

CHINA'S REACTION TO THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS: ADAPTIVE AUTHORITARIANISM IN FULL SWING*

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This article provides an interpretivist-structuralist account to analyze the Chinese party-state's perception of and policy adaptations to the Color Revolutions of 2005-2007. China's leaders and established intellectuals perceived the Color Revolutions as a series of contagious and illegitimate political changes in Eurasia, instigated by three major factors: raging domestic grievances, electoral politics exploited by the opposition, and Western powers' intervention for geo-strategic interests. This perception and interpretation of the Color Revolutions gave rise to a collective sense of external threat and prompted the Chinese regime to strengthen its coercive capacity. The result was the communist party's increased control over liberal and critical media, political activism, civil rights advocacy, and Sino-Western civil exchanges. The Chinese

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state's policy adaptations to the Color Revolutions attested to its long-term model of authoritarian developmentalism.

Key words: East Asian politics, China, Communist parties, Color Revolutions

Introduction

China's authoritarian intellectuals and incumbents perceived the Color Revolutions (CRs) in Central Europe and Asia as a series of contagious and illegitimate political changes, instigated by three major factors: raging domestic grievances, electoral politics exploited by the opposition, and Western powers' (the United States in particular) intervention for geo-strategic interests. Given that the Chinese party-state system's structural weaknesses bore similarities to those of the overthrown Eurasian polities, establishment analysts warned that the shockwaves generated by the CRs were likely to impact the prospects of China's own political order. A sense of vigilance prompted Beijing's leaders to seek out and apply "lessons" from those affected post-Leninist regimes, and to meet perceived threats with preemptive measures that would consolidate their tenure.

In retrospect, President Hu Jintao was already moving away from his predecessor's course of liberalization even before the Color Revolutions began. The Hu administration had already insisted on security and ideological tightening. His supporters in regime-sponsored think tanks and security bureaucracies used the 2004-2005 Color Revolutions to legitimate and materialize an already-existing hard-line tendency. China's coping strategy falls neatly into what Beissinger calls the "elite learning model," seeking to frustrate the diffusion and replication of the CRs in ways characteristic of adaptive authoritarianism.¹

1. Mark R. Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions," *Perspective on Politics*, vol. 5, No. 2 (2007), pp. 261, 269-70.

This article is composed of two major sections. I first survey situation analyses and corresponding policy recommendations made by Chinese specialists in the establishment. As members of state-sponsored policy institutes, they constituted an elite epistemic community, and their publications underlined a penchant for the party-sanctioned order and autocratic stability. These specialists suggested that three interrelated sources of political instability accounted for the Color Revolutions: domestic popular grievances about socioeconomic underdevelopment, official corruption, and racial, ethnic, and regional disparities; a networked protest movement, composed primarily of disgruntled youth, whose operations were inspired by, and modelled on, prior successful opposition campaign in nearby countries; and overt and covert interventions of Western powers, the United States in particular, that lent political and logistical support to the indigenous anti-authoritarian opposition.

The survey of each element of this diagnosis is followed by a discussion of corresponding policy prescriptions, as establishment scholars applied the “lessons” learned from the affected post-Leninist regimes. Their aim was to prevent any domestic-initiated or foreign-fabricated duplication of the Color Revolutions from erupting in China. On the one hand, Chinese scholars affirmed the correctness of the Chinese model of authoritarian developmentalism. On the other, they urged the party-state to retain effective control over the contents and venues of the press and media, to firmly contain activities and ramifications of non-Chinese Communist Party (CCP) political activists and public interest advocates, and to put Sino-Western civil exchanges on a shorter leash.

In the second section I draw on the analytic framework devised by Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way to map out the Chinese party-state’s countermeasures in light of rising official perception of a regime threat. Levitsky and Way highlight coercive capacity as a composite structural factor that significantly determines the survivability of incumbent autocrats in the wake of external democratizing pressure. Their research on the consolidation and resilience of competitive authoritarianism is not

only directly relevant to the Color Revolutions; it is also conceptually insightful for studies of closed autocracies, of which China is a major case.²

Multiple sources presented in this section suggest that the Chinese leadership, realizing the organizational atrophy of the party-state organs and debilitating bureaucratic integrity among cadres, began to address these issues by adopting regime-rejuvenating measures even before the CRs kicked in. The Color Revolutions did not entirely account for these party-initiated measures, but they did give rise to a collective notion of vigilance among Chinese incumbents, magnifying the imperative of reform efforts already under way and affirming the necessity of their intensification and extension. Efforts in party-state building and ideological fortification strengthened the party-state's coercive capacity, resulting in what Levitsky and Way call low-intensity coercion, i.e., the party regime's increased control over liberal and critical media, political and legal activism, civil rights advocacy, and Sino-Western civil networks. That is, the CRs were used to justify and ratchet up state-imposed restrictions over potential sources of popular unrest.

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2. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13 (April, 2002), pp. 51-65; Lucan A. Way, "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave," *World Politics*, vol. 57, No. 2 (2005), pp. 231-61; Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "International Linkage and Democratization," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 16, No. 3 (2005), pp. 20-34; Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: The Emergence and Dynamics of Hybrid Regimes in the Post-Cold War Era* (unpublished ms., 2005); Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 39, No. 3 (2006), pp. 387-410; Lucan A. Way, "The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 19, No. 3 (July, 2008), pp. 55-69; Lucan A. Way, "A Reply to My Critics," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 20, No. 1 (2009), pp. 90-97.

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Chinese Interpretations of and Policy Recommendations for Color Revolutions

Beginning in December 2004, as the drama of the Orange Revolution was in full swing in Kiev, Ukraine, Chinese scholars affiliated with the party-sponsored think tanks and the state-run media took notice of several unusual features of popular protest movements in individual Eurasian countries, later categorized as the Color Revolutions. Hu Jintao admonished the research institutes and think tanks to examine the causes and developments of these irregular political changes in formerly socialist countries.³ Thereafter, during 2005 the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and several of its provincial equivalents—institutions that serve advisory and policy-planning functions, as official think tanks, for the party and government—dispatched fact-finding missions to the United States and the affected countries to investigate the causes, processes, and results of the Color Revolutions.⁴ Open sources confirmed that at least seven national, cross-departmental conferences on the Color Revolutions were organized during 2004-2006. At least three edited books were later published. A search in CNKI, a full-text Chinese academic database, turned up sixty articles published in core academic journals between 2005 and 2008 that directly addressed the Color Revolutions.

A closer look at the organizers of the seven known conferences offers some clues as to which sectors of the Chinese party-state were concerned about the potential reverberations of the Color Revolutions. The Research Center for Contemporary

3. Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 38.

4. Yongding, "China's Color-Coded Crackdown," *Yale Global*, October 18, 2005, online at <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/chinas-color-coded-crackdown>; Paul Mooney, "How to Deal with NGOs: Part I, China," *Yale Global*, August 1, 2006, at <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/how-deal-ngos-%E2%80%93-part-i-china>; Jeanne L. Wilson, "Color Revolutions: The View from Moscow and Beijing," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 25, No. 2 (2009), p. 372.

International Issues (RCCII) of the Communication University of China in Beijing organized two symposia in late December 2004 and July 2005. Closely affiliated with the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT) and the CCP Propaganda Department (CCPPD), the RCCII serves and represents the interests of the Chinese propaganda and censorship system.

In addition, the Center for the Development and Research of Social Sciences (CDRSS) under the Ministry of Education (MOE) held three interdepartmental meetings on the Color Revolutions in April 2005 (twice) and April 2006. Established in 1986 with the task of developing the party-sanctioned interpretation of Marxism and dictating the official curriculum of Marxism studies for Chinese higher education, the CDRSS is the gatekeeper and a major stakeholder in the party-state's ideology sector.

Furthermore, a forum on the Color Revolutions was conducted in May 2005 by the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), an official think tank under the auspices of the Ministry of State Security (MSS). Lastly, in May 2006 a symposium titled "Harmonious Society and Internal Security" was held in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, by the Zhejiang Provincial Public Security Academy and the Public Security University of China. This gathering was to present the analyses and policy recommendations by domestic security apparatuses. Its published transcripts unambiguously marked out the Color Revolutions as the main cause for the gathering. What is particularly worth noticing is that the Bureau of Internal Security Protection (BISP) of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) sponsored the Zhejiang event, and the China Research Association of Internal Security (CRAIS) was established afterwards to facilitate research projects linking domestic stability with international issues.

The survey indicates that Chinese research on the Color Revolutions was dominated by establishment scholars affiliated with the propaganda/censorship sector, the official ideology system, and security bureaucracies of the party-state.⁵ As an intellectual

5. Defining the precise relationship between China's establishment intellectuals and the interests of the party leadership is challenging. Simply

collectivity that maintained symbiotic, if asymmetric, relationships with the party-state's coercive apparatuses, these groups of establishment scholars constituted a highly selective epistemic community whose members shared a foundational mindset that prioritized *order* and *stability*.⁶ Here, order is rendered as a set of organizing principles of the Chinese political system, and stability refers to a dynamic status wherein this particular order is retained and reproduced. In other words, an absolute majority of Chinese research on the Color Revolutions amounted to what Blyth characterized as situation diagnoses, informed by "locally-generated ideas," i.e., the dominant truth-claims about *order* and *stability*, which in the Chinese political context referred to a continued autocracy by the developmentalist CCP regime.⁷

While emphasizing varying causes of the Color Revolutions, Chinese establishment scholars claimed that the Color Revolutions were instigated by three major sets of factors: intense domestic

examining scholarly work in publicly available sources does not necessarily determine whether it was the interpretations and policy recommendations of establishment scholars that influenced the policy preferences of national power holders, or if it was the policy parameters and ideological guidelines set by top policy makers that conditioned the situation definitions and policy prescriptions submitted by establishment scholars. My intention here is to suggest that attention be drawn to the significance of this symbiotic, if asymmetric, relationship between the party-state and intellectuals in China.

6. The party regime coopted and domesticated scholars by dictating the distribution of academic-professional goods, such as professorships, fellowships, national research grants, periodic work evaluations, and publication licences and permits. By official censorship and pervasive self-censorship, the party-state was able to assure the compatibility, if not uniformity, of scholarly publication with the party line, especially on sensitive issues such as the Color Revolutions. It then follows that what eventually appeared in the Chinese academic press (such as core journals) on the Color Revolutions may be understood as scholarly discourses that reflected and were consistent with the party-state's convictions about order and stability.
7. Mark Blyth, "Powering, Puzzling, or Persuading? The Mechanisms of Building Institutional Orders," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 51, No. 4 (2007), pp. 763-64; Wesley W. Widmaier, "Constructing Foreign Policy Crises: Interpretive Leadership in the Cold War and War on Terrorism," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 51, No. 4 (2007), p. 780.

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grievances, electoral politics exploited by the opposition, and interventions by Western powers for their geo-strategic interests. Following each claim, Chinese scholars proposed corresponding policy recommendations to prevent the Color Revolutions from affecting the CCP's autocratic rule. First, they almost unanimously vindicated the correctness of the leadership's priority to economic expansion over systemic political reform, and encouraged the party-state to intensify its dealing with vices such as official corruption and growing inequality. On the other hand, Chinese scholars insisted on the party-state's effective control over the activities of non-CCP political and rights activists, the contents and outlets of the press and media, and Sino-Western civil society networks.

Domestic Grievances: Inequality, Corruption, and Ethnic-Regional Divide

Domestic grievances were highlighted especially by scholars of Fudan University's Center for Russia and Central Asia Studies (CRCAS), a research institute whose core faculty members were associated with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Zhao Huasheng, the CRCAS Director, published what appears to be the first analytic article on the Color Revolutions in Chinese academia in April 2005. Zhao first argued that the Color Revolutions should be understood as the "Second Revolution," i.e., the deepening and continuation of the "First Revolution" that terminated socialist regimes in the early 1990s.⁸ Zhao did not ridicule or trivialize the opposition leadership's declared pursuit of a liberal democracy in those Eurasian states, as most of his Chinese colleagues did. Rather, he pointed out that among various factors leading to disruptive political changes in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, popular dissatisfaction with socioeconomic under-

8. Huasheng Zhao, "Yuan Sulian diqu 'yanse geming' langchao de chengyin fenxi" (Analyzing the Causes of the "Color Revolutions" in the Former USSR Areas), *Guoji guancha* (International Observation), No. 3 (2005), pp. 1-8.

development was the most decisive one.⁹

Sustained poverty and a stagnating economy were the perennial themes of the three post-Leninist countries, whose national productivity and living standard suffered an “avalanche-style downfall” during the transitional period in the early 1990s. Although the three countries’ economies had incrementally recovered, Zhao and other like-minded analysts argued, their performance on the eve of the Color Revolutions still could not measure up to where it had been before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Economic underdevelopment was further exacerbated by a staggering disparity between the poor and the rich, a malaise underpinned by various kinds of official corruption—unabashed nepotism, extensive speculation, rampant favoritism, rent-seeking, and bribe-taking—that permeated the entire bureaucratic system and created growing discord between the ruling and the ruled.¹⁰ The breakdown of political trust between ruling elites and the general populace laid the groundwork for political radicalization and instability, opening the way to exploitation and intervention by external actors.¹¹ Zhao concluded that “poverty, polarization, corruption, and injustice constituted the social background against which the Color Revolutions transpired in the former USSR areas.”¹²

Zhao further argued that socioeconomic inequality and

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9. See also Wang Cunkui, “Zhongya diqu ‘yanse geming’ de xingzhi yu yuanyin tanjiu” (Examining the Nature and Causes of the “Color Revolutions” in Central Asia), *Guoji guanxi xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of the University of International Relations), No. 4 (2006), pp. 67-71.
 10. Ru Yanxia and Ren Zhongping, “‘Yanse geming’ gei Zhongguo gongchandang jianquan zhizheng hefaxing de qishi” (Lessons of the “Color Revolutions” for Improving the Legitimacy of Rule by the Chinese Communist Party), *Neijiang shifan xuebao* (Journal of Neijiang Teachers College), vol. 21, No. 1 (2006), pp. 34-5.
 11. Wang Dongying, “Zhengtan budaoweng bei jietou zhengzhi zhuchu zhengtan” (A Political Tumbler Was Expelled by Street Politics), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi yu “yanse geming”* (Street Politics and the “Color Revolutions”) (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2006), pp. 162-63.
 12. Zhao, “Yuan sulian diqu ‘yanse geming’ langchao de chengyin fenxi,” pp. 3-4.

bureaucratic irregularities were complicated by ethnic-regional divides that historically characterized Ukrainian and Kyrgyzstani politics in particular. He suggested that the Orange Revolution in Ukraine was a raucous manifestation of this ethnic-regional rupture, given the fact that the pro-Western opposition alliance was overwhelmingly supported by western Ukrainians, whereas a majority of their eastern compatriots endorsed the pro-Russian team.¹³ A similar ethnic-regional divide may also be found between the northern and southern regions of Kyrgyzstan that once more significantly determined the contours of Kyrgyzstani politics and in turn presaged the Tulip Revolution in 2005.¹⁴ Zhao and like-minded scholars did not exclude other causes of popular unrests from their analyses, such as the U.S. intervention. However, they reminded readers that “fundamentally speaking, the United States did not create the ‘Color Revolutions’ by itself, nor did those ‘revolutions’ succeed entirely on account of the U.S. endorsement and support.”¹⁵ Domestic factors, they asserted, were by far the most important.

Although Zhao Huasheng was among the first few scholars who analyzed the Color Revolution, his viewpoint on domestic inequality and peculation as the decisive factors was not the dominant view in Chinese academia. A majority of Chinese security specialists tended to treat popular discontent as secondary and emphasized almost exclusively the significance of

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

14. Min Qinqin, “‘Yujinxiang geming’ ganpaole Ji zongtong” (The “Tulip Revolution” Forced Out the Kyrgyzstani President), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi*, pp. 184-85; Pan Zhiping and Shi Lan, “Jirjisi: ‘yanse geming’ de dishan” (Kyrgyzstan: Evolution of the “Color Revolutions”), in Pan Zhiping, ed., *“Yanse geming” xiji xia de zhongya* (Central Asia Under Assault of the “Color Revolutions”) (Urumqi: Xingjiang renmin chubanshe, 2006), pp. 53-55.

15. Zhao Huasheng, “Yuan Sulian diqu,” p. 6. See also Li Silin, “Guanyu ‘yanse geming’ de fansi” (Reflections on the “Color Revolutions”), *Yunnan xingzheng xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of Yunnan Academy of Public Administration), No. 6 (2006), pp. 123-24; Ji Jun, “Jingji zhuangui yu ‘yanse geming’” (Economic Transition and the “Color Revolutions”), *Shichang jingji zongheng* (Market Economy), No. 3 (2006), pp. 21-22.

collusive interventions by external actors in each revolution. While economically-rooted grievances carried weight in guiding their policy recommendations, Chinese specialists pointed out that economic underdevelopment in Eurasia should be attributed to the Western-assisted structural adjustment programs that each former socialist polity carried out in the 1990s.¹⁶ The drastic reorientation of the economic structure invited wholesale privatization of state-owned enterprises and introduced market mechanisms, while a parallel reorganization of the political system demolished one-party rule and erected, at least formally, a Western-style electoral democracy.

In contrast, Chinese analysts claimed, the strategy of reform and opening up that China has carried out since 1978 was moderate and gradualist in its nature, and more concentrated and manageable in its scale. On one hand, they argued, China's economic structural reform did not follow the so-called "shock therapy" recommended by Western-dominated international organizations that attempted to revamp the entire economic order in a relatively short period of time. Although China legalized private economic activities and let in market mechanisms, the party-state carried out economic liberalization in a piecemeal, sector-by-sector manner. On the other hand, Chinese scholars indicated, the Chinese party-state firmly and effectively resisted the temptation and pressure of "blindly copying" liberal political ideals and Western political institutions that legitimate broader civil and political rights.¹⁷ Chinese establishment analysts declared that the

16. Dong Yuqun and Yu Min, "'Yanse geming' jingshi he jianchi shehui zhuyi chujī jieduan jiben jingji zhidu xueshu yanyao hui shuyao" (Summary of Seminar on Warnings of the "Color Revolution" and Adherence to the Basic Economic Institution of the Primary Stage of Socialism), *Gaoxiao lilun zhanqian* (University Theory Frontline), October 2005, pp. 62-63; Ji Jun, "Jingji zhuangui yu 'yanse geming'," p. 21; Ma Zhenchao and Zhou Liang, "Zhuanxing qi woguo zhengzhi anquan mianlin de weixie yu tiaozhan" (Threats and Challenges that Confront Our Country's Political Security During Transition), *Xinxiang shifan gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao yuanbao* (Journal of Xinxiang Teachers College), No. 1 (2007), pp. 35-37.

17. Establishment scholars endorsed the party-sanctioned ideological revisionism that defines China's current developmental status as the primary

recent history of East Asia and Eurasia had revealed that China's approach was more successful in terms of improving economic performance and raising living standards while retaining the party-defined order and stability. They saw no reason to depart from this path.¹⁸

In addition to carrying on economic development and resisting political liberalization, establishment scholars further urged the government to strengthen the party regime's popular legitimacy by giving more attention to wealth redistribution and social justice, as structural reforms in socioeconomic institutions not only resulted in growing productivity and booming trade at the macro-national level, but also triggered widening inequality and increasing grievances at social and individual levels. Establishment scholars argued that Chinese society was currently passing through a delicate, precarious stage, during which uplifted economic performance stimulated social stratification and exacerbated popular frustration. Official corruption and mismanagement only bred further social discontent.¹⁹

Therefore, establishment scholars suggested, the party regime should move beyond the performance-based understanding of legitimacy, and incorporate issues of social justice into the policy-making equation. Doing so was imperative for retaining the party-defined order.²⁰ After all, they maintained, legitimacy was contin-

stage of socialism. While the primary stage tolerated private sectors and market forces for the sake of uplifting overall productivity and facilitating socioeconomic transition toward the final stage of communism, the fundamental socialist *order*—the public ownership of major productive forces and the “people’s democratic dictatorship”—should never be forsaken. See Dong and Yu, “‘Yanse geming’ jingshi,” p. 63; Zhu Nianfeng and Wang Qunying, “Zhuanjia xuezheng yantao ‘yanse geming’, ‘jietou zhengzhi’ ji Meiguo xihua, fenhua Zhongguo zhanlue” (Experts and Scholars Discussed the “Color Revolutions,” “Street Politics,” and the U.S. Strategy of Westernizing and Dividing China), *Gaoxiao lilun zhanxian* (University Theory Frontline), June 2005, pp. 63-64.

18. Ru and Ren, “‘Yanse geming’ gei Zhongguo gongchandang,” pp. 35-37.
 19. Ma and Zhou, “Zhuaxing qi woguo zhengzhi anquan,” pp. 35-36.
 20. Ji, “Jingji zhuangui yu ‘yanse geming,’” p. 20; Zhu and Wang, “Zhuanjia xuezheng yantao ‘yanse geming,’” pp. 63-64; Ru and Ren, “‘Yanse geming’ gei Zhongguo gongchandang,” p. 36.

gent upon societal recognition and identification, especially among those socioeconomic groups that were relatively disadvantaged in the market economy, such as workers and villagers.

In particular, Chinese political economists brought to the fore the exigency of strengthening anti-corruption measures. In Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, pervasive official corruption devoured and overshadowed economic recovery, causing the material interests of ruling elites to be alienated further away from those of the general public, and provoking social resentment and political instability. Likewise in China, rampant official corruption has fuelled mass demonstrations and riots nationwide over the past decade, making corruption the single most disruptive and corrosive factor in contemporary China's state-society relationship. Therefore, Chinese establishment scholars concluded, the existing order and stability hinged on the party's determination to strike hard at all forms of official corruption through investigative, punitive, and preemptive measures.²¹

Electoral Politics Exploited by the Opposition

Besides socioeconomic causes, Chinese establishment scholars were attentive to the strategies that domestic opposition adopted in each of the CRs. In particular, scholars who were integral to the party-state's propaganda and censorship system took an interest in analyzing how opposition movements capitalized on popular resentments and mobilized massive street protests by exposing and exploiting controversies regarding allegations of electoral fraud.

Liu Hongchao, the late RCCII Director and an influential

21. Zhu and Wang, "Zhuanjia xuezhe yantao 'yanse geming,'" pp. 63-64; Li, "Sudong jubian he 'yanse geming,'" p. 46; Kuang Xiaoyang and Liu Yu, "'Yanse geming,' Meiguo de minzhu zhanlue, Duice" ("Color Revolutions, the U.S. Democracy Strategy, and Our Policy"), *Yangzhou daxue xuebao* (Journal of Yangzhou University) No. 3 (2006), p. 27; Ru and Ren, "'Yansse geming' gei Zhongguo gongchandang," pp. 35-37; Ma and Zhou, "Zhuanxing qi woguo zhengzhi anquan," p. 36.

journalist affiliated with the state-run Xinhua News Agency, argued that the Color Revolutions should not be characterized as democratic changes through election, for opposition leaders in each case rejected electoral results as fraudulent. Instead, Liu defined the Color Revolutions as a type of irregular power struggle launched by opposition parties, after losing a major election, with the express intent of seizing state power via civil disobedience.²² Likewise, Zhang Zhongyun, a professor in the Central Party School's Research Institute of International Strategy, suggested that all the success stories of the CRs witnessed a relatively stronger domestic opposition with historical roots, popular support, better organization, and well-publicized leadership.²³

Liu and his colleagues emphasized the lethality of street protests. They recounted how political opposition, by amplifying charges of electoral dishonesty, mobilized waves of street protests that eventually brought down unpopular leaders and their administrations, such as Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, Georgia's Eduard Shevardnadze, and Ukraine's Leonid Kuchma.²⁴ Interestingly, these scholars indicated wryly that political leaders in these countries dug their own graves by installing liberal democratic institutions, such as multiparty competition and division of power, which legitimated popular mobilization and curtailed administrative privileges down the road.²⁵

22. Hongchao Liu, "Jietou zhengzhi yu 'yanse geming' jiexi" (Analyzing Street Politics and the "Color Revolutions"), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi yu "yanse geming,"* p. 8.

23. Zhang Zhongyun, "Jietou zhengzhi yu zhengquan gengdie" (Street Politics and Regime Change), *ibid.*, p. 30.

24. Ma Yuezhou, "Milosevic zai jietou zhengzhi mianqian fanchuan luoma" (Street Politics Dislodged Milosevic), *ibid.*, pp. 157-59; Wang, "Zhengtan budaoweng," p. 164; Zhang Chongfang, "Yushchenko kao jietou zhengzhi fanpan chenggong" (Yushchenko Rebounded by Street Politics), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi yu "yanse geming,"* pp. 171-72.

25. Liu, "Jietou zhengzhi yu 'yanse geming' jiexi," pp. 11-13; Zhang, "Jietou zhengzhi yu zhengquan gengdie," pp. 33-34; Zhang, "Yushchenko kao jietou zhengzhi," pp. 168-9; Li Fusheng, "Sudong jubian he 'yanse geming' dui dang de xianjinxing jianshe de qishi" (Seismic Political Changes in the Former USSR Areas and Eastern Europe, the "Color Revolutions," and the CCP's Advanced-Nature Campaigns), *Wenshi buolan* (Culture

Furthermore, Liu and his colleagues labelled the "so-called freedom of press" as the other culprit of political disorder.²⁶ Unchecked domestic liberal media and unobstructed Western radio and television networks became the mouthpiece of political opposition that, on the one hand, criticized official corruption, social injustice, economic underdevelopment, and poverty, and on the other hand promoted the opposition's campaign platforms and crafted a positive image of opposition contenders. The result was that social discontent reached an all-time high, and so did popular expectations of regime change.²⁷

Chinese establishment scholars observed the effects of electoral politics not only from the side of the opposition but also through the lens of the incumbent leadership. In contrast to the aggressive and concerted campaigns of the opposition, incumbents' reaction in every successful revolution was marked with miscalculation, wavering, and internal division, according to the Chinese analysts. Ma Yuezhou, a professor at the CUC's School of International Communication (SIC), indicated that the open disobedience and defection of the Serbian armed forces and internal security apparatuses was the last straw that crushed the Milosevic regime in October 2000.²⁸ Wang Dongying, the other SIC professor, pointed out a mostly identical sequence of events in Georgia in November 2003 that eventually toppled the Shevardnadze administration: the Georgian government's fatal indecision on repressing massive demonstrations, because top army commanders withdrew their endorsement of the Shevardnadze regime's declaration of a state of emergency at the critical juncture.²⁹ In like manner, Zhang Chongfang, an influential journalist-official affiliated with the Xinhua News Agency, emphasized the policy schism between the outgoing President Leonid Kuchma, who sought a middle ground and political compromise, and the premier-turned presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich,

and History), No. 3 (2006), p. 45.

26. Zhang, "Yushchenko kao jietou zhengzhi," p. 177.

27. Liu, "Jietou zhengzhi yu 'yanse geming' jixi," pp. 16-17.

28. Ma, "Milosevic zai jietou zhengzhi mianqian fanchuan luoma," pp. 156-60.

29. Wang, "Zhengtan budaoweng," pp. 164-65.

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who urged that the government squash opposition rioters.³⁰

If the Color Revolutions succeeded in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, it could happen in China as well. Economic performance and capacity building were far from enough for power retention; rather, Chinese scholars argued, the party needed also to reclaim the ideological high ground, and to solidify its sociopolitical control. In particular, scholars of the propaganda/censorship system and the personnel system were disturbed by a commonality of socialist Eastern European regimes and the Soviet Union before their implosion: The official ideology had become ossified, lost vitality, and surrendered the power of persuasion to Western liberal ideals. Likewise, the state-imposed ideology was losing its appeal, especially among the youth, which cogently explained the leading role played by youth opposition movements in each instance of the Color Revolutions.³¹ Chinese scholars of ideology hence emphasized the imperative of rejuvenating Marxism-Leninism studies, "to link the fundamental Marxist theories to the concrete reality of China's reform and opening up, in order to broaden the horizons of Marxism."³² An adaptable and updated Marxist ideology would then become the ideational weapon and armor to withstand theoretical confusions and spiritual contamination, especially among the youth.³³

In the meantime, establishment scholars proposed a corresponding set of practical policy prescriptions, the kernel of which was to retain the party's monopoly in Chinese politics. According to establishment scholars, the ineptitude and internal division that doomed the Eurasian leaders was due to their having lost the guiding ideology. They were disoriented by externally-implemented liberal propaganda, to the extent that they "dug their own grave" by instituting competitive, multi-party political sys-

30. Zhang, "Yushchenko kao jietou zhengzhi," pp. 175-7.

31. Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena," pp. 261-68; Joshua A. Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Color Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 5, No. 3 (2007), pp. 539-43.

32. Li, "Sudong jubian he 'yanse geming'," p. 45.

33. Zhu and Wang, "Zhuanjia xuezhe yantao," p. 64.

tems. If anything, establishment scholars argued, the Color Revolutions revealed that China had to unwaveringly insist on the party's political domination, and resolutely oppose the transplantation of liberal democratic institutions—the so-called Western initiative of peaceful evolution. Establishment scholars went so far as to call for reinvigorating the long-ignored Four Cardinal Principles to highlight the presupposed causal relationship between party-imposed order and stability.³⁴ In particular, establishment scholars specified the party's absolute control and command over the armed forces and internal security apparatuses as its lifeline.

Ideological fortification and political domination require cooperation of the mass media to justify and disseminate pro-regime accounts, establishment scholars further argued. Shockingly, witnessing the liberalizing processes during which pro-opposition media took over and marginalized government-fed information in each instance of the Color Revolutions, Chinese propaganda specialists emphatically reminded the top leadership of the deadly risks incurred by overthrown regimes once censorship was lifted and unlimited press freedom took effect. For instance, Ma Yuezhou and Zhang Chongfang summarized eight major destabilizing functions induced by Western and opposition media during each electoral process: promoters of liberal democracy, propagators of subversive information, rumor creators, image molders for opposition leadership, manipulators of public opinion, distorters of mass communication, real-time coordinators of anti-regime demonstration, and monopolizers of political discourse.³⁵ Tang Xiuzhe insinuated that Soviet propaganda officials' sympathy to liberal ideals and their self-terminated censorship expedited the dissolution of the Soviet Union.³⁶ Wen Youren exclaimed that "pulling back from the battlefield of public opin-

34. The Four Cardinal Principles refer to the Chinese party-state's adherence to the socialist road, the proletarian dictatorship, the leadership of the CCP, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

35. Ma and Zhang, "Xifang chuanmei zai sudong jubian," pp. 326-35.

36. Tang Xiuzhe, "Gorbachev shiqi de jietou zhengzhi" (Street Politics during the Gorbachev Era), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi yu "yanse geming,"* pp. 120-28.

ion is tantamount to the inception of regime change.”³⁷

As a result, pro-regime scholars recommended that the party should hold on tight to its control over the “barrel of a pen,” with the aim to prevent “capitalist elements and market forces” from influencing the political content of mass media.³⁸ But on the other hand, they also urged the government to carry out institutional and practical reform in propaganda and news reporting, so as to convert propaganda into effective public relations campaigns that would enhance the authoritativeness of government-fed information among domestic audiences, and would improve China’s international image. They further suggested that the party should encourage the supervisory and consultative functions of mass media for the populace to vent grievances and defuse hostilities toward the regime. However, they cautioned, this pressure-relieving function must be conducted within the permissible range dictated by the party. Lastly, establishment scholars urged the government to be more attentive to the higher education curriculum in communication and journalism, in order to cultivate true believers and active defenders of Marxism-Leninism in the media industry.³⁹

Overt and Covert Interventions by Western Powers

Lastly, an overwhelming majority of Chinese establishment scholars singled out external support, the United States in particular, as the most decisive factor in the Color Revolutions. Their analyses characterized those regime changes as part and parcel of the U.S. grand strategy to sustain hegemony in the post-cold war era.⁴⁰

37. Wen Youren, “Rangchu yulun zhendi jishi diushi zhengquan de kaishi” (Giving Away the Position of Public Opinion Signifies the Beginning of Losing Power), *ibid.*, p. 313.

38. Liu Ming and Ma Yuezhou, “Dazhong chuanmei yu zhengquan gengdie” (Mass Media and Regime Change), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi yu “yanse geming,”* pp. 292-93.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 293-95.

40. Among numerous sources, see Liu Jianfei, “Cong ‘yanse geming’ kan

They argued that Washington was determined to accomplish two strategic imperatives: containing and further weakening Russia, and securing access to strategic materials.⁴¹ Eurasia hence became increasingly significant, they suggested, because the region joins southern Russia and the oil-rich Middle East. After the synchronized terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, one more goal was added to the U.S. foreign-policy agenda: destroying globalized Islamic radicalism and preventing its resurgence.⁴² As a result, Chinese security scholars argued, the George W. Bush administration had to court or find reliable allies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This, Chinese specialists argued, constituted the policy rationale of U.S. interventions in the region.

As the U.S. military was stretched thin by two regional wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, armed interventions in Eurasia became too costly and unviable, argued Chinese scholars. Instead, Washington utilized its soft power, and adopted nonviolent but subtler tactics that led to the establishment and consolidation of pro-Western administrations in the region to be its strategic out-

Meiguo de minzhu tuijin zhanlue" (From the "Color Revolutions" Analyzing the U.S. Strategy of Democracy Promotion), *Zhongguo dangzheng ganbu luntan* (China Forum for Party Cadres) August 2005, pp. 42-43; Sun Zhuangzhi, "Meiguo zai Dulianti guojia tuidong 'yanse geming' de zhuyao celue he zuofa" (Tactics and Approaches Employed by the United States to Promote the "Color Revolutions" in the CIS States), *ibid.*, pp. 46-47; Zhao Huasheng, "'Yanse geming' hou Ouya diqu xingshi de bianhua" (Eurasia after the Color Revolutions), *Xiandai guoji guanxi* (Modern International Relations), No. 11 (2005), pp. 31-33; and Jin Biao, "Shixi Zhongya 'yanse geming' zhong waiguo feizhengfu zuzhi de zuoyong" (A Preliminary Analysis of the Functions of Foreign NGOs in the "Color Revolutions" in Central Asia), *Feiyingli zuzhi yanjiu* (Non-Profit Organization Studies), No. 4 (2008), pp. 7-11.

41. Ji, "Jingji zhuangui yu 'yanse geming'," p. 22; Li, "Guanyu 'yanse geming' de fansi," p. 124; Zhang, "Jietou zhengzhi yu zhengquan gengdie," pp. 34-35. See also Sun Lingyun, "'Yanse geming' yu guoji guanxi zhuanti yantaohui" (Seminar on the "Color Revolutions" and International Relations), *Guoji guancha* (International Observation), No. 3 (2005), pp. 15-19.
42. I appreciate Edward Friedman's insightful comments, indicating that the U.S. strategic imperatives on energy security and global terrorism also were among China's strategic pursuits.

posts.⁴³ Chinese analysts shared the view that the United States carried out regime changes in Eurasia mainly through two courses of action: internal destabilization and external imposition, each having public and clandestine components.

Regarding internal destabilization, Chinese analysts alleged a U.S. policy of implanting a *Trojan horse* into Eurasian polities: Congress appropriated significant amounts of money to promote democratization in Eurasia, beginning with Serbia. The U.S. government distributed the funds not only to state organs but also to various nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to spread the ideology and institutions of liberal democracy and market economy in the region.⁴⁴ Openly, Chinese scholars opined, the U.S. government, American higher education institutes, and U.S.-based political NGOs launched various exchange programs that brought tens of thousands of Eurasian political and intellectual elites to the United States, in order to instill in their mind a sense of the superiority of American political ideals and system, and to prop up pro-U.S. circles in individual polities.⁴⁵ Clandestinely, the U.S. government and political NGOs allegedly provided financial aid, training sessions, and logistical assistance for opposition movements that Washington considered worthy of investment for regime change.⁴⁶

43. See the speech of Huasheng Zhao during a special forum held in Shanghai in April 2005, in Sun, "'Yanse geming' yu guoji guanxi zhuanli yantao hui," pp. 18-19.

44. Qian Wenrong, "Feizhengfu zuzhi," pp. 48-51.

45. Among other sources see Pan Rulong and Dai Zhengqin, "'Yanse geming' yu guoji feizhengfu zuzhi" ("Color Revolutions" and International NGOs), *Dianzi keji daxue xuebao* (Journal of UESTC), December 2005, pp. 78-79, and He Zhilong and Zhao Xinggan, "Zhongya 'yanse geming' de genyuan jiqi dui Zhongguo de yingxiang" ("Color Revolutions" in Central Asia and Their Implications for China), *Shanxi qingnian ganbu guanli xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of Shanxi Academy of Administration for Junior Cadres), No. 2 (2005), p. 47. Those U.S.-based NGOs that were frequently marked out by Chinese scholars as colluding with the U.S. government's hegemonic strategy are the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Ford Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation, the Soros Foundation, and the Open Society Institute (OSI).

46. Kuang Xiaoyang and Liu Yu, "'Yanse geming,' Meiguo de minzhu

U.S. diplomatic and intelligence agents were involved in networking dissident organizations of different Eurasian countries to exchange and enrich experiences in the mobilization and organization of nonviolent civil disobedience.⁴⁷ Local opposition parties, networked and empowered, then used the U.S.-provided funding and learned skills to run and manipulate mass media, instigate popular discontent, disrupt political order, and eventually seize power.⁴⁸

On the external side, the United States, in collaboration with its European allies and those international organizations under its control, is said to have shored up local opposition in the region by publicly hinting that international sanctions would not be lifted unless the pro-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) camp claimed electoral victory.⁴⁹ During post-election phases, the United State stepped up its pressure by discrediting electoral process and results, and by warning respective Eurasian governments not to meet popular unrest with force.⁵⁰ In Serbia, NATO even staged joint offshore military exercises on the day of the presidential election to intimidate the incumbent Milosevic administration, argued Chinese specialists.⁵¹ According to Chinese accounts, the Western-imposed international pressure directly led to the wavering and inaction of respective Eurasian governments, dissuaded incumbents from quashing massive demonstrations, and eventually overthrew their regimes. At the

zhanlue, Duice," pp. 24-25; Pan, "Meiguo de 'dazhanlue'," pp. 34-35.

47. Liu, "Jietou zhengzhi yu 'yanse geming' jiexi," pp. 19-21; Zhang, "Jietou zhengzhi yu zhengquan gengdie," pp. 35-36; Ma, "Milosevic zai jietou zhengzhi," pp. 155-57.

48. Among the many sources, see Liu and Ma, "Dazhong chuanmei yu zhengquan gengdie," pp. 288-89, 291-92; and Zhang Zhongyun, "Dazhong chuanmei shi Sulian jieti he zhengquan gengdie de cuihuaji" (Mass Media Catalyzed Soviet Dissolution and Regime Change), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi yu "yanse geming,"* pp. 298-300.

49. Liu, "Jietou zhengzhi yu 'yanse geming' jiexi," p. 17.

50. Kuang and Liu, "'Yanse geming,' Meiguo de minzhu zhanglue, Duice," pp. 24-26.

51. Liu, "Jietou zhengzhi yu 'yanse geming' jiexi," p. 17; Ma, "Milosevic zai jietou zhengzhi," p. 158.

end of the day, Chinese security specialists asserted that democratization was only a smokescreen for Washington's ulterior agenda: further Westernizing Eurasia for a perpetual American hegemony.⁵²

Unsurprisingly, establishment scholars tended to project the CCP's policy over civil organizations onto their understanding of state-society relationship in democracies. That is, establishment scholars almost always expressed an oversimplified view of an asymmetric relationship between the state and civil society, in which a powerful and domineering regime unilaterally and indisputably provides funding to, imposes its policy demands on, and dictates the operational guidelines of civil-society organizations. A presupposition that stands as the touchstone of this viewpoint is that civil organizations are neither independent of government nor nongovernmental in terms of their clientelist ties to the ruling machine. It is based upon this presumption that Chinese establishment scholars drew no distinction between the U.S. government and the U.S.-based NGOs, and treated them simply as integral aspects of one entity.

This understanding of state-society relations led Chinese security specialists to suggest that the government curtail suspicious networks between grassroots civil organizations and transnational civil society, particularly NGOs that received funding and logistical support from the U.S. government. Chinese officials and establishment scholars maintained that NGOs from industrially-advanced countries almost always won the trust of host countries by first introducing ostensibly innocuous projects, such as poverty reduction and elementary education, and gradually carrying forward their ulterior agendas. Following this logic, they defined those international NGOs engaging in political change as civil accomplices, or disguised saboteurs, who were in partnership with their national governments to carry out pernicious schemes of regime change.

Establishment scholars hence called for the Chinese government to investigate thoroughly and to regulate more effectively

52. Pan and Shi, "Jirjisi: 'yanse geming' de dishan," pp. 45-49.

the operations of foreign civil organizations in China. They called for and justified the government's forceful actions against those potentially, or actually, disruptive foreign NGOs.⁵³ Specifically, pro-regime scholars drew lessons from those ex-socialist countries whose leadership foiled the spread of the Color Revolutions, such as Azerbaijan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Chinese establishment scholars suggested that all the incumbent administrations in these countries invariably took strong interventionist measures to stymie the activities and penetration of Western political NGOs.⁵⁴

The Party-State Strikes Back

As noted above, a discussion of Chinese establishment scholars' explanations of the Color Revolutions and their corresponding policy prescriptions does not mean to prove a causal relationship between scholarly understandings and state responses. Publicly available materials do not provide evidence of such a conclusion.⁵⁵ Instead, my discussion reveals a symbiotic, even inter-subjective, relationship between the official stance of the party-regime and the formal presentation of the establishment scholarship in China. In-system scholars had to declare their allegiance to the party-sanctioned order at least formally and publicly, although they may, based on their analyses, have tinkered with policy prescriptions to adjust those stabilizing mechanisms. Such

53. Pan and Xu, "Feizhengfu zuzhi yu dulianti guojia de 'yanse geming,'" p. 203.

54. Ding Zhitao, "Andijan shijian de lailong qumai" (The Andijan Incident), in Liu Ming, ed., *Jietou zhengzhi yu "yanse geming,"* pp. 217-23; Zhao Xuebo, "Kazakhstan dui 'yanse geming' shuo 'bu'" (Kazakhstan Said "No" to "Color Revolution"), *ibid.*, *Jietou zhengzhi yu "yanse geming,"* pp. 239-40; Wan Chengcai, "Eluosi ruhe duifu 'yanse geming'" (How Did Russia Deal with the "Color Revolutions"), *ibid.*, *Jietou zhengzhi yu "yanse geming,"* pp. 253, 261-62.

55. In fact, a majority of the journal articles and book chapters cited in this article appeared either in tandem with or a little while after the Chinese government adopted the "counter-revolution" measures.

tactical flexibility among pro-regime analysts reflected a shared conviction among Chinese leaders that while the party-defined order had to remain constant, the party-approved stabilizing measures could be adjusted to the dynamic environment.

I employ the analytic framework devised by Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way to examine the Chinese party-state's regime-stabilizing measures that it implemented in the wake of the Color Revolutions. Their research on competitive authoritarianism sought an explanation of the fact that democratization in ex-socialist states and former autocracies often neither endured nor was consolidated.⁵⁶ Levitsky and Way define competitive authoritarian regimes as:

civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which fraud, civil liberties violations, and abuse of state and media resources so skew the playing field that the regime cannot be labelled democratic. Such regimes are *competitive*, in that democratic institutions are not a facade: opposition forces are legal channels to seriously contest for (and occasionally win) power; but they are *authoritarian* in that oppositions are handicapped by a highly uneven—and even dangerous—playing field. Competition is thus real but *unfair*.⁵⁷

Levitsky and Way explain the post-cold war phenomenon of competitive authoritarianism by shedding light on the relative causal weight of two distinct groups of independent variables, one covering the international dimension of democratizing pressure and the other addressing the domestic structural aspect of authoritarian resilience.⁵⁸ For our purposes, the domestic variables are most important: the *scope* of regime capacity and *cohesion* of internal security. They measure the organizational strength of any given authoritarian incumbent's resilience and capacity to thwart international democratizing pressure.⁵⁹ The

56. Lucan A. Way, "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave," pp. 232-23.

57. Levitsky and Way, "Competitive Authoritarianism," p. 4.

58. Levitsky and Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," pp. 52-54.

59. Way and Levitsky, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the

scope of regime capacity refers to the effective reach of the state's security apparatuses and its ruling party's organizational networks, such as armed forces, police, and paramilitary organizations. Cohesion of internal security entails the compliance of security personnel and party cadres with autocratic incumbents.⁶⁰ A high level of cohesion refers to a condition where "incumbents can be confident that even highly controversial or illegal orders . . . will be implemented systematically on the ground. Security officials will obey executive orders to repress, and rank-and-file soldiers, police, and bureaucrats will carry out those orders."⁶¹ Levitsky and Way synthesize the international variables with the domestic structural ones to explain regime outcomes in countries undergoing democratization in the post-cold war era.⁶² They propose that the result of democratizing pressure would be more likely contingent upon domestic structural variables (that is, the incumbents' authoritarian capacity) in cases where international leverage is weak and linkage sparse.

Levitsky and Way's research agenda highlights the explanatory power of domestic organizational determinants. These are particularly relevant to the China case, since Western powers hold relatively low leverage over Beijing, and their linkages with Chinese bureaucracy and society have only recently increased. The regime-stabilizing measures that the Chinese party-state actually adopted, to be presented below, confirm the importance of domestic factors: The Chinese regime initiated in-party campaigns and instituted new rules, with a professed aim to fortify and extend its organizational capacity, and to enhance the level of cohesion within security apparatuses and party organizations. The policy results are what Levitsky and Way define as *low-intensity coercion*, i.e., consolidation of the regime-defined order through systematic, if less brute, control over political activism in various dimensions that went beyond the party bounds.

Cold War," pp. 389-97.

60. Levitsky and Way, "Competitive Authoritarianism," p. 49.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

62. Lucan A. Way, "The Real Causes of Color Revolutions," pp. 59-62.

Tightening the Grip: Political and Socioeconomic Transitions Prior to the Color Revolutions

The power transition during 2002-2003 ushered in new leadership as Hu Jintao secured the position of CCP general secretary in November 2002 and was appointed president of the People's Republic in March 2003. The China that Hu inherited from his predecessor, Jiang Zemin, was a mixed bag: high-speed economic growth was accompanied by widening social inequality and rampant corruption.⁶³ An economically strengthened but administratively fragmented and professionally underdeveloped regime was unable and unwilling to provide adequate collective goods (legal protection and social security) for the disadvantaged laborers and villagers.⁶⁴

The ineptitude of China's bureaucracy in accommodating and regulating market mechanisms exacerbated the socioeconomic conflicts that came along with economic liberalization, resulting in the exponential growth of disputes, litigations, protests, and riots.⁶⁵ Throughout the 1990s labor disputes and

63. On rising urban unemployment, see Merle Goldman, *From Comrade to Citizen: Struggle for Political Rights in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), chap. 8. On official corruption, see Melanie Manion, *Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), chaps. 3-4.

64. On China's fragmented authoritarianism manifested in various governing sectors, read Kenneth Lieberthal, "Introduction: The 'Fragmented Authoritarianism' Models and its Limitations," in Kenneth Lieberthal and David Lampton, eds., *Bureaucracy, Politics and Decision Making in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992); Stanley Lubman, *Bird in a Cage: Legal Reform in China after Mao* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), chaps. 2 and 4; and Dorothy J. Solinger, "Path Dependency Reexamined: Chinese Welfare Policy in the Transition to Unemployment," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 30, No. 1 (2005), pp. 83-96.

65. See, for example, Kevin O'Brien and Li Lianjiang, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Dorothy J. Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 61-71.

disputants involved in labor cases increased rapidly as well. However, a mismatch between a rising consciousness of rights and an underdeveloped legal system led to increasing numbers of unsettled disputes and disgruntled citizens—a fertile ground for mass discontent and social unrest.⁶⁶ As a result, not only did disputes and lawsuits pile up; there also were soaring numbers of civil petitions and incidents of popular resistance that defied government's mandatory (and usually abusive) acts, such as house demolitions in urban settings or excessive taxation in the rural areas.⁶⁷ Both the industrial-urban sectors and the agricultural-rural areas witnessed a rapid increase of what the Chinese government refers to as "mass group incidents."⁶⁸

Facing a volatile state-society relationship, the Hu administration presented a reformist-cum-populist image by stressing the necessity of administration by law, strengthening administrative professionalism, dealing with cadre corruption, and addressing socioeconomic inequality between geographic regions and among social strata.⁶⁹ In 2003 two high-profile incidents—the SARS pandemic and the death of a college student in a police detention center at Guangzhou—instigated nationwide criticisms by civil soci-

66. Jae Ho Chung, "Assessing the Odds Against the Mandate of Heaven: Do the Numbers (on Instability) Really Matter?," in Chung, ed., *Charting China's Future: Political, Social, and International Dimensions* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp. 107-28; Albert Keidel, *China's Social Unrest: The Story Behind the Stories* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006).

67. Thomas P. Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, *Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Yongshun Cai, "Civil Resistance and Rule of Law in China: the Defense of Homeowners' Rights," in Elizabeth J. Perry and Merle Goldman, eds., *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 174-95.

68. Ching Kwan Lee, "Is Labor a Political Force in China?," in Perry and Goldman, eds., *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China*, pp. 228-52; Murray Scott Tanner, "China Rethinks Unrest," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 27, No. 3 (2004), pp. 137-56; Zhou Zhongwei, *Quntingxing Shijian ji Chuzhi* (Managing Mass Incidents) (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 2006).

69. Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), chap. 2.

ety and liberal academics over the opaqueness, ineptitude, and abuse of the party regime.⁷⁰ While the top leaders responded by demoting (and even criminalizing) responsible officials and adopting new regulations, they noticed the potential of a perilous transition from economic liberalization and social diversification to mass-initiated political reform. It was against this background of delicate sociopolitical stability and vibrating legal activism that the Rose Revolution in Georgia entered into the purview of top Chinese leadership and establishment scholars.

As political unrest in Ukraine toppled the Kuchma administration in December 2004, what Chinese leaders perceived as an ominous scenario of collaboration between an aspiring domestic civil society and Western agencies for political change seemed real and imminent. Official perception of regime insecurity triggered adjustments in China's domestic governance and foreign policy making. The logic of vigilance gained ground among Chinese incumbents, leading to the party-state's intensified campaigns for ideology reinforcement, and its aggravated restriction over liberal media, political activism, public interest advocacy, and Sino-Western civil cooperation. Government actions were almost identical with the policy prescriptions advanced by in-system analysts: upholding the party-ordained order but adjusting the order-*stabilizing* measures.

The Color Revolutions did not directly trigger all the regime-stabilizing measures after 2004. Rather, the outbreak and proliferation of the Color Revolutions delivered a timely justification to hard-liners in the Chinese regime to affirm the imperative of restrictive efforts already under way, and to devise more aggressive measures for internal security control. Also, the implementation of these security measures became more assertive, persistent, and systematic soon after Chinese leaders took notice of the development of the Color Revolutions. In short, Chinese incumbents utilized their fear of the Color Revolutions to vindicate, and to make sense of, pre-programmed hard-line measures, hence relating these measures, in an *a posteriori* manner, to the Color Revolutions.

70. Ibid., chap. 4.

The remainder of this section examines the Chinese party-state's post-Color Revolutions undertakings that attempted to strengthen the level of regime coherence and to extend the scope of regime control. The policy result was *low-intensity coercion*: from late 2005 through 2007 Chinese society experienced an increasingly overbearing approach of government over civil and political liberty, reflected in rising state intervention over media and civil society, increasing restriction over Sino-Western civil exchanges, and a growing number of arrests and indictments on the charge of endangering state secrets.

Enhancing the Level of Regime Coherence

Pursuant to Levitsky and Way's structuralist framework, I suggest that China's preemptive measures covered two dimensions: *cohesion* of internal security systems and *scope* of regime capacity, which were meant to constrain Western leverage over Beijing, and to place Sino-Western civil linkages under closer scrutiny. The central Chinese leadership enhanced the level of *coherence* within its organizational structure by launching a new wave of ideological indoctrination and increasing budgets appropriated for internal security apparatuses. Almost concurrently, the Color Revolutions directly caused the Chinese party-state to reinforce and extend its *scope* of administrative capacity in two respects: press and media administration and control over civil society.

Although the party-initiated campaign of ideological fortification was pre-programmed and scheduled for implementation prior to the Color Revolutions—and publicly available documents and interviews are insufficient to substantiate a causal relationship between the Color Revolutions and increasing internal security expenses—its implementation was unmistakably legitimated and intensified due to the Color Revolutions. Moreover, the ideology campaign and rising internal security spending unequivocally reinforced state intervention in, and control over, media and civil society, hence contributing to low-intensity coercion.

Intra-Regime Campaign for Ideological Fortification

Levitsky and Way suggest that authoritarian incumbents improve bureaucratic coherence and discipline within the governing structure through material, relational (familial and/or ethnic), and ideational methods. The China case confirms their proposition. At the 4th plenary session of the 16th CCP Central Committee in September 2004, Hu Jintao urged the party members to strengthen the party's capabilities to govern permanently.⁷¹ The plenum communique maintained that the party's governing capacity hinged upon upholding Marxism as the guiding ideology, and vowed to "firmly hold the direction of public opinion, and strengthen and improve political thought work."⁷² Following the instruction of the plenum communique, the CCP Politburo launched an aggressive all-party campaign to "preserve the advanced nature of Communists."⁷³ The CCP Central Organization Department set up an Advanced-Nature Education Office on October 1, 2004, to coordinate and supervise the following nationwide ideological drive.⁷⁴

71. *Xinhua News Agency*, September 19, 2004, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-09/19/content_1995366.htm.

72. *Ibid.* and "Chinese Party Document Vows to Uphold Marxism, Retain Control of Media," *Xinhua News Agency*, LexisNexis Academic, September 26, 2004.

73. "Chinese Communist Party Launches Advanced-Nature Education Drive," *Xinhua News Agency*, LexisNexis Academic, October 22, 2004, (accessed May 7, 2008); Lin Chufang, "30 wan dangyuan sixiang dadiaocha zhendong zhongyang" (Ideology Survey on 300,000 Party Members Shook Up the Party Center), *Liaowang Dongfang Weekly*, November 23, 2004, <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/zhuanti/xjxy/753416.htm> (accessed February 16, 2009).

74. In fact, the Advanced-Nature Campaign originated from the disturbing findings of a national inspection conducted in 2000 that surveyed the state of political values of 300,000 party cadres. This unprecedented survey exposed disquieting signs of party atrophy: individualism, materialism, ignorance of ideology, eroding party discipline, decaying basic-level party organization, and growing alienation between the party and society. The CCP Central Organization Department (CCPCDC) in late 2000 proposed an intra-party ideological campaign to promote the "Three Representations" thinking, which was approved by the top

The Advanced-Nature Campaign lasted eighteen months, from January 2005 to June 2006. The campaign required all the party members to be familiar with Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and particularly Deng Xiaoping theory and the "Three Representations" thinking of former president Jiang Zemin.⁷⁵ Under the overarching goal of strengthening the party's capacity to govern, the objectives of this campaign were four-fold: enhancing the ideological quality of party members, restoring the basic-level party organizations, serving the masses, and facilitating government work.⁷⁶ Its preparatory stage overlapped with the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and its initial phase coincided with the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan. While it is indisputable that the Color Revolutions broke out after the top Chinese leadership's decision on

leadership. In January 2003, the CCPCDC carried out pilot projects of the Advanced-Nature Campaign at seven state agencies and twelve provincial and municipal government units. 52,000 party cells and 1.03 million party cadres participated in these experimental projects that laid the groundwork for the following nationwide campaign. "Baochi dangyuan xianjinxing jiaoyu' huodong de lailong qumai" (On the Genesis of the "Advanced-Nature Education" Drive), *Xinxi Daokan*, January 11, 2005, www.china.com.cn/chinese/zhuanti/xjxjy/753458.htm.

75. Jiang Zemin's "Three Representations" thinking refers to the discourse that the Chinese Communist Party, in order to continue its rule, must strive to represent: China's advanced productive forces, China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. Jiang proposed the Three Representations in May 2000. At the 16th CCP Congress in November 2002 the Three Representations was incorporated into the CCP Constitution and became one of the party's authoritative political guidelines. "Introduction and Development of the 'Three Representations' as an Important Thinking," *Xinhua News Agency*, July 1, 2003, at www.southcn.com/news/gdnews/xcrc/xgc/xxzl/200307010864.htm.
76. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu zai quandang zhankai yi shijian 'sange daibiao' zhongyao sixiang wei zhuyao neirong de baochi gongchandangyuan xianjinxing jiaoyu huodong de yijian" (Circular of CCP Center on Carrying out Campaign Activities of Retaining the Advanced Nature of Communist Party Members, Based upon Practicing the Important Thinking of the "Three Representations" as the Major Content), *Xinhua News Agency*, November 7, 2004, at www.china.com.cn/chinese/PI-c/751762.htm.

launching the Advanced-Nature Campaign, various sources pointed out that irregular political changes in those ex-socialist Eurasian countries vindicated China's propaganda system and resulted in the intensification and rigor of the ideological campaign in China.⁷⁷

Besides ideological fortification, the party propaganda system used the Advanced-Nature Campaign to delegitimize the international and domestic drives for political liberalization. They reiterated that the Western liberal political systems were inadequate for contemporary China, and reminded cadres of the interventionist and expansionist tendency of certain Western democracies—particularly the United States—in attempting to transplant their own political institutions to the developing countries.⁷⁸ As Hu Jintao himself publicly declared, “history indicates that indiscriminately copying Western political systems is a blind alley that would lead China to a ‘dead end.’”⁷⁹ Shambaugh's research indicates that the top leadership and the CCP-COD carried out the Advanced-Nature Campaign with sophistication and determination. The campaign did not resemble prior ideological drives that quickly degenerated into formalism and left no durable effects. Rather, from the beginning it was given great significance, in both ideological and practical terms. The top leadership carried out the campaign as the most crucial component of a greater effort to assure the party's continued tenure. During its three phases, party members were required to attend mandatory study sessions on a weekly basis, be familiar with (in some cases even recite) select propaganda materials, and reflect on

77. Li Fusheng, “Sudong jubian he ‘yanse geming.’”

78. Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era*, pp. 34-42, 108-27. For instance Yu Yunyao, the vice chancellor of the Central Party School and an influential socialist theorist, faulted what he labelled as the Bush administration's unilateralist and expansionist foreign policy for creating a sense of uncertainty and instability in international relations. Yu, “Wei shenma yao jiaqiang dangde zhizheng nengli jianshe?” Banyue Tan, September 2004, at www.southcn.com/nflr/llzhuanti/zzn1/zhizz1/200409270425.htm.

79. “Hu Warns against Aping Western Politics,” *Straits Times* (Singapore), LexisNexis Academic, September 24, 2004.

ideological purity and work quality.⁸⁰ In particular, the Advanced-Nature Campaign was carried out with tenacity among higher education institutes and media professionals. It was not uncommon to hear professors in Beijing complaining that they were ordered to participate in every study session and to compose essays of self-criticism in their own handwriting.

On top of the general ideology-intensifying drive, the party leadership endeavored to inculcate internal security officials with a sense of vigilance to any attempts of subversion, by drawing upon “lessons” from recent incidences of regime change around the world, such as the Color Revolutions. On June 19, 2008, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), under the auspices of the CCP Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission (CCPCPLAC), released a six-episode, 120-minute documentary titled “Warnings of Color Revolutions,” which was based upon the multi-year CASS studies mentioned previously. The first audiences of the mini-series were senior officials (at the provincial or ministerial level) of internal security apparatuses (the police, prosecutor’s offices, and the judiciary) who were summoned to the Central Party School for an ideology study workshop organized by the CCPCPLAC. Its leadership ordered the documentary distributed throughout the government structure, and every member of internal security departments was required not just to watch the entire series but also to compose personal reflections after viewing it.⁸¹

80. David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), pp. 129-31.

81. Wei Xiao and Shiyu Lin, “Quanguo zhengfa xitong zhuanli yantao ban jiti guankan *yanse geming jingshi lu*” (Members of All-Nation Study Workshop of Political and Legal Affairs Systems Watched Warnings of Color Revolutions), *Jiancha ribao* (Prosecution Daily), CNKI, June 20, 2008; Wei Xu, “Yanmi fangfan yanli daji gezhong dianfu pohuai huodong” (Preventing and Striking Harshly on All Kinds of Subversive and Disruptive Acts), *Fazhi ribao* (Legal Daily), CNKI, June 20, 2008; Can Xu, “Baochi gaodu jingjue weiwu changzhi jiu’an” (Maintaining High Alert, Sustaining Order and Security), *Renmin gongan bao* (People’s Public Security Daily), CNKI, June 20, 2008.

Increasing Internal Security Spending

In addition to ideological reinforcement, Levitsky and Way propose that authoritarian incumbents enhance the level of bureaucratic coherence and discipline by patronage, i.e., rewarding security personnel and inner circles with material gains. The official Chinese statistics of government spending on internal security confirm such a proposition, reflected in huge government spending for internal security during the post-Color Revolutions years (2005-2007). *Table 1* presents overall government spending (OG) and government expenses on internal security (IS) from 2002 through 2007, with the latter category further broken down into two sub-categories: expenses for the police, prosecutor's offices, and the judiciary (PPJ), and spending on the people's armed police (PAP, the national gendarmerie). From 2003 on, each amount of spending is followed by its annual growth rate,

Table 1. Annual Government Spending and Spending and Annual Growth Rates for Internal Security Forces (unit: RMB 100 million)

Year	OG	IS	PPJ	PAP
2002	18903.64	1348.98	1101.57	247.41
2003	21715.25 (14.87%)	1565.54 (16.05%)	1301.33 (18.13%)	264.21 (6.79%)
2004	26396.47 (21.56%)	1835.15 (17.22%)	1548.06 (18.96%)	287.09 (8.66%)
2005	33930.28 (28.54)	2179.86 (18.78%)	1852.89 (19.69%)	326.87 (13.86%)
2006	40422.73 (19.13%)	2562.26 (17.54%)	2174.23 (17.34%)	388.03 (18.71%)
2007	49781.35 (23.15%)	3486.16 (36.06%)	2900.99 (60.34%)	585.17 (50.81%)

Note: OG = overall government expenses; IS = internal security expenses; PPJ = expenses for the police, prosecutor's offices, and the judiciary; PAP = expenses for the People's Armed Police.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, China Statistical Yearbook (Beijing: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1994-2008), www.stats.gov.cn/english/statisticaldata/yearlydata/#.

bracketed within parentheses. While during fiscal years 2004-2006 the annual growth rates of internal security spending lagged behind those of overall government spending, in fiscal 2007 overall government spending increased over 23 percent over 2006, while internal security expenses grew 36 percent. Likewise, in 2007 government spending on the police, prosecutor's offices, and the judiciary grew rapidly (about 60 percent), while the annual growth rate of government spending on the people's armed police grew nearly 51 percent.

Judging from publicly circulating materials, it is difficult to attribute increasing internal security spending directly and *solely* to the Color Revolutions, because other factors such as soaring mass protests and the approaching Olympics could together have prompted the Chinese government to stack up its investment in state coercion apparatuses. Nevertheless, the Color Revolutions unmistakably drove home the voice of internal security systems within the CCP, rendered the authoritarian call for security tightening much more persuasive than before, and evidently facilitated state-imposed constriction after 2005.

Strengthening and Extending the Scope of Regime Capacity

In addition to enhancing regime coherence through ideological fortification and patronizing internal security bureaucracies, Chinese authoritarian incumbents adapted to the Color Revolutions-instigated perception of regime threat by strengthening the capacity and reach of regime control over media, civil society, and Sino-Western civil exchange programs.

Tightening Press and Media Administration

The institutional measures for extending the reach of regime control was felt most noticeably in mass media, as regime leaders scrambled to reassert the party's grip on outlets and contents of mass media. Gone was what Chinese media professionals called *xiaoyangchun* (springtime for a brief moment)—a short-lived

period of time that was noted for loosened media censorship as a result of nationwide criticism over the government's coverup and mishandling of the SARS epidemic in 2003. In January 2005 the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) released a directive stipulating that only state-licensed journalists may engage in news gathering and news editing, hence compressing independent journalism.⁸² In February 2005 the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT) issued the propaganda work priorities for the year of 2005, requesting media professionals to self-consciously reject ideologies and political viewpoints that were harmful to the socialist political system.⁸³ Book publishers, media professionals, and newspaper and periodical publishers likewise were told during 2005 to support the party's ideological priorities.⁸⁴

Besides the externally-imposed discipline, the Chinese regime emphasized self-censorship and voluntary cooperation by journalists. In April 2006 the semi-official All China Journalists Association organized a national conference to declare journalists' rejection of Western (that is, liberal) bourgeois ideals, and to reaffirm their allegiance to the state-sanctioned ideology and the socialist political system.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the government was intensifying control over the content of the Internet. Administrators of fourteen major Chinese Internet portal websites in April 2006 announced their voluntary cooperation with the government to filter out socially and politically inadequate information, and to disseminate state-approved political discourses. Their declaration of voluntary cooperation was soon followed by other major enterprises of the Internet industry.⁸⁶

82. Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2005* (Washington, D.C.: CECC, October 2005), p. 60.

83. *Ibid.*

84. CECC, *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2006* (Washington, D.C.: CECC, September 2006), pp. 30-31.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Strengthening Supervision over Nongovernmental Networks

The other major undertaking for strengthening and extending scope of regime capacity was the Chinese government's intensified scrutiny over Chinese civil society and Sino-Western civil cooperation. In the wake of the Color Revolutions, Beijing strengthened its existing administration over domestic civil society, including non-profit organizations, private foundations, and professional associations. On top of that, new sets of regulations were enacted to enhance the government's supervision and inspection of civil-society organizations.

The Provisional Regulations of Registration and Administration of Civil Non-Profit Organizations (hereafter the *NPO Regulations*), issued by the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA) in October 1998, placed all registered nongovernmental organizations, Chinese and foreign, under the administrative jurisdiction of two bureaucracies.⁸⁷ The State Council in December 1999 promulgated the Provisional Rules of Registration of Civil Non-Profit Organizations (hereafter the *NPO Registration Rules*) that detailed the requirements and procedures of NPO registration. The State Council in March 2004 further issued the *Regulations for the Administration of Foundations*, whose content notably resembled the two sets of rules for NPO administration. In a sense, these regulations indicated Beijing's realization of the growing presence of, and a great social demand for, civil-society organizations, even though these regulations constituted a major bureaucratic hurdle that frustrated private NGOs (as opposed to

87. On the one hand, the MOCA functions as a clearinghouse and administrator of national NPO registry. The Ministry's Bureau of Civil Organization Administration holds the power to review and (dis)approve the application of NPO registration, to issue the non-profit, tax-exempt license to NGOs, to carry out annual inspection on legally registered NPOs, and to renew or revoke the license. On the other hand, in order to register and obtain the NPO license, an NGO must secure the professional sponsorship of another bureaucracy whose administrative specialty relates to the said NGO's agenda. This bureaucracy monitors and supervises the NGO's daily operations, and reviews the NGO's annual report prepared for license renewal by the MOCA.

those state-sponsored, or party-affiliated mass organizations) from applying for and obtaining the legally registered status.⁸⁸

Until 2005 the Chinese government implemented these registrations with laxity and regional variation. Institutional hindrance caused a great number of private NGOs to either register as for-profit (hence tax-paying) entities, or to stay unregistered (hence *illegal* in the Chinese context).⁸⁹ In the meantime, annual inspection and random auditing, as stipulated in the regulations noted above, were not consistently carried out. As a result, Beijing did not gather reliable statistics on the number and state of affairs of NGOs in China. This unintended ignorance due to fragmented governance was met with rising alert after early 2005.⁹⁰ Observing the powerful influence of local NGOs and their Western sponsors in shaping public opinion and organizing contentious demonstrations during the Color Revolutions, the Chinese government was determined to tighten its administration over civil-society organizations.

In March 2005, the MOCA issued the Directives on the Annual Inspection of Civil Non-Profit Organizations (hereafter the *Inspection Directives*) that went into effect in June. From then on the MOCA more consistently carried out annual inspections of legally registered NGOs. The government was especially attentive to NGOs' financial sources and their connections with Western foundations. As a result of tightened policy execution,

88. Interview with a professor of law of Wuhan University, Wuhan, China, September 28, 2007; interview with a lawyer affiliated with a major regional legal aid NGO, Wuhan, China, September 29, 2007. For an updated discussion of Chinese government's NGO policies, read also Liu Yiyi, "NGOs in China: Development Dynamics and Challenges," in Zheng Yongnian and Joseph Fewsmith, eds., *The Non-State Sector and Governance* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 90-93.

89. Wilson, "Color Revolutions: The View from Moscow and Beijing," pp. 374-75; Liu, "NGOs in China," pp. 92-3.

90. Ironically, slack law enforcement created a breathing space for relatively independent civil society to grow and spread, especially among the urban population. Liberal intellectuals, critical youth, rights-defending lawyers, and public interest advocates adroitly employed various communicative approaches (such as the Internet and cell phones) to disseminate their agendas and mobilize concerned citizens into informal interest groups.

official statistics on the development of Chinese civil organizations were generated for the first time in 2005, signifying more effective official management and reach over civil society.⁹¹ Meanwhile, the MOCA froze the processes of new NGO registration.⁹² The legal profession also came under scrutiny: In March 2006 the All China Lawyer Association (ACLA, China's semi-official national bar association), in cooperation with the central authorities, issued a binding opinion, requiring its member lawyers who represented cases of mass protest to keep local authorities posted on the progress of the case. It also urged law firms to strengthen supervision over member lawyers representing mass-protest cases.⁹³

Policy Results: Low-Intensity Coercion in Operation

Punitive Acts on Liberal Media and Press

After the yearlong ideological campaign, the Chinese official censorship system began to impose restrictions on uncooperative journalists who defied the party's ideological instruction and cooptation. In December 2005 the editor-in-chief and two deputy editors of the well-respected *Xinjingbao* (New Capital News) were suddenly removed from their posts on account of the CCPCPD's direct intervention. In January 2006 the CCPCPD again lashed out at the *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* (China Youth Daily) by demanding that its leadership remove the editorial team of its popular *Freezing*

91. In 2005 the MOCA approved registration licenses of 319,762 existing civil organizations (*minjian zuzhi*), an umbrella category that consisted of 171,150 social organizations (*shehui tuanti*), 975 foundations (*jijin hui*), and 147,437 private non-profit organizations (*minban feiqiye*). National Bureau of Statistics of China, *China Statistical Yearbook 2006*, at www.stats.gov.cn/english/statisticaldata/yearlydata.

92. Yongding, "China's Color-Coded Crackdown."

93. All China Lawyers Association (ACLA), "Zhonghua quanguo lushi xiehui guanyu lushi banli quntixing anjian zhidao yijian" (ACLA Directive Concerning Lawyers Handling Mass Incident Cases), at www.acla.org.cn/pages/2006-5-15/s34852.html.

Point Weekly, because its liberal-leaning editors published an essay that criticized the official Marxism-informed historiography.⁹⁴

Targeted Repression over Political Activism and Public-Interest Advocates

In addition to increasing state intervention in press and mass media, the Chinese government after 2005 stepped up repression of political and legal activism, a development that came about almost concurrently with the substantial growth of government spending on internal security. The increasing budget was soon converted into more equipment, manpower, and facilities for control and coercion.

The party-imposed crackdowns not only resulted in growing harassment and intimidation of political activists, civil rights defenders, independent lawyers, and religious practitioners, but also led to extraordinary increases in arrests and indictments for political crimes. Defined in China's Criminal Law as the crimes of endangering state security (ESS), political crimes include charges against subversion, inciting subversion, secession, and leaking of state secrets. According to official statistics, the Chinese government in 2006 arrested 604 ESS suspects, double the number of ESS arrests in 2005. Likewise, the number of ESS arrests in 2007 (742) increased 23 percent from the year before.⁹⁵ An almost identical pattern may be found in official statistics concerning EES indictments.⁹⁶

94. *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2006*, p. 34.

The other major case was the forced closure of the Chinese Development Brief by the Beijing public security bureau in July 2007. The reputable newsletter had operated since 1995 and provided reliable information of China's social-economic development and public policy to foreign aid community in China. Joseph Kahn, "China Shut Down Western-Run Newsletter," *New York Times*, July 11, 2007, online ed.

95. Dui Hua Foundation, "More Official Statistics Point to Increasing Crackdown on Political Dissent in China," December 3, 2007, at www.duihua.org/2007/12/more-official-statistics-point-to.html.

96. National Bureau of Statistics of China, *China Statistical Yearbook* (Beijing: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1994-2008), at www.stats.gov.cn/english/statisticaldata/yearlydata/#.

The San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation further pointed out that the “number of individuals detained for political reasons is actually much larger than the annual statistics show. . . . [T]here recently appears to have been an increase in the use of non-ESS charges such as ‘illegal business activity’ or fraud to punish individuals clearly targeted for their political activity.”⁹⁷ Moreover, “the numbers incarcerated rise well into the thousands if one includes those detained for other forms of oppositional activity, such as participation in banned organizations or ‘mass incident’ protests against corruption, land seizures, environmental damage, and other injustices.”⁹⁸

Scrutinizing Sino-Western Civil Linkages

In addition to its high-handed policy over the press, the media, public interest advocacy and political activism, the Chinese party-regime intensified harassment and intimidation on targeted unregistered NGOs.⁹⁹ In particular, the central government was anxious to figure out the activities and agendas of Western NGOs in China; the administrative scrutiny and registration applied to local NGOs went to Western ones as well. For instance, since 2006 the San Francisco-based Asia Foundation had applied for the license of a private foreign foundation in China, yet as of October 2007 the MOCA had not made a decision. Meanwhile, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) established an ad hoc task force, under the Division of International Organizations, to investigate foreign NGOs.¹⁰⁰ Public security and state security officials began to visit offices of Western NGOs without prior notice, and Chinese NGO employees were approached by security officials to inquire about Western staffs and their operations.

While the U.S.-headquartered NGOs and the local NGOs

97. Dui Hua Foundation, “More Official Statistics.”

98. Joshua Rosenzweig, “Increased Rate of Political Arrests in China is Troubling,” *JURIST*, November 30, 2007, at <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/hotline/2007/11/increased-rate-of-political-arrests-in.php/>.

99. Yongding, “China’s Color-Coded Crackdown.”

100. Paul Mooney, “How to Deal with NGOs.”

receiving U.S. funding were the focus of government investigation, Western NGO communities in China felt intimidated. Several international conferences or NGO-sponsored exchange programs were suspended, and higher-education bureaucrats acted more conservatively in processing pending proposals of academic or professional cooperation projects.¹⁰¹ For instance, a law professor in Hong Kong revealed that his latest legal aid project that received funding from the US Agency for International Development was halted in September 2007 by the top leadership of the justice ministry for undisclosed reasons. China also slowed its cooperation with U.S. agencies on rule-of-law matters.¹⁰²

Some Western NGOs received harsher treatment than others. For instance, after April 2005 the Chinese Ministry of Justice refused to answer requests and inquiries from the Dui Hua Foundation that, since its establishment in 1999, has advocated early release or humane treatment of imprisoned Chinese dissidents. The Chinese government accused the Dui Hua Foundation of imposing pressure on, and hence intervening in, China's judiciary and law enforcement.

Conclusion

In this article I adopt a structuralist approach to explain China's official responses to the Color Revolutions. Irregular

101. Yongding, "China's Color-Coded Crackdown"; interview with a senior research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007; interview with three program officers of a major U.S.-headquartered NGO, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007; interview with a former official of the U.S. embassy in China, Beijing, China, September 7, 2007.

102. Interviews with a senior manager of a major U.S.-headquartered NGO, Hong Kong, August 28, 2007; interview with a professor of law of Hong Kong University who managed legal aid projects in China, Hong Kong, August 31, 2007. The tightened supervision over foreign NGOs and foundations since 2004 was confirmed as well during an interview with a senior research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.

political changes that overthrew incumbent governments in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan shocked Chinese ruling elites and establishment scholars. In particular, academics associated with propaganda, censorship, and security apparatuses were appalled by what they understood to be the common factors that accounted for the three revolutions—a disgruntled populace, an election exploited by the opposition, and the interventions of Western powers. Accordingly, beginning in early 2005, the Chinese party-state initiated a series of regime-stabilizing measures to strengthen and extend its regulatory capacity, and to enhance the cohesion and discipline of its bureaucrats. A new round of intra-party ideological campaigns that was launched right before the Ukrainian revolution was intensified and carried out more consistently than previously supposed. New rules were added to the existing regulatory frameworks, resulting in tighter state control and scrutiny over the press, media, and civil organizations. Harassment, intimidation, and formal repression against political activists and rights defenders who defied party guidelines and/or state cooptation increased conspicuously after 2005.

The vigilance-inspired, regime-stabilizing measures corresponded well to what Beissinger and Tucker identified as the “elite learning model.” Under this model, “established elites retain a belief in the future of current institutions, . . . and respond to the threat of . . . change by moving aggressively to prevent such challenges, repressing them and raising institutional constraints that they face.”¹⁰³ If anything, the Color Revolutions further reinforced the commitment of Chinese ruling elites and establishment scholars to the CCP-sanctioned political order. To them, China should never adopt the competitive, multiparty political system promoted by the West, because an exposed fraud or misdeed in a general election might become a “*focal point*” to be exploited by political opposition.¹⁰⁴ In fact, the major objectives of the Chinese party-state’s preemptive measures were

103. Beissinger, “Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena,” p. 269.

104. Tucker, “Enough!” p. 541.

to thwart the formation of single contentions into a focal point in national politics, to disperse those focal points that already existed, and to prevent linkages between independent activists, discontented citizens, and global civil society that might amplify and capitalize on these focal points for political gains.

The Color Revolutions-generated vigilance subsided notably after late 2007. Domestically, the vigilance-guided measures kept local mass protests from spreading and networking with external pressure. Whereas the CCP-approved order was sustained, the party-regime could not inoculate itself from the destabilizing tendencies it feared, which were brought about by a widening chasm between socioeconomic liberalization and political-legal closeness. The ethnic riots that erupted respectively in Tibet (March 2008) and Xinjiang (July 2009) exemplified the complexity and volatility of China's state-society relations, which have severely strained the party-regime's monitoring and control capacity. Although the perceived threat phased out, the term Color Revolutions—due to ideological campaigns and propaganda mobilization—has not just stayed on but also has found its way into the Chinese political lexicon. It refers to any attempts at political change through external intervention by Western powers.¹⁰⁵

Internationally, the Chinese national leadership and foreign affairs bureaucrats noticed that the Color Revolutions stopped at Kyrgyzstan and failed to proliferate. They were equally aware of the fact that the United States did not wield absolute power over Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan after these revolutions.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the Chinese leadership's perception of external democratiz-

105. Wilson, "Color Revolutions," pp. 380-81. The fear that the West might instigate a "Color Revolution" in China is exemplified by two news reports. See Wang, "'Yanse geming' cedongzhe yinmou Zhongguo" (Instigators of the "Color Revolutions" Conspired Against China), at www.chinaelections.org/NewsInfo.asp?NewsID=124328, and Shen Benqiu and Ni Shixiong, "Meiguo jieru Xianggang 'yiguo liangzhi' de xianzhuang yu qushi" (The State of Affairs and Trend of the U.S. Intervention in Hong Kong's "One Country, Two Systems" Policy), *Xiandai guoji guanxi* (Modern International Relations), No. 11 (2008).

106. Zhao Huasheng, "'Yanse geming' hou Ouya diqu xingshi de bianhua," pp. 31-32.

ing pressure was apparently somewhat relieved by a major policy talk by Robert Zoellick, then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, on September 21, 2005, in which he urged China to be a “responsible stakeholder” in the existing international system, and to cooperate with the United States to deal with global issues such as terrorism, radical Islam, and weapons of mass destruction.¹⁰⁷ Realizing that Washington was deeply entangled by the war on terror and badly needed China’s cooperation (or at least acquiescence) on a number of thorny issues (e.g., North Korea, Iran, and Sudan), Chinese leaders were reassured that a U.S.-endorsed regime change in China in the near future was highly unlikely, albeit Washington is in favor of seeing China’s peaceful transition toward democracy. Security reassurance from the United States in turn allowed Beijing to adopt a less obstructionist stand with Washington over its foreign policy to pariah states in which China holds high (or potentially high) strategic and/or economic stakes, such as Sudan, Myanmar, North Korea, and Iran.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, as new restrictive measures were assimilated into routine procedures, party-state agents and a majority of public-interest advocates and NGOs settled on tacitly agreeable but regionally varied modes of interaction. What Kellee Tsai identified as “adaptive informal institutions” in private economic sectors—those unofficial arrangements improvised by local entrepreneurs in their daily interactions with local authorities to evade compli-

107. Robert B. Zoellick, “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?” (remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, New York City, September 21, 2005), at www.ncuscr.org/recent-remarks-and-speeches.

108. Hak Yin Li and Yongnian Zheng, “Re-interpreting China’s Non-Intervention Policy towards Myanmar: Leverage, Interest, and Intervention,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 18, No. 61 (2009), pp. 630-33; Quentin Peel, “China Tested by Unstable Neighbour,” *Financial Times*, September 27, 2007; Morton Abramowitz and Jonathan Kolieb, “Why China Won’t Save Darfur,” *Foreign Policy*, June 2007, at www.foreign-policy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3847; Tan Banyue, “Huajie Darfur wenti de Zhongguo yuansu” (The China Factor in the Solution for the Darfur Problem), *Xinhua News Agency*, June 25, 2007, online at http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2007-06/25/content_6287115.htm.

cated formal regulations—exist in civil organization management as well.¹⁰⁹ Civil-society activists and regulatory agencies reached a localized, tacit, and volatile *modus vivendi* that, under state acquiescence, granted an ambiguous, unspecified breathing space for daily operations and short-term development of local NGOs (even unregistered ones). In other words, while the CCP-sanctioned political order remained in place, those regime-stabilizing measures continued to evolve. The party's adaptive strategies have had the short-term effect of reinforcing the organizational robustness and policy responsiveness of the CCP rule. Regime durability was hence assured by institutional adaptation.¹¹⁰

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