ENGAGING CHINA

The Management of an Emerging Power

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MANAGING THE RISE OF GREAT POWERS

History and theory

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The history of world politics is commonly told as a story of the rise and decline of different countries and regions. At times, the tempo of these shifts in fortune resembles a carousel spinning at dizzying speed. This motion was evident among the Greek city-states during the time of Herodotus, who observed that "the cities that were formerly great, have most of them become insignificant; and such as are at present powerful, were weak in olden time." It also describes the period between the congress of Westphalia in 1648 and the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, when Spain, the Netherlands, and Sweden fell from the top tier of powers (Poland was wiped off the map!), and France, Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Russia emerged as great powers.

No such wheel of fortune existed during the nineteenth century, which saw Britain, Prussia/Germany, France, Russia, and Austria hold on to their exclusive status as great powers. By the century's end, however, America, Japan, and Italy were all knocking at the great power door. Since 1945, no new power has been able to vault into the great power category, though one fell from the ranks.

Whether structural transformation is dramatic or barely perceptible, turbulent or smooth, the important point is that the pecking order of states continually changes. As Paul Kennedy puts it, the "relative strengths of the leading nations in world affairs never remain constant, principally because of the uneven rate of growth among different societies and of the technological and organizational breakthroughs which bring a greater advantage to one society than to another." Recognizing that this is so, this chapter addresses the question: How has the international system adjusted to the rise of new powers? More specifically, how successful have the established great powers been in managing and peacefully assimilating rising, dissatisfied challengers into the existing international order?

Great power transitions are never easy, but it is better when they happen slowly, surely and, in any event, not in an atmosphere of general crisis. A cursory glance at the historical record reveals that the nature and success of the
established powers' responses to rising powers has varied not only from one historical epoch to another but on a case-by-case basis within the same era. As is true for most explanations of history, this variance is a function of both situational factors (e.g., the structural characteristics of the international system) and dispositional ones. With regard to the latter causes, the key questions are: How dissatisfied, if at all, is the rising power with the existing order and its place within that order? What is the extent and nature of its revisionist demands? How are those demands and intentions perceived by the established powers? Can the rising power acquire the requisite strength (whether through internal or external means) to change the system by force of arms? How, if at all, will the desired changes affect the interests of the other great powers?

The chapter begins by addressing the questions of why and when rising powers are dangerous. The next section lays out the various policies available to the established powers in response to a rising power. This is followed by a typology of rising powers according to their goals and risk propensity. In the final section, the nature of the rising power (discussed in the prior section) is linked to the choice and success of the established powers' policy responses.

The dangers of rising powers

The question of how to manage a rising power presupposes that such a situation is dangerous and therefore requires a strategy or plan of action on the part of the established powers. This raises several questions: Why are rising powers dangerous? What are the causal links between national growth—which typically accounts for the rising power's gain in relative strength—and international conflict and possibly war? When and why does an additional member of the great power club cause systemic instability?

Why rising powers are dangerous: the temptation to expand

According to Classical Realism, a nation's interests are shaped in the first place by its power (measured in terms of material resources and political influence). Specifically, as Martin Wight puts it: "It is the nature of powers to expand. The energies of their members radiate culturally, economically, and politically, and unless there are strong obstacles these tendencies will be summed up in territorial growth." In this view, states expand when they can; that is, when they perceive relative increases in state power and when changes in the relative costs and benefits of expansion make it profitable for them to do so. Thus Glibin writes: "a state will attempt to change the international system only if it has some relative advantage over other states, that is, if the balance of power in the system is to its advantage."

Acknowledging that political and military power must have an economic base, realists view economic prosperity as a preliminary to expansion and war; a full war
industrialized country, they claim, has manifested strong, extensive lateral pressure in some form. Whether motivated by exploration, commerce, investment, or conquest, lateral pressure establishes extraterritorial national interests among the great powers. Depending on type, extent, and intensity, lateral pressure generally leads to major power conflict when the foreign activities and interests of two or more major powers collide. Choucri and North's analysis of great power policies during the years between 1870 and 1914 revealed that:

expansionist activities are most likely to be associated with relatively high-capability countries, and to be closely linked with growth in population and advances in technology. Also, growth tends to be associated with intense competition among countries for resources and markets, military power, political influence, and prestige.14

A related problem is raised by the security dilemma: "many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others."15 The rise of new great powers, particularly when they have or seek to acquire empires and/or other less formal far-flung interests and commitments, will likely engender security dilemmas and/or intensify existing ones. As Jervis puts it: "Any state that has interests throughout the world cannot avoid possessing the power to menace others."16 Thus, when the US emerged as a world power after the Spanish-American war, it found that its new Pacific possessions could not be protected without threatening the security of Japan's home islands and insular colonies. Despairing over the US acquisition of the Philippines and the security dilemma it created with Japan, Theodore Roosevelt prophetically observed in 1907:

The Philippines form our heel of Achilles. They are all that makes the present situation with Japan dangerous... To keep the islands without treating them generously and at the same time without adequately fortifying them and without building up a navy second only to that of Great Britain, would be disastrous in the extreme. Yet there is danger of just this being done.17

For its part, Japan's quest for East Asian hegemony also could not be achieved without seriously compromising the security of the United States. Thus in vain President Wilson objected to the Council of Four's decision on May 7, 1919 to mandate to Japan the German islands in the Pacific north of the equator. A. Whitney Griswold paraphrases Wilson's concerns:

The Japanese mandate, [Wilson] confided to one of his closest advisers, lay athwart the path from Hawaii to the Philippines. The mandated islands were nearer Hawaii than was the California coast. They could easily be fortified; in fact he could conceive of no use for them except as naval bases... The entire mandate... would, in the hands of a naval rival, menace the security of the Philippines.18

Colliding interests leading to war, however, do not always involve security. For example, following Elizabethan England's surprising defeat of Spain's "Invincible Armada," the Stuart Navy found itself confronting the rise of a new, more formidable maritime and commercial rival, the Dutch Republic, which had been thriving (ironically, with Elizabeth's aid) despite more than thirty years of continuous struggle to resist Spanish subjugation. The ensuing Anglo-Dutch rivalry and series of wars that ended in 1668 were fueled entirely by motives of prestige, power, and profit.

This basic cause of a long-lasting rivalry over trade and primacy at sea set the style of the Anglo-Dutch wars: more than any others fought by the British in the past four centuries, they were trade wars. Invasion was not really planned or attempted by either side (except in 1673), and if a threat to territorial security had been the main criterion for assessing potential foes, then both countries would have regarded France as a more likely danger. It was, instead, a quarrel about who should rule the waves and reap the commercial benefits of that privilege.19

The Anglo-Dutch rivalry was a classic case of two rising powers with expanding and overlapping non-security interests headed for an inevitable showdown. Because their national identity as trading powers depended, they believed, on maritime supremacy, because their coasts and respective naval forces were separated only by the Narrow Seas, and because their commercial and colonial interests brought them into collision in almost every part of the world, the English and Dutch were locked into a "rivalry which was unavoidable, inexorable, a rivalry which could eventually have only one of two issues, either the voluntary submission of one of the rivals to the other, or a trial of strength by ordeal of battle."20 The town, so to speak, simply wasn't big enough for both of them.

The significance of the arguments summarized above is that they imply that a rising power need not be an aggressor to cause instability in the system. Because there is no Leviathan in world politics to enforce agreements made between, or to keep the peace among, nation-states, international conflict is inevitable. In this regard the above arguments stress that, even among states seeking only to survive, conflict arises because of the constant condition of scarcity in terms of raw materials, markets, social goods (prestige, leadership), and security. National growth, by generating new resource demands in excess of the state's domestic endowments, exacerbates competition for scarce resources, regardless of the rising power's intentions. Equally significant, under conditions of global economic expansion, states must run faster simply to stay in place; fearing losses in relative power and prestige in the system, great powers will feel pressure to expand merely to keep up with the Jones's (e.g. the scramble for African colonies in the 1880s).
For all these reasons, interstate interactions in the periphery will intensify, making it more likely that interests will collide.

**System structure: when are rising powers dangerous?**

The central questions of whether the emergence of a new great power will be destabilizing and what is the likelihood that the established powers can and will peacefully incorporate the rising power into the existing order are partly functions of the structure of the international system. All other things being equal, the rise of a sixth (or seventh or eighth) great power will have less impact on system stability and will be easier for the established powers to manage than will the rise of a second or third great power. In international relations parlance, the former situation represents a change within the structure of the system; that is, the addition of a sixth great power does not change the basic structural condition of multipolarity (a system composed of four or more great powers) that existed prior to the emergence of the rising power.

In contrast, the latter two hypotheticals are changes of system structure: the emergence of a second great power transforms a unipolar system into a bipolar one; the rise of a third great power transforms a bipolar system into a tri-polar one. This is important because the system dynamics (or characteristic behaviors) of unipolar, bipolar, tri-polar, and multipolar structures differ significantly from each other. This is, after all, the theoretical justification for using the concept of “polarity” to categorize systems and for maintaining four separate categories of polarity. If, for example, tri-polar systems behaved just like multi-polar ones, there would be no theoretical reason to distinguish the two types of structures.

While scholars agree that these various structures behave differently, a consensus has yet to emerge about the precise nature of that behavior. Waltzian neorealists, for example, claim that bipolarity is more stable (less prone to system-wide war) than is multipolarity; many scholars within the “quantitative empirical” school, however, make precisely the opposite claim. More basic, there is no consensus over how to define, operationalize, and measure the concept of polarity. Little wonder that the current system has been variously described as unipolar, tripolar, multipolar, uni-multipolar, and multi-multipolar. Unfortunately, any attempt to settle these prolonged scholarly disputes is well beyond the scope of this chapter.

What can be said with some confidence is that multipolarity is more conducive to the emergence of new great powers than are systems with fewer numbers of poles. This is because the power capability requirements for polar status in a multipolar system are less demanding than in tri-, bi-, and unipolar systems. Simply put, as the number of poles in the system increases, each pole’s share of the total capabilities within the great power subset correspondingly decreases. Hence, emerging powers will find it easier to vault into the great power ranks under multipolarity than under any other type of system.

The question of whether multipolarity is more conducive to the successful management of rising powers than are other types of systems can be answered in several contradictory ways. On the positive side, potential blocking coalitions of various combinations of poles will be most plentiful under multipolarity. It is most unlikely, therefore, that a rising, revolutionary power will be able to gain the necessary strength to overthrow the existing order before a blocking coalition forms to counterbalance it. Further, because there are many established powers in a multipolar system, it is most likely that the interests of the rising power will coincide with those of one or more of the established powers. This suggests that the process of co-opting and socializing rising powers into the balance of power will be easier under multipolarity. In contrast, when the advent of a rising power transforms the system from bipolarity to tripolarity, the danger of gang-up in an overpowering “two against one” coalition is always present. In other words, under tripolarity, even amity between two poles causes instability.

On the down side, the logic of collective action implies that the temptation to ride free on the balancing efforts of others will increase with the number of poles in the system. The danger is that, by passing the “balancing” buck, the established powers allow the rising, dissatisfied state to substantially increase its relative strength through piecemeal aggression. In addition, sheer numbers alone suggest that revolutionary powers are more likely to emerge under multipolarity than other types of systems.

**State responses to rising powers**

The historically most significant consequence of the rise of new great powers is international political change. As Gilpin points out, “a precondition for political change lies in a disjunction between the existing social system and the redistribution of power toward those actors who would benefit most from a change in the system.” Of particular relevance here is that the rise of new powers, by altering the configuration of relative power in the system, inevitably presents the established powers with both threats and opportunities: some to benefit by its emergence, others fear that they will be disadvantaged.

How states are affected by the emergence of a new power differs not only in kind but also in degree: neighboring states and world powers with substantial interests in the region of the rising power will be affected more than distant powers with minor or no interests in the area of its growth. These two factors largely account for the variety of state responses to rising powers, e.g., balancing, bandwagoning, preventive war, engagement, appeasement, economic, and political sanctions, accommodation, containment, and “roll back,” to name a few. Some of these strategies involve alliances, others do not; some use alliances for capability-aggregation purposes, others use them as tools of management; some seek security from the rising power, others aim to profit by it.

For the purposes of analysis, these various state responses may be grouped into six basic policy options: (1) preventive war, (2) balancing, (3) bandwagoning,
(4) binding, (5) engagement, and (6) distancing/buckpassing. Which option is chosen depends on the established power's goal; that is, whether it seeks to eliminate the rising power, contain it, profit by it, bind it, convert it, or ignore it.

/ Preventive war

As articulated by Alfred Vago: "The problem of preventive war is, simply put, the problem of whether a war considered inevitable in the long run is to be fought now, rather than later when the advantages may lie with the opposite camp." Note the three basic requirements for preventive war contained in Vago's definition: (1) war is viewed as inevitable, (2) the threat is a long-term one, and (3) it is better to fight now than later. Preventive wars are unique in that they are "wars of anticipation," and therefore, if justified, can rest only upon the inherently unreasonable assumptions of human foresight.

In practice, states have waged preventive wars for other offensive or defensive reasons: to take advantage of a closing window of opportunity or to prevent the opening of a window of vulnerability. Moreover, statesmen may rationally choose preventive war with little or no hope of victory if the expected costs of peace are thought to be even higher than those of war; for example, Japan's decision to opt for war against the US in 1941.

Theorists disagree, however, on the causal links between power shifts and war. Robert Gilpin sees preventive action as "the most attractive response" for a declining dominant power confronting a rising power: "When the choice ahead has appeared to be to decline or to fight, statesmen have most generally fought." Similarly, Jack Levy writes: "Statesmen have often convinced themselves that war will reverse or retard the rising military power of the adversary...and history provides few examples of states'-nonviolent acceptance of their national decline." Conversely, A. F. K. Organski and Jacke Kugler argue in 1928 to 1929 that recent history shows that rising dissatisfied challengers have initiated wars against leading nations "long before they equaled them in power."

While there have been occasional instances of established powers waging preventive wars against rising threats (e.g., Sparta's initiation of the Peloponnesian wars; the Athenian war against Philip circa 349 BC; Caesar's war against the Helveti in 58 BC; the Florentine–Venetian war against Visconti's Milan in 1424), the historical record strongly supports the proposition that it is not declining hegemons but risk-acceptant leaders of rising dissatisfied challengers -- Philip II, Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, Napoleon I, the Kaiser, and Hitler -- who, in their failed bids for hegemony, have been the great makers of preventive war. Indeed, even the most fledgling of rising powers, countries that were no match for any of the true great powers of their day, have waged preventive wars against far stronger established powers. Consider Drake's 1587 preventive attack upon Cadiz and the resounding defeat inflicted upon the Spanish Armada in the following year, when England was little more than an aspiring great power; or Charles II's preventive war against the Dutch in 1664; or Japan's preventive wars against Russia (1904–5) and the United States (1941) when it was far weaker in terms of its overall power capabilities than either of its opponents.

In contrast, there is not a single "clear-cut" case in the modern era of a hegemonic power initiating war to prevent the rise of a serious challenger. One explanation for this surprising finding is that, as I have argued elsewhere, liberal democracies, for normative and institutional reasons, do not wage preventive wars. Thus the two most recent hegemons, Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the United States in the twentieth century, did not exercise this option or even seriously contemplate it.

Another explanation is that leaders of dominant status quo powers are accustomed to actors who seek only to modify the existing system, not to overthrow it; consequently, they are slow to recognize the threat posed by revolutionary powers. "Lulled by a period of stability which had seemed permanent," Kissinger notes, the defenders of the status quo... tend to begin by treating the revolutionary powers as if its protestations were merely tactical; as if it really accepted the existing legitimacy but overstated its case for bargaining purposes; as if it were motivated by specific grievances to be assuaged by limited concessions. Those who warn against the danger in time are considered alarmists.

For both these reasons, preventive wars have rarely been waged to close windows of vulnerability; far more often than not, they are wars of aggression to take advantage of windows of opportunity.

/ Balancing/containment

Balancing means opposing the stronger or more threatening side in a conflict. Balancing may be accomplished in two ways: (1) internal balancing: individual attempts by the threatened states to mobilize their national resources to match those of the enemy; or (2) external balancing: the establishment of formal or informal alliances directed against the rising state or coalition. If they have the capacity to do so, threatened states would be well advised to engage in both types of balancing behavior to counteract the threat. This is because states that attempt to avoid the costs of internal balancing but want the security benefits that an alliance offers will appear as unattractive allies to potential partners.

Several conditions are required for the balance of power to work. First and most basic, there must be a sufficient number of powerful states that wish to survive as autonomous actors, and whose combined strength at least equals that of the strongest state in the system. Second, defender states must be vigilant and sensitive to changes in the distribution of capabilities, such as their ally growing weaker or their enemy growing stronger. Third, states must possess some mobility
of action, that is, they must be able to respond quickly and decisively to changes in the balance of power. Fourth, external balancing often relies on the ability to project military power; therefore, status quo states must not adopt strictly defensive military postures. Fifth, states that are essential to the balance must accept war as a legitimate tool of statecraft, even if they consider it to be a last resort. Finally, ideology, religious affiliation, and prior territorial disputes must not rule out alignments needed to maintain the balance; that is, balancing is most likely to be effective when there are no alliance handicaps.

Related to the two traditional forms of balancing (harnessing internal resources along with those of allies) is the strategy of containment, which seeks not to defeat the rising power but to prevent its further expansion. It is a strategy designed to maintain the balance, not to restore it. John Caddell makes the useful distinction between two styles of containment: symmetrical and asymmetrical response.

Symmetrical response means countering the enemy’s provocation at the location, time, and in the manner of its original occurrence (for example, the way in which the US fought the Korean and Vietnam wars, and the strategy behind NSC 68 and Flexible Response). Asymmetrical response entails reacting to aggression at sites, in places, and by means of one’s own choosing: that is, instead of responding in kind, the defender shifts the location and nature of its reaction onto terrain better suited to the application of its strengths against adversary weaknesses.

US Cold-War strategies of this type included Kennan’s original containment strategy, the doctrine of “massive retaliation” and the “New Look” of 1953, the Nixon Doctrine, and Kissinger’s use of linkage.

3. **Bandwagoning**

The term “bandwagoning” as a description of international alliance behavior first appeared in Quincy Wright’s *A Study of War* and later in Kenneth Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics*. Both Wright and Waltz employ the concept of bandwagoning to serve as the opposite of balancing (which Wright calls “the underdog policy”): bandwagoning refers to joining the stronger competitor, balancing means allying with the weaker side. Unlike Waltz, Wright believed that, under certain circumstances, great powers may engage in bandwagoning to preserve the balance of power. This occurs when “the stronger in a given war is a relatively weak state whose strengthening is necessary to hold a more powerful neighbor in check.”

Curiously, and in stark contrast with the predictions of balance of power theory, the strongest and most revolutionary of the rising powers have been precisely the ones that have historically attracted the greatest number of bandwagoners. Consider the responses of the great powers to Revolutionary France and Hitlerite Germany. At various times between 1795 and 1814, Prussia, Russia, Spain, and Austria all bandwagoned with Imperial France; similarly, Italy, Japan, Russia in 1939, and some say France in 1940, bandwagoned with Nazi Germany. Only Britain and the United States can claim that they did not bandwagon with either Revolutionary France or Nazi Germany. The United States, however, was not a great power during the Napoleonic wars, and it only actively balanced against the Nazi threat after Hitler declared war against it.

There is a good explanation for this seemingly illogical behavior: powerful revolutionary states are best positioned in the international system to use positive sanctions to lure others to their cause. Unlike defenders of the status quo, revolutionary states will not hesitate to offer other dissatisfied nations substantial gains in territory and prestige as a reward for helping to create a new order. In other words, like delegates at party conventions, states are often motivated to join the stronger side for reasons of profit, that is, to secure a share of the rewards of victory. To induce bandwagoning behavior, revolutionary powers have historically used the spoils of their early victories or the promise of future gains to bribe hitherto neutrals and enemies to align with them; or, in the latters’ case, to pledge neutrality. In this way, the rising power builds up the strength of its own coalition, while at the same time it weakens the military power and political solidarity of the opposing status quo side.

During the period 1667 to 1679, for example, Louis XIV’s France achieved hegemony over Europe largely by promising rewards to attract bandwagoners. In the War of Devolution (1667 to 1668), the Austrian emperor, Leopold I, bandwagoned with France to partition Spain. By the secret Franco–Austrian treaty of 1668, the French Bourbons were to inherit Spanish Navarre, the Southern Netherlands, Franche-Comté, Naples and Sicily, and the Philippines in exchange for which Louis ceded his rights to the Spanish Crown. In preparation for the Dutch War (1672 to 1679), Louis used rewards to gain the support of virtually all the powers that had previously opposed him. In June 1670, Charles II of England signed the treaty of Dover, which included plans for a joint Anglo–French attack against the Dutch in 1672. In exchange, Louis agreed to provide England with subsidies of £225,000 a year and territorial gains around the Scheldt estuary. In April 1672, Sweden, too, abandoned what was left of the Triple Alliance and jumped on the French bandwagon against the Dutch. Between 1670 and 1672, Louis offered the payment of French subsidies to gain alliances with many of the former members of the defunct League of the Rhine, including the Rhineland archbishop-electors, Saxony, the Palatinate, Bavaria, the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne, and the Bishop of Münster; and, while he did not ally with France, Leopold I signed a neutrality agreement in November 1671.

The peace of Nymegen which ended the Dutch War in 1679 proved that Louis could take on all his enemies and still dictate the peace. Declared the Great Elector: “France has already become the arbiter of Europe.... henceforth no prince will find security or profit except with the friendship and alliance of the King of France.”

Like his predecessor, Napoleon Bonaparte used territorial rewards and spectacular military victories to attract bandwagoners. For example, in creating the Confederation of the Rhine (1806) as a counterweight to Prussia and Austria, Napoleon strengthened Bavaria, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Württemberg at
the expense of the tiny German states. Tempted by the promise of aggrandizement, these middle-sized German states voluntarily climbed aboard Napoleon’s bandwagon.59

Similarly, Tsar Alexander I bandwagoned with the French Empire in 1807, when Napoleon used his decisive victory over the Tsar’s army at Friedland to propose the Vistula as the new frontier of Russia. Napoleon also offered Russia control over European Turkey and Finland, and he encouraged further Russian conquests in Asia. In exchange, the Tsar was asked to join the Continental System against England, use his influence to compel Denmark and Sweden to follow suit, and send the Russian Navy to aid France in the capture of Gibraltar.60 As the historian, R. B. Mowat, put it: “Thus a prospect was held out to the defeated autocrat not merely of keeping what he possessed, but actually of gaining more territory: a strange sequel to the abdication of Russia at Friedland!”61

Not surprisingly, Alexander welcomed the alliance with France, which “put the Continent of Europe at the disposal of the two Powers of France and Russia, with, however, the balance distinctly in favour of France.”62 During the Franco-Austrian war of 1809, Alexander proved his loyalty to Napoleon by “fall[ing] to avail himself of the opportunity to ‘hold the balance’ between the antagonists, with the result that France once more defeated Austria, added more territory to her already bulging empire, and threw the European system still further out of balance.”63

In contrast with this wise treatment of Russia, Napoleon’s peace terms to Austria and Prussia were “so rigorous that the treaties invariably were little more than truces under which the defeated powers thirsted for revenge and constantly sought a favorable opportunity to resume their contest of arms.”64 In the end, the victorious Allied coalition, whose forces doubled those of France by February 1814, would never have come together in the first place, much less held together, had Napoleon not foolishly attacked his own allies and neutrals—most fatefully, Russia. By repeatedly thwarting the bandwagoning strategies of Spain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, Napoleon finally succeeded where the British had failed in creating a coalition with the strength and resolve to defeat Imperial France.65

Like Napoleon, Hitler blocked the formation of a powerful counter-coalition by encouraging dissatisfied states—Italy, the Soviet Union, Japan, Hungary, and Bulgaria—to feed on the pickings of the Nazi lion’s kill.66 Thus, Hitler promised (though he never delivered) Mussolini spoils in the Mediterranean and North Africa; he gave away half of Poland and Eastern Europe to the Soviets; and he simply handed over to Japan the French and Dutch colonies in Indo-China and the East Indies that Germany had won in the battle of the West.67 In this way, the Reich became master of Europe by 1941. But just as Napoleon had gratuitously destroyed the source of his own success by attacking his allies, Hitler likewise brought Germany to ruin by declaring war against his Soviet ally and the United States, “two World powers who asked only to be left alone.”68 In so doing, the Führer forced into creation the only coalition powerful enough to prevent a German victory in Europe.

Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory

Binding

As the historian Paul Schroeder has pointed out, sometimes the function of alliances is not capability aggregation but rather restraint or control over the actions of the partners themselves in the alliance. In such cases, states forgo a counter-alliance against a threatening state, which they fear may provoke greater conflict and perhaps war, and instead ally with the rival for the purpose of managing the threat by means of a pact of restraint (pacta de controlendo).69

The state seeking to “bind” the rival hopes that, by allying with the source of threat, it will be able to exert some measure of control over its policy. An alliance accomplishes this by increasing both the state’s influence over its ally and the number of opportunities it gets to voice its concerns. Among these lines, Joseph Grieco posits a “voice opportunities” thesis, according to which “weaker but still influential partners will seek to ensure that the rules of a collaborative arrangement so constructed... provide sufficient opportunities for them to voice their concerns and interests and thereby prevent or at least ameliorate their domination by stronger partners.”70

The goal of management was one of the motivations behind Britain’s decision to ally with the rising power of Japan in 1902: “In Britain’s eyes, one of the objects of the alliance was to act as a restraint upon a wilful Japan whose strength was acknowledged but whose self-control was thought to be doubtful.”71 To the dismay of the British, the alliance had precisely the opposite effect: it emboldened Japan to initiate war against Russia in 1904.72 The British should not have been surprised by this, however. Logically, if the rising, dissatisfied power is inherently reckless or aggressive, aligning with it will doubtless encourage it to excessive boldness in disputes with other powers; it is unlikely to restrain it from undesired actions or to make it more cautious in disputes and crises with neighboring powers.73

When available, multilateral alliances and arrangements, such as collective security systems, are often used as a complement to or in lieu of bilateral “binding” strategies.74 There are several objectives in adopting a multilateral binding policy. First, by incorporating the rising power in existing institutional arrangements, giving it a “place at the table” to speak, the established powers seek to satisfy the prestige demands of the rising power. Second, through its membership in global institutions, the rising state is afforded a greater opportunity to voice its concerns and to build, in conjunction with the other great powers, a new international order that better reflects its enhanced power and interests. The established powers hope that this cooperative approach to international change based on consensus will foster a renewed sense of legitimacy in the international order among all the great powers, including the rising power. Finally, the established powers use multilateral arrangements for the purpose of entangling the rising power in a web of policies that makes exercise of its power too costly. This assumes that the gains derived by the rising power from membership in the existing institutions are substantial, and that “belonging confers additional benefits from which outsiders can be excluded.”75
The policy of engagement refers to the use of non-coercive means to ameliorate the non-status quo elements of a rising major power's behavior. The goal is to ensure that this growing power is used in ways that are consistent with peaceful change in regional and global order.

The most common form of engagement is the policy of appeasement, which attempts to settle international quarrels "by admitting and satisfying grievances through rational negotiation and compromise, thereby avoiding the resort to an armed conflict which would be expensive, bloody, and possibly very dangerous." Typically, this process requires adjustments in territory and "spheres of influence" and the reallocation of global responsibilities and other sources of prestige commensurate with the growth in power of the rising state.

Engagement is more than appeasement, however. It encompasses any attempt to socialize the dissatisfied power into acceptance of the established order. In practice, engagement may be distinguished from other policies not so much by its goals but by its means: it relies on the promise of rewards rather than the threat of punishment to influence the target's behavior.

The primary objective of an engagement policy is to minimize conflict and avoid war without compromising the integrity of the existing international order. In essence, the established powers seek to restore system equilibrium by adjusting the international hierarchy of prestige and the division of territory in accordance with the new global balance of power, while at the same time maintaining the formal institutional arrangements and informal rules of the system, that is, its governance structures. The policy succeeds if such concessions convert the revolutionary state into a status quo power with a stake in the stability of the system.

Engagement also serves three other important goals. First, it enables the status quo powers to gain a clearer picture of the real (as opposed to declared) intentions and ambitions of the rising, dissatisfied power. Only by "engaging" Hitler's legitimate, pan-German aspirations could Britain and France discover whether Germany truly sought limited revision, as Hitler had repeatedly stated, or Continental hegemony and ultimately world conquest. Second, it is a useful policy for buying time to rearm and gain allies in case the rising power cannot be satisfied and war becomes necessary. Third, it can be used to break up dangerous combinations or to prevent them from occurring in the first place. For these purposes, engagement may be seen as an alternative to the formation of a counterbalancing alliance that risks uniting the dissatisfied powers into a rival coalition.

The British government, viewing tight alliances as a primary cause of World War I, applied this insight in 1935, when it attempted to keep Italy out of the German orbit by appeasing Mussolini at the expense of Ethiopia and Spain. Indeed, Chamberlain's engagement policy toward Germany sought to accomplish all of the various goals associated with engagement, namely to satisfy Germany without recourse to war and without destroying the existing order; to uncover Hitler's true intentions; to buy time for rearmament; and to prevent the formation of a German-Italian alliance.

Engagement, when successful, is the most efficient and sensible solution to the rise of a dissatisfied power. It is a very tricky and sometimes dangerous policy to implement, however. For the policy to succeed, the rising power must have only limited revisionist aims and there can be no irreconcilable conflicts of vital interests among the powers. As Martin Wight points out:

It is no good a satisfied power (let us say, Philip II's Spain) telling a dissatisfied power (let us say, Elizabethan England) that its legitimate interests can be fully secured within the existing arrangement of power, for there will be no possibility of agreement between what Spain calls "legitimate" and what England calls "vital".

Moreover, engagement is most likely to succeed when the established powers are strong enough to mix concessions with credible threats, to use sticks as well as carrots, in their attempts to satisfy the rising power. Otherwise, concessions will signal weakness that emboldens the aggressor to demand more. For this reason, engagement should not be viewed as an alternative to balancing but rather as a complement to it — one that seeks a peaceful end to the rivalry and the balancing costs that accompany it. In Churchill's words:

Appeasement in itself may be good or bad according to the circumstances. Appeasement from weakness and fear is alike futile and fatal. Appeasement from strength is magnanimous and noble, and might be the surest and perhaps the only path to world peace.

Another problem in carrying out an engagement strategy is that the two sides' expectations often diverge in accordance with their discrepant motivations for negotiation: the status quo power desires changes in the revisionist power's behavior, while the latter desires changes in the status quo order. Consequently, to the status quo power, engagement involves the use of rewards and threats to influence the revisionist state such that it behaves more in accordance with the rules of the established order. The dissatisfied power, in contrast, sees engagement as a tool for peaceful change of the existing order.

Finally, it must be remembered that the problem of managing peaceful change is not all on the side of the rising dissatisfied power. For the process to work, the status quo powers must exhibit empathy, fairness, and a genuine concern not to offend the prestige and national honor of the rising power. Above all, this means not judging the rising power's behavior according to principles that they themselves are unwilling to live by. The estrangement of Japan and America after 1909, for instance, had less to do with a clash of vital interests than a clash of principles.

From Japan's perspective, America's insistence on the Open Door and Equal Opportunity policy in China contradicted its own Monroe Doctrine. If the US
believed that it was entitled to exercise a monopoly right to interfere in the internal affairs of the other republics of Central and South America, why should not Japan be allowed a Monroe Doctrine for the Far East? Was not Korea to Japan’s security what the Low Countries have been to Britain’s defense since the time of Marlborough? Thus, when the Shanghai incident of 1932 confirmed the basic cleavage between the Western nations and Japan over the issue of special rights and interests in China, the Japanese, exasperated at Anglo-American hypocrisy, pointed out that they merely sought to “advance with a policy of Asia for the Asiaties— an Asiatic Monroe Doctrine.” In an address to the Council of Foreign Relations, for instance, Viscount Kikujirō Ishii reminded the audience that Japan’s foreign policy was “activated by the same principle incorporated in the Monroe Doctrine.”

6 Buckpassing/distancing

Buckpassing occurs when a state attempts to ride free on the balancing efforts of others. In a buckpassing situation, effective balancing against the attacker will benefit all potential targets of aggression whether or not they have been involved in the defeat or substantial weakening of that aggressor. It is therefore to each state’s advantage not to incur the costs of balancing (i.e. the dilemma of the “free-rider”) by redirecting the threat elsewhere and remaining on the sidelines. In other words, the buckpasser assumes that it can safely “bystand” while the defending state or coalition absorbs the initial blow of the attacker and in the process critically weakens or destroys it.

For this reason, buckpassing has been associated correctly with the perception of defense advantage and wars of attrition. If the buckpassing state believed otherwise (namely that the attacker would quickly overrun the defenders), it would not be in its interest to remain on the sidelines, since it would then be confronted by a newly triumphant and thus stronger rising power with fewer or no allies.

Related to buckpassing is the policy of distancing or hiding. Confronted by the threat of a rising, dissatisfied power, states have often attempted to hide rather than to meet the challenge by aligning with other threatened states, especially when their combined strength is insufficient to deter or defeat the aggressor(s). In such cases, less directly threatened states distance themselves from more immediately threatened states by refusing to coordinate their diplomatic and military strategies with the latter. Distancing is frequently combined with the more positive strategy of trying to engage the enemy.

The logic behind distancing is that joining the weaker side not only fails to make the state safer, it is also dangerous: the alliance may provoke the enemy and/or embolden its ally. In either case, the state is more likely to be dragged into a war it cannot win. Associating with the weaker alliance also increases the likelihood that the state will be seen as a potential target, while at the same time it risks diverting precious resources needed for home defense to the defense of its allies.

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Geography plays a significant role in determining which states among the status quo powers will exhibit distancing behavior and which will be desperately trying, despite the odds, to forge a coalition. The surplus security afforded by geostrategic insularity, which is unavailable to land powers, makes insular states (e.g. Britain, the US) the most likely candidates for a distancing strategy. For example, in response to the rise of Nazi Germany, Britain’s foreign and military policy was designed to distance itself from the French. Obviously, a state that is contiguous to the rising aggressor, such as France during the interwar period, cannot hope to gain security by distancing itself from other status quo states.

Mixed strategies

The literature has incorrectly treated many of these strategies as if they are mutually exclusive. It is assumed, for instance, that a state can either balance, bandwagon, or buckpass but it cannot simultaneously do all three. It is easily shown, however, that all three behaviors and their respective goals can be achieved in one strategic move.

Consider, for instance, Stalin’s response to the rising power of Nazi Germany. The Nazi–Soviet Nonaggression Pact from the Soviet’s perspective was bandwagoning because the Soviets joined the strongest and most threatening side to avoid a German attack and to gain essentially unearned spoils in Central Europe. It was buckpassing because the German attack was redirected westward, where Stalin believed, the two sides would bleed each other white to the advantage of the Soviet Union. The pact was therefore a clear example of “free-riding”; by facilitating war among the Western capitalist states, the Soviet Union would gain the benefits of a greatly diminished German and world capitalist threat without incurring the costs of fighting. Finally, it was also balancing because, by delaying a German attack, the Soviets were both buying time to bolster their depleted military forces and gaining additional territory and resources to defend themselves against Germany if and when it returned east.

The reason why these strategies can be implemented simultaneously is that, as Waltz has pointed out, balancing can be accomplished by both internal and external means. A threatened state, therefore, can bandwagon by joining the stronger or more dangerous side in order to redirect the threat elsewhere (pass the balancing buck to others) and/or gain time, space, and resources in preparation for war (internal balancing purposes).

With regard to managing a rising, dissatisfied power, there are few, if any, historical cases of “successful” engagement that were not part of a larger policy of balancing a more dangerous threat. For example, Britain’s successful engagement of Japan between 1900 and 1907 was motivated primarily by the two powers’ common desire to balance the growing Russian threat to their East Asian interests. Once the Russian threat disappeared (when Japan smashed their fleet in 1905), Anglo-Japanese relations grew more distant, and Britain annulled the alliance soon after World War I. Likewise, Britain successfully engaged the rising
American power because the French, Russian, and German threats were far more dangerous. Unable to defend itself against all of its potential enemies, Britain used diplomatic means to reduce the number of its potential enemies, and the US was a major beneficiary.

**The interests of rising, dissatisfied powers**

In addition to state power and system structure, the interests of states have been a traditional concern of international relations theory. Power tells us how much influence a state can be expected to have over others; interests tell us how and for what purposes that influence will be used. Wilsonian liberals divided the world into good (democratic) and bad (non-democratic) states; traditional realists distinguished between revisionist and status quo powers. Unlike Wilsonian liberals, however, traditional realists viewed this international struggle not in Manichean terms (as a morality play between the forces of light and dark, good and evil) but rather as a natural power struggle between the established, satisfied powers and the rising, dissatisfied ones—often the victors and vanquished in the last major power war.

In the eyes of traditional realists, the concept of power politics applied equally to both “have” and “have-not,” sated and hungry states. It is the centrality of this belief that most clearly separates traditional realism from Wilsonian liberalism. As E. H. Carr put it:

> It is profoundly misleading to represent the struggle between satisfied and dissatisfied Powers as a struggle between morality on one side and power on the other. It is a clash in which, whatever the moral issue, power politics are equally predominant on both sides. 

At issue in the enduring conflict between satisfied and dissatisfied states is the legitimacy of the institutional arrangements or governance structures that define the established international order. Here, “legitimacy” does not imply justice. In Kissinger’s words:

> [legitimacy] means no more than an international agreement about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy. It implies the acceptance of the framework of the international order by all major powers, at least to the extent that no state is so dissatisfied that, like Germany after the Treaty of Versailles, it expresses its dissatisfaction in a revolutionary foreign policy. A legitimate order does not make conflicts impossible, but it limits their scope. 

**Revolutionary and other dissatisfied, rising powers**

Rising, dissatisfied powers may be distinguished along two dimensions: the extent and nature of their revisionist aims and their risk propensity.

/ The nature and extent of revisionist aims

There are basically two types of revisionist states: limited-aims revisionists and unlimited-aims revisionists or revolutionary powers. In Kissinger’s view, “the distinguishing feature of a revolutionary power is not that it feels threatened—such feeling is inherent in the nature of international relations based on sovereign states—but that nothing can reassure it.” The goal of revolutionary states is not “the adjustment of differences within a given system which will be at issue, but the system itself; it is a quest for global dominion and ideological supremacy.”

While all revolutionary states are dissatisfied, not all dissatisfied powers are revolutionary ones. The key question is whether the rising power views the protection and promotion of its essential values as dependent on fundamental changes in the existing international order; or whether it is merely dissatisfied with its prestige and position within that order. If the former, then it is a revolutionary state that cannot be satisfied without destroying the status quo. If the latter, then it is a dissatisfied state but not a revolutionary one. Consequently, its demands can be satisfied while at the same time preserving and perhaps strengthening the established order. These limited-aims revisionist states are typically regional powers that seek either compensatory territorial adjustments, recognition as an equal among the great powers, and/or changes in the rules and decision-making procedures within existing regimes.

The key to the success of a strategy designed to cope with a rising, dissatisfied power is accurately distinguishing limited-aims revisionist states, which merely seek changes within the existing order, from revolutionary powers, which aim to overthrow the system. Engagement, for example, is an appropriate strategy with
regard to limited-aims revisionist states. Satisfaction of their grievances through reasonable concessions in the face of legitimate demands not only can be accomplished within the existing order but, by converting these disgruntled states into defenders of the new general settlement, it strengthens the legitimacy and stability of the system and promises to preserve the peace. Attempts to appease revolutionary states, by contrast, are not only misguided but dangerous; they weaken the appeaser's relative power position and simply whet the voracious appetite of the unlimited-aims adversary; it "errs in transferring a policy of compromise from a political environment favourable to the preservation of the status quo, where it belongs, to an environment exposed to imperialistic attack, where it does not belong."80

In Edmund Burke's eyes, for instance, the war against Revolutionary France was not a clash of interests but of ideologies, and so he saw no chance of reconciliation. Unlike the prior war against the American colonies, which Burke condemned, the present war was:

not with an ordinary community, which is hostile or friendly as passion or as interest may veer about; not with a State which makes war through wantonness, and abandons it through lassitude. We are at war with a system, which, by its essence, is inimical to all other Governments, and which makes peace or war, as peace and war may best contribute to their subversion. It is with an armed doctrine that we are at war.81

In 1940, Hore-Belisha took the Burkean view that Nazism and British values could not coexist: "We did not enter the fight merely to reconstitute Czechoslovakia. Nor do we fight merely to reconstitute a Polish State. Our aims are not defined by geographical frontiers. We are concerned with the frontiers of the human spirit. This is no war about a map."81

John Lewis Gaddis similarly views the Cold War as one between a status quo and a revolutionary power:

Throughout the history of the Cold War, the United States has, on the whole, been reconciled to living with the world as it is; the Soviet Union . . . has seen its security as dependent on changing it. In this sense . . . the United States has been the status quo power and the Soviet Union has been the revolutionary power - a fact that should not be overlooked in assessing responsibility for the Cold War.83

The crux of the problem is that, without the benefit of hindsight, it is a very tricky business to infer intentions from behavior. State actions are rarely unambiguous at the time. Consider, for instance, the seemingly clear-cut case of Hitlerite Germany. To Chamberlain and the appeasers, Hitler's actions, prior to the German seizure of Prague in 1939, were consistent with a "normal" German statesman; like his predecessors, Hitler merely desired to free Germany from the shackles of Versailles" for reasons of security not aggrandizement. They therefore endorsed Hitler's role of the injured instead of contesting it. Of this view, Lothian wrote to Eden in 1936: "I believe that if we assist Germany to escape from encirclement to a position of balance in Europe, there is a good chance of the twenty-five years peace of which Hitler spoke."89 Similarly, Neville Henderson asserted in the Spring of 1939: "The Corridor and Danzig were a real German national grievance, and some equitable settlement had to be found if there was ever to be genuine peace."88

To Churchill and those who advocated a hard-line policy toward Germany, Hitler's actions prior to 1939 were unambiguously consistent with a revolutionary state with unlimited revisionist aims. Anti-appeasers pointed out that, unlike traditional German nationalists, such as Stresemann and Bruning, who would have been more than satisfied with the frontiers of 1914, Hitler made it clear that his territorial ambitions far exceeded even a restoration of the enormous gains Germany made by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.88 In the eyes of anti-appeasers, Hitler's many grievances were a mere cover for his program of greedy expansion. Thus, Lord Robert Cecil argued:

I do not think that the present grievances of the Germans are genuine so far as Hitler and his entourage are concerned. They are merely being used in order to justify his armaments policy, and if we were successful in taking away one or more of his grievances, he would only produce others, and at the same time use our concessions as a proof of how well his policy was succeeding.88

In retrospect, we know that Churchill's assessment of Hitler's intentions was more accurate than Chamberlain's. This does not prove, however, that Chamberlain's image of Hitler was the product of misperception, irrationality, or plain naiveté. Given the evidence available to them at the time (prior to Germany's seizure of the rest of Czechoslovakia), both British leaders could reasonably conclude as they did: Hitler's actions were generally consistent with both a limited-aims revisionist and a revolutionary state. That one of these two interpretations would ultimately prove correct does not mean that the other interpretation was the result of cognitive biases or any other type of information-processing problem. Thus, even in this seemingly clear-cut case, the process of inferring motivation from behavior is problematic and riddled with ambiguity.

2 Risk propensity

"Risk propensity" refers to the probability of success that a particular decision maker requires before embarking on a course of action.90 For example, in deciding whether to increase the nation's power through war or war-threatening conflict, leaders of revisionist states must make decisions under conditions of uncertainty, that is, the extent to which the probability of success of a course
of action is unknown. The sources of uncertainty of particular concern to a revisionist leader contemplating war would include: (1) its own country's military strength relative to that of the target of the attack; (2) the balance of resolve, that is, how much it values what is at stake compared with the value the opponent attaches to what is at stake; (3) will other states get involved and, if so, who will align with whom; and (4) the relative capabilities of potential alliance partners.

Let us assume that a revisionist leader attaches a probability of \( p \) to its chances of winning a war it wants to initiate. Because the probability of any event occurring can range from zero to one, its estimated probability of losing the war is \( 1 - p \). Let us further assume that, if the revisionist state wins, it believes that it will increase its power (or utility) by some increment \( x \); if it loses, it believes it will be less powerful than it was prior to the war by an increment of \( y \). The subjective expected utility of the war option, then, is the leader’s estimation of the utilities of the possible outcomes times their probabilities, or \( (px + (1 - p)y) \).

In terms of risk propensity, it is useful to distinguish between two types of actors: those that are risk-acceptant and those that are risk-averse. Risk-acceptant actors are gambling, while risk-averse actors are cautious under conditions of uncertainty. A risk-averse revisionist actor, for example, would be opportunistic in its attempts to improve its power position. “Risk-acceptant leaders, because they attach some added utility to the act of taking a gamble, are less constrained in making war decisions than are risk-averse actors.”

Figure 1.1 categorizes various rising, dissatisfied states according to the two dimensions articulated above.

Risk-averse, limited-aims revisionist powers are opportunistic expanders that generally seek regional dominance. By contrast, risk-acceptant, limited-aims revisionist powers tend to have more ambitious aims than do their risk-averse counterparts; and, related to this, they often advance prestige demands as well as territorial ones. Moreover, risk-acceptant, limited-aims revisionists are typically more dissatisfied with the status quo order than are their risk-averse counterparts; and they tend to place less value on their current possessions than do the latter. Risk-acceptant, revolutionary powers are the most virulent expanders. These are the states that have periodically emerged to mount a serious challenge to the very existence of the modern state system. In contrast, risk-averse, revolutionary powers—while they, too, desire a new order—are unwilling to risk system-wide war to overthrow the system. Instead, they seek revolutionary change as a long-run, almost utopian, goal. Consequently, they are opportunistic and incremental in their attempts to revise the status quo.

**Policy responses to rising, dissatisfied powers**

Foreign policy debates over how to respond to a potential threat generally revolve around differing perceptions of the adversary’s intentions. Along these lines, Robert Jervis distinguishes between deterrence and spiral models—two generic types of belief systems that posit contradictory views of the other state’s intentions, how conflict arises, and how peace can be had and preserved.82

The crux of the deterrence model is that great danger arises when “an aggressor believes that the status quo powers are weak in capability or resolve.”99 Evidence of weakness and irresponsiveness on the part of the status quo emboldens aggressors to advance their revisionist aims, which will cease only when the expansionist state or coalition is confronted by firm resistance. The deterrence model of conflict applies, therefore, when the defender of the status quo faces a formidable, expansionist adversary—such as a revolutionary power. Under these circumstances, deterrence theory prescribes competitive policies: active balancing and, if feasible, preventive war.

The spiral model, by contrast, views conflict as a result of enduring structural factors: international anarchy and the security dilemma. Because states exist in an anarchic, self-help realm, wars are always possible and superior military power is the final arbiter of interstate disputes. Moreover, operating under anarchy and an ever-present security dilemma, states often misperceive the armaments of others for security reasons as hostile and provocative. If both sides operate under this misperception, a dangerous and unnecessary action—reaction process will ensue. In the absence of deliberate efforts to reverse this process, conflict will eventually spiral out of control. The important point, one that distinguishes this model from the deterrence view, is that conflict in the spiral model is merely apparent not real; there is no underlying conflict of interest, only a vicious cycle of distrust and exaggerated fears of the other side’s aggressive intentions. Thus, in contrast to the deterrence model, the spiral model prescribes cooperative policies to reassure the other side of one’s benign intentions. Specifically, a spiral model view would dictate a strategy of Graduated and Reciprocal Initiatives in Tension-reduction (GRIIT), which uses unilateral, costly concessions to gain the other side’s trust.94
The problem with Jervis’ “two-model” scheme is that it excludes situations in which there are real conflicts of interests between two states but their interests are not irreconcilable; that is, their relationship, while adversarial, is not a pure zero-sum conflict. To cover this historically common situation, I propose the engagement model as a third alternative between the deterrence and spiral models. Here, the established power is confronted by a limited-aims revisionist power. The former’s primary goal is to end the rivalry with the rising, dissatisfied power. For this, the appropriate strategy is neither purely cooperative nor purely competitive but instead a mixture of both carrots and sticks. Specifically, the established power attempts to satisfy the rising power’s limited revisionist aims and to modify its behavior through economic and political rewards as well as the threat of force.

Figure 1.2 lists the policies that are most appropriate for the established powers to adopt in response to the various types of rising, dissatisfied powers. Because I am concerned about the policies of directly threatened established great powers, I have omitted bandwagoning for profit, distancing, and buckpassing as prudent responses—though these may indeed be wise policy responses for weak states, unthreatened remote states, and/or other revisionist powers.

Conclusions
This brief historical and theoretical survey suggests certain conclusions. First, the pace and context within which power shifts occur affects how declining and rising powers react to each other and to changes in the ladder of power. Sudden and dramatic power shifts within small-N systems (regional or global) tend to produce instability and war. Conversely, gradual and incremental changes in the relative distribution of power, especially in the context of large-N (multipolar) systems, can often be managed successfully; that is, peacefully and without destroying the basic framework of the established order.

RISK PROPENSITY

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<th>Limited</th>
<th>Risk-averse</th>
<th>Risk-acceptant</th>
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<td>NATURE OF</td>
<td>Containment/</td>
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<td>REVISIONIST</td>
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<td>AIMS</td>
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<td>Revolutionary</td>
<td>1. Engagement</td>
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<td>2. Binding</td>
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<td>3. Mixed strategy</td>
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Figure 1.2 Politics in response to rising, dissatisfied powers

Second, the nature of the rising power—whether it is risk-acceptant or risk-averse, a revolutionary or limited-aims revisionist power—should determine which policies the established powers adopt and whether or not such policies will be successful. The existence of a risk-acceptant revolutionary power rules out any chance of managing the situation peacefully. In these situations, preservation of the status quo order and, indeed, the state system itself requires the established powers to band together against the revolutionary power, which seeks to overthrow, not alter, the essential framework of the international order. If the rising power does not have revolutionary goals, however, then engagement becomes an option; though it may be an unnecessary one (e.g., if the rising power views the status quo as legitimate or can expand its territory and influence without disrupting the vital interests of the established powers).

Third, accurate recognition of the rising power’s true nature on the part of the established states is a crucial step in the process of system management. Unfortunately, because the international environment is one of constant uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the intentions of others, this basic task, which may seem so simple in hindsight, is often botched with disastrous consequences in real time.

Great danger arises when, for instance, a rising revolutionary power, particularly a risk-acceptant one, is misidentified as a limited-aims revisionist state. Policies of accommodation and engagement, which are appropriate responses to a limited-aims revisionist state, will simply further a revolutionary power’s ability to make relative gains. Though less dangerous, the opposite mistake in recognition (namely viewing a limited-aims revisionist power as a revolutionary one) will also lead to unnecessary conflict and possibly war as a result of spiral-model dynamics. Further, this type of recognition error can become a self-fulfilling prophesy: by treating a limited-aims revisionist as if it were a revolutionary state, the defenders of the status quo unwittingly induce such a conversion.

There is no magic formula for managing a rising challenger and maintaining international peace and stability. The characteristics of the external environment in which a rising power emerges are beyond anyone’s control. Even if the status quo defenders are fortunate enough to operate within an international structure conducive to successful management, they must still search for the right policy devices to keep the peace, maintain the integrity of the system, and ultimately convert the revisionist state into a status quo one. Moreover, the success of any effort to manage a power transition is largely a function of factors that are internal to the rising and declining powers themselves. The problem here is that domestic sources of foreign policy, like international structural factors, also tend to be beyond the control of outside powers.

With regard to these internal-external linkages of foreign policy, China’s current growth in power is troubling for three reasons. First, both history and scholarship show that countries undergoing economic transitions tend to pursue assertive and expansionist foreign policies. Second, China is not only in the
midst of transforming its entire political and economic system, it is also ruled by a regime trying to maintain its own legitimacy. Third, while "analysts can reasonably estimate China's economic and military power a decade or more hence," it is far more difficult to predict "China's internal political and social cohesion, and how Beijing will wield its new strength."" Taking these factors into account, David Shambaugh concludes: "The insular and defensive character of Chinese politics and nationalism suggests that China will be reluctant and difficult to engage and to integrate in the existing international order."" In the end, the best that can be hoped for is that the established powers will properly identify the challenger's long-term goals and will avoid over-reacting or under-reacting to the developing situation. The least that can be expected is that the policies adopted to deal with a rising power do no harm.

Notes
4 Fareed Zakaria makes an important and often overlooked distinction between national and state power: "Power, for the statesman, must be "useful" and hence involves not the nation's power but instead the national government's power or "state power." The latter can be defined as the central government's ability to extract resources from society and the ease with which central decision-makers can implement their preferences." Fareed Zakaria, From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 7.
6 Ibid., p. 54.
7 Ibid., pp. 23-4.
9 Wight, Power Politics, p. 163.
12 Ibid., pp. 16-19.
13 Ibid., p. 17. Categorizing states according to population density and per capita indicators, Choucri and North designate the strongest core powers as alpha profiles: "Countries with populations, technologies, and resource access that are large and advancing commensurately - technological advancement maintaining a substantial lead over population growth - are typically high-latitude pressure states, the most powerful and influential in the international system." Niall Choucri, Robert C. North, and Susumu Yamakage, The Challenge of Japan Before WWII and After: A Study of National Growth and Expansion (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 14.

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49 Quoted in ibid., p. 36. For a detailed account of Louis’ preparations for the Dutch War, see Paul G. Sommovo, Louis XIV and the Origins of the Dutch War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938).

50 David G. Chandler, The Campaign of Napoleon (New York: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 449-50; Mowat, The Diplomacy of Napoleon, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1971), Chapter 16. In Article 1 of the Franco-Bavarian treaty of alliance (August 24, 1805), Napoleon pledged “to seize all occasions which present themselves to augment the power and splendour of the House of Bavaria,” in return for the support of 20,000 Bavarian troops. Ibid., p. 132. Likewise, greed not security, Mowat claims, animated Baden’s decision to bandwagon with France. “The Elector of Baden, in the preamble of the treaty, gives the curious reason for making it, that ‘the renewal of hostilities threatened the independence of the States of the German Empire;’ therefore he joined with that Empire’s enemy. The real reason is that the Elector of Baden, through the support of France in 1802–3, had gained greatly in territory.” Ibid., p. 154.


52 Mowat, The Diplomacy of Napoleon, p. 176.

53 Ibid., p. 177.

54 Glick, Europe’s Classical Balance of Power (see n. 38).

55 Steven Roys, European Diplomatic History, 1789-1815 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), p. 581. The defeated Austrian state, for instance, was shorn of most of its possessions in Italy, Ilyria, and Germany.


57 For example, Mussolini and Hitler successfully played on Hungary’s and Bulgaria’s revisionist aspirations to lure these states into the Axis camp. As part of the Munich agreement of September 30, 1938, a German–Italian court of arbitration pressured the Czech government to grant a broad strip of southern Slovakia and Ruthenia to Hungary. Then, when the Germans carved up the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Hitler, in a deliberate attempt to gain further favor with the Hungarian government, ceded the remainder of Ruthenia (Carpatho-Ukraine) to Hungary. In exchange for these territorial rewards, Hungary pledged its unshakeable support for the Nazi cause and its “foreign policy was brought into line with that of the Reich.” On February 24, 1939, Hungary joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, on April 11 it left the League of Nations.” Norman Rich, Hitler’s War Aims: Ideology, the Nazi State, and the Course of Expansion (London and New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 184.


60 Paul W. Schroeder, “Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of
are not divided, once and for all, into good and evil. It is rare that all the wrongs are committed by one side, that one camp is faultless." Aron, Peace and War, p. 584.

76 Kissinger, A World Restored, p. 1.

77 Wait, The Origins of Alliances.


79 Ibid.


84 Quoted in Gilbert and Gott, The Appeasers, p. 42.


87 Quoted in Gilbert, The Roots of Appeasement, pp. 166–7.


89 Ibid., p. 35.


91 Ibid., p. 58.

92 For GRIT, see Charles E. Osgood, An Alternative to War or Surrender (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962).


95 Ibid., p. 209.