

Research on Sino-U.S. Relations from the Perspective of Offensive Realism

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Abstract

After the end of the Cold War, the world structure has changed. Mearsheimer, a leading figure in offensive realism, systematically interprets the theoretical basis of offensive realism and argues that China is a potential regional hegemon in the book "The Tragedy Of Great Power Politics" published in 2001, and it provided the Bush administration with a series of ideas and arguments to contain China's rise. According to the viewpoints in the "Tragedy Of Great Power Politics", this paper analyzes the pertinence and limitation of offensive realism to China.

Keywords

Offensive Realism; China Threat Theory; National Security.

1. The Concept of Offensive Realism

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the two-tier structure, the United States became the world's hegemon, the world seemed to have entered a period of quiet economic development, and offensive realism seemed to have been replaced by liberalism. actually not, realism, especially offensive realism, still occupies a pivotal position in the international political situation.

1.1. Context

In the view of Ohn Joseph Mearsheimer, a leading figure in the school of realism in international relations, offensive realism is when a power looks for every opportunity in the international system to raise its power above that of any other power, the ultimate goal is to be the king of the world. In the current international system, however, there are no states that maintain the status quo. Powerful states are rarely content with the power at hand. On the contrary, they keep an eye on the world landscape, which is generally profitable, there are benefits to be gained at a fraction of the cost, and even to change the situation by force. At the same time, if they believe that the cost of changing the situation is higher than they expect, they will lurk around waiting for a more favourable situation, but the desire to obtain more benefits will not disappear, unless a single country has achieved supreme hegemony. However, since no country can achieve global hegemony, great power competition has become the general melody of world political relations.

The current international system is anarchy. The most authoritative regulator in every country is the government, which upholds the legitimate rights and interests of its citizens. However, from the perspective of realism, in the international order, there is no government above the government (absolute authority), so there is no absolute authority to mediate and protect the rights and interests of both sides when there are conflicts between countries. Realism holds that the international institutions represented by the United Nations are not adequate for this task.

A certain degree of military force is the standard of every country, the state uses military force to maintain social order and protect its security, through these military forces to deter other

countries. Each country's military strength is strong or weak, the weak country will naturally fears the strong country's military strength and worries about its own security.

In the current international system, there is no absolute authority under the anarchy, although a country's breach of promise will be condemned by the morals of other countries, but there will be no specific authority to punish it, the cost of breaking a treaty is that there is no cost, that no country can guess what the real intentions of another country are, and that even if a powerful country makes a commitment, others are not sure if this is the real intentions of another country, the distrust between states is the theoretical basis of realism.

In the course of a country's development, it is possible to set development goals according to the country's concept of development, but everything is based on the survival of the country. If the survival of a country is the issue, nothing else can be considered. The survival of a country means the sovereignty and territorial security of a country. If the sovereignty and territorial security of a country are violated by other countries, they can not be respected by others in the international community, and they can not pursue other ideas. So the first principle of a nation is to survive in a complex international environment.

The combination of these points is that each country has a certain amount of military power that, within its own sphere of influence, is capable of posing a threat to the rest. In the international system under the Anarchy, even if a country makes a commitment not to invade, other countries will not believe it, because there is no absolute authority in the international system to restrain it. In this anarchy international environment, each country's diplomatic starting point is its own national interest, and survival is the most important national interest. As for a country itself, how to strengthen its own power on the one hand and how to weaken the power of other countries on the other is in the best interest of the country.

Offensive realism emphasizes offense. It holds that the best defense for a country is offense, that is, to strengthen its own power and weaken the power of other countries in order to achieve the ultimate goal of world hegemony. That's where aggression comes in.

1.2. Course of Development

The rise of realism was in the 1920s when Edward Carr's book "The Twenty Years Crisis (1919-1939)" expounded the realist international political theory, which proposed that power is the most important part of politics. This is the theoretical basis of realism. International politicians believe that Carl's "Twenty Years Crisis (1919-1939)" is the first step to resolve international affairs from a realist perspective, marking the formation of the realist school. As a result, Carl gained the reputation of "founder of realism". After the end of the Second World War, Hans Morgenthau of the United States published "Politics between Nations-Power Struggle and Peace" in 1948, in which the six principles of realism proposed by Morgenthau were widely circulated and were seen as the most basic and perfect principle of international relations. The publication of "politics among nations : the struggle for power and peace" marked the gradual maturity of realism.

In the 1970s, the rise of new realism was represented by Kenneth Waltz of the United States. His book "International Political Theory" has been hailed as the "Classic of the World" since its publication, and it embodies the international world in Waltz's philosophy. The anarchy in the system has abandoned some abstract concepts in traditional realism, and constructed a theoretical framework of international politics based on realism. In the next thirty years, realism scholars have constantly supplemented realism in controversies with scholars of other schools, and differences on certain issues have led to different branches of realism. Classical realism believes that the country's pursuit of power is caused by the country's own desires and is to pursue the maximization of power; offensive realism believes that the power power seeks all opportunities in the international system to enhance its own power to surpass other power

powers, and ultimately The goal is to become the hegemon of the world; defensive realism believes that the state is a rational individual, pursuing the minimum security.

John Mearsheimer of the United States is a representative of offensive realism. He systematically expounded the theory of offensive realism in "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics", which has aroused widespread concern in the world international relations community. He believes that China will eventually rise He has become a competitor of American hegemony, so he is also the number one supporter of the "China Threat Theory."

2. The Relationship between China and the United States under Offensive Realism

2.1. The Pertinence of Offensive Realism

The offensive realism proposed by Mearsheimer in "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics" focuses on the rising China and puts forward a series of methods to contain China's development. In the introduction of the book, Mearsheimer puts forward: "At present, the US foreign policy is facing a problem. If China maintains its current economic growth rate, it will become a huge Hong Kong. What will China then do in the world?"

Many Americans believe that if China were a capitalist democracy and integrated into the international capitalist system, then China's rapid development would not be an obstacle for the United States. Mearsheimer scoffed at the idea, arguing that China was a socialist country that would necessarily strengthen its military and become a regional hegemon in northeast Asia, and that even if China were a democracy, security would still be a major concern, for any country, achieving and maintaining hegemony is the best way to survive.

Mearsheimer does not advocate contact with China. He believes: "Once China becomes prosperous and strong, it will never maintain the status quo. It will definitely strive for the position of regional hegemony and pose a certain threat to the United States' international status. Because any country wants to achieve the greatest extent possible. The best way to survive this primary purpose is to become a regional hegemon." And he is worried about China's current economic growth rate, believing that if China maintains its current economic growth rate, it will become a major country that surpasses the United States in the field of cutting-edge technology. Turning wealth into military power, threatening the hegemony of the United States. And like the United States in the 19th century, it did not allow other countries to interfere in American affairs in the Western Hemisphere to dominate Asia. China will become the most threatening potential hegemony of the United States, and may become the hegemony of the Eastern Hemisphere, evenly rivaling the United States. At the same time, he also pointed out that although China has sufficient potential, it is still a long way from regional hegemony. Therefore, the best strategy for the United States is to stifle the danger ahead of time, change its strategy toward China, and restrain China's development.

Shortly after the release of Mearsheimer's "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics", terrorists hijacked two passenger planes and crashed into two buildings of the World Trade Center, and then hijacked a passenger plane and crashed into the Pentagon of the US Department of Defense. The terrorist attack was called In the "9.11 terrorist attack", then President Bush Jr. decided to mobilize all American forces to carry out counter-terrorism operations, and subsequently launched wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. Mearsheimer strongly opposes launching a war against Iraq at this time, because at this time Iraq has been greatly injured and is unable to fight for the supremacy of the Gulf region. At this time, focusing on Iraq will result in the inability to launch operations against China, and China's threat is far away. It's bigger than Iraq. Therefore, more than 30 American professors headed by Mearsheimer published their views in the "New York Times" at their own expense. They believed that it was not in the national interest to

launch military operations against Iraq at this time. The focus of the work is on actions against China.

The idea of containing China sprouted in Mearsheimer's mind, and he no longer advocated the China threat theory all the time. In an interview with international relations in 2002, Mearsheimer once again proposed that the United States should contain China's development, and the future of China is unstoppable. It is believed that if China's economy continues to grow, it will transform economic power into military power in the near future, and will become the most dangerous opponent in the US national strategy. Just like the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Sino-US confrontation is inevitable. And once again put forward the point of offensive realism, global hegemony is the ultimate goal of every country, and regional hegemony is the most recent goal. Once China becomes the Asian hegemon, the United States will be unable to intervene in the affairs of the Eastern Hemisphere, just like the United States did with the Western Hemisphere. That way, once China's economic and military levels reach American standards, it cannot control China and will not do what the United States does. Therefore, once China becomes an Asian hegemon on par with the United States, it will jeopardize the international status of the United States. The United States should try its best to contain China's development, just as it did with the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Regarding the development of China, Mearsheimer also suggested that the Bush administration implement a containment policy to prevent China from dominating Asia. Advocating the formation of a Northeast Asian alliance to restrict China's development, and drawing in Japan, Vietnam, South Korea, India and other countries to fight against China, the South China Sea dispute is the initial manifestation of this strategy.

Mearsheimer sneered at the policy of China's peaceful rise and never seek hegemony. He believes that if China maintains this economic growth rate for decades, then China's rise cannot be stopped. China and the United States are likely to be involved in fierce security competition with potential war risks, and once again proposed that most of China's neighbors should join the Containment China Development Alliance to prevent China from dominating the Asian region.

2.2. The Asia-Pacific Game between China and the U.S.

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee in 1978, the theme of the times became peace and development, and China implemented reforms. Opening up to economic construction, China vigorously developed its economy in the next thirty years, and successfully developed nuclear weapons in 1964 and entered the nuclear weapons club, but China's standing military power did not increase significantly. Mearsheimer analyzed in "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics" that although China has less actual power at this stage, it has a lot of potential power, and China has one-fifth of the world's population base and wealth level, which is in line with the "high potential power" argument.

After the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, the economic development of Western capitalist powers headed by the United States was severely affected, and China has gradually increased its influence in the international society by virtue of its strong economic capabilities, and Chinese companies have also begun to go global on a large scale. Develop high and new technology. The establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has strengthened the cooperation between China and other Asian countries; the proposal of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative has enhanced China's worldwide prestige. At the same time, China's military expenditure has begun to increase year by year, and the service of a series of new military equipment represents that China has entered the ranks of the world's power in terms of military strength. Against this background, and according to the logic of offensive realism, China already has the material basis for the world hegemony. Moreover, Mearsheimer believes that the emergence of the AIIB and the "Belt and Road" is not only an economic behavior, but also a

manifestation of geopolitics. A considerable number of countries along the "Belt and Road" are politically unstable. Once China does not get enough returns in the country, it will benefit from other aspects.

China's rise in economic and military power has raised its voice in the international community and its power, but it has also raised alarm among its neighbors. Although China claims that it is willing to share the fruits of its economic development with its neighbors, on the one hand, there is no mutual trust between countries, and on the other hand, the US has continued to propagate the China threat theory, so China is still viewed with suspicion by its neighbors.

After the Cold War, the United States became the only superpower in the world. In order to restrain China's development, it began to intervene in the Asia-Pacific region, but did not want to directly damage its own interests to hinder China's development, so it organized countries in the Asia-Pacific region to confront China. The "Indo-Pacific" strategy was set up to deal with China. Trump hopes that the "Indo-Pacific" can replace the geopolitics of the "Asia-Pacific". In the "Indo-Pacific" strategy, the United States on the one hand exaggerates India's role and supports India's participation in East Asian affairs including the South China Sea issue, hoping that India can put more pressure on China on the other side, and on the other hand confuse Japan, Australia and other countries. Publicizing the China threat theory has allowed these three countries to check and balance China's development in the Indo-Pacific region. The establishment of the "Indo-Pacific" is fully in line with the theoretical logic of offensive realism. "The way for regional hegemonies to prevent hegemony in other regions is to provoke the contradiction between the countries in the region and the potential regional hegemonies and hinder the development progress of the potential regional hegemonies." and According to Mearsheimer, the best way for a powerful country to increase relative power is to gain power based on the loss of power by its competitors. Trump has fully implemented this concept in his "Indo-Pacific" strategy. On the one hand, the United States fools India, Japan, Australia and other allies to check and balance China's development. On the other hand, the United States sells its advanced military weapons to its allies at high prices. . The increase in military power in the Indo-Pacific region has led to the return of international capital to the United States and stimulated the recovery of the US economy.

The South China Sea has been the territory of China since ancient times. There is a record of the landform features of the South China Sea in the "Nanzhou Foreign Body Biography" written by Wan Zhen during the Three Kingdoms period. Over the years, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and other countries have been fighting for islands in the South China Sea, delusional. Put a foot in the resources. The United States has hyped the China threat theory and fooled surrounding countries to compete for resources in the South China Sea in order to achieve the effect of checking and balancing China. In 2016, he illegally sailed in the South China Sea without China's permission in an attempt to create disputes, while the United States itself has nothing to do with the South China Sea interests, but intervened in the South China Sea issue and tricked relevant countries to contain China. From the perspective of offensive realism, as a regional hegemon, the United States must maintain its dominance on the one hand and suppress potential hegemonies on the other. Although Russia's economic strength has receded after the end of the Cold War, its military strength is still in the forefront of the world. The national strategic rejuvenation cooperation initiated by China and Russia in 2016 has attracted the attention of the United States. Although both countries are targeted in the United States' global strategy, China's development speed is too fast compared to Russia. The United States hopes to restrict China's development through the "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing" strategy.

2.3. China's Response

According to Mearsheimer's offensive realism theory, the United States should not engage in contact and cooperation with China. There are endless competition and conflicts between China

and the United States. In fact, after China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, although frictions continued to occur between China and the United States, the cooperation between the two countries also continued. After the end of the Cold War, the successive US presidents all proceeded from the national interests of the United States and invited China to join the United States-led post-Cold War era of world economic integration and modern international system in order to achieve a win-win situation for both sides. The in-depth cooperation in the field of economy and trade has created a lot of benefits for the two countries and added more color to the theme of world peace and development.

After the end of the Cold War and before the outbreak of the global financial crisis, China's economy developed rapidly and its economic scale doubled several times, successfully surpassing Japan to become the second largest economy after the United States in terms of global GDP. This reality is completely opposite to Mearsheimer's strategy to contain China, and the status of the United States has not been shaken by China. The rise of Google and Apple has made American capitalism more confident in its ability to innovate, and the United States is still leading the global economic concept. China's economic development has also promoted the economic activity of the United States. The contacts and activities between the two have resulted in profits for both sides, and it is an effective counterattack to Mearsheimer's offensive realism that advocates no contact with China. In today's globalization, the contact and cooperation between China and the United States are the needs of the times, but also the development of the times.

China adheres to the development strategy of peaceful development, and has no intention of competing with the United States for the position of world hegemony. The Chinese government has repeatedly expressed China's views on public occasions: The Pacific Ocean is large enough for the common development of China and the United States. Even if the United States wants to take action to contain China's development, China will not allow other countries to bully. China is now There is enough power to respond. Each country's external development route is determined in accordance with its own national interests and will not blindly follow in the footsteps of the United States. For example, Russia did not join the Northeast Asian Alliance to contain China, and even cooperated more closely with China under the pressure of the United States. Although India has joined the Northeast Asian Alliance to contain China, it runs counter to the United States on issues such as global warming and energy. Although it has territorial disputes with China, it will still unite its common interests. In today's world economic integration and globalization, peace and development are the themes of the times. China has become an indispensable part of economic globalization, and the strategy of containing China is bound to be impossible to succeed.

3. The Limitations of Offensive Realism

3.1. Military Strength does not Mean Comprehensive Strength

Offensive realism places too much emphasis on the power struggle between states, in which one side gains power from the other, and the loser loses power by losing power, thus, there are winners and there are losers, and this zero-sum power struggle seriously neglects the role of countries in the current world environment, under the coordination of multilateral international institutions, mainly the United Nations, the established fact of the interdependence of states in the field of security.

American classical realist master Hans Morgenthau believes that power refers to the ability of a person to influence and control the thoughts and consciousness of others. According to Morgenthau's theory, we can conclude that in international politics, power refers to the ability of a country to influence the behavior of other countries and control the direction of international affairs. In fact, all the elements that can help a country influence the will of other

countries can be called power, which includes objective comprehensive strength as well as the soft ability to respond to emergencies. Therefore, the size of power is not completely equivalent to the country's military strength. On the other hand, Mearsheimer's offensive realism only considers the comparison of military power and neglects the contest of comprehensive national power. In fact, it is a single method of comparison.

And from a theoretical point of view, Mearsheimer's view is too extreme. In the current international state, traditional security threats dominated by military conflicts have gradually decreased, and non-traditional security threats have subsequently increased. International issues such as ethnic conflicts, immigration issues, and terrorism have become increasingly prominent, and there will be more cooperation between countries in non-traditional security areas.

3.2. Trends in Human Development

Offensive realism only values the anarchy in the international society, while ignoring the cooperation and development between countries under the control of multilateral international institutions based on the United Nations. The United Nations is a product of the Second World War and a product of the Yalta system. The theme of the 21st century is peace and development. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the development of the Internet and economic globalization have brought people around the world closer. Moreover, in the current international environment, there may be small-scale military conflicts but there will be no outbreak of World War III, which is not in the interests of most countries. Therefore, offensive realism exaggerates the anarchy in the international community. Like neoliberalism, it also recognizes anarchy in the international community, but also believes that based on international institutions, two countries can develop mutually beneficial cooperation between two countries on a fairer platform.

Furthermore, the anarchy in the international society has nothing to do with the structure of the international society. In the process of development, the powerful countries will treat countries at the same stage as their subconscious competitors. In the process of competing with each other, they will continue to generate estrangement and suspicion, and long-term estrangement and suspicion will lead to struggle. And some international affairs in international institutions that involve the interests of the two countries can provide a platform for the two countries to understand each other on the basis of common interests and resolve conflicts. Surmounting disorder in the international society is something that human society has been working hard for thousands of years, and human society has gradually moved from disorder to order.

3.3. A Development of the Existing Realism

The success of a new theory lies in its interpretation of the law from a different perspective. Compared with traditional realism, offensive liberalism does not explain international politics from a different perspective. Most of the concepts Mearsheimer used were those of traditional realism and Neorealism, so Mearsheimer's answer to questions about international politics was more an exploration of the original than a true offensive realism. He's just using other people's theories to develop his own understanding. While the original realism was at its peak during World War II as the United States became the world's dominant power, Mearsheimer took the realist quest for power to an extreme, arguing that the state would never be satisfied with the power it already had, will seek to maximize their power.

3.4. China Threat Theory

In the "Tragedy of Great Power Politics" published in 2001, Mearsheimer proposed that if the United States wants to maintain its dominance, it must contain China's development. And his

offensive realism completely deviates from contemporary international relations, especially Sino-US relations.

Mearsheimer believes that the rise of China will challenge the United States' global hegemony. In order to maintain its existing hegemony, the United States needs to reduce its contact with China and even restrict China's development in advance. As China's GDP has become a country second only to the United States, the Obama administration has gradually attached importance to the strategy of the Asia-Pacific region and began to restrict China's development. The offensive realism proposed by Mearsheimer in 2001 began to gradually rise. Mearsheimer even believes that Asian countries are not enough to check China's development. The United States needs to maintain its hegemony in the Western Hemisphere and at the same time encourage other countries in the Asian continent to restrict China to prevent China's rise.

Mearsheimer's ignorance of China misled him to believe that China would continue to use its own force to gain power in the process of rising, just like Western countries, and finally compete with the United States for the status of world hegemony. Moreover, survival is the primary goal of a country. To become a regional hegemon to suppress countries in the same region can be said to maximize survival, and China's rapid development will become the most threatening enemy for the United States to dominate the world. In fact, China is an ancient civilization with a history of five thousand years, and the Chinese nation that advocates Confucian culture will not harm the interests of other countries in order to seek hegemony.

4. Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold War, with the continuous development of the international community, the world pattern has also changed accordingly, and peace and development have become the main theme of today's international world. Mearsheimer's offensive realism against China has gradually revealed its shortcomings during Sino-US exchanges and China's development. Any attempt to contain China from the outside will not succeed. His claim --"contains China's development" is an impossible mission.

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