

Panel 1. Title

**A Rejoinder to Robert Sutter's Paper  
on Chinese Foreign Policy**

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Panel 2. Format of my presentation

I am not presenting anything of a formal paper but merely address myself to Robert Sutter's paper on the legacies and constraints of Chinese foreign policy. I will affirm his thematic proposition with illustration of three cases of Chinese foreign policy undertakings and will, further, supplement his paper with a notation on the shifting Chinese foreign policy paradigm from the Mao times to the present. In doing so, I act partially as a discussant and partially as a presenter. This is a format that Bob and I have agreed upon.

Panel 3. The Sutter proposition

Sutter's thematic proposition: During the Cold War, contradictions between PRC's insistence on upholding certain high foreign policy principles and the country's actions to achieve its national interests-based objectives constituted the PRC's foreign policy legacies. Today, these legacies serve as a constraint in the PRC's relations with its Asian neighbors and the United States.

High principles: peace, stability, mutual respect, and non-interference—all consummated in the Zhou Enlai-declared Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence (1955).

National interests: security, ascendancy in big power rivalry, extending political influence abroad.

Panel 4. Affirmation of the Sutter proposition

**Affirmation of the Sutter Proposition**

I will discuss three cases of Chinese foreign policy undertakings briefly referred to in Sutter's paper to substantiate his proposition. Two of these occurred in the past: the Korean War and the Vietnam War; one is taking place right now, the rising conflict in the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

Panel 5. The Korean War

The Korean War

China's endorsement of North Korea's attack on South Korea in 1950 is clearly a violation of the pledge it made at the founding the PRC, i. e., to preserve peace and stability in the Far East and to avoid interference with other nations' internal affairs. It insists falsely, to this day, that South Korea and the United States were the aggressor nations for having started the war, and it declared that it participated in the war as an action of self-defense. Yet, its involvement in the Korean War was actually motivated by two considerations: the unification of the two Koreas under the Communist rule; safeguarding its leadership position in the Communist international front in East Asia.

#### Panel 6. The war's results

The end results: It failed to achieve both objectives but incurred, I think, unacceptable costs, including enormous casualties, with 152,000 soldiers dead, 383,000 wounded and a battlefield expenditure of RMB 6.2 billion, about 32 percent of the national budget. It delayed immeasurably the PRC's planned reconstruction of the economy that had been damaged by 12 years of international and domestic wars. It forfeited the opportunity for conquering Taiwan in 1950, which it was widely expected to succeed. It poisoned its relations with Japan and the United States. The war constituted a fundamental game-changing event in Far Eastern international politics.

It did, however, profit from the war in the sense that China's actions in the war may be accepted as a deterrent to future invasion of the country by foreign powers.

#### Panel 7. The Vietnam War

##### The Vietnam War

As in the case of the Korean War, the PRC took the position in the Vietnam War that other nations--South Vietnam and the US--initiated the war, thus being the aggressor nations. It took a public stance of morally supporting the causes of North Vietnam and the Vietcong for the sake of international justice and Communist brotherhood but shunned any military involvement. Yet it did, covertly, participate in the war, with a total peak troop strength at 170,000 and provide a profusion of guns, tanks, aircraft and ammunition to North Vietnam.

#### Panel 8. The war's result

What happened to the war? North Vietnam did succeed in creating a united Vietnam under the Communist rule in 1975. China was, however, far from benefiting from the war. On the contrary, it saw the victorious North Vietnam aligned with its nemesis, the Soviet Union; occupied its sort of protectorate, Cambodia; and deported Chinese residents in Vietnam from that country. The PRC was so enraged by these Vietnamese actions that it had to launch a war to "teach Vietnam a lesson" in 1979, but with inconclusive results; it earned the enmity of Vietnam to this day.

### Panel 9. The disputes at seas

#### The Disputes at Seas

The South China Sea  
The East China Sea

### Panel 10. The South China Sea disputes

The South China Sea has since the 1970s been an area of contention primarily between China, on the one hand, and Vietnam and the Philippines, on the other. Then other nations that also make claims to the area include Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. Armed clashes over the Paracel and Spratly islands between China and Vietnam and naval ship standoffs over the Scarborough Shoal between China and the Philippines have occurred.

The Chinese government takes the position that it has irrefutable proof on the South China Sea as part of Chinese territory since historical times; in its published maps China makes a claim to “all waters within the nine-dash line.” In the face of rising conflicts among the nations in the area in recent years, it declared that it is in favor of joint development of the resources of the sea while letting the conflicting claims be settled through bilateral negotiation by the disputant parties.

### Panel 11. The rising tension, 1

In recent months, China has taken several actions to boost its claim to the South Sea. It established in Yongxing, an island in the Paracel group, administrative and parliamentary institutions and a garrison for the governance of the disputed islands; it created a “regular combat-readiness patrol system” to safeguard Chinese rights.

China also refused to endorse any multilateral negotiation to resolve the disputes. Because of China’s stand, the ASEAN Summit meeting in Phnom Penh last July failed to formulate a “code of conduct” for all nations in regard to the status of the sea and their navigation and extraction rights.

China’s claim to nearly the entire body of waters within the nine-dash line is a matter of central concern to many other nations. The Chinese assertion that China possessed the area historically is difficult to sustain under the current rules of international law. The relevant rules relate to those of “occupation”: a nation making a claim to a territory must demonstrate effective administration of the concerned territory; its claim must not be disputed by other nations; and its claim must be recognized by other nations. The Chinese claim does not appear to meet these conditions.

### Panel 12, The rising tension, 2

Vietnam and the Philippines have taken action comparable to China's.

The reality is, of course, China as a rising superpower has enough military prowess and economic clout to reinforce its claim to the South China Sea. This reality is in conflict with China's assertion of its preference for a peaceful resolution of the disputes and has caused Vietnam and the Philippines enough anxiety to invite the United States to be involved in the settlement of the disputes.

[Panel 13 Maps of South China Sea](#)

[Panel 14. Map 1. Nine dashes line](#)

[Panel 15. Map 2. Conflict of claims](#)

[Panel 16. Map 3. Conflict of claims](#)

[Panel 17. The East China Sea Dispute](#)

Senkakus or Diaoyu Islands disputes since the early 1970s

Recent crisis: Japan's purchase of the islands and Chinese retaliations (09/12)

Past: Chinese popular protests and government restraint from action

Present: Chinese popular protests and government semi-military intervention

[Panel 18. Map of islands](#)

[Panel 19. Photo Image](#)

[Panel 20. Supplement to the Sutter Paper](#)

### **Supplement to the Sutter Paper**

These three cases appear to sustain Bob Sutter's thesis in his paper. Now let me turn our attention to a matter of supplementing his matter, China's shifting foreign policy paradigm.

[Panel 21. The Cold War Paradigm](#)

#### **The Cold War Paradigm**

In Cold War times China's foreign policy paradigm was developed by Mao Zedong, with the following characteristics:

It was in the form of a clearly defined grand strategy  
 Politics as the dominant motivating factor or using Mao's jargon, "Let politics  
 take command."

Military actions as a necessary ingredient of foreign policy

Communization of the world as the ultimate objective

### Panel 22: Illustrations

Illustrations:

Leaning to One Side

The conflict of two camps

The concept of the Three Worlds

The strategic triangle

Three wars: Korea, Vietnam, and India; bombardment of Quemoy in  
 1954 and 1958; clash with the Soviet Union over Damansky  
 (Zhenbao) island in 1969

### Panel 23. The post-Cold War Paradigm

#### The Post-Cold War Paradigm

Pragmatic, multi-faceted operations

Economic prominence

Absence of military adventures

Nationalistic (regime supportive, vicarious policy participation)

### Panel 24. Illustrations

Illustrations:

Resource diplomacy: acquisition of raw materials and oil from Iraq, Iran and  
 Saudi Arabia; Australia; Latin America, Africa

The most recent example: \$15 billion bid for Nexen, a Canadian oil producer,  
 and other adventures

Trade: China as the biggest trade partner of ASEAN, India, Japan, Korea, and  
 Australia

Aid: recent examples: a \$6.3 billion loan to the Caribbean countries in 2011, and  
 a \$20 billion loan package to Africa in July 2012, twice the amount it offered  
 in 2009

Worldwide propaganda drive

\$7 billion investment to expand China's television, radio, and news agency  
 coverage. For example, CCTV has a production center in Washington with 80  
 journalists; Xinhua, the news agency, has 23 bureaus in Africa—in contrast to  
 the dwindling presence of Western public media networks overseas.

Not a single war in the post-Deng period: The restraint over the Taiwan Strait was especially pronounced (Cf. the Cuban Missile Crisis)  
The South China Sea and the Senkaku (Diaoyu) disputes are partially nationalism-driven

Panel 25. Recent Chinese oil Acquisitions

Panel 26. Map on oil acquisitions, Nexen and other deals

Panel 27. Explanations for Paradigm shift. Leadership change

### **Explanation of the Shift**

Since the Third Generation of Chinese leadership came to power (beginning with Jiang Zemin in 1992), the Chinese top power hierarchy has registered a notable change. We can say that the engineers are in charge. The Fourth Generation, beginning in 2002, is especially pronounced. All nine members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo were engineers. The change in the composition of the Committee in 2007 still left the engineers as majority. None of them is a revolutionary; none prefers to militant course of action; none subscribes Mao's grandiose foreign policy strategies.

Panel 28. Explanation of paradigm shift. Changes of policy orientations.

Giving top priority to policy of economic expansion, domestic and international, allows the current leadership to reap two vital dividends:  
(1) Legitimizing Communist rule; (2) Augmenting military power in the long run.

Panel 29. Concluding note

### **Concluding Note:**

While my presentation sustains much of what Sutter has proposed, changes in Chinese leadership's composition and orientation in recent years have moderated China foreign policy operations.