

Subject: RE: Week 6

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

Posted date: Monday, November 2, 2009 5:20:51 PM GMT

Last modified date: Monday, November 2, 2009 5:20:51 PM GMT

Total views: 23 **Your views:** 9

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Author: Anonymous

Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 12:12:05 PM GMT

Subject: Week 6

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Here is my initial attempt to answer to the question *Is China a threat to the West?*

No, China is not a threat but an opportunity for the West. Being a country with few aggressive tendencies and precedents (Tibet being the exception) and with a stance of deference and respect for Western achievements and abilities in science and technology as well as in culture, China does not intend to challenge the West but merely to coexist and prosper within the existing international framework and to make positive contributions to a more accommodating transnational polity. China's only ambition is to be viewed as an equal and willing partner in the struggle to bring prosperity and peace to the world.

The only area where China shows intransigence and little tolerance for outside interference is the integrity of its borders and the sovereignty to make its own decisions on what it views as internal matters, which, unfortunately, also include Taiwan and Tibet. However, since the West and China are completely interdependent in economic terms, they are not about to take chances by provoking each other.

The only serious area of potential conflict is access to energy sources, which due to dwindling supplies and increasing global demand will pose a global problem that can only be resolved by rapid technological progress in renewables and the attendant political will to retool one's economy away from sole dependence on fossil fuels. In this respect both China and the US have a lot to learn from Europe and will undoubtedly look to Europe for direction.

Kevin

Subject: RE: Week 6

Subject: RE: Sino-US relations since 9/11

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

Posted date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 4:00:43 AM GMT

Last modified date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 4:00:43 AM GMT

Total views: 14 **Your views:** 5

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Author: Anonymous

Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 12:12:05 PM GMT

Subject: Week 6

Please hit the 'Reply' button to respond to this thread.

This is my initial answer to the question “Have the events of 9/11 and the subsequent ‘War Against Terrorism’ profoundly transformed Sino-US relations or merely papered over the differences?”

Old differences remain and new grievances have appeared, what has changed is the two parties’ willingness to work together on their common foe, violent Islamic fundamentalist groups that threaten America’s weakening hegemony and China’s artificial internal cohesion and which have strengthened Sino-US counterterrorism initiatives and, tangentially, made possible even anti-piracy naval operations in the Gulf of Aden.

The US then and now still insists on currency reform, non-interference in Taiwan’s affairs, more open markets, proper enforcement of intellectual property rights, product safety, openness and transparency, political reform, and respect for human rights. More recently, it has added new expectations from China in respect to a more activist foreign policy and to action on the trade imbalance.

Conversely, China insists on the non-negotiability of its sovereignty, on the separation of political and economic considerations when engaging other nations, on Taiwan and Tibet being internal matters, and on having its own policy prescriptions towards Iran (and its nuclear program), Myanmar (and its repression of unrest), Sudan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela and other nations on whom it depends for oil and gas and that represent lucrative markets for Chinese exports. More recently, China expects of the US lifting restrictions on technology sales and worries about the security of the US Treasury bonds it continues to buy despite the declining value of the dollar and the ailing American economy.

Kevin

Subject: RE: Sino-US relations since 9/11

Subject: Starting off

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 9:06:56 AM GMT

Last modified date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 9:06:56 AM GMT

Total views: 14 **Your views:** 2

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Author: Anonymous

Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 12:12:05 PM GMT

Subject: Week 6

Please hit the 'Reply' button to respond to this thread.

Good morning, all,

Kevin has got the ball rolling with two well-argued postings, essentially taking a quite positive and optimistic view of relations between the US and China. I have a couple of thoughts and questions but I will wait and pose these after some of you have responded to him.

One little guiding comment, though: the topic this week is about **Challenges to Western dominance** - whilst the US remains the predominant Western power, we must also remember the **EU** and perhaps more importantly Pacific powers such as **Japan** and increasingly **Australia**. Keep these in mind when thinking about the questions.

I look forward to seeing what you come up with.

Nick

Subject: Starting off

Subject: RE: Starting off

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Author: [Carla LIUZZO](#)

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Posted date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 2:21:23 PM GMT

Last modified date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 2:21:23 PM GMT

Total views: 18 **Your views:** 6

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 9:06:56 AM GMT

Subject: Starting off

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I look forward to seeing what you come up with.

Nick

I'm writing this in a rush so I hope I make some semi-clear points

To your point Nick. There appears to be some very important 'to be confirmed' variables when it comes to assessing the 'threat' to the West that China poses. I would argue we do not yet know (and perhaps neither does China) what the long-term intentions of China are.

It is a very exciting and fluid time for Chinese relations with the world. Two fundamental points underpinning any assessment of China and its actions I believe are firstly, the complexity of the Chinese system of Government, that is China is often misinterpreted as an authoritarian State thus one with centralised control. However China is much more complex and fragmented, resembling many power bases and a constant struggle between Provinces and the State, resources and power. Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg describe the state of complexity when they say 'China is held together by the formal structure of authority, by the networks of individuals bound by mutual obligations and loyalties who are imbedded by the formal organisations and who are held together by the total bargains among the hundreds of thousands in the system'. This 'constant and protracted haggling and side bargaining' leads to a Chinese system of government to be strategic overtime but chaotic in the short term. This level of complexity warns us against making definitive assessments of China's overall strategic objective.

Secondly, and specifically to your point about the other regional players Nick, the role of China is and is going to be increasingly determined by its relations regionally and by the type and nature of the relationships it is currently forming with its neighbours. There are many countries within the region who wish to maintain the United States primacy in the region, particularly regarding the security of the Asia

Pacific. Australia is one such country. However China took over as Australia's largest trading partner in 2007 which is leading to some interesting and meaningful dialogue about what that means for Australia's strategic direction. China demands a price from such a trading relationship and Australia's 'obligations' in the friendship call for direct compromise of what some would say are core values to Australia.

I would like to continue this post but I'm forced to leave my computer for now, hopefully there will be some further debate generated and I can resume this evening.

Carla

Subject: RE: Starting off

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

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Posted date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 2:57:11 AM GMT

Last modified date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 2:57:11 AM GMT

Total views: 18 **Your views:** 5

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Author: Carla LIUZZO

Date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 2:21:23 PM GMT

Subject: RE: Starting off

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Carla

To your astute observations, Carla, I would like to add that China is also hampered in its long-term planning and execution of foreign policy objectives by a degree of internal disunity between the various constituent ethnic and cultural factions that have yet to fully identify with the Han majority. To a great extent, China is not only an economy in the making; it is also a country still in the making. Witness for instance the great efforts the central leadership is making to suppress China's many dialects and languages, while forcing the use of Putonghua, all for the sake of attaining a level of national identification that is eons away from the internal cohesion of the United States.

Kevin

Subject: RE: Starting off

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Author: [Carla LIUZZO](#)

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Posted date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:45:20 AM GMT

Last modified date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:45:20 AM GMT

Total views: 16 **Your views:** 2

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 2:57:11 AM GMT

Subject: RE: Starting off

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Kevin

It is true Kevin, and the homogenisation the central government is seeking to implement comes in many guises. I watched a programme recently about a Provincial government rebuilding traditional villages in the name of 'earthquake safety' but to the detriment of the social structure and history of the ethnic minority who live there.

The challenge of maintaining social order and the deep and real fear of social chaos obviously underpin China's development plans. Zheng Bijan cites the challenge that China's huge population base brings when he says 'any small difficulty in its economic or social development, spread over this vast group, could become a huge problem.'

Leading on from yesterday's discussion I wish to add that when the 'threat posed by China' is referred to I see this as not so much a fear that China will overtly seek global hegemony, because by any measure China has advocated for no such predominance. However I believe the fear or caution comes from China's advocating for a new international order. Stemming from its belief that 'for too long the world has been shaped by those who hold power and make systems to serve them' (M, Wesley). China's history has shaped a discontent and a victimology and it has long called for the 'democratisation' of global affairs. The possibility of China seeking to reshape or undermine international relations systems which do serve to maintain US primacy in the region make some countries nervous. Specifically those with a preference for keeping the USA responsible for security in the region i.e Australia, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea. So it is the possibility that China will seek to reshape the system that seems to be one of the fears when it comes to its rise.

Carla

Subject: RE: Starting off

Subject: Huntington's return

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

Posted date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 10:21:34 AM GMT

Last modified date: Tuesday, November 3, 2009 10:21:34 AM GMT

Total views: 14 **Your views:** 3

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Author: Anonymous

Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 12:12:05 PM GMT

Subject: Week 6

Please hit the 'Reply' button to respond to this thread.

For those of you may be interested after last week's discussion of Huntington's Clash of Civilisations, the following link will take you to an interesting review of the 2002 edition of his book in the International Public Policy Review, a graduate student-run journal at University College London.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ippr/issues/volume5-1.php>

Best,

Nick

Subject: Huntington's return

Subject: RE: Week 6

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Author: [Sheldon RICHARDSON](#)

Posted date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 6:39:18 PM GMT

Last modified date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 6:39:18

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Total views: 11 Your views: 2

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Author: Anonymous

Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 12:12:05 PM GMT

Subject: Week 6

Please hit the 'Reply' button to respond to this thread.

Segal, G. "Does China Matter ?" Foreign Policy. Vol 78. No.5, Sep-Oct. 1999. p.24.

Segal's article discussed whether or not China poses a significant threat to western dominance. He takes a 3 part analysis which takes into account China's economic, military and political forces and came up with the conclusion that China poses no serious threat to western global dominance.

Segal examined the economic situation in China and observed that the Chinese economy did not experience any real growth. In fact the numbers show that China had an unflattering 200 years in economic performance. In terms of international trade and investment, China is an overrated power. China only made up 3% of total world trade in 1997 and as 1998, China only accounted for 11% of Asian trade. When it comes to FDI, when being used as an indicator of economic growth, reports show that 80% of inflows of 45 billion came from ethnic Chinese. This year also reported a record capital flight from China of 35 billion. China is at best a minor part of the global economy, what it did was project an image of being an economic powerhouse.

The article discusses China's military capabilities. China accounts for 4.5% of global defense spending. China may be a threat in the east, perhaps to the Philippines, but it can be counteracted by forging military allies. China will matter because it is a status quo power, but it does not matter because it can be constrained. China matters according to a Cox report on Chinese espionage, they steal secrets about US missile guidance and modern nuclear warheads, it also matters that Chinese military exercises simulate attacks on US troops in South Korea and Japan. It must be noted however that Chinese challenges are not like the Soviet one.

Politically, China has tried to find its place and identity in the modern global scene. It has engaged in deep resistance to the essential logic of global interdependence. This can be seen by the failed attempts to resist the western dominated international system. China's abhorrence for the global interdependence has left it in isolation. China believes that it can learn what it needs to learn and retain control of its destiny. As far as human rights are concerned, China is considered a pariah as the treatment of dissidents remains inhuman and indecent.

China according to Segal, is a middle power. China matters on certain issues but it is not considered a threat to the west. Its military is medium rank and politically speaking has no real weight. China matters in that it can create regional mischief but is incapable of posing any serious threat. What has in fact occurred is that China's power on the global scene has been exaggerated. Even though China has a permanent seat in the UN security council but it is not a great global power.

Subject: RE: Week 6

Subject: Question to Sheldon

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

Posted date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 8:52:02 PM
GMT

Last modified date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:03:38
PM GMT

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Total views: 13 Your views: 2

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Author: Sheldon RICHARDSON

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And what is your opinion of Segal's assessment?

Nick

Subject: Question to Sheldon

Subject: RE: Question to Sheldon

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Author: [Sheldon RICHARDSON](#)

Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 9:28:37 PM GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 9:28:37 PM GMT

Total views: 8 Your views: 2

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:03:38 PM GMT
Subject: Question to Sheldon

And what is your opinion of Segal's assessment?

Nick

I think that Segal's assessment of China is an interesting and revealing one. He was able to illustrate how China's ability to be a threat has been somewhat inflated. This assumption perhaps could be as a result of thinking that China being a considerable power in the east may have some influence on the region. This being the case, the rise of the "Asian tigers" with somewhat promising economic growth in the region has earned the attention of the west. China's potential power and influence could probably conflate in the region and pose some kind of threat to western dominance in the global system. As Segal has shown, that may not be the case. The notion of China being a threat could probably be as a result of its political ideology. Since China's political system and values are not "liberal" and western, china could be easily regarded by the west as a global "other". Upon careful examination when we look at notions such as "the green peril", we see a clear trend. Any group or nation that does not share the liberal values and democratic political systems are viewed as potential threats to western dominance. Segal's argument shows that China while being a medium power does not have the political, economical and military to pose any real threat to the west.

Subject: RE: Question to Sheldon

Subject: RE: Week 6

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:03:04 PM GMT

Last modified date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:03:04 PM GMT

Total views: 18 **Your views:** 4

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Author: Anonymous

Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 12:12:05 PM GMT

Subject: Week 6

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Some interesting comments thus far. I was struck by one of Kevin's points:

[China is also hampered in its long-term planning and execution of foreign policy objectives by a degree of internal disunity](#)

He was referring to the different ethnic groupings within China and the tensions that may hamper their relations.

However, I think this is relevant on the **institutional level** as well in terms of the different and competing centres of power within the Chinese political establishment: there is the Politburo, the Party, the People's Liberation Army etc in the centre; then powerful regional baronies and important local level politicians; the economic and business elite etc.

All these groupings - some more influential than others - will seek to have a say in China's foreign policy and will have very different perceptions of what should be prioritised, and the face that China should present to the world.

So my question to you is how you would factor this into your assessments of China and its foreign policy - thoughts?

My other question sits at a more fundamental level in terms of how we approach this week's subject. Why is China so often perceived or conceived of as a "threat" in the West? Is it because it represents the passing of the era of Western dominance and the rise of the East? Is it because we continue define ourselves in terms of an "Other" which China has now become? Or is there something else? Should we "fear" the growth in Chinese power and the influence it now enjoys? (That's actually 5 questions, but there you go.)

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this.

Nick

Subject: RE: Week 6

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

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Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 5:48:21 AM GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 5:48:21 AM GMT

Total views: 13 **Your views:** 4

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Nick

Hi Nick and all,

Foreign policy, we are told, is no longer the exclusive domain of the Politburo. Apparently, “*the predominant leader can no longer dominate foreign policy decision making*” which has been institutionalized to such an extent that “*the distinctive identities and interests of bureaucratic organs*” such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Commerce (MOC), and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) are now also prominent in the process (see Zhang, 2008, *Institutionalizing China's Foreign Policy Making*, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p250717_index.html).

What this means is that China gives equal weight to economic, diplomatic and strategic considerations and interests in deciding what face to present to the world and that it no longer depends on the cult of personality to steer the nation. This implies a more measured and balanced approach to foreign policy. I do not believe that prominent businessmen and/or local governments have much sway with the central leadership when it comes to national decisions. This process is and will continue to be the business of Beijing.

I believe China is perceived to be a military threat due to fear-mongering and propaganda by vested interests in the USA and Western European countries that are exporters of weapons, as well as by intelligence and military institutions that can only think of the world in terms of aggression and submission; a remnant of the ideological divide of the Cold War.

In economic terms, fear of China comes from above and below and is well-grounded. The loss of manufacturing jobs and the attendant capital the West is experiencing has left a Western society divided into losers and winners. The winners are those who can tap into the global employment market or are sheltered by professions immune to foreign competition, as well as those with substantial capital to invest, therefore a minority. The losers are those who have hitherto powered manufacturing and are now the victims of competition they cannot hope to outdo because their higher productivity cannot make up for China’s low wages, therefore a majority (even in the service economies of the West).

Macroeconomically, an ascendant China that aspires to have a standard of living similar to that of Western countries means an inevitable shortage of and fight for raw materials and energy, and that is something to be feared.

If rampant capitalism is allowed to seek the lowest wages and the greatest profits in an environment that is deregulated and insensitive to job insecurity and growing income disparities, it is only a matter of time until the fine socio-economic balance that has allowed Western nations to thrive will be tipped to such an extent that these societies will collapse. The mortgage defaults we have seen in the US are a foretaste of what is to come.

On paper, Western economies that have hitherto also been manufacturing centres are supposed

to become service and innovation economies while developing nations are supposed to take over their manufacturing capacity. This, however, fails to account for the fact that a majority of the populace, even in well educated Western nations, is incapable of making any contributions to science and technology, creativity and innovation, and that this large segment of the population cannot possibly be absorbed by the service economy and, even if absorbed, will experience a huge loss of earning power. As a result, for the first time in the history of the Western world, we are experiencing a lower income in the new generations than the previous ones, a total lack of job security (and therefore the inability to make long-term financial commitments), a shrinking labour market (and consequently chronic unemployment), ever-greater delays and conditions on when one can enter the labour market (and therefore a distorting struggle for the few worthy jobs available), and a sense of superfluosity derived from the realization that one is not needed. If one were to find an appropriate name for this generation, as a result of the socio-economic conditions imposed on them by a global economy in rapid transition, it is the 'superfluous generation'. No wonder Westerners fear and resent China; it epitomizes a confluence of forces they have come to loath because it victimizes them and undermines their very existence. And while anxiety and idleness turn into exasperation and xenophobia, their political establishments pretend all is well.

Kevin

P.S. I apologize for depressing you all.

Subject: RE: Week 6

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[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author: [N. Wright](#)

Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:37:10 PM GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:37:10 PM GMT

Total views: 15 **Your views:** 7

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If rampant capitalism is allowed to seek the lowest wages and the greatest profits in an environment that is deregulated and insensitive to job insecurity and growing income disparities, it is only a matter of time until the fine socio-economic balance that has allowed Western nations to thrive will be tipped to such an extent that these societies will collapse. The mortgage defaults we have seen in the US are a foretaste of what is to come.

On paper, Western economies that have hitherto also been manufacturing centres are supposed to become service and innovation economies while developing nations are supposed to take over their manufacturing capacity. This, however, fails to account for the fact that a majority of the populace, even in well educated Western nations, is incapable of making any contributions to science and technology, creativity and innovation, and that this large segment of the population cannot possibly be absorbed by the service economy and, even if absorbed, will experience a huge loss of earning power. As a result, for the first time in the history of the Western world, we are experiencing a lower income in the new generations than the previous

ones, a total lack of job security (and therefore the inability to make long-term financial commitments), a shrinking labour market (and consequently chronic unemployment), ever-greater delays and conditions on when one can enter the labour market (and therefore a distorting struggle for the few worthy jobs available), and a sense of superfluousness derived from the realization that one is not needed. If one were to find an appropriate name for this generation, as a result of the socio-economic conditions imposed on them by a global economy in rapid transition, it is the 'superfluous generation'. No wonder Westerners fear and resent China; it epitomizes a confluence of forces they have come to loath because it victimizes them and undermines their very existence. And while anxiety and idleness turn into exasperation and xenophobia, their political establishments pretend all is well.

Kevin

P.S. I apologize for depressing you all.

Hi Kevin,

A really interesting - and challenging - posting which makes some excellent points. I find your analysis of the situation in the Western world at the end particularly persuasive (if, as you say, a little depressing).

I'd like to press you on a couple of the points you made about China.

You wrote:

"What this means is that *China* gives equal weight to economic, diplomatic and strategic considerations and interests in deciding what face to present to the world and that it no longer depends on the cult of personality to steer the nation. *This implies a more measured and balanced approach to foreign policy.*"

Forgive the multi-coloured approach, but I wanted to emphasise these points.

The point I was trying to make in the previous posting about competing centres of power is whether or not we can speak of China in this unitary sense. Yes, the Party retains political control, but this is essentially based on a compromise that says "we will let you make money - as much as you want - provided you do not seek to upset the political apple-cart" - not dissimilar to the situation in Russia, in fact. If you throw into the mix, for example, the genie-in-the-bottle of Chinese nationalism, which has been called upon on a number of occasions by national and regional leaders to distract from the institutional shortcomings and mistakes, you get an idea of the strength of forces swirling beneath the surface.

In democratic systems these tend to find an outlet which does not damage the overall fabric of the state. However the lack of such an outlet - or safety valve - in China, along with autocratic state structures which concentrate power in a few places, mean that the level of control the political leadership over the "face" that China presents to the world. Does this therefore automatically lead to a more measured and balanced approach to foreign policy?

I think we have a tendency to see a nation's foreign policy as an expression of how it engages with the outside world - it is important, however, also to consider it in terms of the internal messages it sends and the internal balances and compromises it is seeking to achieve. This is very much the case in China which, I am

sure you would agree, is undergoing an almost unimaginable degree of change.

I'd like to hear your thoughts.

Best,

Nick

Subject: RE: Week 6

Subject: RE: Week 6

[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author: Kevin GALALAE

Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 1:28:28 PM GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 1:28:28 PM GMT

Total views: 12 **Your views:** 4

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:37:10 PM GMT

Subject: RE: Week 6

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Subject: RE: Week 6

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[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 4:30:51 PM GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 4:30:51 PM GMT

Total views: 9 **Your views:** 3

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Kevin

Hi Kevin,

It is quite addictive, isn't it. I look forward to reading your responses and in the meantime enjoy Ottawa - hope you're all feeling better!

Nick

Subject: RE: Week 6

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[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author: Kevin GALALAE

Posted date: Friday, November 6, 2009 6:03:10 AM GMT

Last modified date: Friday, November 6, 2009 6:03:10 AM GMT

Total views: 15 **Your views:** 6

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You hit the nail on the head in pointing out the unmentionable deal between China's political class and the national and international economic establishments, namely that "*we will let you make money - as much as you want - provided you do not seek to upset the political apple-cart*".

Let me contribute a concrete example of conflicting forces "swirling beneath the surface" and the "internal balances and compromises [China] is seeking to achieve". There is an ongoing rift between the country's demographers – who advocate keeping in place the 1978 one-child policy, in order to prevent further environmental devastation and the exhaustion of already scarce natural resources, which would undermine the country's self-sufficiency and wellbeing – and China's economists – who warn that failing to abolish population controls will lead to a dry well for labour, which in turn will cause wage inflation and ultimately lead to China's decreasing competitiveness and loss of exports, thus undermining the country's prosperity. The leadership has heeded to both sides by keeping the one-child policy in place but lessening its restrictions, the rationale being that continuing to control population growth will enable the country to hang on to its prosperity, whereas in lessening stringent controls a steady but moderate flow of workers is assured at levels the country's resources can sustain and the economy can absorb with benefits to its competitiveness.

It is this kind of fine balancing act the Chinese leadership faces and, given the size and precariousness of the population it administers, cannot afford to miss a single step. Moreover, it must seek solutions that are entirely internal and do not offload problems onto the international community. This is in line with the first of the three grand strategies or transcendences Zheng Bijan (see *China's "Peaceful Rise" to Great-Power Status*, Foreign Affairs, Sep/Oct 2005) has identified as the main components of China's foreign policy, namely the need to transcend the old model of industrialization, characterized by high needs and rivalry for resources to satisfy those needs, with a new one, based on a society of thrift achieved through economic efficiency and low consumption.

Let me now address the issue of China's lack of an outlet or safety valve to address shortcomings and mistakes. I believe that safety valve is provided by the population's split into rural and urban distinctions, a singularly Chinese solution and a highly autocratic one. Because the rural population is prohibited by law from moving away from their villages without the state's permission (which the state hardly ever grants), it finds itself in the unfortunate position of having to seek opportunities by migrating to the cities, which it does against the law and to the loss of the rights and benefits accorded to urban citizens who have residence permits. This in effect splits the country into the urban Überclass and the rural Underclass; witness the resulting income and wealth discrepancy between the two classes. Internal migrants in China are as devoid of legal rights and state benefits and protections as illegal Mexican workers are in

the US. By keeping them in legal limbo, China uses its rural citizens (just as the US uses its illegal immigrants) as a safety valve to the social and economic upheavals created by the blunt tools of state action (the Chinese equivalent to the US's cruel inequalities and abuses of pure capitalism). Thus devoid of rights (because devoid of residence permits) they are easily abused and just as easily discarded. They are so devoid of status that their children are not allowed to attend public schools in the cities. In 2008, for instance, 20 million migrant workers lost their jobs, out of a total of some 100 million rural migrants with jobs in the cities (see Derek Scissor's *Deng Undone*, Foreign Affairs, May/June 2009), and were forced to return to their villages. Had the government recognized them as full-fledged citizens, it would have had to accommodate them with social or unemployment assistance.

This brings me to the other two grand strategies of China's foreign policy: (2) emerging as a great power without recourse to plunder or hegemony, but by dint of peace, development and cooperation; and (3) transcending outdated models of social control with the self-governing tools of a harmonious socialist society.

As one can see, without using its rural population and one-child policy as safety valves to unmet demand and unsustainable population growth at home, China would not be able to live up to its first (i.e. reaching a new model of industrialization by building a society of thrift) or second foreign policy objectives since it would have to plunder other people's resources or send its masses abroad to prevent social and economic collapse at home. Plunder (through colonialism or invasion) and mass migration have been the white man's solutions in the past, which is why the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and large tracts of Africa are now populated by Caucasians who took over other people's lands, and why corporations largely owned and staffed by white men are nowadays extracting and controlling natural resources in lands other than their places of origin. While China cannot avoid following the West in tapping other people's natural resources through trade and more recently direct investments, it has largely avoided colonizing other people's lands; the exception, once again, being Tibet.

The conclusion I therefore draw from China's internal and external behaviours is that it has so far managed to solve its internal problems and aspirations without exporting or offloading them onto others - and that is an achievement that Western nations cannot boast.

In this respect, China has the moral high horse, which is why it has become the acknowledged leader of the developing world and the mortal fear of the developed world. The discipline with which China has managed its internal problems while seeking peaceful relations with the outside world rather proves that China's actions on the international arena have been and continue to be measured and balanced.

Having said this, I cannot agree with you more when you stated that "*we have a tendency to see a nation's foreign policy as an expression of how it engages with the outside world*" but that it

is “important, however, also to consider it in terms of the internal messages it sends and the internal balances and compromises it is seeking to achieve.”

Thank you for challenging me to think deeper, Nick.

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Subject: RE: Week 6

Subject: A really interesting and insightful analysis

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Saturday, November 7, 2009 10:45:22 AM
GMT

Last modified date: Saturday, November 7, 2009 10:45:22
AM GMT

Total views: 9 **Your views:** 4

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

Date: Friday, November 6, 2009 6:03:10 AM GMT

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Kevin

Hi Kevin,

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It seems to me that the biggest question facing Chinese policy-makers and society is how these inequalities are managed, given the sheer number of people involved. By scale alone, it therefore dwarfs the problems in the USA (although this is in no way to detract from these). How China answers these questions will have profound and long-term ramifications for all of us - as you will know, there are some analysts who question whether the Chinese state as it is currently formulated can actually survive structurally and foresee the possibility it could even break up, which would have disastrous consequences for all of us.

A more middle-of-the-road scenario would see China's growth and long-term modernization hampered by an institutional and bureaucratic inability to address these problems. I believe that sooner or later the question of the disparity between rural and urban societies will have to be addressed. A case for historical inevitability

might even be made here as every society has had to deal with it at one time or another.

Really, really interesting stuff - I hope the others have a chance to read through this.

Best,

Nick

Subject: A really interesting and insightful analysis

Subject: RE: A really interesting and insightful analysis

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

Posted date: Sunday, November 8, 2009 7:49:25 AM GMT

Last modified date: Sunday, November 8, 2009 7:49:25 AM GMT

Total views: 8 **Your views:** 4

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Saturday, November 7, 2009 10:45:22 AM GMT

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Really, really interesting stuff - I hope the others have a chance to read through this.

Best,

Nick

Hi Nick,

Thank you for the generous praise.

Addressing the disparity between the urban Überclass and the rural Underclass is indeed China's great challenge and until it succeeds in doing so it will be a nation consumed by its internal problems and incapable of leading the international community in any direction. Since failure in this respect, as you have rightfully pointed out, will have disastrous consequences for all of us, we can only hope that our leaders have the wisdom to assist rather than undermine China in its efforts to create a harmonious socialist society.

Like the analysts you have mentioned, I too believe that China's leadership cannot survive the

transformational progress it has enabled and thus far managed to direct without altering the nation's one-party structure. At the same time, given the Chinese inclination to submit to authority and the country's uninterrupted history of autocracy, political change will have to come from above since it is highly unlikely to come from below.

Kevin

Subject: RE: A really interesting and insightful analysis

Subject: RE: Week 6

[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author: [Carla LIUZZO](#)

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Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 7:49:54 AM GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 7:49:54 AM GMT

Total views: 12 **Your views:** 2

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:03:04 PM GMT

Subject: RE: Week 6

Some interesting comments thus far. I was struck by one of Kevin's points:

[China is also hampered in its long-term planning and execution of foreign policy objectives by a degree of internal disunity](#)

He was referring to the different ethnic groupings within China and the tensions that may hamper their relations.

However, I think this is relevant on the **institutional level** as well in terms of the different and competing centres of power within the Chinese political establishment: there is the Politburo, the Party, the People's Liberation Army etc in the centre; then powerful regional baronies and important local level politicians; the economic and business elite etc.

All these groupings - some more influential than others - will seek to have a say in China's foreign policy and will have very different perceptions of what should be prioritised, and the face that China should present to the world.

So my question to you is how you would factor this into your assessments of China and its foreign policy - thoughts?

My other question sits at a more fundamental level in terms of how we approach this week's subject. Why is China so often perceived or conceived of as a "threat" in the West? Is it because it represents the passing of the era of Western dominance and the rise of the East? Is it because we continue define ourselves in terms of an "Other" which China has now become? Or is there something else? Should we "fear" the growth in Chinese power and the influence it now enjoys? (That's actually 5 questions, but there you go.)

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this.

Nick

I would repost and earlier notion to answer your second question Nick.

When the 'threat posed by China' is referred to I see this as not so much a fear that China will overtly seek global hegemony, because by any measure China has advocated for no such predominance. However I believe the fear or caution comes from China's advocating for a new international order. Stemming from its belief that 'for too long the world has been shaped by those who hold power and make systems to serve them' (M, Wesley). China's history has shaped a discontent and a victimology

and it has long called for the 'democratisation' of global affairs. The possibility of China seeking to reshape or undermine international relations systems which do serve to maintain US primacy in the region make some countries nervous. Specifically those with a preference for keeping the USA responsible for security in the region i.e Australia, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea. So it is the possibility that China will seek to reshape the system that seems to be one of the fears when it comes to its rise.

I would also concur with Kevin's point about China's need for raw materials for development and add that this need extends to water and food (which are likely to be the source of future conflict). China's population is not expected to peak until 2030 at which time the population will be in the area of 1.5 billion. The very real fear is that China will seek resources outside their jurisdiction (perhaps by force) to sustain such a massive population. Already we have seen efforts by China to purchase large parts of resource companies in Australia and elsewhere in an effort to have greater power over the price of these such resources. While China continues to state its peaceful objectives, I believe the sheer reality of China's size and particularly the growing middle class (reduced agrarian class) has caused the countries in the region (and the West more broadly) to consider what the future may hold.

On a more ideological level. While moving toward an industrialised country China is by no means moving towards a capitalist system. Marxist theory puts 'history on the side of the Socialists who will be able to exploit the flaws in the Capitalist system' (Westley). To this point China is seeking a new model and a new path which is true to its ideology and which allows prosperity and industrialisation. This point also causes concern to those in the West (particularly the USA) who struggle to separate capitalism from democracy from free markets from industrialisation and this is another reason to fear China. Now to question one.....
Carla

Subject: RE: Week 6

Subject: RE: Week 6

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:50:46 PM
GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:50:46
PM GMT

Total views: 12 **Your views:** 4

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Author: Carla LIUZZO

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 7:49:54 AM GMT

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On a more ideological level. While moving toward an industrialised country China is by no means moving towards a capitalist system. Marxist theory puts 'history on the side of the Socialists who will be able to exploit the flaws in the Capitalist system' (Westley). To this point China is seeking a new model and a new path which is true to its ideology and which allows prosperity and industrialisation. This point also causes concern to those in the West (particularly the USA) who struggle to separate capitalism from democracy from free markets from industrialisation and this is another reason to fear China.

Now to question one.....

Carla

Hi Carla,

Like Kevin's posting, very thought-provoking and well-argued.

There are clear issues relating to China's enormous appetite for natural resources - for example its challenge to America and Europe in Africa through huge investment coupled with the promise of total non-interference in the different nations' internal affairs, which stands on its head the Western approach of coupling investment and aid with political conditionality. On its own borders, moreover, we have the situation of rapid depopulation in the resource-rich region of Eastern Russia, next to an area of China that is undergoing a demographic boom. These serve to illustrate how important the development path China follows in the coming decades will be to the rest of the world.

My question to you relates to the position of China within the structures that "govern" international relations. China is clearly a modern-day great power with the clear potential to become the new superpower. It already has a place at the institutional top table as a veto-wielding permanent member of the UNSC. You note that it seeks "democratisation" of global affairs - i.e. an end to US-led Western dominance. It is safe to assume that the other important international players both accept and encourage China to take on a full and active international role - does this mean that China will continue to advocate a reform the "new international order" you write about? What could such an order entail - or is it just code for China being recognised as the power it is?

Best,

Nick

Subject: RE: Week 6

Subject: RE: Week 6

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Author: Kevin GALALAE

Posted date: Sunday, November 8, 2009 7:27:32 AM GMT

Last modified date: Sunday, November 8, 2009 7:27:32 AM GMT

Total views: 7 Your views: 3

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:50:46 PM GMT

Subject: RE: Week 6

Hi Carla,

Like Kevin's posting, very thought-provoking and well-argued.

There are clear issues relating to China's enormous appetite for natural resources - for example its challenge to America and Europe in Africa through huge investment coupled with the promise of total non-interference in the different nations' internal affairs, which stands on its head the Western approach of coupling investment and aid with political conditionality. On its own borders, moreover, we have the situation of rapid depopulation in the resource-rich region of Eastern Russia, next to an area of China that is undergoing a demographic boom. These serve to illustrate how important the development path China follows in the coming decades will be to the rest of the world.

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Best,

Nick

Hi Nick and Carla,

Having abandoned the most sacred principle of communist doctrine, equality, China will be unable to make positive contributions to an already sound Western order as long as the Chinese people are led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This means that China's declared intention to help shape a more equitable international order is merely the empty rhetoric of self-absorbed political elite whose days at the helm of China are numbered.

If China, however, succeeds in accomplishing within its borders a harmonious society that is self-governing, environmentally sustainable and devoid of ideological rigidities, which is its declared intention, then China's model will supplant that of the West as the new international standard to which to aspire and it will form the basis of a new world order.

I for one hope that China will succeed! A Western world order that does not seem interested in addressing either its glaring ethical shortcomings or its unsustainable economic principles cannot be humanity's blueprint for the future of a global civilization.

Kevin

Subject: RE: Week 6

Subject: Reply to Kevin and Carla

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:52:15 PM GMT

Last modified date: Thursday, November 5, 2009 12:52:15 PM GMT

Total views: 11 **Your views:** 2

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 9:03:04 PM GMT

Subject: RE: Week 6

Some interesting comments thus far. I was struck by one of Kevin's points:

[China is also hampered in its long-term planning and execution of foreign policy objectives by a degree of internal disunity](#)

He was referring to the different ethnic groupings within China and the tensions that may hamper their relations.

However, I think this is relevant on the **institutional level** as well in terms of the different and competing centres of power within the Chinese political establishment: there is the Politburo, the Party, the People's Liberation Army etc in the centre; then powerful regional baronies and important local level politicians; the economic and business elite etc.

All these groupings - some more influential than others - will seek to have a say in China's foreign policy and will have very different perceptions of what should be prioritised, and the face that China should present to the world.

So my question to you is how you would factor this into your assessments of China and its foreign policy - thoughts?

My other question sits at a more fundamental level in terms of how we approach this week's subject. Why is China so often perceived or conceived of as a "threat" in the West? Is it because it represents the passing of the era of Western dominance and the rise of the East? Is it because we continue define ourselves in terms of an "Other" which China has now become? Or is there something else? Should we "fear" the growth in Chinese power and the influence it now enjoys? (That's actually 5 questions, but there you go.)

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this.

Nick

You've both made some very interesting points. Rather than re-hashing what I have already written, perhaps you'd like to look at the responses I've posted to both of you individually and make some comments on these as well as your own.

Nick

Subject: Reply to Kevin and Carla

Subject: Rounding up Week 6

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Sunday, November 8, 2009 4:19:07 PM GMT

Last modified date: Sunday, November 8, 2009 4:19:58 PM GMT

Total views: 11 **Your views:** 2

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Author: Anonymous
Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 12:12:05 PM GMT
Subject: Week 6

Please hit the 'Reply' button to respond to this thread.

Dear Sheldon, Kevin and Carla,

Thanks to you all for what has been a very interesting discussion this week. In terms of quantity of postings it might not have reached the level of last week, but the quality of what you have put up has been great. I hope you have found it of use.

With only a week for each of these topics we have only really scratched the surface here. China is impossible to encapsulate in a few sentences. It probably faces every social, economic and political challenge we can list, it generally defies prediction and is endlessly fascinating. Most important for us, it cannot be ignored - as we have mentioned, the policies China's leadership design over the coming years to meet the challenges the country faces will influence every single one of us. In that sense it is already a power as significant as the US.

I hope you have found this week of use and that it has given you a jumping off point for more in-depth consideration of the country both now and in the future.

See you in Week 7!

Nick

Subject: Rounding up Week 6

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

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Author: [Carla LIUZZO](#)
Posted date: Monday, November 9, 2009 7:36:31 AM GMT
Last modified date: Monday, November 9, 2009 7:36:31 AM GMT
Total views: 9 **Your views:** 2

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Author: N. Wright
Date: Sunday, November 8, 2009 4:19:58 PM GMT
Subject: Rounding up Week 6

Dear Sheldon, Kevin and Carla,

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I hope you have found this week of use and that it has given you a jumping off point for more in-depth consideration of the country both now and in the future.

See you in Week 7!

Nick

Just to add finally. Did you all see the China/Africa summit yesterday in Sham el Sheik?

It was incredible to witness the entire continent of Africa (I'm unsure who declined the offer!!) in attendance, with China offering 10 billion in loans as well as huge investments. It really was a spectacle! It just goes to show how China's policy of 'no strings attached' investment is so attractive to pariahs and developing countries alike. When looking at the room yesterday (and the notable absence of any Western powers) it was hard to argue against your point Nick that China is as powerful as the US.
See you in Week 7!

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

Posted date: Monday, November 9, 2009 9:10:24 AM GMT

Last modified date: Monday, November 9, 2009 9:10:24 AM GMT

Total views: 10 **Your views:** 2

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Author: Carla LIUZZO

Date: Monday, November 9, 2009 7:36:31 AM GMT

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

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See you in Week 7!

A very apt way of rounding up the week, Carla. It is especially interesting as it has received ***virtually no*** coverage in mainstream British media (or at least none that I could see). That tells you all you need to know!

Nick

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author: [Carla LIUZZO](#)

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Posted date: Monday, November 9, 2009 9:21:28 AM GMT

Last modified date: Monday, November 9, 2009 9:21:28 AM GMT

Total views: 7 **Your views:** 2

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Author: N. Wright

Date: Monday, November 9, 2009 9:10:24 AM GMT

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

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Nick

Really Nick? I am guessing not a thing on American TV then! Al Jazeera was covering it all day. I am surprised at the BBC actually because they are usually interested in Africa and seem to do a lot of stories from there (something about the former colonies I suspect).

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

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Author: [N. Wright](#)

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Posted date: Monday, November 9, 2009 1:23:14 PM GMT

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Author: Carla LIUZZO

Date: Monday, November 9, 2009 9:21:28 AM GMT

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6

Really Nick? I am guessing not a thing on American TV then! Al Jazeera was covering it all day. I am surprised at the BBC actually because they are usually interested in Africa and seem to do a lot of stories from there (something about the former colonies I suspect).

I imagine the World Service would have covered it, but the domestic news services can barely see beyond Afghanistan and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in terms of international news coverage. It is a deplorable state of affairs.

Nick

Subject: RE: Rounding up Week 6