

OTHER NATIONS

The Great Creep Forward

A SURVEY OF RECENT ARTICLES

A GENERATION AGO A BLOCKBUSTER book, *Japan as Number One* (1979), proclaimed Japan's world leadership in industrial competitiveness, crime control, education, and a host of other areas. This triumph appeared almost inevitable—until the Japanese economy melted down in the late 1980s. Now Asia has brought forth a new challenger, China. An academic cottage industry has grown up around new Chinese demographic, military, commercial, and political threats. But scholars are also increasingly pointing out that Chinese hegemony is far from assured, and that in its climb to power and wealth China has disappointed new friends and attracted unsavory allies.

The People's Republic of China has 1.3 billion people, \$1.7 trillion in foreign trade, 2.2 million soldiers, and about 200 nuclear warheads. But according to Naazneen Barma and Ely Ratner, Ph.D. candidates at the University of California, Berkeley, writing in *Democracy* (Fall 2006), "The real threat posed by China isn't economic or military—it's ideological."

Since the end of the Cold War, Barma and Ratner write, "democratic liberalism has been the dominant model for national development and international affairs." China provides an enticing alternative to some of the world's worst rulers: "illiberal capital-

ism"—free markets and tightly controlled politics. It is coupled with a hands-off policy toward other nations' internal affairs, no matter how repugnant.

China's "see no evil" policy is especially pernicious when combined with its relentless search for oil, scholars say. "China's drive for energy resources risks gravely weakening international human rights and obstructing global energy security objectives," writes Matthew E. Chen, a research assistant at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, in *Orbis* (Winter 2007).

Beijing's move to sign between \$70 and \$100 billion in oil contracts with Iran complicates world efforts to isolate Tehran's nuclear-ambitious regime. Its growing oil ties to Venezuela may embolden Venezuela's authoritarian president, Hugo Chávez. Its relationship with another oil exporter, Nigeria, could undercut efforts to improve that state's conduct, Chen writes.

Oil-rich Angola, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund to reduce corruption, recently received a \$2 billion credit line from the Export-Import Bank of China. Angolan dictator José Eduardo dos Santos proudly described the China deal as free of preconditions.

China's most dangerous African liaison is with Sudan. China has been the biggest investor in Sudanese oil, whose revenue has given Khartoum

the ability to sustain its militias and expand its attack helicopter fleet for use in the Darfur area. There, between 200,000 and 400,000 people have died in fighting between government-backed troops and rebel groups. China has used its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council to block introduction of a UN peacekeeping force or the imposition of sanctions, according to Chen.

In Asia, China has propped up the military regime in Burma with \$1.2 billion in trade, and last year signed an agreement to pipe natural gas from a new offshore field, vowing not to meddle in the nation's affairs, Chen writes.

While China is active economically and diplomatically across the globe, "Latin America is the current center of China's global strategy," writes Joshua Kurlantzick, a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in *World Policy Journal* (Fall 2006). In 2004, China's president and vice president made triumphal tours of Latin America, launching trade deals in Brazil and Venezuela, while romancing Bolivia, which has huge stores of natural gas.

In the end, however, scholars are suggesting that China's rise to world hegemony may not be the cakewalk some have predicted. "Less than two years after China and Brazil's courtship, strains have developed in Beijing's relationship with the largest nation in South America as a flood of Chinese imports has not been matched by Chinese consumption of Brazilian goods," Kurlantzick writes.

"China's widely touted investment in nearby Asia actually amounts to very little money passing from China

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Ukrainian *Implementatsiia*

THE SOURCE: "A Note on Lexical Changes in the Contemporary Ukrainian Language Since Independence (1991–2005)" by Valerii Polkovsky in *Slavic and East European Journal*, Fall 2006.

FIFTEEN YEARS OF FREEDOM have transformed the language of the Ukraine just as it has changed the nation. Ukrainian has become more modern, colloquial, and functional, even as Soviet phraseology has been tweaked to reflect an uniquely Ukrainian perspective on contemporary life. The slogan "Forward to the victory of communism" has morphed

into the jocular "Forward to the victory of 'corruptionism.'" The Soviet army song line "The armor is strong and our tanks are agile" has been transformed into the ironic "The armor is strong and their Mercedes are agile." Rural expressions have acquired urban meanings, for example, "Thousands of them got cozy at the budget udder." And "workers on the hard currency front" has come to refer to black-market money-changers.

Almost extinct are the "palaces of pioneers" and the "stations of junior technologists and modelers," writes Valerii Polkovsky of the University of Alberta. Instead, newspapers and journals describe

discotheques and offices. Restaurants, Panasonics, and IBMs loom large as *restorantny*, *panasoniky*, and *aibiemy*. Favorite new words are *implementatsiia* (implementation), *elektoral'nyi* (electoral), and *hrant* (grant), whose use must be watched to prevent *hrantove uzalezhnennia*, or grant dependence. Many Ukrainians continue to speak Russian, but the Ukrainian language is on the rebound after becoming "lifeless" toward the end of the Soviet period, Polkovsky says. Polish, Czech, and Bulgarian are undergoing a similar renaissance.

Certain borrowed words have suffered in the

abroad, while China's foreign-aid effort sees much smaller amounts of money leaving China," writes Georgetown University professor Robert Sutter in *International Journal of Korean Studies* (Spring–Summer 2006). "Official Chinese figures show Chinese foreign investment amounted to less than \$4 billion and Chinese foreign aid . . . less than \$1 billion" worldwide.

Moreover, Beijing's public-relations successes—polls show increased anti-U.S. and pro-China sentiment in South Korea, for example—rest on a "narrow foundation," Sutter says. China's "win-win" approach—neither partner is asked to do anything it doesn't want to do—means that Beijing focuses on achieving "easy things" that avoid costly commitments or major risk.

It has, for example, refused to ease its hard-line stance toward Taiwan, and as a result was forced to rely on the Bush administration to be a voice of reason when Taiwan moved toward independence during 2003–04.

By contrast, according to Sutter, America has worked hard and spent liberally to promote stability and prosperity in Asia, and it asks something in return. As a result, South Korea has put its troops where it believes its true national interests lie: It deployed more than 3,000 to Iraq to sustain its alliance with America, and 2,300 are still there.

EXCERPT

A Gaza Neocon

What [do] the current chaos, lawlessness, random killings, infringements on public land, clashes between families, strewn pedestrian walkways . . . what does all this have to do with the [Israeli] occupation? We've gotten in the habit of blaming others for our own failures. . . . When we walk the streets of Gaza we cannot but be appalled by what we see: disorder on an indescribable scale, indifferent policemen, swaggering young men with weapons draped over their shoulders, big families reenacting ancient blood feuds, all amid a general disregard for the public welfare.

—GHAZI HAMAD, spokesman for the Palestinian government and former editor of the *Hamas* weekly newspaper in Gaza City, in an article in *Al-Ayyam*, translated from Arabic and reprinted in *Middle East Policy* (Winter 2006)