

China's increasing soft power; Implications for the United States

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Abstract: China in current years has been pursuing its national interests through its global workout of economic and soft power as it projects a non-aggressive, friendly diplomacy to states in emerging areas. China is consuming its soft power plan to stimulate its own national interests, than of becoming a direct challenge to U.S. It is China's swift development that is motivating its state advancement forward, and the country's requirement for natural resources, feasible export markets, and political impact has lead China to intensify its activities with emerging countries. The emphasis of Chinese inventiveness in many countries is confirming its access to feasible energy sources and soft power plays a substantial role in setting energy affiliation in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa and elsewhere. At present China lacks a synchronized national soft power scheme and considers its soft power as protective and largely responsive, a standpoint envisioned to dispel uncertainties in other countries of a China threat. China has not pursued to swap or to replace U.S. in its part of security source in the Middle East, South East Asia or somewhere else. But the economic engagements even in American neighboring countries have triggered a sort of competition and apprehensions in the views of policy makers of U.S. Thus, U.S. policy makers should be familiar with China's intentions of upholding its own economic growth and internal strength as they craft strategies to guarantee that the US encourages its own procedures efficiently.

Key Words: *China, Diplomacy, Investment, Soft Power, United States*

What is soft power?

Everyone is aware of hard power. We see that economic and military capacity regularly get others to alter their position. Hard power can rely on attractions (carrots) or threats (sticks). But occasionally you can acquire the results you want without tangible intimidations or payoffs. The secondary way to grab what you need has at times been entitled the second surface of power. A state may achieve the endings it desires in world politics as other states-approving its standards, rivaling its sample, aspirant to its level of affluence and openness-want to trail it. By

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this way, it is also vital to set the outline and fascinate others in global politics and not merely to vigor those to change by intimidating economic sanctions or military might.ⁱ

Soft power rests on the aptitude to shape the inclinations of others. At individual level, we are aware with the influence of attraction and seduction. And in the materialist world, a leader's job is not only to issue commands, but he is supposed to attract others by incentives and cooperation so as to enact his own or state's might. It is hard to run a great institute/organization by only commands. It is therefore becomes important to attract others to share and be intact with your values.ⁱⁱ Soft power is not simply comparable with influence. Because influence can also rest on the hard power of payments or threats whereas soft power is persuasion or the aptitude to convince people by argument. It is also the skill to attract, and attraction habitually leads to acceptance. So keeping in view the above details, we may get exact definition of soft power in the words of Joseph S. Nye. According to Nye "soft power is the skill to shape the preferences and penchants of others through attraction and appeal".ⁱⁱⁱ

China's exercise of soft power:

Niccolo Machiavelli once advised princes in Italy that it is more significant to be feared than to be loved. But in contemporary world, it is finest to be both. Winning minds and hearts has always been imperative, but it turned more essential in the current global information period. Information is power, and technology is disseminating information more broadly than formerly in history. Nevertheless political leaders have consumed little time discerning about how the nature of power has transformed and, more exactly, about how to integrate the soft proportions into their plans for employing power. China's embryonic power and its upcoming impact on global stability are among the most deeply debated issues in international relations. Much consideration has been paid in examining China's 'hard power', which is about the aptitude to practice economic and military means to induce or compel another country to accomplish a course of action. In current years, China's soft power has become the emphasis of substantial research worldwide. Concerned have been elevated about the enlargement of China's soft power effect around the globe and its consequences for the United States.^{iv} The interpretation that Beijing's charm offensive is faction of a grand strategy intended to challenge the world's left over superpowers has echoed with many.^v

China's methodology to foreign policy experienced an incredible transformation during the past 50 years, shifting from the war and revolution age under Mao Zedong to an age of harmony, peace and progress under more current leadership. Just two decades before, China was regarded as a somber and colossal communist state that endangered the enlargement of democracy in Asia and elsewhere—a view that was intensified by harsh retort of the Chinese Communist Party. However, today China is progressively capitalist, globalized and modernized. Economic reforms instigated in 1978 by Deng Xiaoping have converted China into one of the world's biggest place for foreign direct investment (FDI)^{vi} and quadrupled its economy since then.^{vii} Beijing's 'go global' tactic—an enticement motivated program encouraging Chinese firms and companies to chase affluent investment overseas—is a prototype of China's alteration, richness from years of economic enlargement has not only systematized China striking to foreigners but also awarded China with the assets to be a main customer in the international marketplace.

As the world observes China transformed, there is swelling apprehension that, after 25 years of astonishing economic evolution, Beijing has pointedly raised its aptitude to effect world businesses and that it will practice this newborn power coercively. Some experts consider that China shams a grave test to United States for the role of the global superpower—the first serious intimidation since Soviet Union in the Cold War years. One of the most prominent illustrations of both the swift progression of China's standing in the global economy and of the shifting equilibrium of commercial power between the US and China has been the latter's fast intensifying foreign currency reserves produced from its trade surplus with the US.^{viii} Mindful of economic progress, Beijing has hunted to attribute itself to the motto of 'peaceful development' in a struggle to soothe others that its strength is nonthreatening. Indeed, equated with the Mao years, China today looks greatly charming—an alteration that can at least be moderately accredited to its mounting soft power, possibly Beijing's most treasured foreign policy instrument.

China's soft power instruments:

Mindful of the paybacks of refined soft-power assortment, Chinese leadership is directing to extend relations with all areas of the globe, predominantly the emerging countries of Africa, of Latin America, of South East Asia and Middle East. Beijing practices a range of tools to raise its

impact in the rising world that comprises economic spurs and military collaboration; however, orthodox style utility of soft power has also turned into an upward part of how China attains its influence. The table given below shows the Chinese soft power influence in Africa and illustrates the gap between Chinese and U.S. aid. Beijing has pursued to reinforce relationships with developing states by sponsoring regional economic incorporation and security apparatus, stressing the peaceful character of United Nations, contributing in humanitarian operations, giving debt relief and concessionary loans, growing economic and cultural exchange programs, and fetching local societies through skillful diplomats. The instruments of Chinese soft power can be categorized into five major groups i.e. investment, exchange programs, public diplomacy, humanitarian aid and contributing in multilateral institutions.

Investment:

There are two methods to understand the soft power width of China's investment undertakings; alluring to states via dollar diplomacy or captivating friends by the guarantee of noninterference in domestic matters. The principle of admiration of sovereignty can particularly be more attractive to emerging nations which were earlier ruled by dictatorial regimes. China's expanding association with different regions is not simply to safeguard its interest and to comfort the resource-rich nations, but its extensive engagements are also aimed at not to challenge United States. China's investment power is perhaps its most noteworthy and operational soft-power gadget. Rising at an average rate of 9.8% of real GDP/year from 1979 to 2007, China is estimated to become the world's biggest economy within few decades.^{ix} Chinese exports surpassed American exports in 2007 by a fair margin of 54 million and by 2008, China had the world's most foreign exchange reserves worth \$ 1.9 trillion.^x China reported that its overseas direct investment (other than finance sector) in 2007 was \$ 18.7 billion while its cumulative ODI in year 2007 was 93.7 billion.^{xi} These developments specify that advantages from foreign direct investment and trade surplus have given China the funds to pursue remarkable ODI. Intensifying overseas undertakings are a precedence of China's foreign strategy, and it has pursued larger investment in approximately every area of the planet. China's investment stratagem is profoundly influenced by the necessity to obtain steady and viable supply flow of raw materials and energy to keep the momentum of economic development. Energy and raw materials are necessary to uphold economic evolution. Roads, dams and bridges are vital in the advancement

of developing countries, thus; investment in substructure permits China to win the kindness of resource-rich emerging countries.

Exchange Programs:

Exchange programs are fundamental to Beijing's public diplomacy approach. China has meaningfully lengthened its exchange program to embrace academic, cultural and language exchanges; political drills for foreign government officials; and media exercises for foreign journalists. With the objective of stimulating Chinese culture and language, China has set up more than 760 Confucius Institutes in more than 110 countries.^{xii} Even 87 Confucius Institutes has been established in 37 states of America since 2005.^{xiii} Ever since Chinese universities are turning more competitive academically, the number of worldwide students has intensely increased. From 2002 to 2005, overseas students registered in Chinese universities augmented by 30%, and maximum students received financial assistance or scholarships from the Chinese government.^{xiv} These finance likely accounts for substantial upsurge in the quantity of students from South Asia, Middle East and Africa. Equally, Chinese multinational corporations repeatedly sponsor exchange program by presenting grants to foreigners for education in China.

Public diplomacy:

As China's upswing has required the state to contemplate in terms of its soft power, the Chinese government has paid more and more consideration to public diplomacy. A new Chinese public diplomacy policy emerged in 2004 during an academic seminar related to diplomacy.^{xv} China's public diplomacy means to accomplish two roles---as a purpose of astute strategic rational and as a crucial task to enable China's rise to soft power. China is looking for the path for nonviolent expansion.^{xvi} It wishes to alter the global view of China, remove the so-called China threat, and make the world admit the upsurge of Chinese power.

China has opted more refined diplomacy, including growing high level leadership meetings and drills a more accomplished and urbane diplomatic force. Beijing often hosts leaders of smaller republics, particularly from South East Asia and Africa. In 2006, Beijing hosted first summit and third ministerial conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, in which China invited delegates of more than 50 countries^{xvii} in a move to celebrate Chinese growing

relationship with African states. At the concluding ceremony, China also announced to double its African aid by 2009.^{xviii} Showered with consideration, these foreign dignitaries are usually flattered by Beijing's friendliness. China's highest leaders regularly tour to developing nations to augment bilateral dealings. Today, diplomats from China are more skilled and cordial at appealing local societies. They are educated at prominent foreign universities, display a higher degree of competence associated with previous allies and are more accomplished than formerly in circumnavigating foreign media channels.^{xix}

Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Aid:

Peacekeeping is the sector in which China has participated more energetically than any other assignments.^{xx} China is a vigorous peacekeeper. Excluding France, China drives more peacekeepers to UN missions than any other permanent member of UN Security Council. Chinese contribution in UN peacekeeping forces was at 46 in 2001 but its extensive involvement in the following years made it 12th major contributor in UN peacekeeping missions.^{xxi} Chinese troops are serving energetically throughout the world and are considered more reliable and helpful. Chinese soldiers in peacekeeping missions are very much social and benign in their dealings with effected people which ultimately engross additional love and affiliation towards them and China alike.

Health diplomacy is another significant aid program sponsored by the Chinese. More than 15000 doctors have been sent to roughly 47 African states during turmoil or unrest and constructed 100 hospitals including 54 in African states. China established pharmaceutical factories in Tanzania, Mali and Ethiopia while provided facilities for safe drinking water in at least 9 African states also.^{xxii} A crew of about 2000 Chinese doctors landed in Yemen during last 40 years of tough times and has assisted in restoring and functioning fading health facilities there. In response, Beijing has been able to get energy and Yemen's market for its products. China's thrust for energy needs made her hungry to opt different tactics to overcome energy shortfall. Providing health facilities and humanitarian to feeble African and structurally weak Gulf States has resulted in the Beijing's access to oil fields, very easily.

Although accurate figures are nearly difficult to find, there is no query that China has evidently amplified expenditure on development and humanitarian aid. To stimulate a

constructive image that presents China as a liable stakeholder in the global community, Chinese media channels ensure substantial reporting of China's UN development and peacekeeping accomplishments.

Contributing in Multilateral Institutions:

After almost four decades of its economic reforms, Chinese economy and market is more incorporated to the global economy than before. Since 1990, China has become more energetic partaker and contributor in multilateralism. Under exclusively drawn mechanism of 'peace and development', Beijing feels constructive involvement in multilateral forums as an inevitable feature of its foreign policy. China has gradually developed more energetic in intercontinental multilateral institutions so as to amplify its worldwide legitimacy and express the appearance as a liable stakeholder that actually plays by the guidelines. To date, it has made positive entry into prevailing regional groups in South, Central and South East Asia, Caribbean and Latin America.^{xxiii} Being a new comer to regional or global multilateral organizations, Beijing has followed the rules and regulations already set by the earlier members. For example, China participated in war on terror and Six Party Talks on Korean Peninsula by following existing norms and values^{xxiv} however; it always gave thoughtful input in resolving these global issues. China is also a vigorous member of several organizations i.e. the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, SAARC, and the Forum for East and Latin American Cooperation, ASEAN Regional Forum, Organization of American states and the Inter-American Development Bank. China also initiated various multilateral outlets, in which the United States does not contribute, to back up its own comforts and enlarge its transnational impact. Some examples of these outlets are The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, The East Asian Summit and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

China's Soft Power performance:

Despite achievements in utilization of soft power overseas, China confronts abundant constraints. As the Taiwan instance shows, Beijing is not completely able to attain desired results, even in this area of vast significance to Chinese benefits where China has considerable soft power effect. Although Beijing has devoted significant effort to increasing soft power capability, the extent to which China's soft power has actually increased is often exaggerated.

For example, in 2009, Chinese invested \$48 billion overseas as compared to United States' \$340 billion. And by the end of 2010 total Chinese overseas investment was \$211 billion, 4.3% of its GDP whereas U.S. invested \$ 3245 billion, roughly 23% of its GDP. At existing rates, China's FDI will not draw near to the United States' till 2047.^{xxv} Even if the figures on China's FDI, which come largely from Ministry of Commerce and State Administration of Foreign Exchange, nevertheless disclose a substantial gap between the balance of China's external investment and of United States.

A key measurement of China's go-global strategy is to give aid, grants and loans with low interests to external governments in provision of specific ventures and to require in return that they employ only Chinese companies to complete the projects. According to Chinese Ministry of Finance, China's foreign aid (other than military support) totaled below \$2 billion in 2009 as that of the United States' \$28 billion.^{xxvi} In August 2008, opening ceremony of Olympic Games observed the most remarkably synchronized presentation of any major international event. Superbly choreo-graphed performance and the lavish displays were infused with representative meaning and prompts of China's artistic past. Yet the triumph of the Opening Ceremony was not complemented by economic deficiencies. And many international tourists complained of failing to meet their expectations, and the enormous investment in gaming infrastructure has burdened Beijing's Olympic presentation with a load of heavy debts.^{xxvii}

The soft power of America still exceeds that of China by a substantial margin, even in China's own neighborhood. A majority of people saw China as a future leader of Asia; however, it is uncertain whether Asian states see this as an entirely positive thing. In fact, the United States is seen as a stabilizing and countervailing force in Asia region as China takes on a greater role.

Implications for United States:

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States— from White House to Congress, from government to public, from policymakers to commentators, from China specialists to persons who know minute about China—has involved itself in the apparently limitless debate on China. Instantly after the downfall of the Soviet Union, people discussed whether China was still significant to the United States and whether China-U.S. associations were worth preserving. With China's extraordinary economic soft entrance and the resulting vigorous and continued

economic growing, Americans appeared to have derived a hypothesis that China is the only country which may take American position in the world in the future.^{xxviii} And therefore Sino-U.S. relationships are repeatedly stated to as one of the most vital bilateral relations to the United States. Whether China is supposed as a challenge or opportunity, first and probably for most rests upon the U.S. grand foreign policy goal and its correlated strategy. That is to say, it depends on how the U.S. outlines its character in the international structure. If the U.S. considers relaxed existing in a multipolar world, China is more possibly perceived as a partner. But if the objective of U.S. foreign policy is to preserve its place as the lone superpower and does not contemplate other major countries' parallel ambitions as legitimate, then the enlargement of China could be measured as a threat.

Since 1945, the US has been the world's central power. Pre and post-Cold War era also witnessed American economy as far more advanced as that of the Soviet Union, while its military competence and technological superiority were much greater. Following the Second World War, the US was the major motivator in the formation of a variety of global and multinational institutions, for example the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and NATO, which were demonstration of its spanking global authority and power. The demise of Soviet Union significantly heightened America's distinguished position, abolishing its main opposition and causing in the countries and territories of the former Soviet bloc opening their marketplaces and moving in many cases to the US for financial aid and support. The dollar turn out to be the world's desired currency, with most trade being directed in it and most assets held in it. Despite its extensive power and global recognition, U.S. is facing the challenge of Chinese soft power utilization in East, South and West Asia along with Africa and Latin America. United States is extremely concerned about increasing Chinese influence, which largely is attained with the usage of peaceful means and economic cooperation, support and investment. After Soviet collapse, initially United States considered Chinese rise as a normal case and keep chasing its grand strategy in the globe either through sanctions or through military interventions. However, in the meanwhile Chinese kept on working closely with developing countries and got tremendous response from these countries. In that changing scenario, U.S. felt its stakes in jeopardy and now on a course to limit or break Chinese soft power tools.

Joseph Nye, Professor at Harvard University, in his article published in the Wall Street Journal (Asia) on December 29, 2005, argued that China's soft power is speedily increasing in Asia. He called upon the US government to respond. The article tells a certain change in Nye's earlier approach towards China's soft power utilization. Nye had downplayed the establishment of China's soft power as being a growth for the future. In his book (Soft Power; The Means to Success in World Politics), Nye argued that China's soft power resources are still inadequate compared to U.S. and Europe because of nonexistence of China's intellectual liberty, its political dishonesty, and the issues regarding the Taiwan Strait.^{xxix} The US worries that an influential China will contest with the U.S. by crafting its own spheres of influence in the world or by asserting on modifications to global financial and trade rules. The main problem of U.S. administrations has been whether to perceive China as a strategic opportunity and deal with it, or to consider it as a threat and encompass it. Regardless of increasing Chinese soft power performance in the world and threats to U.S. stakes, the Obama administration concentrated largely on making Washington engaged with Beijing. President Obama's approach regarding China is based on cooperation and collaboration on all issues, offering a constructive, supportive and comprehensive relationship. However, U.S.-China affairs reached at lowest ebb in 2010,^{xxx} as neither Beijing nor Washington was able to disperse mistrust over each other's long term objectives: Beijing considered U.S. policies as an endeavor to block China's upsurge; Washington assumed China's soft power engagements in Asia and Latin America as meant to displace the U.S. stakes from these regions. Therefore U.S. administration readjusted its strategy to a more inflexible place on matters of disagreement. This move is opted to return to a realistic, centralist approach, aimed at engaging China in cooperation, strengthening relations and asserting that China follows universal norms and international law.

One should expect China's soft-power assets to grow in forth coming years. As Beijing's soft power grows, it presents the U.S. and its global allies a curious dilemma. On the one hand, China is marshaling its resources for the long-standing objective of being a leading actor in East Asia and elsewhere. As and if Beijing attains triumph in this quest, it will have massive and possibly destructive, repercussions for the existing balance of power in the area, and particularly for the United States and its companions.^{xxxi} On the other hand, many features of China's foreign policy which validate its soft power – better reception of standards governing worldwide relations, diplomatic defrayal of disputes, mutually constructive economic links,

acknowledgment of the necessity to tackle non-traditional and transnational security complications such as proliferation, terrorism and intercontinental crime –are gradually convergent with methods promoted by majority of the international community.^{xxxii} How the major powers, and specifically Washington, answer to this quandary in the near future will be a main aspect influencing the stability of East Asia and beyond. A neo-containment strategy to stop China’s enlargement is not realistic, and with regards to Beijing’s continuous and nuanced usage of its soft and hard power –is questionable to be tolerable to many in the region and outside. Furthermore, dwelling closely on refuting the ‘hard’ sides of Chinese power not only oversees imperative Chinese soft-power achievements, but could turn into a self-fulfilling prediction by infuriating Beijing to step away from the favorable parts of its soft power and emphasis instead on throwing around its mounting economic and military weight.

As being sole superpower, United States has poured billions of dollars in third world countries and also contributed largely in United Nations and other international forums. U.S. has been providing financial and economic assistance to developing countries even before China plunged into soft power bandwagon. Non-conditional and sometime conditional aid has made U.S. image more benign and helpful in many regions of the world and still Washington don’t hesitate to grant economic help, loans and humanitarian assistance to the affected areas in the world. However, with sudden Chinese economic rise and Beijing’s increasing soft power has compelled U.S. policy makers to review and reconsider the amount and value of their soft power influence.

Conclusion:

Chinese soft power procedure is expected to persist mainly at ad hoc and predominantly responsive, designed at contesting the China-threat concept and emphasis on stimulating cultural soft power. The management will continue to prohibit official consultations of the Beijing Consensus as part of a thoughtful exertion to evade from the appearance of stimulating the United States. Over the long term, nevertheless, the depiction is less definite. There are previously sounds for China to ‘articulate an inclusive plan for erection of the nation’s soft power’ and to give better emphasis on foreign policy, politics, and institutes in the elevation of Beijing’s soft power. As China expands its wide-ranging national power and adopts an important

role in the global stage, the domestic argument will warm up over whether Chinese socialist standards should be promoted as a substitute to Western standards and whether the China development model should be disseminated.

Undoubtedly, some consider soft power utilization by both sides as zero sum terms.^{xxxiii} Yet, as long as there is an enthusiasm on both edges to seek collaboration rather than confrontation, there is no reason why both sides cannot work together in the area of soft power. China is gradually identifying that the regions facing challenges require global resolutions, and China is eager to learn and join United States in this cause. In violation of its orthodox policy of not meddling in other countries, for instance, Beijing has practiced limited stress on the leaders of North Korea, Burma and Sudan to encourage them to amend their intolerable policies. Moreover, China is now revisiting its external aid program in reply to criticism that its aid strategies are deflating the purposes of the United States, the European Union and other home of assistance to the developing world. China has employed more weight on soft power features of its foreign activities, playing both to regional audiences and to a wider global gallery to whom it pursues to represent itself as a non-intimidating and responsible global authority. China's energetic undertakings in the unindustrialized countries in particular have aggravated a variety of replies around the world.

In developing areas, many hold extraordinary optimisms for what China can bring to the table of investment, trade and substitute development deals; others are anxious by what China's apparently limitless call for resources, energy, and export marketplaces will mean for inexperienced economics, feeble governments, and alienated populations. Ultimately, the test for developing states will be whether their people and governments can bind themselves with external engagements---China and other significant players' as well--- to their subsequent national benefits. In the West, China's mix of soft power and economic actions has prompted some qualms that Western influence in emerging areas will thus be reduced and that their assistance in governance, accountability and transparency will be destabilized, mostly countries which are rich in natural resources but their governments lack acceptability or national visualization. Americans in specific are troubled about losing strategic impact to China. But Joseph Nye, despite all American doubts and apprehensions stated;

“China’s soft power is likely to continue to grow, but this does not necessarily mean that Washington and Beijing are on the collision course, fighting for global influence. First, a number of factors ultimately will limit China’s soft power, including its own domestic political, socioeconomic and environmental challenges. Second, there are number of critical areas of mutual interest between United States and China on which the two powers can work together---and in some cases already are. Energy security and environmental stewardship top that list, along with transnational issue such as public health and nonproliferation. China can only become preeminent if the United States continues to allow its own powers of attractions to atrophy”.^{xxxiv}

Though looking at current pace of Chinese soft power utilization, we still not aware of how Beijing’s soft power approach will play in future. However, the United States can learn from features of China’s soft power commitments, and the US has assets of soft power that it has utilized less in current years. Now is an appropriate period for the USA and others to enthusiastically engross China on zones of economic importance, to reinforce regional bulks to cope the escalating race that China and others carry, and to overwhelmingly effort to alleviate possible areas of dissimilarities.

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