



It's that time again! We at Debate Central are proud to release Part 1 of our February topic analysis on the resolution that,

Resolved: On balance, the rise of China is beneficial to the interests of the United States.

Aside from sharing a striking similarity to a former college topic on which at least one Debate Central staffer debated, this topic is timely and broad; a great recipe for exciting debates!

Today, we're breaking down all the economic and security reasons why China's rise may be a boon for American interests, but first:

What do we mean by China's rise?

Commentators discussing a rising China are generally referring to the recent economic and military growth China has experienced in the last several decades. China is now more than ever a serious force in the Pacific and globally and not all commentators agree on what this means.

The debate over China's rise centers around one very important question that we'll open with:

What is the nature of China?

That is, what does China hope to accomplish with its recent economic and military build-up? How will this affect U.S. interests and U.S.-China relations? Some commentators see the increasing liberalization of the Chinese political elite as a reason for hope:

1. **China's communist political system is increasingly open and liberalized. This is a stark difference from the repressive policies that existed under Mao Zedong. In fact, many people suffered under Mao and are now in positions of power. Their past experiences give them reason to be receptive to the U.S.'s message of democracy, freedom, and human rights. Donald Gross explains:**

Donald Gross, 2012 ["The United States Can Benefit from China's Rise," World Policy Blog, December 10.]

Now is the time to rethink America's policy toward China. The United States can benefit economically from China's rise, strengthen Chinese advocates of human rights and democracy, and avoid a new Cold War. We urgently need a national debate about U.S.-China policy to prevent doing permanent damage to American interests in Asia.

Fortunately, **this is a propitious period to have that debate**. In the United States, President Barack Obama will shortly embark on his second term in office, so will be able to guide American foreign policy without the ever-present political pressures of a re-election campaign. In China, a new generation of leaders are coming to power with a mandate to address the country's daunting domestic challenges—including corruption and cronyism within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), environmental degradation, frequent "mass incidents" of social unrest, inflation, and glaring social inequalities. The leaders who take office in March—including President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang—know firsthand some of the worst excesses of the CCP. They were victims of Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, when an entire generation of young people—many from prominent families—were "sent down" to rural areas to perform backbreaking



manual labor for years. Having experienced and survived the widespread human rights abuses that occurred between 1966 and 1976, the year of Mao's death, China's new leadership will be more receptive to calls for political reform from the country's middle class and liberal intellectuals, who are highly critical of increasing corruption and cronyism within the CCCP.

This can be a key opening for the United States to forge a strong partnership. As the evidence suggests, leaders are more receptive to criticism of former repressive social policies than before and are looking to move forward on a trajectory similar to the United States. Louise Watt underscores a similar point:

Louise Watt, 2012 ["Chinese Like U.S. Democracy Ideas More, Says Survey," Huffington Post, October 16.]

BEIJING — People in China are increasingly worried about corruption, inequality and food safety, according to a survey that also **found that about half of Chinese like American ideas about democracy**.

Chinese citizens have become far more concerned about domestic quality-of-life issues over the past four years, the Pew Global Attitudes Project report on attitudes in China found. The new attitudes highlight the challenges China's new leadership will face when it assumes power in a once-in-a-decade transition next month. China's runaway growth in recent decades has led to a yawning gap between rich and poor and worsening pollution. The Communist Party has said repeatedly that pervasive corruption threatens its hold on power.

Thus, not only do the political elite have an unprecedented appetite for engagement, so do the citizens of China. This is critical because it will be more difficult to sell anti-U.S. policies to politicians and citizens with a fundamental respect for American ideals.

Additionally, growing markets in China may also benefit the United States economically.

- 2. China is the largest market for U.S. goods and services. As the average Chinese family becomes wealthier, there will be a larger demand for American products and labels – like McDonald's, iPods, music, etc. Sauter, Weigley, and Zajac explain:**

Michael B. Sauter, Samuel Weigley and Brian Zajac, 2012 ["The 9 U.S. cities selling the most good to China," NBC News Business.]

Last year, U.S. exports to China topped \$100 billion for the first time. The country is now the third-largest importer of U.S. goods, behind Canada and Mexico. The total value of products being shipped to China is growing faster than any other country in the world. For many U.S. cities, China is the largest and fastest-growing importer of goods and services. In 2011, crop production, computers and electronics, chemicals, and transportation equipment were the four largest exports to the country. While not the biggest overall, China is the largest recipient of U.S. goods from 28 separate states. It is also the biggest export market of many metropolitan regions within those states. Earlier this year, the International Trade Administration, also known as the ITA and a part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, released data on total exports by metropolitan statistical area to each country. 24/7 wall St. reviewed the nine metropolitan areas that export the most to China.

As the authors explain, China buys lots of American goods. This is great for our economy because the money they pay for said goods and services goes to American companies. These companies can use the money to develop products, hire workers, and otherwise invest in the American economy. As China grows, this demand will only increase proportionately. Kenneth Rapoza underscores this point, mentioning that:



Kenneth Rapoza, 2012 ["China Imports Of U.S. Goods A Record-Breaker," Forbes, March 28.]
"U.S. exports to China recovered faster after the recession than exports to anywhere else in the world. Clearly, **China is a market that is important to US companies' bottom lines, even in tough economic times,**" said USCBC Vice Pres. Erin Ennis in a press release Wednesday. **China's increase in demand for U.S. goods has exceeded the increase from every other U.S. export market other than Canada. Forty-eight states have registered at least triple-digit export growth to China since 2000, **beat export growth to every other country U.S. companies do business with.**** Thirty states now count China as one of their top three export markets and 25 states exported more than \$1 billion to China in 2011, with export categories reflecting a broad range of products. A total of 20 states have seen growth rise by more than 400%. Some by over 1,000%. "American companies from every corner of the nation are exporting high-value computers, electronics, agricultural products, chemicals, transportation equipment, and machinery to an expanding marketplace in China," Ennis concluded.

This point is important. Rapoza is arguing that, even though recently the American economy has slowed, Chinese demand is only growing. This is good; it means that despite economic turmoil domestically, a growing China will still provide the U.S. with a booming market where we can sell our goods and services. Daniel Gross even goes so far as to say that economic recovery is in no small part *because of* Chinese demand:

Donald Gross, 2012 ["The United States Can Benefit from China's Rise," World Policy Blog, December 10.]

It is essential to remember that China's rise strengthens America's economy and future prosperity. Today, China is the largest growth market in the world for U.S. goods and services. Trade with China, America's third-largest export market and the leading market for U.S. agricultural products, has helped America's recovery from the global financial crisis. From 2000 to 2011, U.S. exports to China increased by approximately 640 percent, from about \$16 billion to \$104 billion. During this period, American exports to China grew seven times faster than U.S. exports to all other countries in the world except for Canada and Mexico. As Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner has pointed out, these exports "are supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs across the nation in all sectors—from high technology to soybeans, aircraft to autos and forklifts to financial services." **The United States and China, as Geithner puts it, "have a great deal invested in each other's success."**

Along similar lines, wealthy Chinese investors are flooding American companies with surplus capital. This is good because it allows American companies to benefit in another, more direct, way from increasing Chinese wealth.

3. **Chinese investment in the U.S. strengthens our economy. Wealthier Chinese investors may put their capital into American start-ups, helping the economy. Scissors and Payne explain:**

Derek Scissors and Amy Payne, 2013 ["Morning Bell: Chinese Investment in the U.S. Shatters Records," The Foundry at Heritage Foundation, January 11.]

China set a record with its investments around the world in 2012. And in the United States, China shattered its previous investment record. Before people start panicking, it's important to know: **This is not a bad thing.** First, let's put it in perspective. Chinese investment is still very, very small as compared to the size of the U.S. economy. At the national level, the stock of investment is barely \$50 billion—which sounds large, but is negligible compared to a stock of American



wealth of more than \$60 trillion. No one's "taking over" anything. In fact, more Chinese investment is a good thing. It creates jobs; it benefits companies, and it should be welcomed. It also gives us more leverage to push for a more open Chinese market, which continues to be a major problem. Globally, the U.S. can compete and win with China in terms of economic influence, but we have to be willing to play. We have to be willing to expand our trade and investment in both directions.

As the above article explains, increasing the **economic interdependence** between the U.S. and China (that is, the amount by which China and the U.S. depend on one another for money and other important things), the less likely they are to fight one another. Why is this? Simply, it's not in a country's best influence to have conflict with another nation if that nation plays a huge role in how much money it makes and how many of its citizens are employed. For example, if a Chinese investor were to invest in an American company, that company would depend on China. The people who work for that company would be partially beholden to the investor for their jobs. The investor, on the other hand, would want the company to do well so that they could make money on their investment. If the U.S. and China were to fight, both the company and the investor lose resources. Since no one wants that, they will try to lobby their governments to take a measured approach to one another. Donald Gross further explains:

Donald Gross, 2012 ["The United States Can Benefit from China's Rise," World Policy Blog, December 10.]

Looking to the future, the U.S. stands to benefit from billions of dollars of Chinese investment that will reduce production costs for American companies and prices for American consumers, enhance consumer welfare, spur the development of innovative products and, most importantly, result in "in sourcing" — the creation of hundreds of thousands more American jobs. By successfully negotiating a bilateral U.S.-China free trade agreement and supporting China's membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the regional free trade area of the Asian Pacific, the U.S. will stimulate unprecedented levels of international trade and investment. These agreements will eliminate tariff and non-tariff trade barriers to American goods and services, achieve far greater transparency in China's regulatory practices, and enable the United States to benefit from the economic dynamism of Asia—the new "engine" of global growth.

Finally, Marchick underscores the value of **economic interdependence**:

David M. Marchick, 2012 ["Fostering Greater Chinese Investment in the United States," Council on Foreign Relations, February.]

President Barack Obama's meetings in February 2012 with Xi Jinping, China's vice president and soon-to-be leader, provide an opportunity to address this issue and establish an economic framework to help rebalance the global economy. Creating a positive economic framework will help mitigate the inevitable stresses on the U.S.-China relationship as leaders in both political parties sharpen their anti-China rhetoric during the 2012 U.S. election. China's outward investment has substantial room to grow, and the United States has the potential to capture a larger share of it—an outcome that would benefit the U.S. and Chinese economies and strengthen the bilateral economic relationship. China could be transformed into a large overseas investor, not just an exporter. At the core of that framework should be an unequivocal policy of fostering additional Chinese investment into the United States, so long as particular investments do not compromise U.S. national security interests.

Aside from the economic benefits of China's rise, there are significant security benefits as well.

4. Security cooperation and regional security.



- a. **China's rise takes the pressure off the U.S. to be a regional "police officer."**
Christopher Layne explains:

Christopher Layne, 2012 ["The (Almost) Triumph of Offshore Balancing," *The National Interest*, January 27.]

The second driver behind the new Pentagon strategy is the shift in global wealth and power from the Euro-Atlantic world to Asia. As new great powers such as China and, eventually, India emerge, important regional powers such as Russia, Japan, Turkey, Korea, South Africa and Brazil will assume more prominent roles in international politics. Thus, the post-Cold War "unipolar moment," when the United States commanded the global stage as the "sole remaining superpower," will be replaced by a multipolar international system. The Economist recently projected that China's defense spending will equal that of the United States by 2025. By the middle or end of the next decade, China will be positioned to shape a new international order based on the rules and norms that it prefers—and, perhaps, to provide the international economy with a new reserve currency. Two terms not found in the DSG are "decline" and "imperial overstretch" (the latter coined by the historian Paul Kennedy to describe the consequences when a great power's economic resources can't support its external ambitions). But, although President Obama and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta may not admit it, the DSG is the first move in what figures to be a dramatic strategic retrenchment by the United States over the next two decades. This retrenchment will push to the fore a new U.S. grand strategy—offshore balancing. In a 1997 article in *International Security*, I argued that offshore balancing would displace America's primacy strategy because it would prove difficult to sustain U.S. primacy in the face of emerging new powers and the erosion of U.S. economic dominance. Even in 1997, it was foreseeable that as U.S. advantages eroded, there would be strong pressures for the United States to bring its commitments into line with its shrinking economic base. This would require scaling back the U.S. military presence abroad; setting clear strategic priorities; devolving the primary responsibility for maintaining security in Europe and East Asia to regional actors; and significantly reducing the size of the U.S. military. Subsequent to that article, offshore balancing has been embraced by other leading American thinkers, including John Mearsheimer, Stephen Walt, Barry Posen, Christopher Preble and Robert Pape. To be sure, the proponents of offshore balancing have differing ideas about its specifics. But they all agree that offshore balancing is based on a common set of core strategic principles. Fiscal and economic constraints require that the United States set strategic priorities. Accordingly, the country should withdraw or downsize its forces in Europe and the Middle East and concentrate its military power in East Asia. America's comparative strategic advantages rest on naval and air power, not on sending land armies to fight ground wars in Eurasia. Thus the United States should opt for the strategic precepts of Alfred Thayer Mahan (the primacy of air and sea power) over those of Sir Halford Mackinder (the primacy of land power). Offshore balancing is a strategy of burden shifting, not burden sharing. It is based on getting other states to do more for their security so the United States can do less. By reducing its geopolitical and military footprint on the ground in the Middle East, the United States can reduce the incidence of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism directed against it. Islamic terrorism is a push back against U.S. dominance and policies in the region and against on-the-ground forces in the region. The one vital U.S. interest there—safeguarding the free flow of Persian Gulf oil—can be ensured largely by naval and air power.

Layne's argument is complex, but essentially it boils down to this:

The United States has been a "**global superpower**" for a long time. This has required the U.S. to be everywhere, all of the time, using its considerable military might and influence to keep the global peace. This worked for a while and the world has been relatively stable. The problem, for Layne (and many others) is that this role for the United States is very expensive and taxing. Global military deployment drains resources that would be better spent solving domestic problems or addressing the growing **deficit** (amount by which we spend more than we take in) before it destroys the economy.

Additionally, this position ensures that the U.S. is drawn in to every low-level conflict, anywhere in the world. That's dangerously taxing to resources and also increases the likelihood of the U.S. clashing with other countries. China's rise, then, can be seen as an opportunity for the United States to draw down its



forces and cede some of those responsibilities to China now that China is more capable of filling that role in the Pacific.

For more context on this topic, see Daniel Larison, "Free Riders and Burden-Sharing," April 19, 2010, The American Conservative.

Additionally, China has close relationships with many nations the U.S. doesn't really see eye-to-eye with. Initially, this may seem disastrous, but really what it does is present an opportunity.

b. China can broker talks with allies we don't have in common, like North Korea, before they become dangerous. Charles Krauthammer explains,

Charles Krauthammer, 2005 ["Will China broker a nuclear moment with North Korea?" Chicago Tribune News, 2005.]

Why is the Beijing agreement different from the worthless "Agreed Framework" President Bill Clinton signed in 1994 and North Korea violated (we now know) from the very first day? That agreement was bilateral. This one is six-party, but the major player is China. China conspicuously made itself the locus of the conference and its host. Its vice foreign minister declared "North Korea committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and returning at an early date to a nuclear nonproliferation treaty." If China can succeed where the U.S. failed miserably in solving the knottiest problem in the Pacific, China will have emerged. That means a lot for China. It has a large stake in this agreement. Moreover, China controls 30 percent of the food and at least 70 percent of the fuel going into North Korea. That is leverage. The question is why China has decided to use it now. Until now, China had been content to allow North Korea to putter along with its threats, bluster, promises and violations. This served a useful purpose for China in that North Korea was a distraction to the U.S., a thorn in its side. Nor were the Chinese in a particular mood to jeopardize the stability of a useful client state. If this new agreement bears fruit, it will be because China has recalculated its interests, by first deciding that if these negotiations go nowhere and North Korea remains nuclear, it is only a matter of time before Japan goes nuclear, too. A nuclear Japan is China's ultimate nightmare. Second, the usefulness of North Korea as a thorn in the side of the U.S. may have diminished. America has thorns aplenty, from Afghanistan to Iraq to Palestine to Venezuela to say nothing of its Katrina-related domestic problems. Third and perhaps most important, this was less a crisis than an opportunity. China has spent the last decade trying to translate its economic power into geopolitical power to make itself the arbiter of Asian affairs. It has established several new regional organizations with Asian neighbors (ASEAN Plus Three, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, East Asian Summit) that pointedly exclude the U.S. Its major ambition is to displace the U.S. as the major Pacific power. At which point, specific and smaller objectives, such as the absorption of Taiwan and the extension of oil rights to waters claimed by weaker neighbors, become infinitely more possible. By succeeding at denuclearizing Pyongyang, China can demonstrate that the road to getting things done in Asia runs through Beijing. It will have shown its neighbors that the future lies in association with China, with or without the United States.

China, Krauthammer argues, wants to be taken seriously in its role as an emerging Pacific power. In order to do this, China will need to accomplish something significant on the diplomatic front. Thus, China may find it in its own interest, as it rises, to assert its international clout (or influence) by serving as an **intermediary** (essentially, a go-between) in the U.S.-Korea disagreements. This is critical because the U.S. doesn't really have an opening to talk to North Korea, even as North Korea is becoming more aggressive.

In this way, China can basically play the role of a friend that two people have in common. If those two people are to fight, their friend (China) is one party that they both trust. That friend, then is more capable of helping them resolve their differences.



China's influence cannot just be contained to addressing rogues, however.

5. **Global problems. Not all solutions lend themselves easily to the U.S. trying to lead on its own. Partnerships with China are critical to solve transnational threats, such as global warming, environmental collapse, and disease pandemics. Gill and Murphy explain:**

Bates Gill and Melissa Murphy, 2006 ["Meeting the Challenges and Opportunities of China's Rise Expanding and Improving Interaction between the American and Chinese Policy Communities," Center for Strategic and International Studies.]

The direction that China and U.S.-China relations take will define the strategic future of the world for years to come. **No relationship matters more**—for better or for worse—in resolving the many challenges of our time: managing Great Power relations, sustaining global economic stability and growth, strengthening nonproliferation, pursuing counterterrorism, attenuating climate change, stemming the spread of infectious disease, maintaining regional stability, and achieving more equitable and just societies, to name a few. For the United States in particular, a rising China will have an increasingly important impact on American prosperity and security for the decades ahead. Thus it is critically important for U.S. interests to establish, expand, and sustain comprehensive and productive bilateral channels of communication and dialogue with China. These exchanges would sharpen U.S. insights and expertise on China's emergence and its prospects, highlight the challenges and opportunities that China presents to the United States, and inform a well-crafted, intelligent, and effective long-term policy response consistent with U.S. interests.

They continue:

Bates Gill and Melissa Murphy, 2006 ["Meeting the Challenges and Opportunities of China's Rise Expanding and Improving Interaction between the American and Chinese Policy Communities," Center for Strategic and International Studies.]

In addition, China is making important inroads in developing its global political and security presence as well. Chinese leaders and diplomats have dramatically raised their profile and participation in all the major international organizations and worked hard to establish and sustain new organizations and dialogue mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the China- Arab Cooperation Forum, and the China-Africa Summit. Beijing has stepped up its presence across every region of the globe and cultivated "strategic partnerships" around the world, from Russia to South Africa, from the European Union to Australia, and from India to Indonesia. China is seen as a key player in achieving a resolution to major international challenges such as the Iranian and North Korean nuclear impasses, and today it sends more peacekeeping troops abroad under the UN flag than any permanent member of the UN Security Council and more than any member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.²

The argument is as simple as it is obvious: some problems are truly **transnational** (global) in nature. These problems don't respect national borders and can travel globally. Issues like diseases and environmental damage do not remain confined and require countries to work together to solve them. As China rises, it becomes more capable economically and influence-wise to be a serious part of these efforts. Thus, China's rise benefits the U.S. because it gives America a serious and equal partner with which to address truly global issues.



That's all for now! As always, let us know in the comments if you have questions or send us an e-mail at lauren.sabino@ncpa.org

On this topic, as all others, we offer free case critiques as well! If you'd like one, send your case as Word document attachment to the above address. We'll respond within a week. Good luck this season!