

## CHAPTER 6

# THEORIZING AND EXTRAPOLATING CHINA'S INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL HEALTH GOVERNANCE

*[China's integration into the international system] prompts the question: Integration to what end? What's the purpose of this integration?*

—Robert Zoellick, 2006<sup>1</sup>

*We aim to build a harmonious society at home, and work with other countries to build a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.*

—Hu Jintao, 2007<sup>2</sup>

Previous chapters have presented the ways in which China has fought the HIV/AIDS pandemic through multi-lateral cooperation both at home and abroad. China's engagement with the health regime in dealing with the disease has had mixed results. With increasing economic, political, and normative clout, whether China would comply with the Western norms and rules without any qualification is a crucial question. Against this background, this chapter primarily addresses two questions. First, why did China change its stance at the turn of the century and has since then increased its participation in global health governance? Second, what does China's record of compliance and non-compliance with the international health regime and its activities in both the WHO and WTO reveal about its preferences for the world order?

The first section focuses in particular upon the reasons for China's embrace of multilateral cooperation in combating the disease. It

argues that China's changing stance is driven by both necessity and conscious design. On the one hand, both international concerns about good governance and China's aspiration to act as a "responsible" and "legitimate" state have exerted a normative effect on the country to change tack. Its interactions with UN agencies have triggered a learning process for China to securitize the spread of infectious diseases as a security threat. Conversely, China has utilized multilateralism to gain access to international resources and technical assistance. The second section examines China's preferences for world order by studying its use of a multilateral approach to managing a host of global issues since the end of the last century. The promotion of the notion of a "harmonious world" not only serves as a defensive strategy to fend off criticisms from the West about its unyielding understanding of sovereignty and the "China threat" argument, but also shows the world that there are and should be non-Western models of development. However, with limited soft power, China tends to resort to soft balancing to guard against the liberal international order while avoiding a head-on confrontation with the United States.

### Why a Change of Stance on HIV/AIDS?<sup>3</sup>

Previous work suggested that the principal catalyst for China's shifting policy toward HIV/AIDS was the SARS outbreak in 2002–3 that wrought havoc on the nation as well as Southeast Asia and North America.<sup>4</sup> However, this book argues that China began to alter its stance toward HIV/AIDS well before the SARS outbreak. As early as June 2001, China officially admitted its AIDS crisis and started to mobilize various actors inside and beyond its territory to fight the disease. The SARS outbreak simply served as the second catalyst for deepening China's engagement with the global health regime. Several hypotheses can be formulated to account for China's changing governance policy toward infectious diseases and its improved compliance with global norms and rules.<sup>5</sup> Rational utilitarian calculations, a growing trend toward securitization of communicable diseases by the international community since the end of the twentieth century, international concerns about good governance, and China's self-projection as a responsible state have all had lingering impacts on its changing stance on HIV/AIDS since the dawn of the present century.

### *Rational Utilitarian Calculations*

China perceives multilateralism or global health governance instrumentally in terms of rational utilitarian calculations of tangible costs and benefits. The potential cost of multilateralism to China is the danger of losing national sovereignty and inviting external intervention into its domestic affairs. To allay this concern, China has skillfully utilized statecentric multilateralism. While cooperating with a multitude of actors, its multilateral cooperation is heavily dominated by *state-led* health governance. At the same time, China's leaders have also seen the virtue of multilateralism and realized the importance of interdependence in the promotion of its national interests since the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> China openly admits that its ailing health care system is too fragile to control emerging infectious diseases in the hope that it can gain access to international resources and technical assistance. By acknowledging deficiencies in handling its HIV/AIDS problem, China can cement cooperation with international state and nonstate actors. For instance, shortly before China revised its population of HIV/AIDS sufferers in 2001, it was in the process of submitting an application to the Global Fund for a grant worth US\$90 million.<sup>7</sup> Although the first two applications were rejected by the organization, China was finally granted US\$97.8 million in the third round in 2004 for a five-year-long program. This funding was largely devoted to the China CARES program—a community-based HIV treatment, care, and prevention program in central China.<sup>8</sup> Hereafter, China's applications to the Global Fund have been accepted. From 2004 to October 2007, China was granted around US\$369 million in total to run four different projects to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in China.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from that, since its admission of the AIDS crisis, China has entered into cooperation with more than forty international organizations and countries, involving 3.58 billion yuan in financial assistance with 276 jointly operated prevention and control HIV/AIDS programs in the country.<sup>10</sup> All of China's thirty-one provinces and autonomous regions benefited from international cooperation AIDS projects.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the government-spanning networks with Australia and the United Kingdom mentioned in chapter 4, China has collaborated with the U.S. Global AIDS Program since 2002, even though the two governments do not always agree with each other on human rights issues. Northeast China's Heilongjiang

province is one of the beneficiaries of such collaboration. Since June 2004, the U.S. Global AIDS Program has helped to set up fifteen of the province's twenty-one HIV surveillance sites at disease control and prevention centers. The U.S. government announced in June 2005 that it would commit more than US\$35 million to HIV/AIDS-related activities in China between 2006 and 2008.<sup>12</sup>

Financial and medical assistance has also come from such international institutions as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Bank, the Clinton Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GBC). In 2003 and 2004 alone, the international community committed approximately 700 million yuan (US\$87.5 million) in total in donations to support China's response to HIV/AIDS.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, the financial input from the central government was only slightly higher than the financial support the government received from international donors in the same period (see figure 3.2). In other words, through cooperation with international donors, China doubled its funding and resources for the prevention and control of its AIDS crisis. In meeting Peter Piot of UNAIDS in Beijing in September 2006, He Luli, then vice-chairwoman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), said that China needed more support from the UN body to treat its AIDS patients and to prevent the spread of the disease.<sup>14</sup>

The Chinese government realizes that it also needs the help of NGOs and the private sector to combat the disease. Domestically, China has experienced a quiet sexual revolution under its market-oriented economic reform. An ethnographic study of HIV/AIDS in China has shown a triangular relationship among economic growth, sex workers, and HIV/AIDS.<sup>15</sup> On the one hand, people are more open about sex; on the other hand, the lingering effect of traditional culture has made sex a taboo subject in society. People are loath to talk openly about it. Social stigmatization of HIV/AIDS patients has further induced people to deliberately hide their real situation. It is difficult for the government to identify the HIV/AIDS demography in the country. In addition, the fruit of China's economic reforms are highly concentrated in coastal cities. Approximately 150 million migrant workers from rural areas in inland provinces reside and work in major coastal cities. A direct link between floating population and the diffusion of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, has been identified. Floating migrants are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors, such as unprotected sex with multiple

partners, needle sharing, and drug injection.<sup>16</sup> As shown in figure 3.1, among all the transmission modes of HIV/AIDS in China, sexual transmission and intravenous drug use accounted for 90 percent of HIV/AIDS cases at the end of 2007. This forced Beijing to admit the dangers of AIDS and to declare that China could not win the battle by fighting the war alone.<sup>17</sup> It desperately needs help from all sectors, including IGOs, NGOs, and MNCs. As a result, the central government started mobilizing a wide range of actors to combat the diseases at the turn of this century.

In a summit on AIDS in Beijing in March 2005, jointly hosted by the Ministry of Health and the GBC, then Vice Premier and Health Minister Wu Yi urged private companies and NGOs to play a greater role in halting the spread of HIV/AIDS in China. As of December 2005, twenty-six international companies had already established, or committed to implementing, nondiscrimination policies for HIV/AIDS for their China-based employees.<sup>18</sup> Apart from that, the Ministry of Health, Merck & Co., a multinational pharmaceutical company, and the Merck Company Foundation, have co-organized a project known as “HIV/AIDS Community-Based Prevention Initiative.” They have invited private companies to participate on a contracting-out basis in designing a community-based HIV/AIDS prevention and education program in Zhaojue and Butuo counties, Sichuan, where the rate of HIV/AIDS infection is high.<sup>19</sup> A public-private partnership known as the China Health Alliance was launched by the Global Health Initiative of the World Economic Forum in September 2006. The alliance brings together private companies, the Chinese government, and UN agencies, as well as NGOs, to implement HIV and tuberculosis programs for migrant workers in rural workplaces.<sup>20</sup>

In summary, because China is short of human and material resources to manage the deadly disease alone, it badly needs the participation of transnational actors. Cooperation with external actors could draw them into assisting Chinese domestic campaigns to halt the transmission of HIV. This rational calculation of interests motivates China to cooperate with various international organizations in tackling its HIV/AIDS problem.

### *Communicable Diseases as an Identifiable Threat*

Since 2000, the UN has played a critical role in securitizing HIV/AIDS, constructing the disease as a security threat that demands

international attention and action.<sup>21</sup> In January 2000, the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan argued in a UN Security Council meeting on HIV/AIDS that “AIDS is causing socioeconomic crises which, in turn, threaten political stability.”<sup>22</sup> As the first Security Council meeting in 2000—the first one in the new millennium—it was also the first Security Council meeting that addressed a health issue. Five months later, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) not only reaffirmed the commitments to achieving gender equality and development and empowerment of women made earlier in the “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,” but also highlighted the need to combat HIV/AIDS as one of the twelve priority areas to achieve advancement and empowerment of women.<sup>23</sup> In July 2000, the Security Council gave prominence to the security significance of the epidemic in the watershed Resolution 1308.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, in September 2000, the UNGA adopted Resolution 55/2, otherwise known as UN Millennium Declaration, calling for halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The UNGA convened a special session on AIDS in June 2001, when China openly acknowledged its own AIDS crisis, and adopted the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.<sup>25</sup> In the following year, the Global Fund was established. With the UN devoting increasing awareness to the epidemic, the link between HIV/AIDS and insecurity has been established in international policy discourse and agenda.

Peter Piot proclaimed that HIV/AIDS is a catastrophe both from a public health perspective and from its political and socioeconomic impacts. He stressed the need for political leaders to mobilize a multilateral response to it.<sup>26</sup> As early as 1997, the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS warned in its report “China Responds to AIDS,” which was jointly published with the Chinese Ministry of Health, that there would be a potential pandemic in China. If the Chinese government did not respond effectively, the total number of HIV/AIDS cases in China could rise to 10 million by 2010.<sup>27</sup>

The Chinese government came under a further scathing attack by the UN Theme Group in 2002 for failing to contain or treat the disease. The UN Group said in a report entitled “HIV/AIDS: China’s Titanic Peril” that China’s effort to stem the epidemic had an “infinitesimally small impact” and that China was “on the verge of a catastrophe that could result in unimaginable suffering, economic loss, and social devastation.” The UN Group blamed a lack of commitment and leadership on the part of government officials at many levels and insufficient openness about HIV/AIDS for the slow

progress in combating the disease.<sup>28</sup> Soon after the UN Group's biting report, the U.S. National Intelligence Council also published a similar report, claiming that China, together with Nigeria, Ethiopia, Russia, and India, would be "the next wave of HIV/AIDS." It estimated that HIV/AIDS cases in China could grow to 10 to 15 million by 2010.<sup>29</sup>

It is likely that China's long-standing, active interactions with various UN agencies, which have given HIV/AIDS increasing political attention and commitment, has triggered a learning process whereby China modifies its understanding of the vulnerability of HIV/AIDS and accordingly defines it as an identifiable security threat. Looking beyond China, the loss of labor force and changes in demography caused by the AIDS pandemic on the African continent has vividly illustrated that HIV/AIDS should be an issue of high priority for all governments, and that infectious diseases are sometimes more destructive to the economic, political, and social stability of a country than the effects of war. With 25 percent of the adult population being HIV positive at the turn of this century, South Africa's ability to participate in international peacekeeping is limited and the country has to handle the social problems arising from having 2 million orphans whose parents have died of the disease.<sup>30</sup> China's HIV/AIDS problem has been compounded by a quiet sexual revolution in the younger generation, its ailing health care system, and the lack of accurate information about the pandemic inside the country. With a long incubation period of HIV, the real situation of HIV/AIDS in China is pure guesswork. The Chinese government has to take emergency measures outside the normal bounds of political procedure to deal with the disease to prevent the country from becoming "the next wave of HIV/AIDS." As Buzan et al. argue, "an issue becomes securitized when it is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure."<sup>31</sup> To that end, China has started to mobilize resources and encourage the involvement of multiple actors to address the AIDS crisis in the country.

With a new conception of security that blurs the boundary between low politics and high politics, China has, since 2001, framed the looming HIV/AIDS epidemic as a global security issue rather than merely a domestic social issue. The conceptualization of contagious diseases as security threats has further gained strength since the SARS outbreak.<sup>32</sup> For example, during a special meeting on nontraditional security issues in November 2003, the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs specifically named HIV/AIDS as one of the six nontraditional security threats in the country.<sup>33</sup> Translating this rhetoric into practice, Chinese leaders, such as Premier Wen Jiabao and President Hu Jintao paid high-profile visits to AIDS patients in 2003 and 2004 respectively. Against this background, there is little wonder that Peter Piot was invited to the Central Party School of the CCP in June 2005 to speak on the challenges of AIDS to society to a group of promising central and local officials who were groomed for promotion by receiving short-term training programs at the school.<sup>34</sup> A Center for Non-Traditional Security and Peaceful Development Studies was established in November 2006 at Zhejiang University, with Wang Yizhou as the honorary director. There are ten research teams, of which one is on public health security.<sup>35</sup>

### *International Community's Prodding on Governance*

From an “outside-in” perspective, a possible motivation for China to change tack is normative pressure from the international community. The UN Development Program has specifically asserted that good governance is crucial for combating HIV/AIDS.<sup>36</sup> However, what constitutes “good governance” is open to debate. In a similar vein, how a “responsible” member of the global system should behave provokes controversy. Nevertheless, globalization is often considered a “two-edged sword” (*shuangren jian*) by Chinese leaders.<sup>37</sup> On the one hand, China integrates itself into the globalized world in pursuit of economic development. On the other, integration requires China to embrace a multilateral approach and the underlying norms and values of global management. As Rosemary Foot has argued, when China started to rejoin international society in the late 1970s, the criteria of a responsible state were being changed from pluralist to solidarist concepts whereby “common values and some notion of the common good” were given priority.<sup>38</sup>

The notion of “good governance” and the associated “Washington Consensus,” initially espoused by the Washington-based international financial institutions, have since been embraced by the UN and other international development agencies, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).<sup>39</sup> The World Bank emphasizes the institutional environment in which the development process takes place and accordingly brings to the fore the ingredients of effective management of the development process. The ADB

further consolidates the concept of good governance by identifying four elements—accountability, participation by stakeholders, predictability based on the rule of law, and transparency in information flow about government policy and decisions. Before the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, the ADB had warned in a report entitled *Governance: Sound Development Management* that governments in the region had not yet established “direct correlation between the political environment” and “rapid economic growth and social development,” emphasizing that governments should “strengthen the citizens’ right to information with a degree of legal enforceability.”<sup>40</sup> Since the financial crisis, the demand for transparency in the disclosure of information in government decision making and public policy implementation has reached its zenith.

Poor transparency in Chinese government decision making has attracted constant criticism from the international community. International NGOs have often claimed that China under-reports the seriousness of its HIV/AIDS problem. At the end of the twentieth century, there were many castigating reports about China’s “AIDS villages” in Henan. China’s maladministration of the SARS outbreak further exacerbated other countries’ skepticism about China’s responsibility to the international community. During the SARS outbreak, China was ostracized by the international community. Chinese citizens, including Hong Kong residents, were viewed as “aliens” by many countries and were barred from entering their countries or had to be quarantined for days upon arrival.<sup>41</sup> This anti-China stereotype was lingering in the mind of many developed countries. From a “West-centric” perspective, China’s rise and its development is not viewed as peaceful for it directly generated global public bad for health to the global society.

With these bitter experiences, the Chinese government has come under mounting pressure to seek close cooperation with the international society in providing global public goods for health to its own citizens as well as to the global community. These circumstances brought increased pressure to bear on China to comply with the requirements of good governance. By admitting its HIV/AIDS crisis at the turn of the century, China wanted to allay international concerns over its adverse impact on the world by showing that it was becoming more transparent in disclosing information about epidemics at home. In recent years, the central government has displayed a strong commitment to using a multilateral and cooperative approach in engaging with global health governance.

*Aspiring to Be a “Responsible” and “Legitimate” Power*

The external forces that drove China to change its AIDS policy have been illustrated earlier in this text. A closely related issue, but from an “inside-out” perspective, is that another possible motivation for China to shift its health policy is its conscious design to provide global public goods for health and be a “responsible” citizen in the international community. Premier Wen Jiabao asserted during the SARS outbreak, “We [the Chinese government] are a government not only responsible to China’s 1.3 billion people, but also to the world.”<sup>42</sup> Since the beginning of this century, Rosemary Foot notes China has increasingly been concerned about its international image and its identity as a responsible state and therefore has increasingly participated in international institutions and signed international conventions.<sup>43</sup> Ronald Keith also observes that China, as a world power, “is more predisposed to accepting the responsibilities of citizenship in the international community than is the United States.”<sup>44</sup> The puzzle is why China is sensitive to the evaluations made by others in the international community and tries to be in the club of responsible states by providing global public goods for health.

The rewards for cooperation and the cost of defiance are two major reasons. In the parlance of liberal institutionalism, a good reputation will lead to more favorable terms of engagement for China with other countries not only in the health regime, but also in other areas such as trade and human rights. Its compliant behavior in one area will lower the transaction cost of its participation in other areas.<sup>45</sup> By demonstrating itself to be responsible state, China’s policy has shifted from a purely Sino-centric worldview to one that stresses China’s role in and its contribution to global peace and security. Turning this rhetoric into practice, China aims not only at promoting “good governance” in curtailing the spread of infectious diseases but also earning a reputation as a responsible great power.

In addition to the rewards for cooperation, the cost of noncompliance with global norms and rules has also motivated China to make a rational choice on its own terms and therefore to engage with multilateralism. Proponents of neorealism have long asserted that China’s ascendancy is an “unpeaceful rise.”<sup>46</sup> Ruled by a communist regime, China’s extraordinarily robust economic growth and its assertive territorial claims over the East and South China Sea have given rise to a prevalence of “China threat” arguments in the international community since the early 1990s. It would be likely that China would be

portrayed as a villain or a troublemaker if it failed to comply with the prevailing international standards. In order to avoid opprobrium from the international community, it makes sense for China to care more than the United States and the European Union about its international image and status. Chinese scholar, Pang Zhongying has put this bluntly by stating that the national objective of China is “to be a normal member in the international community.” To be a normal global power, Pang contends, China should be a nation-state, an economic power, a peaceful nation, and a regional as well as global power. However, China recognizes that it has yet to be a normal power in the world order. To be a normal global power, China “needs the international community.” In order for the country to improve its image and prestige in the global community, to attain great power status, and to defeat the “China threat” argument, he argues, China should not only safeguard its national security and interests, but also “resolve global challenges through dialogue and cooperation,” and contribute to the international community in a practical way. To achieve its objective, China has to “integrate itself into the mainstream of the international community.”<sup>47</sup>

In a similar vein, Shogo Suzuki describes China as a marginalized power. In order to secure its “international legitimacy” and earn recognition by its peers in the West, it has to play “recognition games” by behaving in a responsible way.<sup>48</sup> That explains why, since the end of last century, Chinese scholars and leaders have emphasized that China is “a responsible great power” and follows the path to “peaceful rise.”<sup>49</sup> An enormous literature, in both Chinese and English, on how to improve China’s national image and enhance its role in the international arena has been published in the discipline of international relations over the past few years.<sup>50</sup> However, despite all-out efforts from the Chinese government, evidence shows that its status as a responsible state in the international arena is never unassailable, which I will return to later.

Chinese culture also attaches importance to good standing in peer groups. Recognition by its peers and the fear of being alienated by the international community provide further impetus for China to participate actively in multilateral dialogues. The unsavory reputation as an “abnormal state” for failing to comply with the international health regime comes back to haunt China. Further, by showing that it behaves responsibly, China strengthens its soft or normative power in the international community. Therefore, its role in the efforts to fight HIV/AIDS has expanded from being a recipient of

international aid to becoming a provider of international assistance toward developing countries, especially in providing medical assistance to the African continent. As a result, with a growing aspiration to behave as a legitimate great power in the realm of global health governance, China tends to be compliant with the prevailing international order rather than posing any direct challenge to it.

In order to defuse the “China threat” argument and to improve its standing in the international community, China has joined all major international treaties and organizations. This is to assure other members of the international society that China is a responsible and benign rising power.<sup>51</sup> It has exercised self-restraint in the use of its newly acquired power, as exemplified in settling border conflicts with Russia in 2004<sup>52</sup> and in mitigating the South China Sea territorial conflict with other claimants by pledging energy cooperation and shelving the jurisdictional disputes about competing claims of sovereignty over the islets. In domestic health governance, China has shown its determination to control and avert the HIV/AIDS crisis and abided by the international health regime, particularly in cooperation with various actors inside the country to protect its citizens from the epidemic. For example, since the government openly admitted the problem of HIV/AIDS, not only did it revise its Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Disease, it has also drawn in various actors, both state and nonstate, to combat the disease. Its cooperative behavior in relation to intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), corporations, and NGOs working within the country has demonstrated its passive compliance with the existing health regime in providing its citizens public goods for health.

On the international front, in order to remedy its tarnished international reputation and to seek sympathetic understanding from ASEAN during and after the SARS outbreak, China was very proactive in participating in various ASEAN Plus Three (APT) special meetings on SARS in 2003. The most notable one took place at the end of April 2003 when the ASEAN member states, initiated by Singapore, held a meeting in Thailand to deliberate measures on containing the spread of SARS in the region. Initially, China was excluded from the meeting. Just one week before it was convened, Thailand swiftly announced that Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao would be present at the summit.<sup>53</sup> It was widely believed that China acted on its own initiative to ask for an opportunity to participate in the summit. During the meeting, China pledged to contribute 10 million yuan (US\$1.2 million) to a fund for China-ASEAN

cooperation programs set up for controlling SARS.<sup>54</sup> Following that, China attended various regional summits dealing with the avian flu pandemic and signed a joint statement with thirteen Asia-Pacific countries in November 2004 to pledge to enhance cooperation in addressing the avian flu crisis.<sup>55</sup> It seems that the SARS outbreak has had a positive impact on China's proactive participation in and deepening engagement with global health governance.

In summary, in conceding the existence and spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 2001, China began to enlist the cooperation of a vast array of state and nonstate actors to combat the disease. China has skillfully utilized multilateralism to gain access to international resources and technical assistance. Further, its frequent interactions with UN agencies have triggered a learning process whereby it subsequently securitizes communicable diseases as a security threat. Globalization has accelerated the movement of viruses and diseases across national boundaries. China's age-old practice of hiding domestic outbreaks of diseases has been severely criticized by the international community. International concerns about good governance, particularly after the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, have put China under normative pressure to change tack. Obviously, its maladministration of the SARS outbreak has exacerbated other countries' skepticism about China's responsibility to the international community. Wary of being ostracized by the international community, the Chinese government has consolidated its desire to seek cooperation with international society in regard to nontraditional security issues. In the wake of the SARS outbreak in 2003, China's participation in global health governance has accelerated rapidly and become more proactive. Although the relative importance of the four factors discussed previously are difficult to gauge, together they help to increase our understanding of China's behavior in its health governance. However, there is no compelling evidence to support the claim that China's compliant behavior results from an internalization of the duty or obligation to global efforts to contain the spread of contagious diseases.

### China's Preferences for World Order

According to the four different theories of power relations in international order presented in chapter 2—namely, critical theory, the English School, realism, and power transition theory—a sense of deprivation toward the dominant order on the part of the rising

power will likely cause the dissatisfied rising power to use revolutionary foreign policy to challenge the status quo and the existing governing pattern.<sup>56</sup> China's perceptions of the world order have shown "a mixture of victimology and aggrandizement"<sup>57</sup> and as a result of these assorted feelings, its involvement in global health governance has also shown a contradiction between practice and rhetoric and ambivalence. What can China's response to HIV/AIDS tell us about its preferences for world order? As a rising economic and political power with a sense of deprivation toward the liberal international order, how and to what extent does China strive to overturn the dominant norms and values of international relations? Or can the liberal democratic norms and values tame this rising power by socializing it into the normative order? How can we extrapolate from China's increased participation in global health governance? Is it acting as a challenger, a maintainer, or a combination of both toward the existing international health regime?

This chapter argues that China can be regarded as both a system-maintainer and a system-challenger toward the international order. It depends on the benchmarks we use to gauge China's participation in the global health regime. If one uses the statecentric cold war order as the benchmark, China is a status quo power because of its preference for a Westphalian model of governance. One can also argue that the Chinese use the Westphalian model to challenge U.S. hegemony and the evolving liberal international order. If one adopts the post-cold war solidarist liberal international order as the benchmark for discussing who wants to maintain or transform the world order, then China is a revisionist.<sup>58</sup> It is not a stakeholder in or a co-guardian of the U.S.-led liberal international order; rather it is supporting a transformation of the liberal order with a desire to revert to the old Westphalian model.

Overall, China's participation in global governance is shaped by and premised upon two principles, namely, to acquire great power status by integration into the global community and to maintain its own state identity and equality with major powers in the West.<sup>59</sup> On the one hand, it is at pains to preserve the Westphalian principles of national sovereignty and nonintervention to assert its national rights not to conform to the liberal Western norms and values, which it does not believe to be universal.<sup>60</sup> On the other, with increased participation in global governance, it finds it imperative to act in concert with other major powers in order to be acknowledged and respected as a "responsible and legitimate" great power. The call for multilateral

cooperation in a “harmonious world” and the suggestion that there is no fixed universal blueprint for development can be viewed as a twin strategy for China first to boost cooperation and reduce tensions with the more advanced industrialized world, and second to shore up the principles of national sovereignty and nonintervention as well as strengthen ties with developing countries so as to consolidate a normative and political bulwark against the liberal democratic values on the world stage.<sup>61</sup> However, evidence that follows shows that China’s normative power is far from complete.

### *Multilateral Cooperation in a Pluralist “Harmonious World”*

China’s emphasis on sovereignty and the associated notion of nonintervention in internal affairs can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century when it was forcibly brought into the international system by the West. However, the principles could not be translated in effective and exclusive control over its own territories until the early years of the People’s Republic of China. Since then, China has become one of the staunchest supporters of Westphalian norms of international relations to guard its national independence.<sup>62</sup> Ironically, since China began to reintegrate itself into the international system in the late 1970s, the international normative structure has gradually shifted from a purely statecentric system toward the present one that emphasizes the state’s responsibility to protect its own citizens or risk humanitarian intervention. The notion of “good international citizens” has been espoused as a post-Westphalian sovereignty norm.<sup>63</sup> Under the constraints of two competing normative political cultures, China’s position among its peers at the world stage is rather peculiar. Chen Zhimin, a Chinese scholar, has precisely pointed out that China as “a Lockean state in a partially Kantian world...is under the challenge from the post-sovereignty norms, which require China to give up some of its sovereignty as the price of global integration.”<sup>64</sup>

As a result of the historical legacy of more than 100 years’ humiliation at the hands of foreign powers, concerns over infringement on national sovereignty have inevitably become a salient feature in China’s post-1949 foreign policy. China has explicitly expressed its dissatisfaction with the liberal international order. However, in order to reap the benefit of globalization and to deflect harsh criticism from the international community, China is focusing more on gaining credibility with institutions of global governance than on

challenging the power relations as well as the core values underpinning the workings of the institutions. Under the influence of the “new security concept,” advocated by Chinese leaders since 1996, Beijing has put great emphasis on multilateral engagement in dealing with transnational affairs and improving its relations with other major powers. China has accordingly demonstrated a strong preference for multilateral cooperation and mutual engagement with great powers. It uses the approaches of “dialogues, consultations and cooperation”<sup>65</sup> in its participation in global governance in order to carve out some international space for itself and to fend off attacks by the liberal normative structure. This multilateral approach even serves to safeguard itself from the encroachment of U.S. values and its unilateralism under the George W. Bush administration and to compete with Washington in good image building.

Simply because China is perceived as a major beneficiary of the international system, its support for the “pariah” regimes, such as the Sudanese, Zimbabwean, and Burmese governments, regardless of their dire human rights record, has often been criticized by the United States, the EU, and international human rights activists. To nudge China into being more cooperative with the West in the international society, the United States has called on China to be a “responsible stakeholder”—to take up its responsibility for the global community based on solidarist norms and to be a guardian of the current U.S.-led international order. Robert Zoellick, then Deputy Secretary of State of the United States, stated:

We now need to encourage China to become a responsible stakeholder in the international system. As a responsible stakeholder, China would be more than just a member—it would work with us [the United States] to sustain the international system that has enabled its success.<sup>66</sup>

Obviously, by prodding China into being a responsible stakeholder, the United States wants China to cease playing the passive role of a free rider in the global community and begin taking more responsibility for the international society, of which China is a major stakeholder. In response to the U.S. request for China to play a new role in the world, Hu Jintao, the Chinese president, told the media in his visit to Washington in April 2006 that “China and the United States are not only stakeholders, but they should also be constructive partners—be parties of constructive cooperation.”<sup>67</sup> Both countries

should use multilateralism to solve international issues. If one deciphers Hu's message carefully, one will find that the word "responsible" is missing in his sentence; instead, he gives more emphasis to the word "constructive."<sup>68</sup> A subtle message from Hu is that all states should engage in constructive cooperation to address the pressing global issues. While the United States assumes that there is a set framework—"good governance"—for national development, the Chinese tend to view that there exists no universally applicable model of development. A constructive way to help the development of the developing world is rather to let third-world countries find their own ways of development in accordance with their national circumstances and preconditions.

Obviously, both governments' perception of world order is different. While one assumes the presence of a widely applicable set model, the other emphasizes multiple roads to development. In addition, their understandings of the word "responsible/responsibility" are not identical either. While China tends to view "responsibility" on the global stage as respecting the principles of sovereignty and nonintervention in domestic affairs of other states and eschewing hegemony (i.e., opposition to imposing one's will on others), the United States pays more attention to the universal appeals of "good governance," such as respect for human rights and the associated notion of responsibility to protect. It appears that Beijing does not want to adopt the criteria of a "responsible" stakeholder laid down by Washington and to be a co-guardian of the existing U.S.-led international order.

In line with its understanding of national sovereignty, China formulates the mantra of a "harmonious world" (*hexie shijie*), which both upholds the principle of nonintervention and stresses the predominant role of the state in governance as a way to defend itself on the global stage. "Harmonious society" is Hu Jintao's new vision for both his nation and the world. In the Fourth Plenum of the 16th CCP Central Committee, held in Beijing in September 2004, Chinese leaders proposed to build a "harmonious socialist society" in China. In the UN 60th Anniversary Summit in New York in September 2005, Hu Jintao further elaborated that a "harmonious world" is to be built on a world composed of sovereign nation-states that respect a plurality and diversity of cultures, ideologies, and politico-economic systems and handle their relations on the basis of "respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as respect for countries' right to independently choose their own social systems and paths of development."<sup>69</sup> Since then, Chinese

scholars have expounded their views on the concept of a “harmonious world” at great length.<sup>70</sup> It is said that the notion represents China’s overall goal and theory of global governance.<sup>71</sup> Based on the official doctrine, Lu Xiaohong of China Foreign Affairs University and Yu Keping of the CCP Central Compilation and Translation Bureau give further details about the Chinese perspective on global governance and the interrelationship between a harmonious world and global governance. For them, the principal actors in global governance are nation-states and the UN.<sup>72</sup>

A decoding of the Chinese explanatory notes of a harmonious world and its theory on global governance reveals that the idea of a harmonious world shares the same logic as the Westphalian international system. China’s advocacy for strengthening the UN-based multilateralism and constructing a harmonious world is obviously targeted at the hegemonic role of the United States and its mission to transform the prevailing Westphalian international system into a self-proclaimed “more peaceful” world based on the solidarist values of liberty, human rights, and democracy. In other words, China would like to maintain the Westphalian international system rather than following in democratic countries’ footsteps to transform the international order into a post-Westphalian one. International relations theorists may find that the Chinese notion of the international order bears a striking resemblance to the English School’s pluralist conception of international society, in which sovereign states, the principal actors in the international society, aim to achieve a minimal degree of order in spite of the fact that they hold varying conceptions of human rights and global justice.<sup>73</sup>

With a suggestion of a pluralist harmonious world, the Chinese government put further emphasis on multilateral cooperation in dealing with adverse global issues while insisting on the Westphalian notion of sovereignty and nonintervention. In the area of public health, as evidenced by the empirical studies on China’s response to HIV/AIDS in the previous chapters, China is using a multilateral approach to tackling the epidemic. Domestically, China has since 2001 shown its dogged determination to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It has drawn multiple actors into the country and acted in concert with them. On the international front, Beijing has also contributed to trying to resolve the transnational problem. It has not only proactively participated in international and regional fora but also provided African countries with assistance in their fight against the HIV/AIDS crisis. It is now more proactive in fulfilling a

prominent role in various international institutions, particularly the World Health Organization.

In a nutshell, it has gradually integrated itself into the global health regime and has taken up greater responsibilities for the provision of global public goods for health. Overall, its active participation and cooperation in providing the public goods has made a profound impact on regional as well as international security. Seen from this perspective, China is acting more as a status quo power without wrecking the international system. However, one has to note that this assessment is made against the cold war order or the English School's pluralist conception of international society. The notion of a harmonious world, particularly with regard to its conception of national sovereignty and the principle of nonintervention into domestic affairs, does not harmonize with the evolving liberal international order.

If we focus on China's multilateral cooperation, it is obvious that sovereignty still forms the cornerstone of world politics in the Chinese mindset. Any act to infringe on its national sovereignty is perceived to be nonnegotiable. As a result, China's participation in global health governance has been focused on IGOs. Its tolerance toward the activities of NGOs inside China is frustrating. As illustrated in chapter 4, the involvement of civil society organizations in domestic campaigns to combat the AIDS disease is conditional. As soon as the government perceives that those activities would attenuate its absolute control over society and threaten the supreme authority of the CCP, China would show no mercy for NGOs and AIDS activists and tighten its control over them. In addition, it refuses to let its domestic NGOs and AIDS activists establish direct links with their counterparts overseas. As a result, NGOs and AIDS activists, particularly those with international contacts, such as Wan Yanhai, Hu Jia, and his wife, Zeng Jinyan, continue facing detention and harassment by local authorities.

The crux of the matter is that all nonstate actors who deal with the HIV/AIDS issue in China are required to rally around and are subordinate to the state and state behavior. In order to exclude unsolicited external authority from its domestic policy-making process, China persists in adopting a state-led multilateral approach to HIV/AIDS. Therefore, it makes more sense to describe China's health governance as "*state-led* health governance." The state is always in the driver's seat to steer the country. As mentioned in chapter 2, those who uphold the statecentric worldview insist that globalization has

not undermined the state's sovereign authority. States do not loosen their grip on the steering wheel and retain substantial capacities to govern their domestic affairs and global activities. For example, Stephen Krasner takes the view that the norm of Westphalian sovereignty has since its inception been routinely compromised, but the compromising of sovereignty allows states to bargain for better policy options.<sup>74</sup> Anne-Marie Slaughter also holds that under the globe-spanning networks, states are still acting as the primary, if not the sole, player in the web of the transgovernmental system. The power shift is not a zero-sum game, as she contends "a gain in power by non-state actors does not necessarily translate into a loss of power for the state."<sup>75</sup>

Throughout the history of the PRC, national unity and autonomy have been of the utmost importance to the Chinese leaders. Mao's handling of a Soviet request to build a joint submarine fleet in 1958,<sup>76</sup> Deng's crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen in 1989, Jiang's missile tests and military exercises during Taiwan's first presidential election by universal suffrage in 1996, and Hu's reaction to Tibetan and Xinjiang unrest in 2008 and 2009, respectively, have demonstrated Chinese leaders' uncompromising stance on territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Therefore, the suggestion of a pluralist harmonious world and multilateral engagement can be seen as the central planks of Beijing's defensive strategy to respond to the spread of liberal values in a partially Kantian world in its involvement in global governance. With increased multilateral cooperation, China hopes that it can escape severe censure from developed countries as well as reassure them that China is acting responsibly as a full-fledged member in international society.

### *Soft Balancing the Liberal International Order*

Through the lens of public health, this research demonstrates that China has gone to great lengths to avoid any outright confrontation with the United States, although rhetorically it is strongly critical of the liberal international order and has called for a "democratization" of "inter-national" relations.<sup>77</sup> However, can one hence conclude that China only aspires to be a follower of the U.S.-led international order? Although China has never attempted a head-on challenge against the United States and its core interests in its participation in global governance, a carefully crafted soft balancing act has instead been used to counter the liberal international order. In the words of

Robert Pape, soft balancing means using “nonmilitary tools,” such as international institutions, economic statecraft, and strict interpretations of neutrality, “to delay, frustrate, and undermine” the hegemony’s aggressive foreign policies.<sup>78</sup> From China’s perspective, this soft balancing includes the aforementioned promotion of multilateral cooperation in a pluralist harmonious world and the associated assertion of the right for states to choose their own paths to development. While this soft balancing works as a defensive strategy to respond to the solidarist values of liberty, it simultaneously acts as a fortress to defend its stance on national sovereignty and to stem liberal democracies from dominating the international system. More importantly, by emphasizing that there is no universal blueprint for development, Beijing has extended its normative influence to developing countries. Using Robert Cox’s arguments in his *Production, Power, and World Order*, as illustrated in chapter 2, an issue that could have far-reaching effects on global governance is whether China will use its newfound economic and diplomatic clout to proactively promote its development model to the developing world, extend its normative influence there, and create a nonliberal order in the third world that is at odds with the liberal international order.

In 2004, Joshua Cooper Ramo summarized China’s success as the “Beijing Consensus” and frequently compared it with the Washington Consensus.<sup>79</sup> According to Ramo, the Beijing Consensus is characterized by three features: economic growth is led by innovations; development has to be balanced and sustainable; and more importantly, China’s path to development is a quest for self-determination, without copying blueprints for economic development from any countries.

Ramo’s encouraging description about China’s development is supposedly welcomed by the Chinese audiences. However, probably much to Ramo’s surprise, the term “Beijing Consensus” did not acquire widespread approval and accord in China. In order to avoid a frontal attack on and a direct challenge to Washington, Beijing has reservation in using the term “Beijing Consensus.” Chinese scholars disagree with Ramo over the use of the term “consensus” to sum up China’s experience. They argue that consensus is normally understood as an “ideal model” that other states can recognize and adopt. Instead of Beijing Consensus, “China model” is preferred in the discourse among Chinese leaders and scholars.<sup>80</sup> They argue that the China model would tell others about China’s experience for development but emphasize that the China model is not a universal model.

The essential element of this “China model” is that states should choose their own paths to development according to their national circumstances and preconditions. Since the late 1970s, China has developed its own development trajectory, as epitomized by the notion of “socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics.” However, this can only be claimed as a strategic policy for development or “a model for governance” under the opportunities and challenges of globalization presented to China. Other countries might use China’s experience for reference in their quest for development paths appropriate to them, but the China model ought not to be treated as a consensus or universal blueprint for others to copy.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, in some way, the Chinese resonate with Ramo by putting emphasis on the claims that the state should play a predominant role in reform and development and that there should not be any grand blueprint for development imposed by external actors from above.<sup>82</sup>

Following on from the idea of the Beijing Consensus and the succeeding notion of a China model, Chinese leaders began to realize the increasing importance of “soft power” in world affairs. In early 2004, the CCP Central Committee promulgated the “Opinions of the CCP Central Committee on Further Developing and Bringing about Flourishing Philosophy and Social Sciences.” In May of the same year, members of the CCP Politburo gathered to study the building of China’s soft power in the context of the debates about the Central Committee document as well as the Beijing Consensus/China model.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, the promotion of China’s development model is argued to be a viable measure for China to build up its soft power. Keys to the China model are the values of economic development, social stability, and harmony.<sup>84</sup> Treating the China model as a major component of its soft power, Beijing revived the Bandung spirit and resumed to make inroads into the developing world in a bid to win more friends and allies to counter the predominance of Washington. Against the background of rising criticisms of the Washington Consensus, the discourse on the China model serves to enhance the voice of the developing world in global affairs.

By emphasizing the right of all states to choose their own paths to development while integrating themselves into the global polity and economy, China, on the one hand, rejects a liberal political order imposed from the outside, particularly from Washington, and on the other hand, tries to develop and exercise soft power in dealing with global issues that require multilateral cooperation as well as recruiting support from developing countries. Multilateralism

becomes a tool for China to gain normative power in the international community. Much has been described about China's growing influence in Asia and the world. Some tend to gauge China's increasing soft power in the transformation of the dynamics of world politics.<sup>85</sup> Others relate China's improved soft power to the United States' declining image.<sup>86</sup> More recently, David Lampton uses a "3M" dimension—might, money, and minds—to articulate China's rising power in three different faces. These "3M" dimensions represent China's military, economic, and ideational power.<sup>87</sup> He argues that China's broad national strategy attaches great weight less to coercive power than to economic and ideational power. Although some dimensions of China's ideational power remain weak, he warns that Washington "should not underestimate China's current and future capacities in this realm."<sup>88</sup>

Lampton's description of China's ideational power is broadly similar to Torbjørn Knutsen's normative power—"the universal application of its values"<sup>89</sup>—or Joseph Nye's soft power—"the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments."<sup>90</sup> It is beyond dispute that an economically powerful China is looming. The case study of China-Africa relations has shown that China's might has already been extended to the normative dimension. Providing development assistance and global public goods for health to the sub-Saharan continent is one of the ways for China to acquire normative power. For the leaders of the developing world, the attractiveness of China's soft power lies in its espousal of the doctrine of nonintervention in domestic affairs, the refusal to make offers of financial and technical aid—including health diplomacy—to third-world countries conditional on their adoption of governance reform, and the expansion of commercial opportunities.<sup>91</sup> With this China model, Beijing is flexing its muscles by constructing a foreign policy template to build up an architecture of global governance with Chinese characteristics and try to reshape the rules of the game in global governance.

However, China's balancing acts are hindered by its limited soft power and the influence of liberal solidarist norms in the international community. Although Charles Kupchan argues that the George W. Bush administration's unilateralism and isolationism inevitably led the United States to an uncertain future, he predicts that there is a potential that the world will return to dangerous great power rivalries because a unipolar world is unsustainable.<sup>92</sup> China's rise takes place at a time when Washington's influence is widely believed to

be in decline, particularly after its invasion of Iraq in 2003. China's ascendancy has caused worldwide concern and, to that end, various think tanks and research institutes have carried out opinion polls on China's soft power.<sup>93</sup> Evidence shows that Chinese soft power has its own limits. Although China's growing economic might is viewed positively in many countries and the country is now generally perceived as a great power on the world stage, an emergent view from the opinion polls is that it is not yet recognized as a multifaceted global power and its soft power is far from complete.<sup>94</sup>

For instance, a study by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the East Asia Institute of South Korea in early 2008 showed that China's soft power is still far behind the United States in Asia. Even with its benign neighborly policy, China still cannot win the hearts and minds of people in the region.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, the survey by Pew Global Attitudes Project conducted in twenty-four countries worldwide between March and April 2008 indicated that the United States' image universally outshines that of China. China's growing admirable economic might notwithstanding, it is widely viewed as not respecting human rights and ignoring the interests of other states.<sup>96</sup> Likewise, a poll in Australia, conducted by Lowy Institute for International Policy in July 2008, showed that many Australians felt uncomfortable about the rise of China. Among 1,001 respondents, 64 percent thought that Australia's interests would be harmed if China gained more power and influence in the region.<sup>97</sup> Hence, the Chinese government can at best earn normative power among the ruling elites of developing countries. Closely related to the "China threat" argument, a typical example that shows the limits of Chinese soft power is its tarnished international image in the course of the SARS outbreak, reinforced by its dismal human rights record and its close relationship with Sudan and other "pariah" states.

China's reputation is further damaged by the Tibetan unrest. The survey by Harris and the *Financial Times*, conducted between March 27 and April 8, 2008, shortly after the outbreak of violence in Tibet and during the early stages of the controversial Olympic torch relay, showed that China overtook the United States as the biggest threat to global stability in the eyes of five European countries (Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and the UK). Although economic competition from China was one of the contributing factors, more importantly many news stories about China in the first half of 2008 were about China's notorious role in Darfur and in Tibet.<sup>98</sup> Following the withdrawal of Steven Spielberg, a renowned Hollywood film director, from the

post of artistic advisor to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing due to his disapproval of Beijing's unwillingness to use its leverage on Sudan to make peace in Darfur,<sup>99</sup> European leaders, such as the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, also threatened to boycott the Beijing Olympics in order to put pressure on China over the Tibet issue.<sup>100</sup> With this "tattered" image among developed countries, even when China suffered from an earthquake in Sichuan in May 2008, some pro-Tibetans in the West shrugged their shoulders. Sharon Stone, a Hollywood celebrity, likened the Sichuan natural catastrophe to "bad Karma" for China's policy in Tibet.<sup>101</sup>

Liu Guijin, the Chinese envoy to Darfur, openly criticized the Western media and some human rights NGOs for distorting China's role in Sudan and, hence, stirring up anti-Chinese feelings among Western countries as well as the opposition groups in African countries.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, China's concern over sovereignty and its policies toward "rogue states" and the alleged human rights abuses in Tibet are not compatible with the democratic values of liberal international order. The controversial Olympic torch relays in 2008 reflected China's ruined global image and questioned the legitimacy of China as a respectable rising power. George Friedman states that China's "public relations strategy is collapsing" in regard to its Olympic dream—a dream of cohesion and progress. The riots in Tibet in 2008 have already destroyed that image.<sup>103</sup> In the realm of public health, the recent food and drug safety problems, the SARS outbreak, and bird flu all have a similar collective adverse effect on China's "responsible" image. Perhaps the Chinese leadership is well aware of its position on the world stage and the limits of its soft power. Accordingly, it has neither gone beyond soft balancing to confront U.S. vital interests directly, nor launched any robust balancing against the liberal international order.

Within the WTO, in particular in the case of the TRIPS agreement on drug patents, China is behaving as a follower or as a system-maintainer in the liberal international order. It fails to present a role model for other developing countries to follow in treating HIV/AIDS and is loath to play a leadership role in supplying public goods for health. It has been discussed in chapter 5 that although China harbors deep resentment against "U.S.-style patent law," the Chinese government has largely complied with the rules of the intellectual property rights. As a result, China's stance on antiretroviral drug patents leads it to run the risk of alienating the developing world. It pays lip service to developing countries, but is not proactively playing

a leadership role in the coalition of G20 in spite of the self-claim that it is the largest developing country in the world and that it would ally itself with all third-world countries on “the establishment of an equitable and just new international political and economic order.”<sup>104</sup> Overall, China contributes little to the expansion of access to affordable antiretroviral therapy for HIV/AIDS to the people living in Africa. In short, while China does not feel overtly comfortable with the liberal international order, it has limited hard and soft power to transform it at its will.

The election of Margaret Chan as the director general of the WHO in 2006 has shown that China is not complacent about merely acting as a passive follower of the liberal international order and is striving for a greater say in global health governance. Chinese scholars have advocated an expansion of China’s might in international discourse (*hua yu quan*), seeking agenda-setting and rule-making power in international institutions is one of the ways to increase China’s discursive power.<sup>105</sup> It has been widely believed that Chan’s success was largely due to Beijing’s blessing and her appointment was seen as a diplomatic triumph both for her and for China.<sup>106</sup> One might wonder whether China is trying to garner political power within the UN health agency. However, there is no compelling evidence that China wants Margaret Chan to undertake any major policy reform in the organization. Without a clear vision of reforming global health governance, China may just want to have a greater say in the health organization, particularly in the agenda-setting process, after experiencing its prowess in the SARS outbreak in 2003. With Beijing’s consent, Taiwan became an observer of the World Health Assembly in 2009. However, the ultimate goal for Taiwan is full membership into this health organization. Having a Chinese woman at the helm of the institution will help China mobilize support among WHO member states against Taiwan’s move. If Shigeru Omi, a Japanese candidate who had openly criticized China’s maladministration at the beginning of SARS outbreak in 2002–3 and was perceived as the strongest rival to Chan in the director general election campaign, had been elected the head of WHO, he would likely have been less sympathetic to China’s political concern over its sovereignty.

In summary, if we ask: would China be a revisionist power and replace the United States as the leading power in the world? The answer is that it is less likely, at least in the foreseeable future. This research has provided ample evidence that China is keen to play a more active global role since the turn of this century. As demonstrated

from previous chapters, China's diplomacy has moved from the stage of "never claiming leadership, hiding capacity and biding time (*jue bu dangtou; taoguang yanghui*)" to the stage of seeking to play a more active role in global governance and global health governance. Public health is the first area for China to gain and exercise leverage in international institutions. However, this cooperative multilateralism is not predicated upon any clear normative and assertive idea of great power obligations to fight against social injustice in the world. Rather, it can be seen as a moderately defensive strategy to counter international opprobrium of China's uncompromising stance on national sovereignty as well as its shirking of responsibility for providing global public goods for health and to reassert the traditional view of world order built on Westphalian sovereignty. Due to the limits of China's soft power on the world stage, Beijing can do little aside from softly balancing against the liberal international order. In the treatment of HIV/AIDS, China has mostly complied with the rules and norms embedded in the liberal international order, particularly in the areas where China can derive material benefits from greater participation. Although China is far from committing itself to working as a co-guardian of the liberal international order, it is less likely that it will pose any formidable challenge to that order.

### Conclusion

Since the turn of the century, China has engaged with multilateralism in dealing with the HIV/AIDS epidemic and has shown its determination to control and avert HIV/AIDS by abiding by the international health regime. This chapter has first theorized the factors for China's changed stance in relation to its treatment of HIV/AIDS and its subsequent increased participation in global health governance. The changes are motivated by both necessity and conscious design.

In regard to China's preferences for world order, while China has integrated itself into international society, its concern over the loss of national sovereignty and foreign encroachment on internal politics are not compatible with the prevailing cosmopolitan liberal democratic values. China is in an awkward situation among great powers in the world. Fears of international opprobrium and concerns over infringement of national sovereignty have forced China to use a dual strategy in its engagement with global health governance, which shows its preferences for the world order. First, in view of

the changing norms of national sovereignty and roles of the nation-state in global governance, China promotes the notion of multilateral cooperation in a harmonious world that upholds the principle of nonintervention and stresses the predominant role of the state in governance. While acknowledging that multiple actors are involved in global governance, Chinese leaders maintain that the principal ones should always be nation-states and the UN.

Second, in order to carve out a hospitable international space for its development and counter the liberal international order, China is also using a soft balancing act to consolidate its soft power among developing countries. By emphasizing that there is no universal blueprint for development and that states should have the right to choose their own individual development paths, China has started to garner soft power among the elites of developing countries. However, owing to the limits of its soft power and dented reputation arising from human rights violations, it is unlikely that China can harness considerable soft power to lead both the developed and developing worlds by example. China can only use soft balancing and minimum deterrence against the liberal democratic values. It has never resorted to robust balancing to confront U.S. vital interests. China is acting more as a status quo power and follows the U.S.-led liberal international order. In addition, China feels it expedient to play the role of a status quo power. Not only does it defeat the “China threat” argument but also helps China to reap the benefits of globalization for the continuation of its economic growth.

This chapter has demonstrated that as far as global health governance is concerned, China aspires to be (but is not yet) a great power. There are grounds for us to believe that the West’s concern over China’s “assertive” engagement with the developing world, particularly Africa, is overblown. In the realm of public health, China has not shown that it possesses the power to lead or shape the emerging international order. Desperate to earn recognition from the West, China has, thus far, mostly complied with the international health regime in dealing with its AIDS problems as well as in contributing to resolve Africa’s AIDS crisis. Intense resentment against the “U.S.-style patent law” aside, China has largely complied with the rules of intellectual property rights under WTO’s TRIPS agreement. While lending vocal support to developing countries, it has never assumed any leadership role to overturn the “U.S.-style patent law.” With an apparent lack of both socialization into liberal norms and values and a global strategy for reordering global relations on the part of China,

it is still uncertain in the end whether China would strive to be a system-transformer of the liberal international order. What is certain is that it does its utmost to avoid resorting to confrontational tactics in dealing with transnational issues, which include global public health. China is content with a conservative posture that does not seek a fundamental revision of the international structure as long as its dream of regaining great power status on a par with other major powers is fulfilled.