

# Summaries

7–46

The Peril of Peaking Powers: Economic Slowdowns and Implications for China's Next Decade

*Michael Beckley, Tufts University*

From ancient times to the present, rising powers have taken up arms to reorder the world. Yet such violent revisionism poses a puzzle: If a rising power is profiting from the existing order, why would it disrupt that progress with a reckless fit of expansion? One reason is slowing economic growth. Over the past 150 years, peaking powers, meaning rising powers whose economic booms have slowed but not yet stopped, have been the most dangerous kind of country. An extended period of rapid growth equipped them with the means to shake up the world, and then a protracted growth slowdown motivated them to move aggressively to try to rekindle their rise. Peaking power dynamics help explain some of the most consequential geopolitical events in modern history, including the surge of U.S. imperialism in the late nineteenth century, the outbreak of World War II, and Russia's 2014 aggression against Ukraine. These findings amend classic theories of great power conflict and have ominous implications for contemporary Chinese foreign policy.

47–90

The Institutional Origins of Miscalculation in China's International Crises

*Tyler Jost, Brown University*

When is China prone to miscalculate in international crises? National security institutions—the rules shaping the flow of information between leaders and their diplomatic, defense, and intelligence bureaucracies—offer one important answer to this question. A theoretical framework differentiates between three institutional types: integrated, fragmented, and siloed. Integrated institutions reduce the risk of miscalculation both by building capacity to relay bureaucratic information to the leader, and by fostering a competitive dialogue between bureaucracies that improves the quality of information that they provide. In contrast, miscalculation is more likely under two types of pathological institutions. Fragmented institutions reduce capacity to relay bureaucratic information to leaders and encourage bureaucrats to manipulate

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information to conform with the leader's prior beliefs. Siloed institutions restrict information sharing between bureaucracies, which degrades the evaluation of information and encourages bureaucracies to manipulate information to suit their organizational interests. A medium-N analysis of China's international security crises from 1949 to 2012 demonstrates that national security institutions help to explain the majority of its crisis miscalculations. Case studies on the 1962 Nationalist invasion scare, the 1969 Sino-Soviet border conflict, and the 2001 EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft incident illustrate the mechanisms by which national security institutions shape the risk of miscalculation in international crises.

91–124

Collective Resilience: Detering China's Weaponization of Economic Interdependence

*Victor D. Cha*, Georgetown University

Since the 2010s, China has used economic coercion against Western and Asian states to achieve territorial and political goals. China's leveraging of its market is a form of "predatory liberalism" that weaponizes the networks of interdependence created by globalization. The United States and other like-minded partners have mostly used piecemeal "de-risking" measures such as decoupling, supply chain resilience, reshoring, and trade diversion to reduce dependence on China and thereby minimize vulnerability to its economic coercion. But these practices do not stop the Chinese government's economic bullying. "Collective resilience" is a peer competition strategy designed to deter the Xi Jinping regime's economic predation. What informs this strategy is the understanding that interdependence, even asymmetric interdependence, is a two-way street. Original trade data show that the previous and current targets of economic coercion by the Xi Jinping regime export over \$46.6 billion worth of goods to China on which it is more than 70 percent dependent as a proportion of its total imports of those goods. These target states could band together in a collective resilience alliance and practice economic deterrence by promising to retaliate against China's high-dependence trade should Beijing act against any one of the alliance members.

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125–165

Words Matter: The Effect of Moral Language on  
International Bargaining

*Abigail S. Post*, University of Pittsburgh

How does moral language affect international bargaining? When countries rely on moral language to frame a disputed issue, they decrease the probability of peaceful compromise and increase the probability of the dispute escalating with military action. This language operates through two pathways. First, moral language prejudices domestic audiences against compromise over the disputed issue, thereby limiting the options available to negotiators during bargaining. Second, moral language prompts the dispute opponent to also utilize moral arguments to defend its position. The ensuing moral debate moralizes both sets of domestic audiences, consequently reducing opportunities for compromise and narrowing the bargaining range. Negotiated concessions then frustrate the bargaining opponent and elicit accusations of hypocrisy from domestic audiences for compromising on the principle at stake. This backlash triggers crises and pressures the government to stand firm on its previously principled (and uncompromising) position, increasing the probability of military escalation. An examination of the effects of moral language on negotiation breakdown and dispute escalation in the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas case probes the theory. The findings illustrate how moral language can shape a government's behavior far into the future, constraining its ability to broker a peaceful compromise.

166–207

Bargaining with the Military: How Presidents Manage the Political  
Costs of Civilian Control

*Andrew Payne*, University of Oxford

In an era of increased politicization of the military, there are powerful disincentives for commanders-in-chief to challenge the preferences of the senior military leadership. Even though presidents may have the constitutional “right to be wrong,” they require considerable political capital to test that proposition. Dominant normative theories of civil-military relations focus on ideal-type scenarios that do not reflect the messy, inherently political character of elite decision-making. A case study of civil-military dynamics during the Iraq War identifies four decision-making strategies that George W. Bush and Barack Obama used to avoid incurring a domestic political penalty for being

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seen to go against the preferences of the uniformed military. Drawing on declassified documents and dozens of interviews with former administration officials and top-ranking military leaders, the findings indicate that both administrations used these strategies during key episodes of civil-military friction in the Iraq War (the 2007 surge and the troop drawdown that followed). Scholars and practitioners should focus on strengthening civilian and military leaders' capacity to navigate the politics of national security decision-making and reconsidering conventional understandings of the apolitical role of the military.

#### NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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