Chinese Views of the Syrian Conflict

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In recent years, many observers of China's foreign policy have witnessed what appears to be a subtle change in Beijing's traditional stance toward foreign intervention in the internal affairs of nation states. Historically, the PRC regime has vigorously upheld what it regards as the sacred principle of state sovereignty against arbitrary or excessive outside (and especially military) interference.

This position has been reinforced by its stated overall opposition to the use of force in international affairs, the highly limited utility, from Beijing's perspective, of external coercive pressures (such as sanctions) on sovereign governments to make them alter their behavior, and a belief in the relatively superior results attained by private dialogue and positive incentives.[1] In addition, the Chinese leadership has no doubt resisted foreign interventions in the internal affairs of sovereign nations—especially when led by the United States and the West in general—out of a concern that such intervention is often motivated by a desire for regime change, and could establish a precedent that one day might be used against Beijing.

All of these factors have led Beijing to resist or at the least abstain from efforts by other states, and even international bodies, to coercively pressure or intervene militarily in civil wars or cases of internal unrest occurring in other (particularly developing) states.

However, in the past few years, China's supposedly principled and pragmatic stance on this issue has been under pressure due to growing international concern over a number of incidents wherein authoritarian governments have applied violence against their own populations (best exemplified by the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the subsequent mass killings of civilians in the Darfur region of Sudan in 2003-2004), as well as the emergence of a wide range of social, economic, and security issues that span and erode national boundaries. For some analysts, such developments are contributing to the creation of so-called post-Westphalian norms, which emphasize "the right (and indeed the obligation) of the international community to infringe on the autonomy of the nation-state to protect or advance other considerations."[2]

* I am deeply indebted to Xu Ren and Rachel Esplin Odell for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this essay.

The most notable example of such an effort in the area of humanitarian intervention is reflected in the so-called "responsibility to protect" (R2P) norm adopted at the UN World Summit meeting in 2005, and addressed in various UN resolutions and statements since then.[3]

If such norms gain greater support, especially among major developing countries (and democracies) such as India, Brazil, and Indonesia, Beijing could encounter increasing pressure to support more interventionist policies. In fact, Beijing now recognizes that humanitarian crises or other local problems occurring in so-called areas of instability (from the Chinese perspective) or failed states (from a Western perspective) can pose serious political, diplomatic, and economic threats to other nations, including China. Additionally, the Chinese leadership agrees with many other nations that although it is important to diagnose the underlying, long-term problems that cause such local instability, this overall objective should not prevent short-term actions necessary to deal with emerging and immediate humanitarian and other threats.[4]

As a result, Beijing has recently shown signs of accepting, or at least acquiescing in, internationally endorsed interventions in other countries, in some cases for reasons associated with the prevention of state-inflicted mass violence. A recent example of such changing attitudes was provided by Beijing's willingness to permit UN-backed, NATO-led military intervention in Libya to prevent the killing of innocent civilians by the Qaddafi dictatorship.[5]

That said, the subsequent evolution of the Libyan intervention into a NATO-backed effort to oust the Qaddafi regime, and more recent Western-led efforts to sanction and condemn the Syrian government for its attacks on protesting Syrian civilians, have led Beijing to more pointedly resist even widely backed foreign intervention efforts, for a variety of reasons. In contrast to the Libyan case, the Chinese leadership has repeatedly exercised its veto against UN resolutions on Syria, and gives no sign of accepting any type of foreign military intervention, even in support of humanitarian ends. This development has called into question the significance of China's apparent earlier move toward accepting, if not endorsing, some infringements on national sovereignty by outside forces.

This issue of the CLM takes a closer look at Chinese views toward the ongoing Syrian turmoil and the larger context created by the earlier Libyan experience, to identify the elements of Beijing's current stance on foreign intervention in human rights-related political conflict occurring within sovereign states, as well as possible differences in viewpoint and approach among Chinese observers.[6]

As with my essay in CLM 38, three categories of sources are examined: authoritative, quasi-authoritative, and non-authoritative.[7]

China's Authoritative Stance

The deepening turmoil in Syria, precipitated by the attempts of the Bashar al-Assad regime to suppress widespread, peaceful protests through military force—thus resulting in armed resistance and the emergence of a full-blown civil war—has prompted increasingly strident international criticisms of the Syrian government and calls for various types of foreign action, from severe sanctions to military intervention. Beijing, alongside Moscow, has opposed all attempts to employ international bodies, such as the United Nations, to single out and direct critical or coercive words or actions against the Syrian regime. Most notably:

- In October 2011, Russia and China vetoed a sanctions resolution drafted by Europe condemning Syria.
- On February 4, 2012, Russia and China vetoed a UN Security Council resolution backing an Arab-West peace plan that called for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to step down. The other 13 UN Security Council members voted in favor of the resolution. On February 16, China and Russia voted against a draft UN General Assembly resolution condemning Syria that was adopted by a 137-12 margin with 17 abstentions.
- On March 1, Russia and China voted against a draft resolution of the UN Human Rights Council condemning crimes in Syria.[8]
- On July 19, China and Russia vetoed a British-sponsored UN Security Council resolution that would have punished the Syrian government with economic sanctions for failing to carry out a peace plan agreed upon in March. Eleven Security Council members, including the other three permanent members—Britain, France and the United States—voted for the resolution. Pakistan and South Africa abstained.[9]

At the same time, both Beijing and Moscow have repeatedly urged the international community, through the UN, to present a united front in calling on all sides to "discard violence" and "address problems through dialogue" and have consistently supported the mediation efforts of the Arab League and the UN Special Envoy (initially Kofi Annan and most recently Lakhdar Brahimi), along with the UN monitoring mission, to reach such a peaceful political solution to the conflict.[10] Beijing has also repeatedly expressed support for the implementation of the Syria Action Group's Communique adopted in Geneva—a plan for political resolution that avoided explicitly calling for the resignation of Assad, the relevant Security Council resolutions (2042 and 2043), and the six-point plan for political settlement presented by Kofi Annan.

On an authoritative and quasi-authoritative level, Chinese sources, consisting primarily of statements by senior officials responsible for foreign affairs, such as Dai Bingguo and the PRC ambassadors to the United Nations, along with various Foreign Ministry spokespersons, have been consistent and often quite detailed in explaining both types of

actions (i.e., vetoes and endorsements) and the larger Chinese position throughout the Syrian crisis. In particular, they have justified China's behavior on the basis of larger principles and norms of international behavior, as well as related views toward the historical consequences of coercive outside intervention in domestic affairs.[11]

Regarding the former principles, Beijing has repeatedly uttered the following statement or variants thereof since the beginning of the Syrian unrest:

> Our fundamental point of departure is to safeguard the purposes and principles of the UN Charter as well as the basic norms governing international relations, including the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in others' internal affairs, to safeguard the interests of the Syrian people and the Arab states, and to safeguard the interests of all countries, small and medium-sized in particular. This is China's consistent stance in all international affairs. It is not targeted at a particular issue or time.[12]

Authoritative sources repeatedly stress that China seeks a just, peaceful, and appropriate resolution of the crisis using political, not military, means, and on the basis of unified foreign support for a UN-brokered process of engagement and consultation among the parties involved.[13]

Regarding historical experiences, authoritative Chinese sources have repeatedly observed, in responding to the Syrian crisis, that efforts to apply pressure to one side or another in a conflict and, more generally, any use of force to solve international problems merely complicate the situation, distract from efforts to reach a political settlement, and are more likely to result in greater chaos and unrest over time.[14]

In line with these principles and interpretations of history, Beijing vetoed the above UN resolutions, viewing them as efforts to place a UN imprimatur on coercive or other interventionist actions targeted specifically against the Syrian regime. More broadly, Chinese officials stated in various fora that such resolutions would erode international trust, violate basic norms regarding sovereignty, jeopardize the unity of the Security Council, and undermine existing mediation efforts toward a political solution.[15]

Equally notable, in explaining China's most recent veto of July 19, UN Ambassador Li Baodong gave what is apparently the sharpest set of official remarks yet concerning the motives behind the proposed draft resolution.

> During consultations on this draft resolution, the sponsoring countries failed to show any political will of cooperation. They adopted a rigid and arrogant approach to the reasonable core concerns of the relevant countries, and refused to make revisions…. a few countries made statements that confused right and wrong, and made unfounded accusations against China. This is utterly wrong. It is out of ulterior motives, and firmly opposed by China….a few countries have been intent on interfering in other countries' internal affairs, fanning the flame and driving wedges among countries. They are eager to see tumult in the world.[16]

Given the above stance, it is no surprise that authoritative Chinese sources have scrupulously avoided any mention of the possible application of the R2P norm as a justification for foreign military intervention against the Syrian government for its attacks on thousands of Syrian civilians.[17]

To our knowledge, only one quasi-authoritative source discusses the R2P norm in this context ("Zhong Sheng," a pen-name homonym of "Voice of China" or "Voice of the Center" used in the *Renmin Ribao*).[18] In general, Beijing has taken the position that the application of the R2P norm: a) "should not contravene the principle of state sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs" that are contained in the UN Charter; b) must be considered "in the broader context of maintaining *international* [author's emphasis] peace and security" (presumably in contrast to *domestic* peace and security—author); and c) must not be abused. The last point refers to Beijing's stated opposition to an "arbitrary" and generalized application of the R2P norm by individual nations, in support of a vaguely defined need for "humanitarian intervention." The implication is that the norm should only be applied under exceptional circumstances, when the UN determines that *international* peace and stability are threatened by "a crisis involving one of the four international crimes: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity." Moreover, any actions taken under the R2P norm must "strictly abide by the provisions of the UN Charter, and respect the views of the government and regional organizations concerned. The crisis must be addressed in the framework of the UN, and all peaceful means must be exhausted."[19] The Chinese leadership clearly does not believe that the Syrian crisis meets the conditions necessary for invoking the R2P norm.[20]

In addition to all this, authoritative Chinese sources have suggested that Beijing's vetoes were also prompted by a concern over possible outside support for regime change in Syria. Usually expressed in response to media questions concerning discussions or efforts in support of severe sanctions or a military "no-fly" zone (similar to the one established over Libya during that crisis—see below), Chinese officials have repeatedly stated that "China is opposed to external armed intervention or forced regime change," indicating that such actions would violate the sovereignty principle enshrined in the UN Charter, and would prove politically destabilizing for Syria and the region.[21]

At the same time, Chinese officials, and even quasi-authoritative sources have also apparently sought to avoid directly labeling specific states, such as the United States, as proponents of regime change.[22] That said, "Zhong Sheng" has come very close to doing so, by accusing "certain Western countries" of such behavior.[23]

Alongside and reinforcing this supposedly principled and broad historically based view are more "realist" perspectives and arguments that reflect China's specific political and strategic interests vis-à-vis the West and the Middle East, as well as the apparent "lessons learned" from the Libya experience. Authoritative and quasi-authoritative Chinese sources clearly confirm that, after initially acquiescing—through its formal abstention vote—in a limited UN-backed, NATO-implemented armed intervention in Libya,

consisting of a "no-fly" zone undertaken to protect civilians under attack from the Qaddafi regime, Beijing subsequently concluded that the U.S. and NATO had grossly exceeded the UN mandate by embarking on a much wider mission to overthrow the Libyan government.[24]

Chinese officials and authoritative spokespersons strongly criticized the military actions undertaken by U.S. and NATO forces in Libya, declaring China's opposition to not only "the use of force in international relations" but also "the abuse of force that can cause more civilian casualties and a bigger humanitarian crisis," and called for "an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful settlement of the issue." These have been Beijing's longstanding positions and became central themes justifying Beijing's vetoes during the subsequent Syrian crisis.[25] Apparently, Beijing felt betrayed and misled to accept a strategy for regime change that it had not endorsed.

Authoritative sources also suggest that China's actions, including its initial support for international efforts to condemn and sanction the Libyan regime, its acquiescence in efforts to prevent that regime from killing large numbers of citizens, and its subsequent criticism of the NATO-led mission, were also to a great extent motivated by other practical considerations. Most notable among these is an apparent desire to avoid appearing at odds with two key regional organizations: the Arab League (AL) and the African Union (AU). China had very important political and economic ties with member states of both organizations.

As Chinese officials indicated, deference to the positions of the AL and AU in supporting UN Resolution 1973 played a major role in initially inducing Beijing to accept foreign military intervention in Libya.[26] Moreover, members of the AL and AU subsequently expressed their opposition to such intervention—once it had expanded in scope and purpose—thereby presumably contributing to Beijing's decision to shift its own stance to one of opposition. Although no authoritative Chinese sources confirm a direct link between the shift in AL/AU sentiment and China's move to opposition, many non-authoritative sources appearing in official PRC media (such as the *Renmin Ribao*) certainly suggest it played a major role. Such sources repeatedly endorsed Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa's criticism of the "double standard" pursued by the Western coalition in Libya in allegedly violating the original intent of the UN-mandated no-fly zone.[27]

During the subsequent Syrian crisis, the AL has taken a more mixed stance reflecting both divisions within that entity and reactions to evolving events. That stance has included support for the dispatch of UN peacekeepers, formal backing for a UN-endorsed attempt at peaceful settlement through negotiation, endorsements of severe sanctions against the Syrian government, opposition to foreign military intervention (occurring after internal discussion of such intervention), and demands for Assad to step aside. It also supported several of the UN resolutions that China (and Russia) had vetoed, while at the same time declaring that it opposes outside efforts at regime change.[28]

Such a stance (expressing views both in line with and at odds with Beijing's position) arguably gave the Chinese leadership more flexibility in the Syrian case. This factor, along with both the "lessons learned" from the Libya experience,[29] its broader principled positions enumerated above (which stem in part from Beijing's desire to prevent the development of an intervention precedent that could be used against it in the future), and other factors discussed below, explain Beijing's willingness, during the Syria crisis, to depart from its past preference for UN abstentions by repeatedly vetoing UN resolutions, and to risk widespread opprobrium by categorically opposing direct efforts to intervene militarily or place focused pressure on the Assad regime.[30]

Non-Authoritative Chinese Views

In general, most analysis and commentary on the Syrian (and the Libyan) crisis by Chinese observers (including primarily journalists and academics) conform with Beijing's authoritative position as defined above.[31] However, many of these sources provide more details regarding both China's apparent view toward the ongoing crisis and its reasons for opposing the relevant UN resolutions. Perhaps most importantly, these sources also offer a more explicit and full-throated criticism of Western—and especially U.S.—behavior than those found in authoritative sources.

Regarding the former, one especially notable article by Qu Xing (the president of the China Institute of International Studies) explaining China's July 19 veto provides the most detailed and pointed analysis found in any Chinese source of the supposedly principles-based logic motivating that action. Qu argues that the Chinese veto arose from Beijing's objections to the resolution's alleged "violations of the basic principles of the [UN] Charter" regarding foreign intervention in the affairs of a sovereign nation, concerns that the resolution would lead to the West bombarding another Arab state (as occurred in Libya—author), and fears regarding the potentially disastrous consequences for Syria and the region of Western military involvement.[32] Other sources have made similar comments, characterizing any use of force to solve a crisis as a violation of the UN Charter, a point also contained in articles by the quasi-authoritative "Zhong Sheng," as noted above.[33]

In addition, non-authoritative Chinese (and Western) sources suggest that Beijing's stance on the Syria crisis is influenced by the absence of the kind of economic and direct humanitarian interests that were present in the Libyan case, as well as the position taken by Russia. The former arguably provided Beijing with a strong incentive to avoid alienating either side in the Libyan conflict, since backing the wrong party might result in significant losses. This adds to the reasons for China's abstention on UN Resolution 1973. In the Syria conflict, China has few such concerns, thus providing it with greater freedom to cast vetoes that might alienate the Syrian opposition.[34] Moscow's strong stance against both censures and sanctions directed at the Assad regime as well as any form of foreign military intervention, arguably provide Beijing with some cover in taking a similar stance.[35]

Regarding the criticism of the West's stance, many non-authoritative Chinese sources argue that efforts to remove Assad through force would prove futile and lead only to a chaotic, prolonged conflict and a highly unstable post-civil war political situation, given the military weakness and disorganized, undisciplined nature of the opposition, and the overall presence of severe ethnic divisions among the combatants.

Moreover, some observers blame the West for assisting in the militarization of the dispute by encouraging and assisting armed resistance to the Syrian government. Such observers criticize the July 19 draft UN resolution as an effort to lay "a foundation for military intervention in Syria" and thereby establish a precedent that permits the West to overthrow "any regime at will."[36]

Indeed, many Chinese analysts insist that Western policy toward Syria reflects a larger pattern of intervention in strife-torn countries (such as Somalia, Iraq, and Libya) that has resulted in greater chaos, violence, and hatred. Some accuse the West of using the excuse of "humanitarian intervention" to "smash governments it considers as threats to its so-called national interests and relentlessly replace them with those that are Washington-friendly."[37] Similarly, some observers argue that the U.S. is pushing for the overthrow of the Syrian government in order to eliminate Iran's only ally in the region, and thereby increase pressure on Tehran.[38]

Thus, for many such observers, geostrategic factors, not humanitarian interests, best explain Western, and especially U.S., behavior. However, a few Chinese observers strike a more even-handed stance, arguing that the Syrian crisis reflects the influence of many large and small powers, both Western and non-Western.[39]

Moreover, in contrast to the general absence of any mention (much less discussion) of the R2P norm and its relationship to the Syrian crisis among authoritative Chinese sources, some non-authoritative observers cover this topic in considerable detail, explaining why R2P is not applicable.[40]

Some Chinese analysts offer very practical explanations for China's stance toward the Syrian conflict, and the difference between that stance and China's response to the Libyan conflict. One analyst argues that the former provided a clear demonstration of crisis and mass killing, while the latter involved a civil war and military gridlock.[41] Another asserts that any settlement of the Syrian conflict must leave the Syrian government with a chance for survival, since not doing so will force it to "fight to the end."[42] And still another Chinese observer suggests that Beijing's stance toward Syria is motivated in part by a desire to "strengthen ties with Russia, whose strategic support to China is more substantial than that of [many] Arab countries."[43]

Finally, one must note that the largely conformist, non-authoritative Chinese observations on the Syria crisis do not validate the notion that all Chinese citizens agree with or support China's stance on this issue. Indeed, a very wide variety of views on the crisis and Chinese policy can be found among the online commentary offered by China's so-called "netizens." This includes some very sharp criticism of Beijing's stance.[44] Such an

observation can of course be made about virtually any aspect of China's overall foreign policy. Nonetheless, it is also the case that such views, while important as an indicator of both the greater freedoms that ordinary Chinese enjoy in expressing their opinion on sensitive topics and the wide range of opinions present among the Chinese public, are almost certainly much less reflective of leadership attitudes than the non-authoritative sources examined above. At most, one can assert that such views, including those both supportive and critical of Chinese policy, might play a role in influencing leadership calculations. But they do not necessarily mirror knowledgeable elite (much less leadership) perceptions.

Conclusions

The preceding analysis strongly suggests that the Chinese leadership holds a unified and—from its perspective—highly principled view toward the Syrian crisis. In particular, they believe that: 1) the UN Charter does not give states or even international bodies the right to employ force in resolving international disputes; and 2) the principle of national sovereignty—and in particular the notion of sovereign equality and non-interference in other states' internal affairs derived from that principle—should be upheld above any other norms or principles guiding the behavior of such entities.

It also suggests that, even if China's leaders had adopted a (slightly?) more receptive stance toward certain types of intervention by the international community in the affairs of sovereign states over the past decade or so, the Syrian and Libyan crises have arguably strengthened their resistance to any Western-led effort to choose sides and place coercive pressure on governments embroiled in domestic conflict, even when ostensibly done for humanitarian reasons. As we have seen, Beijing has already employed its UN veto power three times during the Syrian crisis, even in the face of broad international support for intervention, to prevent targeted criticism of the Assad regime and other punitive military or procedural actions (such as censures) that might establish a basis for later armed intervention.

At root, China's stance on such issues seems primarily motivated by two related factors: 1) preventing the establishment of legal or procedural precedents for military interventions by the international community against sovereign states, except under extremely rare and narrow circumstances; and 2) preventing Western powers, and especially the United States, from using international bodies such as the UN and evolving norms such as the R2P norm to undermine or overthrow sovereign governments in pursuit of larger geostrategic objectives. From Beijing's perspective, such actions undermine international order, obstruct efforts to reach peaceful settlements of essentially political problems, and potentially strengthen the hand of the West in defining the reasons and means employed to deal with both domestic and international problems.

These perspectives in turn suggest that, from a national interest viewpoint, Beijing's position on foreign intervention is also based on a strong desire to prevent democratic states from establishing a principled basis for outside intervention in the internal affairs

of non-democratic states, including China. Thus, for China's leadership, the prevention of such so-called "abuses" of power by other major countries that could threaten Chinese interests, along with the overall defense of the sovereignty principle, are regarded as far more important than efforts to end civilian killings in domestic conflicts, except, perhaps, in those rare cases when such actions clearly threaten international order or the international system. For Beijing, if there is any moral justification for external, coercive intervention against sovereign governments, it is primarily to prevent the disruption of international society through widespread (i.e., inter-state) violence and secondarily to prevent state-inflicted mass atrocities through strictly delimited and narrowly defined efforts.

Furthermore, in the Syrian case, Beijing's resistance to even targeted criticism of the Assad regime is motivated to a great degree by the Libya experience. This time, China's leaders refused to accept assurances that proposed resolutions would not permit or lead to military intervention in Syria. In other words, whether justified or not, Beijing not only does not believe in the efficacy of coercive actions in the Syrian case, but also has become even more intensely suspicious of Western motives in calling for humanitarian intervention. None of this bodes well for the future handling of either the Syrian crisis or Sino-Western interactions to prevent or halt apparent cases of state-sanctioned killings of civilian populations.

Notes

[1] "Are Human Rights Higher Than Sovereignty?" *People's Daily*, March 17, 2006; Human Rights Watch, "China Events in 2007," 270; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report 2007*, 4–5; Jacques deLisle, "Into Africa: China's Quest for Resources and Influence," Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes, February 2007, www.fpri.org/enotes/200702.delisle.intoafricachinasquest.html. For examples of Chinese explanations, see "China's Influence on Darfur Should Not Be Overestimated, Says Envoy," Xinhua, March 7, 2008; "China Plays Constructive Role in World Peace, Stability: Foreign Ministry," Xinhua, March 4, 2008; and "Talks, Not Sanctions, Way to Resolve Darfur Crisis: People's Daily," Xinhua, July 28, 2004.

[2] Harry Harding, "China Rediscovers Ethics in Foreign Policy," Carnegie Ethics Online, January 6, 2009, www.cceia.org/resources/articles_papers_reports/0013.html.

[3] The R2P norm is still undergoing debate over the conditions that permit its application and its manner of implementation. The concept focuses on preventing and halting four types of crimes committed by a government against its citizens: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. See United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, "Mission Statement," http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser. The R2P norm rests on three "pillars." First, a state has a responsibility to protect its population from mass atrocities; second, the international community has a responsibility to assist the state to fulfill its primary responsibility; and third, if a state fails to protect its citizens from mass atrocities and peaceful measures have failed, the international community has the responsibility to intervene through coercive measures such as economic sanctions. Military intervention is possible as a last resort. See United Nations General Assembly, "2005 World Summit Outcome," A/60/L.1, September 15, 2005, http://www.who.int/hiv/universalaccess2010/worldsummit.pdf; and Cristina G. Badescu, *Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: Security and Human Rights* (New York, NY: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2010), p. 110.

[4] See Michael D. Swaine, "China: Exploiting a Strategic Opening," in *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, edited by Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2004), 67–101; Robert Sutter, "China's Regional Strategy and America," in *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics*, edited by David Shambaugh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 290; Bates Gill, *Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 12–13; David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 3 (Winter 2004–2005): 64–99; Susan L. Craig, *Chinese Perceptions of Traditional and Nontraditional Security Threats* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007); and Gao Zugui, "Major Non-Traditional Security Threats in the Asia-Pacific Region: China's Perspective," in *A Collection of Papers of the International Symposium on Non-Traditional Security: Challenges and Responses* (Beijing: China Institute for International Strategic Studies, 2005), 336.

[5] China supported the referral of Libya to the International Criminal Court, voted in favor of UN Security Resolution 1970 imposing strict sanctions on Libya, and abstained on UN Security Resolution 1973 authorizing enforcement of a "no-fly zone" in Libya, thus enabling it to be adopted.

[6] The major primary sources used to chart Chinese statements regarding the Syria and Libya crises include: The official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国外交部), Chinese and English versions (http:www.fmprc.gov.cn and http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng, respectively); the archives of People's Daily (人民日报), at PeopleData (http://data.people.com.cn, 人民数据库：中国政府文献信息); the archives of PLA Daily (解放军报) at East View Universal Databases (http://www.eastview.com); and the databases of the Chinese Government and the Communist Party of China (CPC), both at PeopleData.

[7] See Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Leadership & Elite Responses to the U.S. Pacific Pivot," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 38 (Summer 2012),

http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM38MS.pdf, for a definition of and citations supporting this typology. As in that issue of the CLM, the only quasi-authoritative source commenting on the Syrian crisis consists of articles by "Zhong Sheng," an apparent homophone for "Voice of China" or "Voice of the Center" that appears to be written by the editorial staff of the *People's Daily* and is used to reflect the views of that official outlet for the Chinese Communist Party.

[8] Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Succession, Syria … and the Search for Putin's Soul," *Comparative Connections*, May 2012, http://csis.org/files/publication/1201qchina_russia.pdf.

[9] The resolution would have imposed economic sanctions on the Syrian government under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter. That section of the charter also allows for military intervention to enforce Security Council demands. See Rick Gladstone, "Friction at the U.N. as Russia and China Veto Another Resolution on Syria Sanctions," *New York Times*, July 19, 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/world/middleeast/russia-and-china-veto-un-sanctions-against-syria.html.

[10] "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu's Remarks on the Situation in Syria," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, August 23, 2011, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t851770.htm.

[11] For examples, see "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang's Remarks on Brahimi's Appointment as the UN-AL Joint Special Representative on the Syrian Issue," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, August 18, 2012, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t962129.htm; Zhong Sheng, "Be wary of attempt to resolve Syrian crisis outside UN framework," *People's Daily Online*, August 15, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/90777/7913681.html; "Explanatory Remarks by Ambassador Wang Min after General Assembly Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, August 3, 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t958262.htm; Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria Tabled by the United Kingdom," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, July 19. 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t953482.htm; "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on July 9, 2012," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, July 10, 2012, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t950311.htm; and "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu's Regular Press Conference on March 3, 2011," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, March 5, 2011, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t804119.htm

[12] "Explanatory Remarks by Ambassador Wang Min after General Assembly Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, August 3, 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t958262.htm. and other similar cites

[13] Beijing had originally taken a similar stance during the Libyan crisis. See, for example, "Ambassador Li Baodong Holds Press Conference in His Capacity as President of the Security Council in March," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, March 2, 2011, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t803808.htm; "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu's Remarks on the Adoption of UNSC Resolution 1973 on the Libya Issue," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, March 21, 2011, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/t808091.htm; and "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu's Remarks on Issues Related to Situation in Libya," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, March 11, 2011, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t806252.htm.

[14] For example, Hu Jintao reportedly stated, during the Libya crisis, "History has repeatedly shown that the use of force is not the answer to problems, but only makes them more complicated, Chinese President Hu Jintao said in Beijing Wednesday in reference to recent events in Libya." See "Hu: Use of force no solution to problems like Libyan issue," Xinhua, March 30, 2011, http://www.china.org.cn/world/libya_air_strike/2011-03/30/content_22258604.htm. Also see "Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria Tabled by the United Kingdom," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, July 19. 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t953482.htm; and, for a quasi-authoritative source, see Zhong Sheng, "Do not abandon hope for peaceful resolution to Libyan crisis," *People's Daily Online*, March 21, 2011,

http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/98649/7326329.html. The author states, **"**History and reality fully prove that force is not an effective way to solve a crisis."

[15] See "Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria Tabled by the United Kingdom," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, July 19. 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t953482.htm; and "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu's Remarks on the UN Security Council's Draft Resolution on Syria," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, October 5, 2011, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t865579.htm

[16] Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria Tabled by the United Kingdom," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, July 19. 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t953482.htm

[17] The major primary sources employed to chart the authoritative use of the concept of the U.N. norm of "Responsibility to Protect" include: The official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (中 华人民共和国外交部), Chinese and English versions (http:www.fmprc.gov.cn and http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng, respectively); the archives of People's Daily (人民日报), at PeopleData (http://data.people.com.cn, 人民数据库：中国政府文献信息); the archives of PLA Daily (解放军报) at East View Universal Databases (http://www.eastview.com); the databases of the Chinese Government and the Communist Party of China (CPC), both at PeopleData; and the Open Source Center (www.opensource.gov). Search queries in Chinese include: a search through the PLA Daily Database on EastView for 保护责任 AND 叙利亚 that generated no results; a search on EastView for 保护责任 AND 利比亚 that generated no results; a search through PeopleData for 保护责任 AND 叙利亚 that returned no results; a search through PeopleData for 保护责任 AND 利比亚 that returned no results. Search queries in English include: responsibility to protect AND Syria, R2P AND Syria, responsibility protection AND Syria in Open Source Center.

[18] See "钟声：解决叙利亚危机需要现实行动 [Zhong Sheng: Solving the Syria Crisis Requires Realistic Action]," *Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*), March 30, 2012, http://news.sina.com.cn/pl/2012-03-30/035824197616.shtml. This Zhong Sheng source was returned as a search query conducted in the search engine Baidu (www.baidu.com) for the words "Zhong Sheng," "Syria," and "Responsibility to Protect" (钟声叙利亚保护责任). Another Zhong Sheng article may have made an *indirect* reference to R2P in February 2012, when it stated that peaceful settlement "is what [is] most truly responsible for the Syrian people." Zhong Sheng, "Why China vetoes UN draft resolution for Syria issue," *People's Daily*, February 8, 2012, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7723539.html.

[19] "Statement by Ambassador Liu Zhenmin at the Plenary session of the General Assembly on the Question of 'Responsibility to Protect,'" July 24, 2009, http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/Statement%20by%20Ambassador%20Liu%20Zhenmin.pdf.

[20] For a Western analysis of China's stance on R2P in relation to the Libya crisis, see Andrew Garwood-Gowers, "China and the 'Responsibility to Protect': The Implications of the Libyan Intervention," *Asian Journal of International Law*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2012), pp. 375-393, http://eprints.qut.edu.au/49903/1/China_and_R2P_revised.pdf. The author argues that China's decision to abstain from UNSCR 1973 did not reflect a break from its general stance on "R2P." Its abstention occurred due to three factors: 1) the immediate threat to the civilian population; 2) the defection of members within the Qaddafi government; and 3) most crucially, the regional consensus on the need for external intervention.

[21] "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on July 9, 2012," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, July 10, 2012, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t950311.htm. See "Explanatory Remarks by Ambassador Wang Min after General Assembly Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, August 3, 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t958262.htm.

[22] None of the authoritative sources examined for this study made any specific reference when criticizing proponents of armed intervention or regime change.

[23] See Zhong Sheng, "Be wary of attempt to resolve Syrian crisis outside UN framework," *People's Daily Online*, August 15, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/90777/7913681.html. The article states: "However, certain Western countries still have not given up on regime change in Syria, and have provided increasing support to rebel forces. Their open discussion of a no-fly zone, along with other irresponsible words and actions, has undermined the solidarity of the Security Council, causing the international community to be unable to reach consensus and making Annan's mediation efforts pointless. All kinds of indications show that the rumors that certain Western powers are looking outside the framework of the United Nations for a solution to the Syrian crisis are not baseless." Also see Zhong Sheng, "Regime change should not be determined by external forces," *People's Daily Online*, July 18, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/90777/7879699.html. The article states: "It is very easy for the most powerful military alliance to overthrow the regime of a small country by war. It sounds like the alliance has the strong sense of justice and responsibility to change a regime and stop the humanitarian disaster by force. However, can the unceasing terrorist attacks and bombings in the following 10 years after regime change not be regarded as humanitarian disasters? The wars launched in the 21st century have proved again and again that 'pursuit of democracy' and 'humanitarianism' are nothing but excuses for the powerful states to seek profits." For a similar view, see Zhong Sheng, "Multiple Challenges on Syria Issue," *Renmin Ribao*, July 4, 2012, OSC CPP20120704722026.

[24] China's abstention from the resolution was "in line with its prevailing practice in the Security Council; it [had] employed its veto on only six occasions since 1971." See Jonathan D. Pollack, "China: Unease from Afar," *The Arab Awakening*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2011), pp. 298-304, http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2011/11/18-arab-awakening-china-pollack.

[25] See "Hu: Use of Force No Solution to Problems Like Libyan Issue," Xinhua, March 30, 2011, www.china.org.cn/world/libya_air_strike/2011-03/30/content_22258604.htm; "Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Adoption of Security Council Resolution on Libya," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, March 17, 2011, www.china-un.org/eng/gdxw/t807544.htm; "Ambassador Li Baodong Chairs Security Council Meeting on Libya," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, March 25, 2011, www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t809816.htm; "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu's Regular Press Conference on March 22, 2011," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, March 23, 2011, www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/t809578.htm. Also see Zhong Sheng, "Regime change should not be determined by external forces," *People's Daily Online*, July 18, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/90777/7879699.html.

[26] "Resolution on Libya," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, March 17, 2011, http://www.china-un.org/eng/gdxw/t807544.htm. Ambassador Li stated: "China always opposes the use of force in international relations. During Security Council consultations on resolution 1973, China and some other Council members raised some specific issues. Regrettably, however, there is no clarification or answer to many of these issues. China has serious concerns over some elements of the resolution. In the meantime, China attaches great importance to the decision made by the 22-member Arab League on the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya. We also attach great importance to the positions of African countries and the African Union. Based on these factors and taking into consideration the special circumstances in Libya, China cast a vote of abstention on resolution 1973."

For a very useful and thorough analysis of the impact of the Libya experience on Beijing's attitude toward the Syria crisis, see Yun Sun, "What China has Learned From its Libya Experience," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 152, February 27, 2012, http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/apb152_1.pdf.

[27] See Zhang Xinyi, "Turmoil in Middle East not result of oppressive autocracy," *People's Daily*, March 24, 2011, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90780/91343/7330452.html; Zhang Xinyi, "Libya intervention: Driven by oil or humanitarianism?" *People's Daily*, March 23, 2011, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90780/91343/7329108.html; and "Concerns over air strikes,"

Editorial, *China Daily*, March 22, 2011, p. 8, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-03/22/content_12207703.htm.

[28] See "Arab States Call to Send UN Peacekeepers to Syria," *Al Bawaba*, February 12, 2012, http://www.albawaba.com/news/arab-states-call-send-un-peacekeepers-syria-412570; "Envoy Says Arab League Seeking Military Intervention in Syria," *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, June 3, 2012 (ProQuest Search); "Syria: Arab League to UN: End Syrian 'Killing Machine' Now," *Asia News Monitor*, February 2, 2012; "Arab League to Vote on Sanctions Against Syria," *Voice of America*, November 27, 2011, http://blogs.voanews.com/breaking-news/2011/11/27/arab-league-to-vote-on-sanctions-against-syria; Neil MacFarquhar and Nada Bakri, "Isolating Syria, Arab League Imposes Broad Sanctions," *New York Times*, November 27, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/28/world/middleeast/arab-league-prepares-to-vote-on-syrian-sanctions.html; "Isolating Syria's Assad," *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 2011, http://articles.latimes.com/2011/nov/15/opinion/la-ed-assad-20111115; "Arab Leaders Call on Assad to Step Down," *Voice of America*, July 22, 2012, http://www.voanews.com/content/syrian-troops-bombard-locations-across-country/1442627.html.

[29] Another "lesson" that also explains Beijing's apparently greater efforts to appear even-handed in engaging directly both the Syrian regime and the opposition is the apparent economic and political damage it sustained during the Libyan crisis by failing to engage the Libyan armed opposition sooner. See Yun Sun, "What China has Learned From its Libya Experience," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 152, February 27, 2012, http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/apb152_1.pdf. Beijing's greater flexibility in the Syrian case was also arguably reinforced by the lack of any significant Chinese economic interests in Syria. See Qu Xing, "A Chinese Position On Syria Issue: The UN Charter and 'the Responsibility to Protect' (R2P)," *The 4th Media*, July 21, 2012, http://www.4thmedia.org/2012/07/21/a-chinese-position-on-syria-issue-the-un-charter-and-the-responsibility-to-protect-r2p; and Eva Bellin and Peter Krause, "Intervention in Syria: Reconciling Moral Premises and Realistic Outcomes," *Middle East Brief*, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, no. 64 (June 2012), http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB64.pdf.

[30] In doing this, Beijing has had to engage the Arab League very cautiously, singling out its support for a political settlement while avoiding any criticism of its targeted pressure against the Assad regime and its discussion of military intervention. For an example, see "Explanatory Remarks by Ambassador Wang Min after General Assembly Vote on Draft Resolution on Syria," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, August 3, 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t958262.htm. Ambassador Wang stated: "China understands the concern of Arab countries and the League of Arab States about an early settlement to the Syrian issue. We set store by the important role they play in the political settlement to this issue and appreciate their efforts in that regard. China stands ready to make concerted efforts with the international community, the Arab states included, to uphold the general direction of a political settlement to this issue and encourage political dialogue to resolve differences and ease tension so as to safe guard the fundamental interests of the people in Syria and other countries in the region and preserve peace and stability in the Middle East."

[31] For example, see "Do not give up efforts for peaceful solution of Syrian crisis," *People's Daily Online*, August 25, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/102774/7923371.html; Qu Xing, "A Chinese Position On Syria Issue: The UN Charter and 'the Responsibility to Protect' (R2P)," *The 4th Media*, July 21, 2012, http://www.4thmedia.org/2012/07/21/a-chinese-position-on-syria-issue-the-un-charter-and-the-responsibility-to-protect-r2p; "Commentary: Stick to political course at crucial juncture in Syria," Xinhua, August 3, 2012, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/pla-daily-commentary/2012-08/03/content_4981117.htm; Ruan Zongze, "Will Syria crisis be transformed into an opportunity?," *People's Daily*, March 22, 2012, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7765535.html (Ruan is vice-president of China Institute of International Studies); and Dong Manyuan, "The world must respect Syria's sovereignty," *China.org.cn*, February 18, 2012, trans. Xu Lin and Zhang Junmian, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-02/18/content_24667030.htm (Dong is vice director and research fellow with China Institute of International Studies).

Regarding the Libyan crisis, see "For peace in Libya," Editorial, *China Daily*, March 29, 2011, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-03/19/content_12196455.htm.

[32] Qu Xing, "A Chinese Position On Syria Issue: The UN Charter and 'the Responsibility to Protect' (R2P)," *The 4th Media*, July 21, 2012, http://www.4thmedia.org/2012/07/21/a-chinese-position-on-syria-issue-the-un-charter-and-the-responsibility-to-protect-r2p.

[33] See, for example, "Concerns over air strikes," Editorial, *China Daily*, March 22, 2011, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-03/22/content_12207703.htm. The editorial states: "Every time countries wield force to solve a crisis it constitutes an infringement of the United Nations Charter and the norms guarding international relations. It is also a deviation from the trend of our times, which increasingly opts for peace and development rather than conflict and confrontation." Also see Zhong Sheng, "Regime change should not be determined by external forces," *People's Daily Online*, July 18, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/90777/7879699.html; and Zhong Sheng, "Why China vetoes UN draft resolution for Syria issue," *People's Daily*, February 8, 2012, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7723539.html.

[34] Chinese economic interests in Libya included billions of dollars in investments involving dozens of PRC companies, with 36,000 Chinese laborers on the ground. Beijing has few commercial or personnel interests in Syria.

For information and commentary on the role that China's economic interests in Libya played in Beijing's decision-making, see the remarks of Shen Dingli and Shi Yinhong in Ananth Krishnan and Sandeep Dikshit, "India and China had similar considerations on Libya," *Hindu*, March 26, 2011, http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article1571829.ece?service=mobile; Steven Sotloff, "China's Libya Problem," *The Diplomat*, March 14, 2012, http://thediplomat.com/china-power/china%E2%80%99s-libya-problem/; and "China starts talks with Libya on post-war business," Xinhua, February 7, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-02/07/c_131396472.htm; Douglas H. Paal, "China: Mugged by Reality in Libya, Again," *Asia Pacific Brief*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 11, 2011, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2011/04/11/china-mugged-by-reality-in-libya-again/2h4; and Brian Spegele, "China Takes New Tack in Libya Vote," *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 2011, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703292304576212431833887422.html.

For information on China's economic position in Syria, see Richard Weitz, "With No Interests at Stake, China's Syria Stance Could Shift," *World Politics Review*, June 15, 2012, http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12063/with-no-interests-at-stake-chinas-syria-stance-could-shift; and Yun Sun, "Syria: What China has Learned From its Libya Experience," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, No. 152, February 27, 2012, http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/apb152_1.pdf.

[35] On the role that Moscow's position may have played in shaping Beijing's calculations toward Libya, see references to Russia in Tang Zhichao, "How humanitarian is Western intervention in Libya?" trans. Wang Hanlu, *People's Daily*, March 22, 2011, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/98670/102055/7327885.html; "No more abuse of force," Editorial, *China Daily*, March 24, 2011, p. 8, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-03/24/content_12220671.htm; and Parameswaran Ponnudurai, "Analysts Puzzle Over Libya Vote," *Radio Free Asia*, March 24, 2011, http://www.rfa.org/english/east-asia-beat/libya-03242011174307.html.

Russia voted in favor of the UN Security Council resolution imposing sanctions on Qaddafi, abstained from the resolution authorizing a no-fly zone, and subsequently criticized the alleged over-reaching of the NATO-led intervention—all positions similar to those adopted by the PRC. See "President Medvedev Clarifies Russia's Position on Libya," *Russkiy Mir Foundation Information Service*, March 22, 2011, http://www.russkiymir.ru/russkiymir/en/news/common/news2747.html; and "A crack in the tandem?" Economist, March 23, 2011, www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2011/03/russia_and_libya. (As noted above, something similar can be said for the Arab League—and also for other nations such as India—but Russia may have had a unique influence in providing China cover in its positions [and vice versa], since, like Beijing, Moscow has veto power as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.)

For the role of Russia in Beijing's approach to the Syrian crisis, see Dmitri Trenin, "Flexible relationship of cooperation," *China Daily*, June 6, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-06/06/content_15477099.htm and "Syria Could Unite Russia and China Against the U.S.," Bloomberg, June 7, 2012, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-06-07/syria-could-unite-russia-and-china-against-the-

u-s-.html; "Growing friendship," *China Daily*, April 26, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-04/26/content_15144438.htm; and Wei Wei, "Why Western-backed Syria draft resolution fails again," Xinhua, July 20, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-07/20/c_131727785.htm.

[36] See "Assad inextricable part of peaceful transition," *Global Times*, July 13, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/90777/7874238.html. The article was compiled by *Global Times* reporter Gao Lei based on an interview with Wu Bingbing, deputy director of the Department of Arabic Language and Culture at Peking University. Also see "Annan's initiative for Syria," *China Daily*, July 11, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-07/11/content_15567511.htm; "West wrong on Chinese public's Syria view," *Global Times*, July 23, 2012, http://english.people.com.cn/90883/7884012.html; "UN carries on in Syria," *China Daily*, August 21, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-08/21/content_15691779.htm; and Ding Ying, "Syria in the Eye of the Storm," *Beijing Review*, August 9, 2012, http://www.bjreview.com.cn/special/2012-08/07/content_473723.htm. This last article cites a variety of Chinese analysts critical of Western behavior toward the Syrian crisis, including one researcher who asserts that the U.S. and Europe were "inclined to oppose [Kofi Annan's] peace plan."

[37] "Obama's 'red line' warnings merely aimed to seek new pretext for Syria intervention," Xinhua, August 22, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-08/22/c_131800638.htm. The author adds: "That easily explains why both Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, who once worked closely with the United States, were later depicted as brutal dictators with the people's blood dipping through their fingers." Also see Jin Liangxiang, "Syria is neither Libya nor Yemen," *China.org.cn*, April 5, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-04/05/content_25069458.htm; Ruan Zongze, "Peace and stability in Syria," *China Daily*, March 1, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-03/01/content_24770425.htm; and Jin Liangxiang, "Who is wrong on Syria?," *China.org.cn*, February 10, 2012, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-02/10/content_24604906.htm. The author states: "Non-Western scholars, and even a number of Western scholars, agree that the recent Western interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya stemmed more from geopolitical motives than genuine humanitarian concerns. These interventions have caused more humanitarian crises than the authoritarian regimes they sought to topple. It is certainly reasonable to place blame on these regimes, however, it is equally reasonable to blame the so-called humanitarian interventions."

[38] Zhang Zhouxiang, "Compromise possible in Syria," *China Daily*, February 28, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-02/28/content_14707476.htm.

[39] For example, see Mu Xuequan, "News Analysis: Syrian crisis sees no foreseeable solution in near future," Xinhua, August 3, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-08/03/c_123518547.htm; and Ding Ying, "Syria in the Eye of the Storm," *Beijing Review*, August 9, 2012, http://www.bjreview.com.cn/special/2012-08/07/content_473723.htm.

[40] For an example of a particularly detailed analysis, see Ruan Zongze, "Responsible Protection: Building a Safer World," China Institute of International Studies, June 15, 2012, http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2012-06/15/content_5090912.htm.

[41] See "对叙利亚利比亚 中国为何策略不同 [Why China's Strategy toward Syria and Libya is Different]," *Feng Huang Wang* (*Phoenix Online*), February 7, 2012, http://www.changjiangtimes.com/2012/02/371451.html.

[42] Yin Gang, "Syria situation is a stalemate," *China Daily*, July 4, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-07/04/content_15546948.htm.

[43] See the description of Yan Xuetong's views in Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Succession, Syria … and the Search for Putin's Soul," *Comparative Connections*, May 2012, http://csis.org/files/publication/1201qchina_russia.pdf. Yan Xuetong is an international relations scholar at Tsinghua University in Beijing. According to Yu Bin, Yan also suggested another rather cynical explanation, that "the longer the Syria issue continues, the further a war in Iran would be postponed, which

means the longer the Chinese will not have to worry [about] oil supply problems" (Yu Bin's summary of Yan's position).

[44] For example, an uncertain number of online blog posts and comments reflect the following viewpoints: "My opinion: the three vetoes [cast by the government] cannot represent the Chinese people. The Chinese people support your [Syria's] righteous cause; the dawn of Syrian democracy is imminent. Victory will belong to the brave Syrian people"; "The concepts of sovereignty and territorial integrity are passé. Human rights are supreme and trump sovereignty. Non-interference with internal affairs does not equal a free pass for dictators to slaughter a country's people in order to maintain their regime"; "The Chinese government doesn't represent the Chinese people. I hope the Syrian people will understand!"; and "I'm glad [the news reports] said Russia and China, not Russians and Chinese. Every time when I see Syrian students in Dundas Square collecting signatures I always tell them: 'I'm Chinese. I support you.'" See "Chinese Netizens to Embattled Syrians: We Support You, Even If Our Government Does Not," July 22, 2012, http://tealeafnation.com/2012/07/chinese-netizens-to-embattled-syrians-we-support-you-even-if-our-government-does-not.