of Mexico's Foreign Policy in the 20th Century,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 29, no. 6 (December 2007): 64, East View Online. [http://online.eastview.com/login\\_china/index.jsp](http://online.eastview.com/login_china/index.jsp) (accessed October 18, 2010).

and economic cooperation. Luis Rubio notes that since Mexico's economic "opening," anti-Americanism plays a much less significant role in economic policy.

Mexico must also increase efforts to fix what Villarreal cites as "fundamental differences" in society and trade. According to Villarreal, most studies in Mexico suggest the government must "...invest more in education, innovation and infrastructure, as well as improve the quality of nation institutions."<sup>119</sup> Felipe Calderón also made appeals to the to the U.S. in 2006 for more investment and assistance in job creation rather than building and maintaining a border wall.<sup>120</sup> Mexico has recently employed the *Oportunidades* program, a policy strategy that "...alleviates the immediate effects of poverty through cash and in-kind transfers, but also by improving nutrition and health standards among poor families and increasing educational attainment."<sup>121</sup>

The U.S. can still do more to promote fair business practices that will respect the human rights of immigrants and that can correct the trade imbalance to some degree. Such actions would most surely minimize the levels of socio-economic resentment still prevalent in Mexico. Vega-Cánovas proposes the U.S. government seriously tackle the issue of immigration by expanding working visas while improving security along the border.<sup>122</sup> Although the policy option for a withdrawal from NAFTA is valid for some supporters in the U.S. government, the U.S. is heavily invested in the success of Mexican

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<sup>119</sup> M. Angeles Villarreal, "NAFTA and the Mexican Economy," *CRS Report for Congress*(June 3, 2010): 8

<sup>120</sup> M. Angeles Villarreal, "U.S.-Mexico Economic Relations: Trends, Issues, and Implications," *CRS Report for Congress* (November 9, 2010): 25

<sup>121</sup> M. Angeles Villarreal, "NAFTA and the Mexican Economy," *CRS Report for Congress*(June 3, 2010): 6

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 21

business. The interdependency of the relationship is not egalitarian in the truest sense, but the U.S. holds much stake in the internal stability of its southern neighbor.

### *China – Mexico*

#### *Basis of Asymmetry*

In “China’s Relations with Latin America: Shared Gains, Asymmetric Hopes,” Jorge I. Domínguez provides a brief overview of the asymmetric relations between China and Latin American as a whole as well as with specific regional countries, such as Mexico. Domínguez states that Chinese academics are in broad agreement that positive relations exist between China and Latin America. Between China and the various countries of Latin America, they share comparable levels of political and economic development, a lack of past historical animosities and a mutual concern against “hegemonism” and “imperialism.”<sup>123</sup>

However, these academics also note several problems with the development of relations with Latin America. Industrial competition is high in several Latin American countries initiating “anti-dumping” laws in the host country as well as using trade barriers as a weapon against China. Also, few cultural contacts exist between China and Latin America, including language barriers, and there is a deep concern that Taiwan will continue to hold significant diplomatic sway in the area.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, “China’s Relations with Latin America: Shared Gains, Asymmetric Hopes,” *Inter-American Dialogue* (June 2006): 25

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

The issues of triangular relations and the consideration of Latin America as the “backyard” of the U.S. are also relevant. The blossoming of China’s relations with Latin America is often described by academics to operate within a “soft” balance framework.<sup>125</sup> Although some Latin American countries would favor such a presence for this reason, not all countries in the region have this intention. At the end of the day, China does not want to considerably aggravate the U.S. when it is clear that Chinese relations with the U.S. holds much higher priority than with Latin America.

Addressing China-Mexico specific relations, Domínguez reviews the economic, political and diplomatic conditions between the two nation-states from the first half of the past decade. He begins with trade and NAFTA within the scope of the China-Mexico relationship. In 2004, Mexico received the title of “strategic partner” from China and has become an important player to further China’s interests in Latin America. China enjoys a significant trade surplus provided by Mexico as a result of its relatively large, but modest, foreign direct investment in the country.<sup>126</sup> Indirect association with NAFTA vis-à-vis Mexico also goes a long way in furthering China’s economic interests in the country.

For Mexico, however, the often termed China “threat” has been a real one for some time. President Fox sought to contain competition from China in several sectors to protect Mexican companies involved in NAFTA trade with the U.S.<sup>127</sup> Even before Fox, President Salinas declared Mexico’s first major “anti-dumping” policy on China in 1993

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<sup>125</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, “China’s Relations with Latin America: Shared Gains, Asymmetric Hopes,” *Inter-American Dialogue* (June 2006): 26

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 37

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 38

towards several Chinese imports, including textiles and toys, of approximately one thousand percent.<sup>128</sup> Mexico even voiced apprehension to China's ascension into the World Trade Organization fearing the increase in economic competition would significantly hinder future Mexican trade capabilities to the U.S., especially that of the *maquiladora* industries along Mexico's northern border.

China and Mexico political relations are quite positive, but are still limited in its depth in comparison to other major Latin American nation-states.<sup>129</sup> Mexico has often agreed with China's foreign policy behaviors and declarations. Mexico was one of the first Latin American countries to affirm the "One China" policy and is still considered a strategic asset for China in convincing the rest of Central America to abandon their political commitments from recognizing Taiwan as an independent nation-state. Mexico has also been a consistent partner in UN Security Council affairs, especially in its care for addressing human rights violations and condemnations as well as exchanging views and support against the recent invasion of Iraq.

In 2004, however, political relations between the two countries had undergone slight setbacks.<sup>130</sup> Prior to a trip by Mexican ministers to China, Fox criticized China's undemocratic propensity to restrict labor mobility. The Dalai Lama's visit to Mexico in 2004 set off a criticism by the Chinese ambassador to Mexico on the ignorance of Mexican leaders towards the Tibet issue despite Fox's refusal to declare Tibet "a country"

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<sup>128</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, "China's Relations with Latin America: Shared Gains, Asymmetric Hopes," *Inter-American Dialogue* (June 2006): 38.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 39

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 40

and the subsequent apology by the Chinese ambassador. In the same month, U.S. and Mexican policy-makers looked upon Mexican Foreign Minister Ernesto Derbez with discontent when he publicly stressed the importance of a China-Mexico strategic partnership in a manner that implied joint penetration of the U.S. market.

Continued oppositional rhetoric and faux pas during the first half of the past decade impacted public opinion and the immediate future of relations between the two countries.<sup>131</sup> Although opinions on military influence in the region were “mildly positive” in Mexico compared to other Latin American countries, public opinion shifted from positive to negative with respect to economic relations.<sup>132</sup> Despite Mexico’s status upgrade to one of China’s “strategic partners,” the thought of China as a “competitor” still rings throughout most of Mexico’s economic environment.

Although the salience of relations between China and Mexico has risen over the past decade, so has conflict within the relationship. Mexico sees China as an “option” for political and economic exchanges more so than an “alternative” to U.S. power in contrast to several Latin American nation-states, such as Venezuela or Cuba. China often views Mexico as an economic intermediary for access to the U.S. market not to mention a positive influence against Taiwan’s diplomatic hold on most of Central America. All in all, it appears, “Mexico and China have strategic value for each other but...they are not [quite] yet ‘partners.’”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, “China’s Relations with Latin America: Shared Gains, Asymmetric Hopes,” *Inter-American Dialogue* (June 2006): 39

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 40

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*



## *Foreign Policy*

*Interests.* Relations between Mexico and the Asia-Pacific originated in the sixteenth century with the Spanish Empire's establishment of a sole trade route from Acapulco, Mexico to Manila in the Philippines. This route remained a prominent commercial path until the early 1800s when Latin American countries achieved independence and Spanish control of the route disintegrated.<sup>134</sup> In the late 1800s and early 1900s, relations resurfaced in the form of several waves of Asian immigration into Mexico and the U.S. These immigrants mostly worked on the railroad systems in both nation-states as a means to expedite their respective modernization processes.<sup>135</sup>

Sadly, such interaction was coupled with violence and ethnic discrimination, particularly during the years of the Mexican Revolution and immediately afterwards. Many Chinese immigrants died during the war and the government paid over three million *pesos* in the first years of the revolution in indemnities.<sup>136</sup> At the end of the war, the newfound pride of revolutionary Mexico formulated the nationalist idea of the *mestizo* as the "true" Mexican. Rather than uphold Diaz's "accommodating" racial policies, "Mexican-ness" provided a means of unity for the people that would result in xenophobic tensions with dwindling numbers of Chinese immigrants into Mexico.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Jorg Faust, "Attempts at Diversification: Mexico and Pacific Asia," *The Pacific Review* (June 2002): 5,6

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> "Convention between the Governments of Mexico and China For the Payment of an Indemnity," in "Official," *The American Journal of International Law* 8, no. 2 (April 1914): 147.

<sup>137</sup> Alan Knight, Aline Helg Thomas E. Skidmore, "Racism, Revolution and *Indigenismo*: Mexico, 1910-1940," in *Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, Richard Graham ed., Critical Reflections on Latin America Series (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 96.

Although political relations between China and Mexico became official in the early 1970s, such relations remain relatively underdeveloped to this day. In 2003, Premier Wen Jiabao remarked current political relations with Mexico are at their best in their short history. However, the reason China-Mexico political relations are developing more positively now than in the past stems from the reality of both China and Mexico operating out of limited, if not outright closed, foreign policy interactions from the 1970s to the end of the Cold War due to state structures and ideological underpinnings.

*Tercermundismo* and Mexico's relations with China post-1972 represent the third relational period between China and Mexico. "Third World – ism" developed during the Cold War as an alternative non-aligned movement against the intervening influence of the U.S. and the Soviet Union's political tensions. China and Mexico were both major supporters of this movement, but whereas the Group of 77, including China, sought to continue the campaign, Mexico withdrew its support at the end of the Cold War.<sup>138</sup> Mexico's former presidents Salinas and Zedillo minimized their "ideological" rhetoric symbolizing a shift in foreign policy in favor of closer relations with the U.S.<sup>139</sup> While China continues to indirectly support "Third World" nation-states with a more pragmatic approach, Mexico has still supported China in its pursuit of membership in the WTO (with reservations) while China reciprocated when Mexico received approval of its membership into APEC.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Jorg Faust, "Attempts at Diversification: Mexico and Pacific Asia," *The Pacific Review* (June 2002): 15

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 9

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

Latin America holds great importance for China politically in relation to Taiwan and the “One China” policy, especially Mexico. Of the twenty six nation-states that recognize Taiwan as an independent country, half of them are in Latin America and mostly in Central America.<sup>141</sup> Mexico, who formally recognized Beijing as the legitimated government seat of China in 1972, is seen as a chief ally in the region on this issue. As a (secondary) regional power, China hopes Mexico will convince its peers in the region to shift their recognition towards Beijing.

However, the political contest on recognition does not stop Latin America from doing business with both Beijing and Taipei. In 2004, Mexico’s trade sums with Taiwan reached several billion dollars and such numbers were comparable to other major Latin American countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia.<sup>142</sup> Taiwan’s “dollar diplomacy,” financial investments and advanced technical expertise also play a large role in promoting cooperation from those nation-states that support Taipei. In a way, Taiwan’s close relationship with the U.S. also sends an indirect signal to Latin America that good relations with the former leads to improved relations with the latter.<sup>143</sup> China’s sensitivity to this issue motivates its foreign policy and participation in international events. Faust cites that, “[o]n several occasions, China insinuated that it would only

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<sup>141</sup> He Li, “Rivalry between Taiwan and the PRC in Latin America,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 79

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 90, 91

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 96

support UN-peace-keeping in the region, if the affected countries gave up diplomatic relations with Taiwan.”<sup>144</sup>

In line with the developing political relations between both nation-states, China and Mexico announced the formation of a mutual “strategic partnership” in late 2003 and early 2004. Such an agreement recognizes the salience of relations with Mexico in advancing the aims of China, including the advancement of the “One China” policy and resource trade. This agreement led to the establishment of the China-Mexico Permanent Bi-National Committee as a source for policy ideas and exchange initiatives that can enhance political cooperation between the two nation-states.

In 2008, Hu Jintao put forth political dialogue, “win-win” economic cooperation, personnel exchanges and multilateral cooperation as the four major pathways to success in the China-Mexico relationship.<sup>145</sup> China expounded these same four points in section three of “China’s Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean” later that year highlighting various initiatives in the political, economic, socio-cultural, security and legal realms.<sup>146</sup> Cooperation is not only limited to national frameworks, but also to party frameworks as well. In 2010, the *People’s Daily* quoted a senior member of the Communist Party of China (CPC) praising the bi-lateral ties between China and Mexico

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<sup>144</sup> Jorg Faust, “Attempts at Diversification: Mexico and Pacific Asia,” *The Pacific Review* (June 2002): 16

<sup>145</sup> China, Mexico Establish Strategic Dialogue Mechanism, *People’s Daily Online (People’s Republic of China)*, July 11, 2008. <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6448760.html> (accessed November 5, 2010).

<sup>146</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the People’s Republic of China. “China Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean.” (November 5, 2008)

as a means to promote “party-to-party exchanges,” especially with Mexico’s PRI.<sup>147</sup>

Although much of China’s twentieth century political relations with Mexico operated within a PRI and CPC framework, relations continue to develop between both groups.

### *Military Capabilities*

The lack of open source information on the military relations between China and Mexico suggest such relations are underdeveloped and without any major objectives in mind aside from its simple establishment. On the other hand, China and Mexico are very aware that the latter’s path towards its own national security and military relations abroad is implicitly dictated by its geopolitical position with the U.S. Exposure of any existing serious bi-lateral military ties between China and Mexico can be ruinous to both U.S. relationships towards China and Mexico.

Meanwhile, Mexico is also wary of foreign military presence in its territory by nature and such a position is not limited to the U.S. Given the mostly economic nature of China’s relationship to Mexico, such a concern over military relations may be premature, but nevertheless important for consideration by the U.S. national security community given the contemporary globalizing world. Whether for the purposes of mutual security or undisclosed reasoning, uninformed conjecture can do more harm than good for the U.S. national security community as well as for China and Mexico.

One topic related to military capabilities concern the coast guards of the U.S., China, Mexico and other nation-states as they are playing increasing important strategic

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<sup>147</sup> Senior CPC Official Calls For Closer Party Exchanges with Mexico, *People's Daily Online (People's Republic of China)*, July 13, 2010. <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/7064635.html> (accessed November 5, 2010).

roles in maritime security. It is interesting to note that while the U.S. Navy and the Mexican Navy have historical contentions with each other, their respective coast guards do not have difficulty with cooperation. The law enforcement nature of the coast guard relationship does not carry the specter of military involvement that makes nation-states, such as Mexico, hesitant to collaborate with the U.S.<sup>148</sup> If this distinction holds true beyond the U.S.-Mexico relationship, then there may be a possibility for increased maritime cooperation, albeit limited, between China and Mexico without exactly promoting military cooperation.

China's coast guard remains a subsidiary of the PLAN, but its Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC), a primarily civilian agency that monitors overfishing and illegal agricultural activity on the sea, has taken on some additional duties. The PLAN has promoted more of its influence in the FLEC by converting these flotillas of fishing boats into a "civilian maritime militia" better able to defend the China's maritime periphery and lay stronger claim to an extended coastal jurisdiction.<sup>149</sup><sup>150</sup> These boats and their crews are reported to have harassed various Vietnamese fishing boats, Japanese coast guard vessels and a U.S. spy ship within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) that

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<sup>148</sup> Sam Bateman, "Coast Guards: New Forces For Regional Order and Security," in "Asia Pacific Issues," special issue, *East-West Center* 66 (January 2003): 3

<sup>149</sup> Edward Wong, "Chinese Civilian Boats Roil Disputed Waters," *New York Times*, October 5, 2010.

<sup>150</sup> Kathrin Hille, "China and Us Stage Yellow Sea Wargames," *Financial Times (London)*, September 3, 2010.  
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1875ad9a-b5ac-11df-a65e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1GjFYtMgW> (accessed March 1, 2011).

China shares with other nation-states around its periphery.<sup>151</sup><sup>152</sup> Even seemingly harmless port visits can be used to gather foreign intelligence.<sup>153</sup>

Motivated by the near collapse of its peripheral fisheries industry and overall expansion into the maritime commons eastward and southward, China is taking precautions towards protecting its resource and geopolitical bases. If China's maritime cooperation increases with Mexico by way of the FLEC or its own coast guard, then the negative sentiments tied to Mexico's anxiety of military-to-military cooperation can be temporarily relieved through this channel of interaction. In a way, this situation allows for an opportunity to increase China-Mexico military ties while minimizing U.S. justifications for apprehension, much at the dismay of the U.S. national security community.

### *Commerce*

*Interests.* Despite the limited political and military relations shared between China and Mexico, economics plays a vital role in shaping the agendas of the former two spheres, especially when both nation-states are emerging economic powers in their own rights. Whereas Mexico shifted from an import-substitution/ neo-development model to a neo-liberal model of economic theory, China restructured its Mao-inspired closed economy into a neo-developmental model. In terms of similarities, both China and

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<sup>151</sup> Lyle J. Goldstein, “: Strategic Implications of Chinese Fisheries Development,” in “China Brief,” special issue, *The Jamestown Foundation* 9, no. 16 (August 5, 2009): 11.

<sup>152</sup> Sam Bateman, “Coast Guards: New Forces For Regional Order and Security,” in “Asia Pacific Issues,” special issue, *East-West Center* 66 (January 2003):2

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

Mexico recognized their need for economic reform and the importance of export promotion, both sought after FDI and both focused on developing their information technology sectors.<sup>154</sup>

However, the role of the government represents the foundational difference between the two economic philosophies. The neo-developmental economic model allows the state to maintain the dominant position over economic life while neo-liberal theory desires the suppression of government intervention. The former focuses on the government's ability to suppress poverty and increase the standard of living while the latter only allows so much government involvement in economic affairs if any at all. China's authoritarian system supports the neo-developmental model as China's political models have usually been based on hierarchical and absolute control. Mexico has also promoted the tendency of "one-party rule," such as when the PRI consolidated power for over seventy years. However, the economic crisis in Latin America in the 1980s and the subsequent political and economic movements towards the global market spurred a shift to the neo-liberal economic model towards which Mexicans continue to adapt.

Liu Jixin of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences states several realities of the trade relationship between China and Mexico. Both nation-states are engaged in rapid economic growth, especially in their export markets and conflict *will* ensue given their similarities in structure and goods.<sup>155</sup> However, comparative advantages *within* their

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<sup>154</sup> K.P. Gallagher and M. Shafaeddin, "Policies for Industrial Learning in China and Mexico: Neo-Developmental Vs. Neo-Liberal Approaches," *Trade Working Papers* (2009): 2

<sup>155</sup> Liu Jixin, "Challenges and Solutions For Sino-Mexican Relations: From the Perspective of Chinese Scholars," *Chinese Academy of Social Sciences* (2009): 4



similar export market approaches can build mutual trade benefit, such as China's specialization in electro-mechanics, home appliances as well as leather products and Mexico's auto parts, television and foodstuffs sectors.<sup>156</sup> On the other hand, Mexico is still dependant and focused on the U.S. market while China's increasing competitiveness and past "dumping" practices remain obstacles to China-Mexico trade relations.<sup>157</sup>

A World Bank report, put forth at the time of critique by Rhys Jenkins and Enrique Dussel-Peters, offers an "optimistic view" of the China-Mexico trade relationship. The World Bank report asserts there is a degree of substitution across a few sectors in a few Latin American countries, but overall trade relations with China much more optimistic than either nation-state will admit. Jenkins and Dussel-Peters contend smaller countries, such as those in Central America near Mexico, will suffer greatly given their specializations and economic sizes are much more limited in comparison to Mexico and especially China's growing presence.<sup>158</sup> Secondly, the World Bank report seems to be underestimating China's ability to catch up to Mexico's degree of specialization in electronics and automotive parts.<sup>159</sup>

To be more specific regarding the interests of each nation-states view of the other, China primarily sees Mexico as an intermediary market for increased U.S. access. If China can access the NAFTA trade flow via economic agreements with Mexico, then it

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<sup>156</sup> Liu Jixin, "Challenges and Solutions For Sino-Mexican Relations: From the Perspective of Chinese Scholars," *Chinese Academy of Social Sciences* (2009): 5

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Rhys Jenkins, Enrique Dussel-Peters and Mauricio Mesquita Moreira, "The Impact of China On Latin America and the Caribbean," *World Development* 36, no. 2 (2008): 242

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

can “siphon” out benefits from Mexico’s commercial inflow and outflow. According to Jenkins and Dussel-Peters, “China’s FDI in [Mexico and] Latin America is of the “resource seeking” kind, particularly in oil and minerals.”<sup>160</sup> Mexico offers few raw materials to China with the exception of oil and natural gas, but there is some investment in the manufacturing sector. Nevertheless, China tends to import resources from Mexico and other Latin American countries in their “least value added” and raw form so as to assemble the final product at home where it is cheaper.<sup>161</sup>

China will also like to maintain and improve upon its overwhelming economic power to influence trade and negotiation with the U.S. with or without Mexico’s involvement. China is surpassing the labor-intensive and technology-intensive sectors of the Mexican economy. Basically, China’s economic presence in Mexico and Latin America, “...mutes the beneficial impact of [the] United States’ imperialism on Mexico, while heightening its adverse effects, and without putting anything in its place.”<sup>162</sup>

Although China’s position seems daunting, the competition that exists between the economies of China and Mexico does not signify the latter’s demise. The U.S. employs twice as many workers from Mexico than from China and U.S. FDI into Mexico far exceeds that of China in tens of billions of dollars.<sup>163</sup> Aside from its interest to

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<sup>160</sup> Rhys Jenkins, Enrique Dussel-Peters and Mauricio Mesquita Moreira, “The Impact of China On Latin America and the Caribbean,” *World Development* 36, no. 2 (2008): 240

<sup>161</sup> Alexandre de Freitas-Barbosa, “The Rising China and Its Impacts On Latin America: Strategic Partnership or a New International Trap?” (lecture, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia, August 27, 2008): 10

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 17

<sup>163</sup> Jeanie Gong, “Mexico and China: Partners or Competitors?” *Council on Hemispheric Affairs* (August 3, 2010), <http://www.coha.org/mexico-and-china-partners-or-competitors/> (accessed November 15, 2010).

increase its trade diversity and lessen its dependence on the U.S., Mexico wants to keep China's commercial power at bay while Mexico improves upon its own cross-border economic strategy to remain on favorable trade terms with the U.S. and its newfound "free trade" allies abroad.

*Threats.* Enrique Dussel-Peters notes the rise of China poses three major challenges to Mexico's economy. First, Mexico is not prepared to face the overwhelming capacity that is the Chinese trade economy. Second, Mexico and Latin America must re-evaluate the nature of their respective integration processes into the global economy. Lastly, the massive exports from China to Mexico and the lack of reciprocal importing by China are creating a considerable negative trade deficit for Mexico. Overall, "...Mexico's effort to build an export-led economy with low-cost labor has proved unable to stand up to Asian, and in particular Chinese, competition."<sup>164</sup>

The principal issue in trade relations between China and Mexico involves their similar export economy. If China revalues its currency, acquiescing to U.S. pressure, then many investors may see the action as an "exchange risk."<sup>165</sup> Since both nation-states have similar economies, investors and businesses can shift production to Mexico with little cost to U.S. businesses. On the other hand, the overwhelming economic influence wielded by China has already replaced Mexico as the nation-state that conducts the most trade with the U.S. while most of the same products constructed in Mexico also have a

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<sup>164</sup> Enrique Dussel-Peters, "Mexico: How to Rise to the China Challenge," *China Economic Quarterly*, 2007, 39

<sup>165</sup> Luis Rubio, "China's Surge: Trade and Investment in Latin America" (lecture, Hudson Institute, Washington, D.C., April 29, 2010)

home in China. The friction in this trade similarity made itself known during the 1993 Mexican “anti-dumping” campaign against China where Mexico imposed a one thousand percent tariff on certain imported products, including computers and other industrial material. Such cases of “anti-dumping” and China’s continued unloading of unwanted material into Mexico strains their trade relationship. This simply put, but extremely important commercial friction underlies most of the China-Mexico trade conflict.

Economic relations with Mexico worries China in reference to the former’s trade dependence on the U.S. as well as its domestic affairs. The global financial crisis in the U.S. “spilled over” into Mexico causing a decline in trade amount as well as investments while crime and unemployment has risen.<sup>166</sup> Widespread cartel violence in Mexico also gives China pause to invest in Mexico causing some Mexican authorities to question whether or not closer cooperation with China would restore some “balance” and “normalcy” to the country.<sup>167</sup> The loss of *maquiladora* jobs and goods creation hit Mexico hard. The U.S. and Mexico originally created the *maquiladora* business system to develop cross-border business relations at low cost for the U.S. For example, the system was designed for a Mexican manufacturer to take raw materials purchased by the U.S., construct them into an assembled product at low cost and transport it back to the U.S. for consumption of re-shipment. China’s surpassing of Mexico as the number one trading partner to the U.S. induced many U.S. businesses to transfer their *maquiladora*

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<sup>166</sup> William Ratliff, “Is a 'Win-Win' Relationship in the Cards for China and Mexico?” *China Brief* - *The Jamestown Foundation* 9, no. 7 (April 2, 2009): 10.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

investments to businesses in China where wages are lower.<sup>168</sup> Mexico lost hundreds of thousands of jobs in the past decade due to China's burgeoning economic power.

Mexico's own economic structure remains a problem as well. The shift to a neo-liberal economic model introduced greater levels of FDI, export shipments and a diversified trading market. However, since Mexico continues to fall short in promoting competition with its peers, there exists "a lack of linkages" with foreign businesses and low capacity to improve technology or add value to manufactured goods leading to a continued overdependence on the U.S.<sup>169</sup> Freitas-Barbosa notes that, "... for the moment, there is no true "strategic partnership," given that Latin American nations negotiate largely within the parameters set by the Chinese ..."<sup>170</sup> Keeping this reality in mind, there are several "myths" Freitas-Barbosa clarifies. China is not competitive solely because of its low-labor costs, but also because of, and not limited to its scale of production, market potential, government planning and monetary policy.<sup>171</sup> At the same time, China's goods are most often poor-quality, as is the case with "pirated" media,

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<sup>168</sup> Alexandre de Freitas-Barbosa, "The Rising China and Its Impacts On Latin America: Strategic Partnership or a New International Trap?" (lecture, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia, August 27, 2008): 13, 14

<sup>169</sup> K.P. Gallagher and M. Shafaeddin, "Policies for Industrial Learning in China and Mexico: Neo-Developmental Vs. Neo-Liberal Approaches," *Trade Working Papers* (2009): 9

<sup>170</sup> Alexandre de Freitas-Barbosa, "The Rising China and Its Impacts On Latin America: Strategic Partnership or a New International Trap?" (lecture, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia, August 27, 2008): 21

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

while the authoritarian government is not as omnipotent as many would believe considering weakness in security systems and urbanization flaws.<sup>172</sup>

*Means.* Dussel-Peters suggests that Mexico actively engage in a long term relationship with China, improve existing bilateral institutions that monitor and develop both economic and political relations between the two nation-states and that Mexico realize its own unwillingness to compete in the global market as a hindrance to its own national growth.<sup>173</sup> A change in the perception of competition and improved education on the realities of the global economy can also help Mexico's status as a much more capable trading partner. Jenkins and Dussel-Peters also believe Mexico and Latin America will have an increasingly difficult time creating and exporting their products with the same level of dynamism that existed in the 1990s.<sup>174</sup> Both authors warn against increased protection measures as a means for Mexico to suppress the necessity to compete on the global market with China.<sup>175</sup>

Despite the intense competition Mexico faces with China, Mexico has several key advantages that require utilization to survive in the global economy.<sup>176</sup> "Qualified and

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<sup>172</sup> Alexandre de Freitas-Barbosa, "The Rising China and Its Impacts On Latin America: Strategic Partnership or a New International Trap?" (lecture, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia, August 27, 2008): 21

<sup>173</sup> Enrique Dussel-Peters, "Mexico: How to Rise to the China Challenge," *China Economic Quarterly*, 2007, 39

<sup>174</sup> Rhys Jenkins, Enrique Dussel-Peters and Mauricio Mesquita Moreira, "The Impact of China On Latin America and the Caribbean," *World Development* 36, no. 2 (2008): 249

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> Jose Orozco, "Latin America's Chinese Wake-Up Call," *Asia Times Online*, October 11, 2006. [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China\\_Business/HJ11Cb01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China_Business/HJ11Cb01.html) (accessed January 20, 2011).

bilingual labor” is currently more numerous between U.S. and Mexican businesses and organizations than with the U.S. and China. Proximity to the U.S. allows manufactured goods, such as those in the automotive and appliance sectors, from Mexico to reach U.S. locations a lot faster and at cheaper cost, especially if Mexico re-orientes their export market to cater to these advantages. NAFTA enhances the efficacy of this approach given the removal of trade tariffs between the U.S. and Mexico and the reliability of quality and pricing within regional trade. In order for Mexico to be more successful in trade, it must be more competitive in North America where the benefits of such action will allow more competitiveness in other parts of the world, including Asia and Europe. Rubio notes that this approach will necessitate a closer relationship with the U.S., a move not too popular with much of Mexico.<sup>177</sup>

Alternatively, Mexico can also increase business cooperation with China. By engaging in “expanded cooperative ventures” with China, both nation-states can set up comprehensive and economically favorable production systems that can promote commerce beyond the limitations set up by their export economies.<sup>178</sup> Liu Jixin recommends a “strengthening of complementarities through policies.”<sup>179</sup> Historically, China and Mexico have been engaged in economic transactions for centuries since the inception of the “maritime Silk Road” and Liu believes there is still hope for improved

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<sup>177</sup> Luis Rubio, “China's Surge: Trade and Investment in Latin America” (lecture, Hudson Institute, Washington, D.C., April 29, 2010)

<sup>178</sup> Adrian H. Hearn, “China's Relations with Mexico and Cuba: A Study of Contrasts,” *Pacific Rim Report* no. 52 (January 2009), [http://usf.usfca.edu/pac\\_rim/new/research/pacrimreport/pacrimreport52.html](http://usf.usfca.edu/pac_rim/new/research/pacrimreport/pacrimreport52.html)

<sup>179</sup> Liu Jixin, “Challenges and Solutions For Sino-Mexican Relations: From the Perspective of Chinese Scholars,” *Chinese Academy of Social Sciences* (2009): 4-7.

trade relations. Liu also recommends Mexico gather the will to explore investments much like China so as to proactively garner more FDI.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Liu Jixin, "Challenges and Solutions For Sino-Mexican Relations: From the Perspective of Chinese Scholars," *Chinese Academy of Social Sciences* (2009): 8



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusions

This thesis analyzed the nature of an asymmetric triangular relationship between the U.S., China and Mexico and its importance to the U.S. national security community. This short contribution simply provides general explanations of theory and nation-state behavior, yet no previous study has engaged the topic of a triangular relationship between these three nation-states, the asymmetric nature of such a relationship and its relevance to U.S. national security. Analysis via three bi-lateral relationships within the paradigms of the political, military and economic spheres as well as the importance of a third player as it affects or does not affect that same relationship formed the structure of analysis in this thesis. It may seem effortless to dismiss the relevance of such a relationship despite the depth of the theory presented and the immediacy of issues that concern the U.S. in regards to its relationship with the other three players. However, prudence dictates the U.S. national security community makes every effort to prepare for a situation where the U.S. will have a pertinent advantage or disadvantage and the implications outlined in this thesis provide such a justification.

#### *Summary*

Womack's "triple asymmetrical triangle" would be the best explanation to describe the U.S.-China-Mexico relationship. Admittedly, the analysis would be much more agreeable to the U.S. national security community if the concepts of strategic

affinity and enmity were as clear cut in Womack's deductions as they were in Dittmer's work. However, Womack's approach compensates for the power disparities inherent in each bi-lateral relationship that also takes into account the complex details of a globalizing world and respective unit attributes so as to present a more cohesive idea of how best to judge this triangular relationship. Dittmer's explanation of triangular relations surely provided the theoretical basis for Womack's conclusions, especially the prominence of power disparity within and outside of the U.S.-Soviet Union-China triangular relationship.

As mentioned previously, power disparity plays a large role in analyzing behavior in a triangular relationship and the evidence provided in the previous chapter presents a glimpse into the grand strategic aims embedded in the bi-lateral relationships of the three players. As the most powerful nation-state in this triangular relationship, the U.S. sees China as a potential competitor for much of its pre-established influence even if only to the extent of regional centrality with Mexico as a proximate and much weaker nation-state dependant on its northern neighbor for development. China believes the U.S. to be an obstacle to its grand strategic aims necessitating a balancing strategy if only for the near term while also acting as a major source of commercial interest for which China must compete with Mexico for preferential treatment from the U.S. Mexico, the weakest nation-states in this triangular relationship, is recognizing its own limitations that require a closer, though more cautious, relationship with the U.S. to be successful and China as an interesting medium to increased relations with Asia while watching China's intentions and actions in the western hemisphere.

Although the “triple asymmetrical triangle” order constitutes the overall asymmetric triangular relationship, Womack’s other models can be applied, with accommodation, to provide a more understandable glance at the tri-lateral arrangement within the political, military and economic spheres. Arguably, the political order of the three players within this triangular relationship inclines towards a “Twin-head Dual Asymmetric Triangle” where the U.S. and China hold relatively similar political power that greatly outmatches Mexico. Positive political relations are developing between the U.S. and Mexico as well as with China and Mexico, but it is important to note that Mexico’s political status in this triangular relationship does not dramatically affect relations between the U.S. and China. U.S. and Chinese foreign policies are in conflict and will continue to be increasingly salient as China grows in its comprehensive power projection. Primacy does not tolerate peer competition and China’s growing relationship with Mexico and Latin America heightens U.S. sensitivity to Chinese intentions and actions in the region even if those relations appear non-threatening to U.S. interests.

U.S. and Mexican political history and contemporary foreign policies differ as well, however an AFD framework and power disparity agendas compel both to work together often for mutual gain. Often at odds in political orientation and international relations principles, both nation-states still depend on each other to advance their own foreign policy goals, such as the support of Mexico for regional stability and the aid of the U.S. in intra-national progress. Chinese and Mexican foreign policies hold much more in common than either does with the U.S. and this situation forms the basis of a positive development of amiable relations. However, as China’s political power and its

ability to project it increase, the U.S. national security community, must focus on the consistency of China's own traditionally-based constraint of its power and the newfound opportunities that comes with major power status.

In regards to military power in this triangular relationship, none of Womack's models can be thoroughly applied as a contextual guide given the utter absence of measureable, open source military relations information between China and Mexico. While minor news segments comment on the hopeful development of military ties between China and Mexico, nothing substantial is known short of general statistics concerning arsenal sizes and tactical capacities. In the meantime, U.S.-China military relations seem to continue along the lines of enmity. China's military capacities worry the U.S. in a much more immediate sense than political influence, especially with the developing technological philosophy of "negation-based" weaponry towards U.S. "aggressive defense." Military relations between the U.S. and Mexico are still rooted in enmity, but are in positive transition. The U.S. must continue to operate alongside Mexico's revolutionary principles, but the reward for gradual and consistent operational cooperation will yield more future security benefits than returning to "closed" cross-border relations.

Womack's "Single-head Dual Asymmetrical Triangle" loosely explains the economic trade relationship where U.S. economic power greatly outranks that of the other two players. Although China's economy is significantly larger than that of Mexico, the relative advantages of China and Mexico in terms of trade to the U.S. are quite close. The complementary structure of the Chinese and Mexican trade economies create an

inevitable competition between the two nation-states for the affection of the U.S. China's sheer volume and capacity for export far outweigh that of Mexico, but Mexico's proximity, experience and membership in a free-trade agreement with the U.S. still poses a challenge to Chinese trade supremacy in U.S. business. Meanwhile, the U.S. can take advantage of the trade conflict between the other two players as they will adapt their economic strategies to maintain their business ties with the U.S. If a major conflict ever ensues between the U.S. and another player, then the U.S. can continue to receive the same tradable goods and services from the third player albeit at a smaller volume.

### *Discussion*

Neo-Realism would put forth that China and Mexico can balance against the U.S. or the U.S. can improve upon its ability to secure total hegemony even with systemic roadblocks. China and Mexico relations are considerably underdeveloped in the political and military spheres and economic tension with Mexico continues to influence its political relations with China. While increasing contact between China and Mexico may yield significant gains in relationship development, a "joint venture" with aims of balancing U.S. power is quite unlikely. Considering power distance, the already established AFD relationship between the U.S. and Mexico and little change in the status quo of the region, if Mexico decided to balance against the U.S., it is highly unlikely that China will make any significant commitment to supporting Mexico in any conflict scenario when such action would be of great marginal risk to China. It is difficult for the U.S. and Mexico to break relations when the development of proximate cross-border cultures has made both nation-states culturally and economically integrated.

If the aim for hegemony is not erroneous in its ambitions, then the fault most definitely lies in the reality of its application. The U.S. cannot afford to pursue its objectives of maintaining global hegemony without the support or even if the simple cooperation of its peers. To consistently disregard the opinions and suggestions of other nation-states in extra-territorial matters is dangerous for the U.S., especially with China as an appealing option for other nation-states with overall negative views towards the U.S. In a practical sense, Mexico's role in domestic and regional stability for the U.S. grows ever more important to U.S. national security. To overpower Mexico or any nation-state for the matter, in the classical sense without just cause in the eyes of the rest of the world would immediately create enmity towards the U.S. and a certain path towards the decline of its hegemony.

Neo-Liberalism often claims *all* nation-states operate on an equal and symmetric basis thanks to the Westphalian culture of nation-state interaction as well as calling for global institutionalization of regulatory commissions and political entities to be the ultimate modification to any remaining power disparities. This ideal is praiseworthy, but power disparity is a real situation that is not so easily solved. The variance of nation-state narratives, including the ones involved in this triangular relationship, hold different views on what would comprise a universal framework of international values that neo-liberalism wants to attain. Although many benefits can be produced from a grand accord of interaction based upon universal ethics, such a reality often require nation-states to either replace or reconstruct the narratives upon which many individuals, families and communities based their lives. To dismiss the inequality of power to be nothing more

than an “old-world” concept automatically “levels” the playing field between strong and weak nation-states assuming all have the ability and capacity to adequately protect themselves. In reality, the strong are exonerated from abuse and the weak are given an excuse to “play the victim.”

In relation to the application of asymmetric theory and triangular relations on the case studies, there are several scholars and analysts that treat Latin America as a cohesive hole for which to attribute an equal part in a triangular relationship with the U.S. and China. The logic for this approach cites the endurance of Latin America under the power dominance of the U.S. for two centuries and it is only reasonable that they would seek to repay the favor. These same authors would claim that China’s presence can make the whole region more relevant in international politics as a whole at cost to the U.S.

U.S. national security community should not consider Latin America as a whole region that can balance against the U.S. To consider Latin America as a singular unit that opposes the U.S. is a large and mostly incorrect statement. Not all Latin American countries are a happy compliment to China. For example, Mexico and Central America are economic competitors, Colombia is a staunch supporter of the U.S. in the region and Argentina has economic grievances with China as well. While nation-states in the region vie for regional leadership, China favors some nation-states over others and the reasons to engage in diplomacy with China differ over ideological or economic reasons.

It is also important to “sub-regionalize” the area to get a better sense of international “nodes.” Mexico is a unique nation-state all on its own given its indistinct cultural identity of Latin and North American influences. Further divisions of Latin

America also include the Caribbean sub-region, Central America, the Andean area, the Southern Cone and Brazil. Even these divisions may not be adequate. This reality is yet another reason why alarmists do not understand the impracticality of a war between the U.S. and a “Chinese-led” Latin America.

If China and Mexico resolve their export trade disputes, then both nation-states are much more likely to become allies because of their positive growing relations in the political and military spheres. For example, Mexico may find something to trade with China or both ultimately cooperated on an orderly trade of goods and services to the U.S. making their main export trade issues mute. Such an event could make both nation-states closer economic partners and even pursue a cooperative enterprise into penetrating the U.S. market.

It is unlikely China and Mexico will achieve so much economic cooperation without fundamental shifts in one, if not both, of their trade economies, the marginal importance of Mexico to China because of distance and the negative risks of exploiting such a development when Mexico is on the other side of the border with the U.S. Mexico and China are both dependent on the industrial nature of their trade economies relying on manufactured items for exchange much more than any other good or service type. Power distance plays a role in the importance of international relations and given the already marginal priority of Latin America, specifically Mexico, Central America and parts of northern South America, to China, any increase in relevance will be gradual at most. China recognizes Mexico is in the U.S. sphere of influence and although that may not stop China from exploiting an opportunity, such action will most likely remain subtle so



as not to dramatically and negatively affect public and political relations with the U.S. The U.S. national security community will have to involve itself in any process of agreement to receive any benefits while monitoring and reassessing its current security stances to both nation-states in case closer relations do evolve.

The fear of China establishing a military presence in Mexico can present itself in the realm of U.S. national security and its relation to regional affairs. For example, Cold War tactics, such as international basing, setting up satellite governments and spreading out military assets to monitor opposition power growth, restricted warfare to limited theatres of operations. Some argue that the same situation can happen again between the U.S. and China with Mexico as a potential “Taiwan” for the U.S. Arguably, such a situation already occurred with Cuba and the Soviet Union during the 1960s but this scenario would be more dangerous because of a continental connection between the two nation-states.

This scenario is unlikely to happen without severe U.S. objection. Even if China reaches power equality with the U.S., China would not plan for an invasion of the U.S. with physical troops in Mexico lest it aggravate the U.S. and start a war. U.S. trade is too important to China, the U.S. will hold major political influence in the world for some time and Chinese strategic culture is not so undeveloped as to make such action when military relations with Mexico are just starting. Despite its developing political and military relations with China, Mexico is still wary of China’s intentions in the western hemisphere, especially since its shared principles of non-intervention and sovereignty with Mexico hardly accompany the realities of growing power projection. For the time

being and possibly well into the next ten to twenty years, China will continue to regard Mexico primarily as an economic intermediary.

### *Implications*

Traditional U.S. uni-polarity and classical influence over the western hemisphere is diminishing. Power distribution in the western hemisphere has favored the U.S. for two centuries becoming the *de facto* “hub” for political, military and economic power in the region. Globalization and the relative increase in power across other nation-states are only a couple of the factors that threaten this advantage embodied in Chinese presence in the western hemisphere. If the U.S. national security community does not remain vigilant of its relations with Mexico and China’s impact on regional policy, security and trade, then supportive elements of China south of the U.S. border may influence the Mexican government’s reserved stance to Chinese activity in the region.

Mexican sympathies against the treatment by U.S. power projection capabilities will still exist even if Mexico lacks the political weight to change their current status. Even though Mexico wants a diversity of power globally distributed, the U.S. can adapt its political, military and economic doctrines and practices with Mexico as a means to be more open and inclusive. Hypothetically, if the hegemonic power of the U.S. weakens considerably, then it will have to rely on its neighbors for support and growth more so than it does now. Although such a situation is unlikely in the near future, it does not negate the salience of proximate diplomacy.

The power disparity that exists between the U.S. and Mexico is great indirectly reinforcing the perspective presented by Porfirio Díaz during the period of the Mexican

Revolution: “So far from God, so close to the United States.” The U.S., as the sole global power and a *de facto* regional power, must ensure its interests in both roles do not overlap to a high degree lest Mexico continues to hold onto this “political prophecy” espoused by Porfirio Diaz. It is in the best interest of the U.S. to drive this mentality out of the minds of Mexico much like the revolution did to his hold on political power, but with mutual cooperation rather than violence.

### *Recommendations*

The U.S. national security community and the oversight policy-makers need to be conscious of U.S. behavior and policies towards Mexico. A well known Chinese proverb states that, “If the lips are missing, the teeth get cold.” Mexico’s importance to U.S. national security cannot be replaced by a border wall. Increased efforts towards reconciliation rather than detachment from Mexico will better serve the U.S. as a whole, especially in a period of power re-distribution. The likeliness of maximized and cooperative ventures in the future may not favor the U.S. as it once did in the past thus making relations with Mexico even more salient than before if only because it shares a two thousand mile long border with the U.S.

Continued observation of China growing influence must remain a top priority to the U.S. national security community. Political cooperation, military transparency and economic stability must be the primary objectives by which both nation-states base their developing relationships to minimize the disastrous effects of a major conflict. While China’s presence in Latin America and its increasing relations with Mexico should

concern the U.S., allowing relations with Mexico and Latin America to remain on the wrong side of resentment should worry the U.S. even more.

Patience, not impulsiveness will save U.S. power. The U.S. national security community must increase the information campaign towards patience and consistency in policy. The general American mindset is to have everything now; however government leadership must fight this mentality short of those issues requiring immediate attention, such as national security matters. In a fast-paced and open society, the realities of government process, especially with the original purposes of the U.S. Founding Fathers to decentralize government to prevent autocracy, must be reinforced in the public's attention.

Scholars and analysts must always consider history, especially socio-cultural history. Even if economic prosperity, military agreements and political harmony are achieved between nation-states, people do not often forget the past. Our memories as Americans are often short and only "revitalized" when we read a book or watch a film, but the cultural foundations of many other countries, including Mexico and China, place great importance on the memories of their elders. Stories and perspectives are passed down with each generation and a lot can be known from the events of two centuries, especially when one pays attention.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Dittmer's Game Theory Matrix of International Exchanges

		Balance	
		symmetrical	asymmetrical
Value	positive	1	3
	negative	2	4

Figure A.1. Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis," *World Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 1981): 487

APPENDIX B

Dittmer's Strategic Triangle Patterns with Womack's Fourth Option

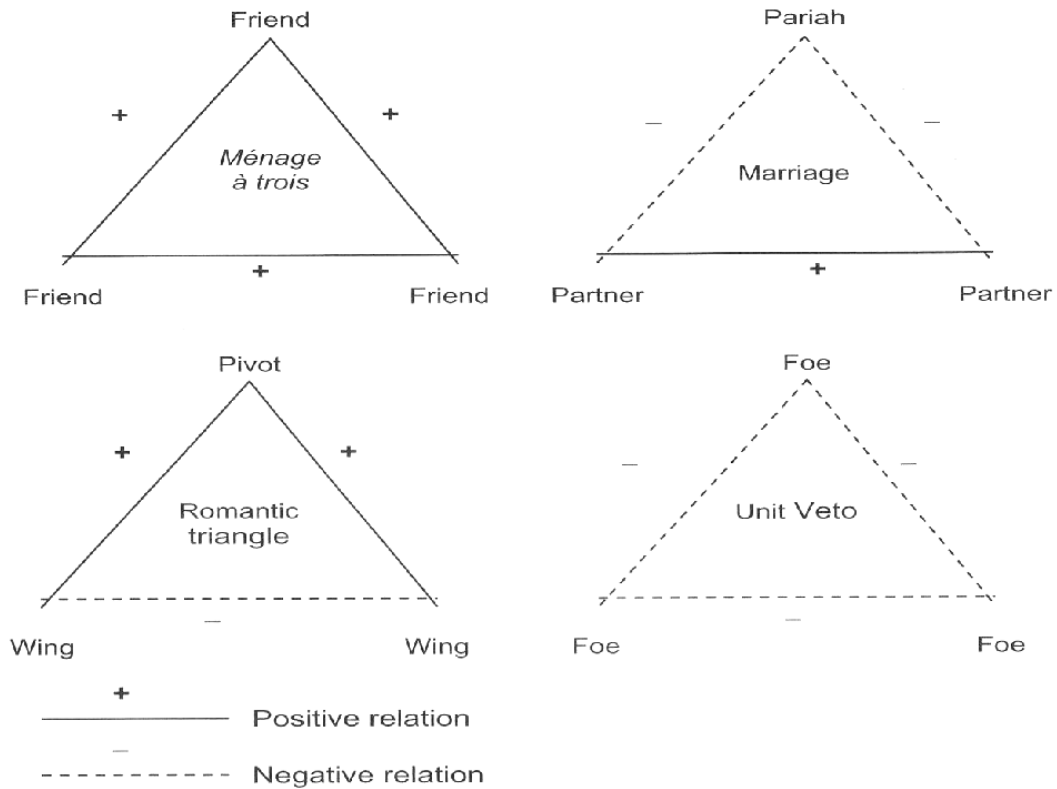


Figure B.1. Brantly Womack, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relations in Asia* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2010), 377

## APPENDIX C

### General Disparities between the U.S., China and Mexico

Table C.1. General Disparities between the U.S., China and Mexico  
(estimate; in billions)

Player	Population (est.)	GDP (est.)	Military (est.)
U.S.	0.3	14119	663255
China	1.3	4985.5	98800*
Mexico	0.1	5490	5490*

*Source:* Calculated from World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI) & Global Development Finance (GDF), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SPRI)

*Note:* China and Mexico military budgets re-calculated in 2009 dollars.

Table C.2. General Disparities between the U.S., China and Mexico  
(percentage; U.S. baseline)

Player	Population (%)	GDP (%)	Military (%)
U.S.	100	100	100
China	430	35	15
Mexico	30	6	1

*Source:* Calculated from World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI) & Global Development Finance (GDF), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SPRI)

*Note:* U.S. figures are considered the baseline from which to compare the statistics of China and Mexico.



APPENDIX D

Table D.1. Kozáks Asymmetric Option Model

Weaker state approach →	Weaker “closed”	Weaker “open”
Stronger state approach ↓		
Stronger “closed”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Slightly tense official relations</li> <li>-Minimum official contact</li> <li>-Limited unofficial ties if beneficial to both states</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Transformation occurring in weaker state</li> <li>-Results uncertain, as the stronger state is not supportive</li> </ul>
Stronger “open”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tense official relations</li> <li>-Pressure for changes in the weaker state detested by its government as interference</li> <li>-Unofficial ties with opposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Potentially successful transformation in the weaker state</li> <li>-Bilateral issues resolved cooperatively</li> </ul>
Stronger “indifferent”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Relations dependent on contingencies</li> <li>-Selective contacts approved by the regime in the weaker state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Transformation in the weaker state, danger of undermining by special interests from the stronger state</li> </ul>
Stronger “dominating”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Conflict with the government of the weaker state</li> <li>-Change of government, or further closing of the weaker state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Political factions favorable to the stronger state prevail</li> <li>-Potential backlash in the long run if asymmetry is not decreasing</li> </ul>

Source: Krystof Kozák, “Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations” (lecture, International Studies Association 2010 Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, February 16, 2010), 13

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