Balance between International Authority and National Autonomy

PingPing Zhu Lincoln

Abstract

Up to the first half of the 20th century, nations had often resorted to force in dealing with international conflicts. Power or hard power played a decisive role in territory disputes and world domination. Now we are living in a multipolar world that is not controlled by one or two hegemonies, and facing many unprecedented global problems such as financial crisis, terrorism, climate change, and nuclear proliferation. No countries can solve any problems alone by resorting to any type of power, whether hard, soft, or "smart". Good global governance is to find a balance between international authority and national autonomy. Is there an international authority that can maintain world order, issue commands, and make rules obeyed by all the autonomous nations? Does the concept of one-country leadership（hegemony）conflict with international authority and national autonomy? This article is to interpret the concepts of international authority and national autonomy, and to discuss the balance between them. International authority is represented by a transnational entity given authority by nations that willingly transfer part of their national power and rights while keeping the autonomy on sovereignty and domestic issues. Bearing its national autonomy, each country within this entity, developed or developing, is an equal member, and has an equal share in international authority. The discussion is both theoretical and empirical.

The balance between international authority and national autonomy is the key for mankind to realize its "five basic social values: security, freedom, order, justice, and welfare"（Jackson, & SØrensen, 2007）. Without this balance, none of these five ideals can be realized at an ontological and universal level. In other words, the balance between international authority and national autonomy embraces the realization of these five basic social values at the individual, national, and international layers. In history, countries, especially the superpowers, claimed their legitimacy and success in maintaining order and peace in regions and in the world. However, if the world order and peace are maintained under the deterrence of any power, or within a hegemonic system, the so-called order and peace are not what all the nations, or not even the majority of the world want. The established order and peace do not last since power structure changes according to certain interests involved, which often violates the national autonomy of some countries. A country, only when its national autonomy is respected as equal as others, including the superpowers, would show its equivalent respect to any international authorities. The international authority represents the interests of all countries that do not conflict with the order and peace of the global community. Thus the relationship between international authority and national autonomy can be understood as two indissociable parts of an entity based on the mutual inclusion of their definitions, and they have to be balanced at an ontological level. No military or political factors should, or will, affect

the ontological identity of any countries. That is to say that as equal members, no countries have more or less power than others; that no countries should ignore international authorities; and that the autonomy of each country is the premise and the foundation of international authorities.

Autonomy and Authority: National or International

Autonomy and authority can be understood from either national or international perspective. According to Christiano (2004), there are two kinds of authorities: legitimate authority and de facto authority. An institution with legitimate authority "maintains public order", "issues commands and makes rules that are generally obeyed by subjects". An institution with de facto authority has the capacity "to maintain public order and secure the obedience of most people by issuing commands backed by sanctions." Based on these definitions, an autonomous nation is a nation either with legitimate authority or with de facto authority. Judging whether a national authority is legitimate or not depends on believed ideology and knowledge of that country including its history and political system. But should the autonomy of a de facto national authority to be respected? Should the autonomous process of a nation be part of that nation's autonomy? Can we apply the same theory to international authorities? Are there two kinds of international authority: one that is legitimate, and the other de facto? Can we consider the U.N. a legitimate international authority and the U.S. a de facto international authority? Is there an international authority that can maintain the world order, issue commands, and make rules obeyed by all the autonomous nations? The U.N. cannot yet maintain the world order like an autonomous country maintaining its domestic order. And the real authority of the U.S. probably only exists among its alliances. Another question raised here is how an autonomous country deals with a de facto international authority. It is not unusual in world history that a national authority went through a process from a de facto situation to a legitimate stage. A de facto international authority, however, has no right to interfere with the autonomy of a national authority, either of a legitimate or a de facto national authority. A legitimate international authority has to respect every nation's autonomy, and cannot force a territorial country to do what it does not want to do. However, it can supervise or safeguard a de facto national authority's transition to a legitimate one. By its original meaning, the autonomy of a nation is in the hands of its people. The premise of the balance between international authority and national autonomy is that international authority has to be based on national autonomy of all countries. One of the main tasks for an international authority is to represent and protect the interests of countries by whom it is authorized. Without national autonomy, there will be no international authority but hegemony. In other words, international authority can only exercise its authority among autonomous countries. International authority does not exist among countries without autonomy. Thus international authority and national autonomy are unalienable and universal.

In order to maintain the public order and people's compliance with the rules and laws, authorities need power as a deterrent. However, authority is different from power. Power is defined as the ability to influence somebody to do something. Authority refers to a claim of legitimacy and right to exercise that power. The concept of Authority has much broader meaning than the concept of Power, because authority can be based either on legitimate violence, money, or knowledge (Zhao and Ni, 2007). All factors that have an influence on others are important in forming an authority, including material elements and

abstract elements such as the quality of government, the spirit of leaders, and diplomatic skills, so power is only a small part of an international authority. While an international authority has a power transferred from autonomous nations, countries obey the power for their own interests and according to their own will. The authority, not the power of an international authority, protects the autonomous rights of individual countries. Using power on any autonomous country without the consent from an international authority means offending that country's autonomy and violating the basic international law of non-interference with other countries'domestic issues.

Humanitarian intervention is often used as a legitimate reason for one country or a group of countries to attack another country. According to the U.N. Chart, lawful use of force can happen in only two cases: "（i）in individual or collective self-defense;（ii）as a result of a mandate from the United Nations Security Council." However, protection of a state's nationals abroad under certain conditions, anticipatory self-defense, the action with the genuine consent of the territorial state, or response to atrocities have been used as pretexts for intervention for other reasons（Rogers, 2004）. In some cases, the Security Council failed to exercise its authority due to the non-compliance of its parties or the emergency of the crisis. When an international authority fails to represent or protect the national autonomy of any its member, it will lose the legitimacy and right to exercise its authority. The United Nations is the international authority acknowledged by most countries in the world, and its members, or autonomous countries, have an obligation to respect U.N. authority, and support its exercise of authority. There are two possibilities to improve the Security Council's reaction and resolutions on crisis management: a task force within the U.N. to deal with crisis, and broader representation on the Security Council. Countries with economic and military strength including the U.S., China, and Japan, should provide more support to the task force. But the decision-making should consider opinions of the majority including developing countries. The domination of the superpowers in U.N. decision-making is not strengthening, but weakening the role and authority of the U.N. in its functioning as an international authority（Zhang, and Zhang, 2000）.

To any country, autonomy is the premise of its existence and development. Without national autonomy, a country cannot maintain its security, freedom, order, justice, and welfare. However, without international authority, national autonomy could be vulnerable to being violated or destroyed. Equal international relations are between autonomic nations. National autonomy of any country has to be protected. When all nations have their autonomy, security will not be an issue in international relations. An international authority is a necessity to guide this process in order to reach that moment. However, in order to be able to exercise its power, an international organization with authority has to be autonomous as well. Based not on power but on commitment, an international authority is an indivisible entity. It is not controlled or manipulated by any individual countries, the same situation as in autonomous countries. Protecting human rights is an important task of a country reaching its autonomy. Respecting the human rights of other people is respecting the autonomy of their countries. When all people and countries are moving towards that direction, a "harmonious world" based on human rights and autonomy will be established. In this harmonious world, the interests of all autonomous countries are combined, new concepts of security about cooperation and common security are accepted, and an international order of justice and rationality is promoted（Xia, 2008）.

In order to protect every country's national autonomy, it is necessary to have an international authority. John Locke stated that "all Men may be restrained from invading others Rights, and from doing hurt to one another, and the Law of Nature be observed," and "the Peace and Preservation of all Mankind" be realized（Locke, 1689）. An international authority tries to make sure that autonomous countries do not hurt one another, respect each other's autonomy, and work towards the common goal of all countries. Countries with autonomy are the basic elements of international organizations. They are the basis of democratic international relations, thus the supporters of international authority. However, in order to ensure the obedience of nations to, and the protection of nations from, an international authority, there should be a contractable relationship between international authority and national autonomy. First, when a nation authorizes an international institution, it keeps its autonomy and independence. The institution with international authority has to respect the autonomy of each country, large or small, rich or poor, with the same social system or different ones, allied or non-allied, using the same language or different languages, with similar cultures or disparate cultures, etc. This international authority has to ensure each autonomous country not be encroached upon by any other countries or by any powers. Second, the level of participation of each country can be related to its national strength, international experiences, and relative interests；however, the rights that countries share in an international authority are equal. In other words, the authority of an international organization depends on its broadness. It should not be manipulated by a few powers. Third, the interests an international authority represents are holistic integrated, comprehensive, and long-term, which are the Omni-directional and long-lasting interests of all countries.

The balance between international authority and national autonomy is the key to a peaceful and progressive world. However, it is only an ideal that takes generations' of effort from all countries in the world, and will not be realized in the near future. Wars and conflicts between countries result from either lacking an international authority or disrespecting the national autonomy of certain countries. The League of Nations（LON）was formed with the Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson under the spirit of idealism "for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."[1] The primary goals of the LON include preventing wars and settling international disputes. However, the LON had only 58 members. It lacked its own-armed force, and had to depend on the powers to enforce its resolutions. Hitler claimed that Germany's sovereignty was violated when he pulled his country out of the LON. Different beliefs and attitudes towards national autonomy and international authority among nations are also the roots for fundamental barriers to the balance between international authority and national autonomy. There have been many debatable cases showing the disrespect to either autonomy or authority at both national and international levels. Cases in recent years include the Iraq War, and the development of nuclear facilities in Iran and the North Korea. Arguments vary such as self-defense, genuine consent, or response to atrocities. It is difficult to reach agreements if all countries involved claim the superiority of their systems and the tenability of their actions. The resolutions to these crises can be reached only in mutual understanding and tolerance between beliefs and attitudes as well as a balance between national autonomy and international authority.

---

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourteen_Points

Arguments between Theories

The two traditionally dominating theories in international relations are realism and liberalism. They have been the theoretical basis for parties and governments in formulating foreign policies. According to realism, international politics is a struggle for power and unilateral advantage; power is always the immediate aim（Morgenthau, 2006; Dunne, Kurki, and Smith, 2007）; one state's security is another state's insecurity; the strong prevails in international relations; today's friend might very well turn out to be tomorrow's enemy, whether they are a democracy or not; while states cooperate through institutions, they still do it solely on the basis of their own decision and self-interest; and all states compete for power, and want to become a regional hegemony（Jackson & SØrensen, 2007）. "Power" and "self-interest" are the two key words of realism. Realism pursues the balance between powers not the balance between international authority and national autonomy. A democratic country will fight against another democratic country for its own interests and power. No individual countries will give up their power or sacrifice their own interests for other countries, not even for their allies. One country's national strength, especially its military development, is a threat to the security of other countries in the region as well as in the world. Thus, it is impossible to establish an international authority that can exercise power on any countries. The realist beliefs have been the theoretical basis for war initiators to justify their actions of invading other countries or destroying the world peace.

While recognizing self-interest and competition of the human nature, liberalism believes that mutual interests and cooperation will prevail due to the rationality of the human nature. According to liberalism, "a world with a large number of transnational networks will be more peaceful"（sociological liberalism）; "modernization increases the level and scope of interdependence between states…military force is a less useful instrument, and welfare…is becoming the primary goal and concern of states"（interdependence liberalism）; "international institutions help promote cooperation between states and thereby help alleviate the lack of trust between states and states' fear of each other"（institutional liberalism）; "democracies do not go to war against each other owing to their domestic culture of peaceful conflict resolution, their common moral values, and their mutually beneficial ties of economic cooperation and interdependence" （Republican liberalism）（Jackson & SØrensen, 2007）. However, if democracies share common moral values, do Christianity and Islamism share any common moral values? Or if democracies do not go to war against each other, does this mean that other systems go to war against each other, or that democracies have to go to war against other systems? Moreover, liberal ideals of transnational networks, world welfare, and cooperation between states cannot be realized without an international authority. Established after the World War II, the United Nations has a broad level of representation with 198 members, including nearly every sovereign state in the world. The U.N. forms transnational networks that consist of five principal organs and seventeen specialized agencies, and aims at world welfare and international cooperation. The U.N. also forms its peacekeeping force in needs, as in the case of sending the protection force during the Yugoslav wars. However, the ideals of liberalism cannot be realized without the participation of nontraditional western democratic countries that are members of the U.N. There are nonwestern theories advocating peace and cooperation besides liberalism.

Case: Realist and liberal views on a rising power

It is a normal case in the world history that countries go through cycles of rise and decline. The rising of China is a fact in contemporary world, which evokes worldwide repercussions in terms of its effect on various issues and in different regions. There are two opposite attitudes towards China's rising: "China Threat" and "China Opportunity". However, not all countries exclusively stand by one of these two positions. Between the two reactions from those countries, one is to shift between "China Threat" and "China Opportunity"; and the other is to undertake business with "China Opportunity" while disregarding "China Threat". Yet there are no countries that consider China's rising an absolute threat. There lacks enough evidence to prove that, and China plays a role as peace-advocator and peacekeeper in certain areas. Among important politicians from the major countries in the world who deny that rising China as a threat to the world there are former French Prime Minister Raffarin,[2] British Prime Minister Cameron, who told the audience that he did not think a rising China is a threat to the world in November 2010,[3] and German President Christian Wulff, who told then Chinese vice-premier Li Keqiang that he did not consider China a threat on January 7, 2011.[4]

Whether a country considers rising China a threat or an opportunity depends on many factors including its theoretical orientation, its views on national autonomy, and its confidence in international authority. According to realism, countries fight for self-interest and power, and take the road of hegemony when they are strong. The realists hold suspicious views on peaceful rising of a country; especially when this country is neither of the same system nor with a similar ideology. For those factors used as the arguments for "China Threat", there are mainly two: the opaque military development of China and its territory conflicts with neighbors. Are these two elements directly related to China's rising? Since the PRC was established in 1949, the Chinese government has been attaching importance to its independent military development. China established its navy and air force under the direct commands from Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. China has never made its military development public information. There are no logical links between "rising" and "threat" in this case. In terms of protecting its territory, China had wars with the former Soviet Union, India and Vietnam while the country was much weaker. China has not been involved in a war with any of its neighbors for last thirty years at a time when its military force and economy are much stronger than before.

The US is one of the countries where the concept of "China Threat" is most widely spread although it is much stronger than China either economically or militarily. Some of the US allies accept any advanced military development of the U.S., but worry about any steps towards China's military modernization. The U.S. expresses deep concerns when China develops its military devices while its own military capacities are much more advanced than China. The U.S. ignores China's claim for its security purpose of military development, yet expects China's believing in the U.S. explanation for its military exercises and aircraft carriers in the East Sea and Yellow Sea[5]. The former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates

---

[2] http://qnck.cyol.com/content/2010-12/07/content_3983467.htm

[3] http://www.zsr.cc/Returnee/StudentAbroadElite/201011/519511.html

[4] http://news.sohu.com/20110108/n278743017.shtml

[5] Gates told China Defense Minister Liang Guanglie on Jan 10, 2011, available from http://news.sohu.com/20110111/n278793180.shtml

expressed his contradictory psychology just before his visit to China between January 9 and 12, 2011. On the one hand he considered China's recent military development, especially the sea-based antiballistic missile, a threat to the U.S. interests in the region.[6] On the other hand, he warned China not to underestimate the U.S. or the continuing power of US military after the financial crisis, saying that "my general line for those both at home and around the world who think the U.S. is in decline is that history's dustbins are filled with countries that underestimated the resilience of the United States."[7] On the same day of January 14, 2011, when the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that "China is not a threat" in her speech to the State Department,[8] Mr. Gates tried to convince Japan that the necessity of U. S. army in Japan is to stop China being pontifical in the region.[9] How should China face the reality that the U.S., the military giant in the world, has been deeply involved in the region including military exercises with China's neighbors and sending three of its aircraft carriers to the gate of China? The U.S. is a democratic country that claims to support a democratic and peaceful world order. But the U.S. is very suspicious about China's intentions in Asia, Africa, and other regions. U.S. deep concerns on China's rising are theoretically rooted in realism: U.S. beliefs in power and hegemony, its worries about China's taking over U.S. power; and American mistrust towards China's Communist regime and its autonomous ability. The U.S. claims its leadership in the world, in the areas of Atlantic-Europe, Mideast, Pacific-Asian, and East Asia. Thus, the U.S. assumes that China would want to have the political power along with its economic development, even though China expresses no interests in hegemony or supremacy, and refuses to be one of the two powers to dominate the world. China claims that it only wants its own autonomy and insists that the authority of the U.N. to be respected. As the famous realist, Morgenthau says, "not every action that a nation performs with respect to another nation is of a political nature. Many such activities are normally undertaken without any consideration of power, nor do they normally affect the power of the nation undertaking them. Many legal, economic, humanitarian, and cultural activities are of this kind"（Morgenthau, 2006）. In order to overcome this "China Threat" or "Cold War" mentality, countries should support U.N. authority, and respect China's autonomous ability with a more idealist view of liberalism. With this international authority, countries do not have to worry about any rising power to be a threat to them.

While realism believes that states have to look after themselves because nobody will do it for them（Jackson & SØrensen, 2007）, liberalism believes that countries can work together towards a rational and peaceful world. As mentioned above, the U.S. looks at China's military development and strategy from a traditional viewpoint of realism, but China is not following the realist path of pursuing hegemony when the country is strong. It claims to take the road of peaceful development towards a harmonious world（Xia, 2008）. The Chinese government has announced and explained its peaceful development on many occasions. On December 22, 2005, the State Council published a white paper on China's Peaceful Development Road.[10] It interprets its peaceful development as the inevitable way for China's modernization

---

[6] http://big5. xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-01/10/c_12963343.htm

[7] http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/gates-warns-china-not-to-underestimate-us-power/story-e6frg6so-12259846 39589

[8] http://news.sohu.com/20110115/n278886353.shtml

[9] http://phtv.ifeng.com/program/news/detail_2011_01/15/4293596_0.shtml

based on its national conditions, its historical and cultural tradition, and the development trend of the present world. It is not a power-driven but a peaceful development that is "striving for a peaceful international environment to develop itself, and promoting a peaceful world order through its own development; achieving development by relying on itself, together with reform and innovation, while persisting in the policy of opening-up; conforming to the trend of economic globalization, and striving to achieve mutually beneficial and common development with other countries; sticking to peace, development and cooperation, and, together with all other countries, devoting itself to building a harmonious world marked by sustained peace and common prosperity." There are two key points in this white paper: 1) own development with a policy of opening-up; and 2) mutually beneficial development and common prosperity. On December 6, 2010, the Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo provided a thorough explanation of China's Peaceful Development Road. In his article, Dai uses the concept of common interest instead of the realist term of self-interest. China's peaceful development pursues not the national power but the mutual benefit and common development, not self-interest but common interest. China's development will not lead to an aggressive and offensive power because it is peaceful, independent, scientific, cooperative, and common, namely "Five in One". China considers its development an autonomous issue in which no other countries have the right to interfere. It has an obligation to communicate with an international authority on its military development, and support those activities organized by international organizations. But it does not have an obligation to tell details to other countries, especially those who consider China as an imaginary enemy. China claims itself a democratic country, and supports the liberal concepts of welfare in the world and cooperation between all countries. Yet China's opinion is different from traditional liberalist views. China holds that no countries should take an individual action to interfere with any domestic issues of other autonomous nations with any systems, except those group activities under the authority of the United Nations. In facing "China rising", countries should take advantage of a "China opportunity" while respecting its national autonomy and supporting international authorities to carry out rules to avoid a "China threat". This is what most East Asian states want, as Kang (2010) says, "East Asian states see substantially greater economic opportunity in China than they do military threat… They prefer China to be strong rather than weak, and although the states of East Asia do not unequivocally welcome China in all areas, they are willing to defer judgment about what China wants". In conclusion, a rising power can become either an aggressive competitor to existing powers or a supporter and helper to international authorities.

Resolution through Power or International Authority

What makes power, money, territory, military strength, or national quality including national morale, the quality of government, and the conduct in dealing with foreign affairs? According to realism, the desire to attain a maximum of power is universal; all nations live in constant fear least their rivals deprive them of their power position; and all nations who have gained power tend to consolidate that advantage to their favor (Morgenthau, 2006). Many people accept this realist view on the universality of the power drive. Thus, the balance of power was "a general social phenomenon to be found on all levels

---

[10] http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200512/22/eng20051222_230059.html

of social interaction". However, in pursuing this balance, two possibilities exist: the status quo defended or tensions intensified and war triggered (Dunne, Kurki, and Smith, 2007), thus national autonomy violated and international authority ignored. In international relations, the balance of power is only a temporary situation, and the imbalance of power is a permanent phenomenon. The power drive will never be satisfied, nor does it ever stop. Since the power drive is based on self-interest, interest-conflicts among countries that follow the principles of realism are unavoidable. Even humanitarian interventions should not be lead by a single power or a few powers from the same alliance unless the action is disinterested. Abuses of power often end up violating the autonomy of other territorial states. Thus, the world needs rules and laws to guide and limit the use of power. Power that follows rules and laws drawn up by the majority of participants can be interpreted as an authority. What are the differences between power and authority? As mentioned above, the former is based on hard power or material might, and the latter on both hard and soft powers or both material and spiritual capacities. Power is for self-interest whereas authority should be disinterested and should resort to justice. The extreme of power drive aims at hegemony. Even though it may have a democratic system domestically, hegemon tries to dominate the world based not on rules but on power whereas an international authority is established under democratic principles through voting, consultation, and cooperation among all countries.

A country can claim its power based on its economic and military might, but authority has to be earned and accepted by the will of others. In a country, the power, not the authority, could fall in the hands of some individuals who claim the representation of the country and its people. But the people of that nation give the authority to those officials elected and the government formed by them. Power and authority can co-exist. Without authority, no countries should use power on any other autonomous countries. When power is abused, authority vanishes. In the world history, there has not been a power that earns an authority from the majority of the countries in the world even if this power has all the capacity of money, territory, military strength, and national quality. If there is such a power existing, then, there are no needs for international authorities. The concepts of power and international authority contradict, and existence of powers weakens the functioning of international authorities. Only when power is given to international authorities, both power and international authority will last. Thus, the balance of power and international authority means the combination of the two.

International authority is based on its legitimacy of being above any individual country including powers. However, if powers do not transfer their power, or do not use their power to support the international authority, the international authority will be challenged. There had been no international authorities but powers and hegemonies before the United Nations was founded. Facing more challenges including financial crisis and terrorist attacks, the world needs international authorities more than ever. The transnational terrorist attack is a strategy to fight with military strong or powers, and no powers yet could stop or win the situation. Without the unified effort of all countries in the world, no countries can solve any modern problems alone by resorting to power, whether it is hard, soft, or smart. The international authority is an assembly of power and authority from all its members. There are two things supporting an international authority. One is its broad representativeness, such as the U.N. whose members cover nearly every country in the world. The other is its unchallengeable power that accumulates the might from all its members. Under the current mechanism, the U.N. does not have this power yet. Broad rep-

resentativeness and an unchallengeable power ensure the existence of an international authority, and the practices of this international authority need the guidance from rules, laws, and moral principles. Is there a universal morality in international affairs? Can international conflicts be resolved through the application of international law based on justice and moral principles? If there is an international authority in its true meaning, it should be able to resolve the conflicts through rules, laws, and principles abided and supported by all its members.

Thus the key to the relationship between power and international authority is the combination of power and international authority under the two conditions. First, the international authority must have its legal and military power to deal with international affairs and conflicts. Second, any powers have to respect the leadership of an international authority. For example, any actions of a power involved with another country should be approved by and report to the international authority. A legitimate and fully supported international authority should have enough power and capability to deal with conflicts between individual countries. Instead of taking over the leadership from the U.N., the powers should participate in U.N. actions as normal members.

Case: Existing and rising powers' views of power and international authority

Contemporary realists consider military capacity and alliances the very foundation of security （Dunne, Kurki, and Smith, 2007）. Liberalists believe in an international organization that can exercise its power and authority to all the countries in the world. The present U.S. power is partly based on its GDP which amounts for 25%[11] that of the world, but even more depends on its military capacity whose share is 48.6%[12] that of the world （Lincoln, 2009）. Since taking the office, the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has advocated and adopted the "Smart Power" as the guideline of U.S. foreign policies （Clinton, 2009）. Smart Power means to use military cautiously, and use money wisely in order to manipulate others to do what you wish. Thus, the key of the Smart Power is still the "power" and self-interest. The U.S. never hesitates to remind or warn the world that it has the strongest power in the world. Thus it claims its leadership in every important region where the U.S. has its interests, and most recently, in Asia and East Asia. Clinton expressed that the U.S. as a Pacific Ocean nation and trading power, has grown increasingly concerned about the competing claims for territory in the South China Sea, and announced that "the U.S. is coming back."[13] On September 24, Obama addressed at a summit with ASEAN countries that "the United States intends to play a leadership role in Asia."[14] Also as mentioned above, the former Defense Secretary Gates warned China and the rest of the world that the U.S. is still the most powerful country in the world. In dealing with international affairs, the U.S. focuses on power.

The characteristics of Obama's smart power are mainly three: to appeal for international cooperation; to protect the interests of the U.S. such as national security; and to keep the American leadership in the world. It brings corresponding questions. Under which frame does the international cooperation op-

---

[11] Resource from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Economic_Outlook

[12] Resource from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures

[13] http://www.gmw.cn/01gmrb/2009-07/23/content_952543.htm

[14] http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100924/pl_afp/unsummitusaseanobama

erate? Why is it necessary to keep the American leadership in the world? Does the concept of one-country leadership conflict with international authority and national autonomy? Can the United Nations function as an international authority in most areas? How does the U.S. respect other nations' autonomy while playing the role of leadership? How does the U.S. deal with issues when the national interests of the U.S. conflict with those of other nations or regions? What is the position of the U.S. in the balance between international authority and national autonomy? It is hard to draw a conclusion based on the actions the U.S. has taken in different regions in recent decades.

As a rising power, China, however, does not claim its power and leadership in the world. In Deng Xiaoping's words, "China will never want to be a hegemon, and never want to be a leader"（Zhang & Zhang, 2000）. Meanwhile China has participated many activities organized by the United Nations including peacekeeping, Energy Action, Climate Action, Low Carbon Emission Action, and the U.N. Millennium Development Goals（MDGs）.[15] The secretary of the U.N. Ban Ki-moon（Oct. 18, 2006）praises China's responsible participation in U.N. organized actions: "China has played a very important role in all the activities of the United Nations, including the resolution of the North Korea nuclear issue and participating in many peacekeeping operations."[16] The former vice premier of Germany Joschka Fischer（2010）thinks that military, economic, and technical strength have been used by European powers, the Soviet Union, and the U.S. as their power on other countries in gaining the position of hegemony. However, China will not follow the path of all those powers. The main reason according to Fischer is the pressure of a huge population on Chinese government. China will only pursue the regional power to protect its core interests of modernization, stability, and national unification. China is "Domestically-oriented Superpower". The concept of "Domestically-oriented Superpower" can be further discussed, and China's pursuing of the regional power can also be investigated. The question is whether China has used its power on other countries for its own interests. If China has not in fact abused its power, we may define China as a de facto rising power, or an inactive power. The views on power and international authority are mutually supportive. A country will refrain its power under the leadership of any legitimate international authorities if it respects international authorities. If a country overly stresses its own power, it is more likely to disobey international authorities, especially when decisions made by an international authority are not in favor of its national interests.

East Asia is one of the most sensitive regions in the world. Due to the aftereffects of the World War II and the shadow of the Cold War, there have been conflicts and incidents between the two Koreas, Japan and China. The role of U.S. involvement in the region is debatable, especially its frequent military exercises with its allies that are parties of regional conflicts. Since 2010, the U.S. has had five military exercises with South Korea within half a year, and had its most massive military exercise with Japan as well.[17] On November 23, 2010, when the North Korea shelled the South Korea island of Yeonpyeong after South Korea's military exercise in a sensitive disputed area, the Korean Peninsula was in crisis mode leading to a war between the two Koreas. Under the domestic pressure from the aggressive wing, and with the support from the U.S., the South Korea conducted a live-fire drill on the same island. The North

---

[15] http://news.163.com/10/0917/17/6GQ3HV3E00014JB5.html

[16] http://english.cri.cn/2947/2006/10/17/176@151817.htm

[17] http://www.wyzxsx.com/Article/Class20/201012/199918.html

Korea also warned: "if the U.S. brings its carrier to the West Sea of Korea at last, no one can predict the ensuing consequences."[18] When the crisis occurred, China suggested to resume the six-party talks, and sent State Councilor Dai Bingguo to both Koreas to stop the deterioration of the situation, while the U.S., as its first reaction, announced its joint naval exercises with the South Korean forces, bringing the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier George Washington to the sensitive area. The U.S. conducted military exercises with the South Korea and Japan for ten days. Facing this precarious and complicated situation, China pursued international authorities through a multilateral negotiation whereas the U.S. pursued the power through military alliances and military exercises. U.S. and China attitudes and means to the Korean Peninsula crisis are the case footnotes of realism and liberalism. When an international conflict occurs, the former resorts to military power first, and the latter pursues international cooperation and authority.

Democracy and National Autonomy

Democracy is a political formation in which the power of a government is derived from its people. It has three forms: consensus, direct, and representative. Most modern democratic governments take the representative form, since it is more applicable than the other two forms to modern countries with median or large sizes. The establishment of a democratic government is a long process of social development. It has to be chosen and participated by the majority people of that very country. In other words, democracy has to be established within the national autonomy of a country. In history, most western democracies went through many reforms and civil wars before democratic systems were finally established. However, some countries nowadays try to be democratized in a more civilized way with less disruption in economic development and social stability. In the age of globalization, the chaotic situation of one country, especially a large-sized country like China, will bring a huge step backwards in its development, which will also be a draw back for the whole world as well. China cannot afford to have a costly and bloody revolution when all the accomplishment of thirty-year reform comes to nothing. China has been taking steps towards a fully democratic society by setting up rules and laws and systematic reforms on its own under the leadership of the communist government. Although the political reform in China has not reached the depth to match its economic reform, it may be only different from western models in its route, but not in its ultimate goal.

Can democracy or a certain governmental system be exported to another country? There are two arguments for a negative answer to the question. First, it is against the principle of national autonomy. Autonomy refers to the capacity of a rational individual to make an informed, un-coerced decision. According to Kant, autonomy is demonstrated by a person who decides on a course of action out of respect for moral duty.[19] National autonomy is the state of self-government of a nation, or the right to independent administration or to governmental decision-making by any part of a state.[20] It is hard to imagine that a democratic reform takes place smoothly in a country without autonomy or not from the will of its majority citizens. Second, it is not wise for a country to exactly copy another country's political system.

[18] http://www.weeklyblits.net/1139/current-crisis-in-korean-peninsula

[19] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_autonomy

[20] http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/National+autonomy

 The formation of a government is rooted in the tradition of governing in that country and political beliefs of its people. Western democracy has been developed from traditional elements of citizen assembly, election, parliament politics, freedom of speech, human rights, and two-party system. To some nations, these western elements are new or unfamiliar concepts and practices. When nations that have no democratic experiences copy an imported western system, their people may have an attitude of resistance, being confused, or fail to follow through. In the process of globalization, the economy of individual countries has to be combined with and integrated into the world economy. This integration, however, should not result in weakening the economic autonomy of any nations. In the process of democratization, political improvements or reforms have to be taken place in all countries. But the pace and patterns of democratization have to be localized, and chosen by the natives of that country. When or how the process of democratization takes place has to be decided based on national interests and political maturity of the society out its national autonomy.

Case: Iraq's democracy and autonomy

 The two main arguments that the U.S. and the U.K. use to justify their invasion of Iraq were the possibility of Iraq employing weapons of mass destruction that threatened the security of the U.S., the U.K., and their regional allies; and Saddam Hussein's supporting of al-Qaeda. But no evidence on these two accusations was ever found.[21] [22] Then, two follow-up arguments were used to justify the invasion: the human rights abuse of the Iraqi government, and the western effort to spread democracy to Iraq.[23] This article does not discuss the legitimacy of the Iraq War but the questions related to national autonomy and international authority. First, if Iraq is suspected to have weapons of mass destruction, the U.N. should take charge of the inspection. Only when the Security Council fails to deal with the situation, can it be dealt with in a different way. When the U.N. weapon inspectors found no evidence of weapons of mass destruction, should the military force withdrawn from Iraq, or change to new tasks such as improving the human rights situation and spreading democracy in Iraq? Second, is the democratization of Iraq part of its autonomous right? If yes, it should be initiated by its own people with help from an international authority. Only when the Iraqi government and its people fail to deal with the situation in an emergency, may it need an external help to push ahead. Third, are the U.S. and the U.K. interest-involved countries to the Iraq War? If yes, can a military operation led by them truly represent U.N. intentions? Fourth, does the military operation in Iraq meet the following two criteria: 1）"the action must be proportionate; it must not cause more harm than the harm to be alleviated." 2）"Any use of force must comply with international humanitarian law"（Rogers, 2004）. According to statistics at the end of 2010 （White, 2011）, the U.S. spent and approved war spending was about $900 billion. There were 4, 433 U.S. soldiers killed, and 32, 006 seriously wounded. Followed by the overthrowing of Saddam Hussein re-

---

[21] Sen. Nelson on the Purported Iraqi UAV Threat to America, available at http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2004_cr/s012804b.html

[22] Woods, K.M. and Lacey, J.（2008）"Saddam and Terrorism: Emerging Insights from Captured Iraqi Documents," available at http://abcnews.go.com/images/Politics/Saddam and Terrorism Redaction EXSUMExtract.pdf

[23] President Discusses the Future of Iraq（Feb. 26, 2003）, available at http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html

gime, there were over $100,000$ Iraqi civilians killed, and millions of Iraqis were displaced or became refugees. The Iraq War was strongly opposed by Iraqis and the world. In a poll taken in Iraq in August 2005 by the British Ministry of Defense, 82% of participants expressed their strong opposition to the presence of coalition troops, and less than 1% of them believed coalition forces were responsible for any improvement in security (Source: Brookings Institute, from White, 2011). Between January 3 and April 12, 2003, 36 million people across the globe took part in almost $3,000$ protests against war in Iraq.[24]

The numbers above show that the Iraq Operation does not meet the requirements of effectiveness and legitimacy of a necessary international intervention, nor does it have a good balance between national autonomy and international authority. First, the international authority has to be legitimate. The U.N. Security Council should act as an important legitimating body during the whole process. "The issue of legitimacy is relevant not only to the source of the high representative's authority but also to the purpose for which that authority is exercised" (Caplan, 2004). No countries can replace the role of the U.N. that is disinterested in any international conflicts, and it is also a most representative existing international authority. Second, the national autonomy of Iraq has to be respected. Public opinion plays an important role in national autonomy. If majority Iraqis do not support the coalition troops, the operation is against the will of Iraqis, and it cannot effectively take place in Iraq. The experience of the international administration in Bosnia suggests (Caplan, 2004): 1) "It is preferable for interim territorial administrators to exercise, or possess the power to exercise, full executive authority." 2) "While this executive authority may be adequately controlled at the international level, international administrations need to be more accountable to the local populations on whose behalf these institutions have been established." In order to promote a democratic reform in Iraq, its national autonomy has to be concerned. This cannot be done by interest-involved countries or their alliance, but by an international authority. The Iraq War is not a practice of international authority but a case in which the U.S. and its allies as the de facto power destroyed the de facto authority of Iraq through military might and war.

Conclusion

The balance between national autonomy and international authority is an important principle in dealing with international affairs. It is a balance between power and peace, between democracy and autonomy, and between power and authority. Without this balance, it is difficult to reach a fair and acceptable solution for parties involved. Countries have to reach a consensus on concepts of national autonomy and international authority with a detailed interpretation. Every nation is equal in terms of its right of autonomy. National autonomy means that a territorial state decides on its domestic issues. However, territorial administrators have to be supported by the majority of their people, or do things for the interests of their people. Countries have different views on the category of domestic issues. For example, some countries consider the human rights issue and democratization a country's domestic issues that should be dealt within a nation's autonomy. Others keep criticizing countries on their human rights issues and democratization process, and consider human rights and democracy the principles and ideals that are more important than, or the premises of national autonomy. There should be an international

---

[24] Alex Callinicos, Socialist Worker, March 19, 2005.

authority that takes fair positions for all its members and represents every country in the world. Within this international institution, there are no differences among countries in terms of power of vote or power of speech. Every country has an equal vote on all the important decisions. Countries more advanced and richer, or with stronger military power, have the same share as their small, weak and poor counterparts in authority of this institution. The leadership of this international authority should take turns based on the representativeness of a country in terms of size, region, governance, economic development, etc. Since the U.N. is one of the existing international authorities with its members almost including all the countries in the world, it should be the model of such an ideal international authority. The most important task is to enhance its authority by empowering the Security Council with its representativeness, executive capacity, and military power. These changes require both structural reform and conceptual innovation. Power is the imbalanced factor between national autonomy and international authority. No powers should play more important role than other nations. In pursuing hegemony, superpowers dysfunction the authority of international institution and violate the autonomy of territorial states. The balance between national autonomy and international authority should replace the balance between the Powers.

References

Caplan, R.（2004）. *The Exercise of international authority in state building: The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina,* Global Governance 10, no. 1.

Christiano, T.（2004）. Authority. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/authority/.

Clinton, H. R.（2009）. *Use "smart power" in diplomacy,* CBS News, 2009-01-13. Retrieved on Nov. 27, 2009 from http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/01/13/politics/main4718044.shtml.

Dai, B.（December 6, 2010）. Go on the road of peaceful development. Available at http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-12/06/content_176081.htm

Dunne, T., Kurki, M., & Smith, S.（ed.）（2007）. International relations theories: Discipline and diversity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fischer, J.（Oct. 12, 2010）. Super China, Singapore: United Morning News. Available at http://economics.dwnews.com/news/2010-10-28/57010952.html.

Jackson, R., & SØrensen, G.（2007）. Introduction to international relations: Theories and approaches. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kang, D. C.（2010）. China Rising, Columbia University Press.

Lincoln, P. Z.（2009）. *Necessity of power restructuring in Northeast Asia,* NUCB Journal of Economics and Information Science, Vol. 53, No. 2.

Locke, J.（1689）. Second Treaties, available at http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/print_documents/v1ch2s1.html.

Morgenthau, H. J., Revised by Thompson, K. W., & Clinton, W. D.（2006）. Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace, 7th ed New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rogers, A. P. V.（2004）. Humanitarian intervention and international law. Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, Summer, 2004.

White, D.（January 10, 2011）. Iraq War facts, results & statistics as December 30, 2010, available at http://usliberals.about.com/od/ homelandsecurit1/a/Iraq Numbers.htm.

Xia, L.（2008）. Contemporary international system and strategic relationship among major powers. Beijing: Current Affairs Press.

Zhang, L. & Zhang, Q.（ed.）（2000）. Introduction to contemporary international relations. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press.

Zhao, K., & Ni, S.（2007）. International relations theories in China. Shanghai: Fudan University Press.