Historical Legacies and Non/Traditional Security: Commemorating National Humiliation Day in China

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In mid-September 2003, I saw a poster of a soldier wielding a bayoneted rifle against the background of a flag, fireworks and missiles. It was posted on a neighbourhood noticeboard in Shanghai. The caption enjoined us to celebrate National Defense Education Day because "National Defense connects you, me and him to mark the national borders that peacefully hold together the millions and millions of families [in China]." This new holiday, which was declared in 2001, joins together both traditional and nontraditional security. It clearly refers to the military security of guarding borders for the well-being of the nation now and in the future. But because it is informally known as "National Humiliation Day" it also marks the historical legacies of the past: it was first celebrated in Beijing by thousands of university students who gathered at the ruins of the Yuanming Garden palace. The PLA explained the National Defense Education Law to these students in the context of this

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opulent palace that had been destroyed by British and French troops in the 2nd Opium War (1860).[2]

National Defense Education Day thus is part of the discourse of National Humiliation, which recounts how at the hands of foreign invaders and corrupt Chinese regimes, sovereignty was lost, territory dismembered, and the Chinese people thus humiliated. The Opium War whereby the British navy pried open the Chinese empire to western capitalism in 1840 is usually seen as the beginning of the century of national humiliation, and the communist revolution in 1949 as the end.[3] Moreover, this recently-declared military holiday is not new. National Humiliation Day was an unofficial holiday in China from 1915 to 1926, and an official holiday from 1927 to 1940 under the Guomindang (GMD) regime. During the Republican period, the holiday commemorated May 9th, the day when the Chinese government succumbed to Japan's 21 demands in 1915, which seriously compromised China's national sovereignty. As we will see, recent National Humiliation Day events closely mirror activities and discourses from the early 20th century.

This essay will examine the curious custom of National Humiliation Day to explore how "history" is an issue that links traditional and nontraditional security. As Hughes points out, the discourse of security has been expanding since the end of the Cold War beyond military security to address other issues. Here he joins those who question the ahistorical "Iron Laws of IR" posited by rationalist IR theorists. Hughes

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[2] Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guofang jiaoyu fa [National Defense Education Law of the People's Republic of China], 28 April 2001, articles 12, 20. "China Fails To Designate National Humiliation Day," Beijing, Xinhua, 28 April 2001, FBIS-CHI-2001-0428; Renmin ribao, 16 September 2001; Feng Chunmei, "Jintian shi diyige quanmin guofang jiaoyuri [Today is the first nationwide National Defense Education Day]," Zhongguo qingnian bao, 15 September 2001.

[3] For more on national humiliation discourse see William A. Callahan, "National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation and Chinese Nationalism," Alternatives 29:2 (2004); Paul A. Cohen, "Remembering and Forgetting: National Humiliation in Twentieth-Century China," Twentieth-Century China, 27:2 (April 2002):1-39; Luo Zhitian, "National Humiliation and National Assertion: the Chinese Response to the Twenty-one Demands," Modern Asian Studies 27:2 (1993):297-319.

looks to Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde's notion of "securitisation" to explain how some issues become security problems, while others do not.[4]

In this essay, I will expand upon the securitisation argument in two ways. Firstly, I will use the Chinese case to show that the social construction of security is not merely a post Cold War phenomenon, but explains security politics in a wide variety of times and places. Secondly, I will expand from securitisation to examine how national security is an identity issue that takes on coherence in the context of national insecurities. Making something a security issue, I will argue, is not simply "putting it beyond political debate" or "suspending normal rules" as the securitisation argument suggests. Rather security and identity are intimately related not just in elite circles at special times, but in the events of everyday life: "you, me, and others" are called upon to celebrate National Defense Education Day not only to guard the nation, but to contain it. International politics thus is best analyzed as a series of sovereignty performances, not just by state actors in official sites like the Foreign Ministry, but also through the cultural governance of "unofficial" sites such as art, film, literature – and public holidays.[5] Rather than the state being the actor that produces security discourse directed at outside dangers (as in securitisation), it is the insecurity discourse that produces the inside: in this case, the Chinese nation.

The body of this essay will consider the relation of traditional and nontraditional security through an analysis of activities on National Humiliation Day to explore how nationalism and security are co-produced through sovereignty performances. By comparing the differing practices of the holiday as it was celebrated in the early 20th century and the early 21st century, it will argue that in the early 20th century the political performances aimed to construct a proper Chinese nation out of the ashes of the clashes between the Qing dynasty, northern warlords and foreign

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[4] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, Security: A New Framework for Analysis, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997; Christopher R. Hughes, "Traditional and Nontraditional Security," presented at "Traditional and Nontraditional Security in Northeast Asia" Conference, Renmin University of China, Beijing, April 2004.

[5] David Campbell, "Cultural Governance and Pictorial Resistance: Reflections on the imaging of war," Review of International Studies (2003) 29:57-73, 57. Also see Michael J. Shapiro, Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject, London: Routledge, 2004.

empires. The goal was to construct a "China" worthy of being saved. At the turn of the 21st century, the political performances are focused on containing the nation through a commemoration of the various crises of the early 20th century. Thus the essay will argue that the nation does not arise from the ideology of its leaders (at either end of 20th century), so much as through popular performances such as National Humiliation Day. The debate over national insecurities such as National Humiliation Day thus is not outside politics, as securitisation suggests. Cultural governance reinserts security into the contentious debates that characterise domestic politics, and thus show how security and identity, domestic and international politics, are intimately related.

I. History and patriotic education as non/traditional security

To those who study East Asian international relations, it comes as no surprise that "history" itself is often seen as a security issue. The question of "historical legacies" is an important one in regional diplomacy. Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations are regularly soured by the "issue of history," with the "textbook controversy" as most famous case. But Japan is not the only culprit in the nontraditional security of history. China also has been criticised for its "Northeast Asia project" research on the medieval Goguryeo dynasty, which included both the Korean peninsula and Manchuria. An editorialist in Seoul wrote: "…this Chinese attempt to include Goguryeo as part of the history of China should be criticised for what it really is: an example of China-centered great-power chauvinism."[6] Tenth century history thus is the focus of heated debates not just over nontraditional security issues of identity, but also over the very traditional security issue of proper border between Korea and China.

History is increasingly a theoretical issue among scholars as well. With the rise of sociological constructivism in the 1990s there has been much more attention to national identity, since national identity is seen as determining national interests, which in turn determine policy and state action. In their introduction to International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific, Ikenberry and Mastanduno stress that history

[6] Park Woo-Jung, "'Goguryeo, China' and 'Dokdo, Japan'?," The Hankyoreh, 12 January 2004, translated in Korea Focus (Jan-Feb 2004), 36-8, 38.

and memory are crucial issues that affect the stability of the region.[7] Thomas Berger goes further to argue that many of the key conflicts in East Asia are "rooted in their interpretation of history," and foreign policy outcomes are thus shaped by historical memories.[8]

But it is not just the sociological constructivists who are interested in history: liberals and realists are also concerned with how memory shapes institutions and threat perception. To understand Chinese grand strategy, they tell us, we now need to examine Cultural Security through the historical models of Cultural Realism.[9] The military and think-tanks as divergent as the Center for Security and International Studies, Rand Corporation, and the Carnegie Council have also focused on history as a security issue; Gong's Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia: Issues of Identity in International Relations is the best example of this trend.[10]

History is also an important security issue in Chinese texts. More than in most countries, history is seen as the key to political legitimacy in China. Whereas "freedom" is the keyword to understand the core values of America, and "rule of law" is the key to England, "history" is central to Chinese identity. Indeed, the legitimacy of the CCP regime grows out of the history of its revolution against foreign imperialism and domestic corruption, rather than from democratic elections,

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[7] G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

[8] Thomas U. Berger, "Power and Purpose in Pacific East Asia: A constructivist interpretation," In International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific, G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, pp. 392, 404.

[9] Alastair Iain Johnston, Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History, Princeton University Press, 1995; David Kang, "Hierarchy and Stability in Asian International Relations," in International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific, G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., Columbia University Press, 2003, pp. 163-89;

[10] Gerrit W. Gong, ed. Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia: Issues of Identity in International Relations, Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2001; Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future, Santa Monica, CA: Rand/Project Air Force, 2000.

effectiveness, or public opinion. The PRC is legitimate because it founded a "New China." But history can be subversive as well; it records the memories not just of regimes, but memories of the revolutionary history of mass demonstrations. Much of the power of the mass demonstrations in 1989 came from the fact they the presented an alternative to the official commemoration of a key revolutionary holiday – the 70th anniversary of the May 4th movement of 1919.[11] National Humiliation Day (scheduled for the third Saturday of September) is likewise placed near another key event in Chinese revolutionary history: September 18th, the Mukden Incident whereby Japan took Manchuria in 1931, and which was commemorated in the 1930s as the second National Humiliation Day. Indeed, the cycle of protests that led to 1989 started in 1985 when Beijing University students commemorated "September 18th" as a way to protest a new Japanese economic invasion.

Patriotic Education Policy

Because of these legitimacy issues, the PRC is very attentive to history education. It has a patriotic education policy that aims to control memory as a way of shoring up regime legitimacy. Hence rather than the new nationalism that emerged in the 1990s being simply an expression of popular feeling, we also need to understand this nationalism in the context of the state's patriotic education policy.[12] This is not a new policy: patriotism and national humiliation also were closely linked in editorial commentaries and history textbooks in the early 20th century.[13] In this way national humiliation was part of the construction of citizenship and national identity in the

[11] Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, Student Protest in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai, Stanford University Press, 1991, p. 277-93; Elizabeth J. Perry, "Challenging the Mandate of Heaven: Popular Protest in Modern China," Critical Asian Studies 33:2 (2001):163-180.

[12] Suisheng Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China," Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 31:3 (1998): 287-302.

[13] See Hou Hongjian, "Guoxue, guochi, laoku sanda zhuyi biaolie [Illustrative charts displaying the three great principles: National studies, national humiliation and hard work]," *Jiaoyu zazhi* 7(7) (July 1915):21-4; Liang Xin, Guochi shiyao [History of National Humiliation], Shanghai: Rixin yudi xueshi, 1931, p. 1.

Republic of China (ROC). In the late 20th century, national humiliation discourse was revived as a response to the Tian'anmen movement in 1989. To the outside world this was seen as a pro-democracy movement. But the Chinese leadership saw it as a threat to regime security and cultural security; for the first time, popular protest was not directed against foreign imperialism. Rather the focus of Beijing Spring was internal: official corruption and domestic political reform.

The solution to this problem, the leaders decided, was to shift the focus of youthful energies away from domestic issues to foreign problems. A patriotic education policy was formulated not so much to re-educate the youth (as in the past), as to redirect protest towards the external Other. According to the Party's "Outline for Implementing Patriotic Education" (1994), the policy's objective was to boost the nation's spirit, enhance cohesion, foster national pride, consolidate and develop a patriotic united front, and rally the masses' patriotic passions to "build socialism with Chinese characteristics". The study of history is an important part of this patriotic education, especially the study of China's modern history of being invaded by imperialists, and the study of China's national characteristics, especially as they are incompatible with western values.[14] The outline proposed a multimedia campaign of patriotic education activities that would take place not just in schools but in museums, film, television, popular magazines, newspapers – and national holidays.

National humiliation discourse thus was revived in the service of patriotic education; indeed, according to the records of the National Library of China, no new books about "national humiliation" were published in China between 1947 and 1990. The discourse dramatically reappeared in the early 1990s, perhaps as the result of a caustic remark from Deng Xiaoping in April 1990. Responding to the Group of Seven's criticism of the Tiananmen massacre, Deng revived national humiliation themes when he quipped that the Group of Seven was basically the same bunch of imperialists who had invaded China in 1900 to put down the Boxer Uprising and divide up China.

Following Deng's lead, the first National Humiliation history textbook since 1937 was published in 1990 as part of a "history, patriotism, and socialism" book

[14] Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, "Aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu shishi gangyao [Outline for Implementing Patriotic Education]," Renmin ribao, 6 September 1994, p. 3; also see Zhao 1998, p. 293.

series. By recounting China's humiliating diplomatic and military defeats at the hands of European, Japanese and American imperialism, The Indignation of National Humiliation follows many of the same themes and rhetoric as textbooks from the early 20th century. The author confirms that the timing of the book was very political: it was published on the eve of the 150th anniversary of the Opium War in April 1990.[15] Patriotic education thus served to redirect students emotions and energies away from commemorating the first anniversary of Beijing Spring in April 1990.

Other national humiliation textbooks were more direct in linking national humiliation and the Tian'anmen movement. As the preface to a national humiliation history text edited by the Ministry of Education tells us, patriotic education can protect the Chinese nation from threats both foreign and domestic: "Today we are confronted with foreign and domestic enemies who are plotting to force 'peaceful evolution' on our country. We need to make the youth understand [the history of national humiliation] … I hope that patriotic education will end the turmoil and counter-revolutionary tendencies [of the Tiananmen movement] among primary and secondary school students."[16]

Books and articles that link patriotic education and national humiliation were published on a regular basis after 1990. Moreover, as mentioned above, this security/insecurity discourse went beyond school textbooks and teacher's journals to a multimedia campaign in museums, film, television, popular magazines, and newspapers. While it is true that patriotic education started out as a state-driven propaganda campaign, by the mid-1990s national humiliation discourse had spread beyond official control as the Chinese popular media were opened up to market forces. To put it simply, patriotism sells – not just in China, but most countries. Moreover, although many see patriotic education and National Humiliation Day as peculiarly communist activities, sources from popular movements in the early 20th century confirm that national humiliation is an enduring narrative of modern Chinese history and identity. It is thus necessary to compare how Chinese identity and security

[15] Liu Jisheng, Guochi fen [The Indignation of National Humiliation], Ji'nan, Shandong: Ji'nan chubanshe, 1990, p. 284.

[16] He Dongchang, "Preface," in Wuwang guochi [Never Forget National Humiliation], National Education Committee, Elementary Education section, ed., Tianjin: Xinlei chubanshe, 1991, p. 1.

are shaped by the historical insecurity of national humiliation both in the early 20th century and the early 21st century.

In the next two sections, I will consider the techniques of National Humiliation Day as it was celebrated in both the early 20th century and early 21st century. In this way, we will not just examine what is being remembered (to gauge the effectiveness of propaganda), but examine how the past is commemorated as a nationalist performance in international space. This analysis will take us beyond the securitisation of threats by state actors to see how techniques of cultural governance are used by the rank-and-file and the state for both nationalism and security. In this way, the "why-question" of the meaning of national humiliation day is framed by the when- and how-questions of the technique of national humiliation day performances.

II. When: Proclaiming National Humiliation Day

In Festivals and the French Revolution, Ozouf argues that the French Revolution was more than an ideological project of liberty, equality and fraternity. It was also a cultural project that revolutionized the everyday life of the people. Indeed, the French were created as citizens of the republic as much by new practices as by "the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen." An important part of this new French lifestyle was the new French calendar, with its list of new revolutionary festivals.[17]

After China's own Republican revolution of 1911, which overthrew not only the Qing dynasty but also three millennia of empire, the new government likewise worked hard not just to found new state institutions and ideologies, but also to fashion republican citizens out of imperial subjects. One marked oneself as a new citizen less by subscribing to the new ideological program, than by following revolutionary fashion. Republican men cut their queques (the mark of imperial submission), and women unbound their feet. Everyone wore western-style suits. A Western-style solar calendar replaced the imperial Chinese lunar calendar. Indeed, much like how the French Revolution's new calendar founded a new republican society through its festivals, the solar calendar instituted a new series of positive celebrations which not

[17] Mona Ozouf, Festivals and the French Revolution, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 161.

only added to the legitimacy of the state, but also forged a new society of citizens.[18] National Day was first officially celebrated in 1912 as "10-10 day" (October 10th). The first national protest day came 2 ½ years later on May 9th, and was named "5-9 National Humiliation Commemoration Day."

The Century of National Humiliation, many textbooks tell us, started in 1842 with the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing that ended the Opium War with Britain. But National Humiliation Day itself was not proclaimed until 1915 – 73 years into that century. While European powers were distracted by World War I, Japan made imperial claims on Chinese territory in early 1915. A long process of secret diplomacy culminated on May 7th when Japan sent its ultimatum of "21 Demands" to the Chinese government. These included ceding to Japan the Chinese territories of the German empire, as well a host of other lucrative economic concessions. Chinese President Yuan Shikai accepted these demands on May 9th.

Nationwide mass protests broke out once this treaty was announced. Both National Salvation Societies and National Humiliation Societies were formed to hold meetings and discuss this slight on the honor of China. In mid-May 1915, May 9th was proclaimed as National Humiliation Day: a holiday to be celebrated and a humiliation to be commemorated on an annual basis. But this patriotic movement to defend Chinese national security was not state-led. Rather it was proclaimed in civil society against the government by the National Teachers' Association. Other corporate associations for national humiliation formed, including groups representing chambers of commerce, student unions, female student unions, overseas student associations, labor unions, provincial governors, soldiers and common citizens. To underline how this political protest was political theatre – performing nationalism – an actors union put on a special play not just to commemorate the national humiliation of the 21 demands, but to raise money for the National Humiliation Fund to fight Japan.[19] Thus "May 9th" was commemorated on an annual basis in cities around China after 1915.

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[18] Henrietta Harrison, The Making of a Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China: 1911-1929, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.14ff.

[19] See Guochi [National Humiliation] (Shanghai) 1:1 (June 1915); Zhichi she [Psued., Sense of shame association], ed., Guochi [National Humiliation], Shanghai: Zhichi she, 1915.

Moreover, political activities in civil society increasingly took on a national character in response to China accepting Japan's 21 demands. Not only was a nationwide national humiliation day declared, nationwide and cross-class associations began to form to save China from national humiliation. In this way, Chinese nationalism is one of the products of National Humiliation Day – not vice versa.

Once the GMD asserted state sovereignty in 1927, it quickly made "May 9th National Humiliation Commemoration Day" an official holiday. Indeed, since Japan and the other imperial powers had humiliated China numerous times since 1915, in 1928 the GMD issued an official calendar of 26 National Humiliation Days throughout the year: they lamented that "only December lacks one."[20] The official announcement tells us that this list of 26 humiliation holidays was the result of a survey of China's various locally-celebrated National Humiliation Days done by the Department of the Interior in 1928.

But since odd days are included and familiar days are excluded, a certain logic of selection seems to have prevailed. The purpose of distributing the National Humiliation Days throughout the year was both political and economic. The concentration of humiliation holidays in May was beginning to cause problems for the government: in 1921 a national humiliation day article proclaimed, "There are commemorations on May 1st, May 4th, May 7th…."[21] In 1925 the May 30th Shanghai massacre was added, and in 1928 the May 3rd Ji'nan massacre was included. It got so bad that one author sarcastically commented that "May has become a sad month. We should follow the English pronounciation of 'May', which is the same as the Chinese word 'mei-out of luck'. May is the unlucky month."[22]

The authorities did not have such a sense of irony; after the GMD took control of Shanghai in 1927, it instituted "Humiliation Month Precautions," to "suppress communist uprisings and radical movements" during May.[23] Hence the government used this new commemorative calendar as a tool of cultural governance to control

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[20] Cited in Liang Xin, 1931, pp. 1, 6. Also see "China to observe 25 'Humiliation Days'," New York Times, 16 September 1928, p. 60.

[21] Xiu Jun, "Wujiu zhi wo jian [My view of May 9th]," Shenbao, 9 May 1921, p. 18; North China Herald, 18 May 1925, p. 271;

[22] Cheng Zhizheng, "Wuhu wuyue [Alas, May]," Shenbao, 9 May 1928, p. 21.

[23] North China Herald, 8 May 1928, p. 189.

security threats in much the same way as the CCP would after 1990. The aim was to use a calendar of approved humiliation holidays to redirect and contain the political unrest and economic disruption of mass demonstrations. In this way, the GMD sought to police, and thus control, nationalism by transforming the energy of resistance seen in civil society into a ritual of party corporate groups.

As we saw above, National Humiliation Day reappeared in 2001 as National Defense Education Day. It was proclaimed through an official document, the National Defense Education Law, which was passed by the National People's Congress. But this nationwide national humiliation day was the upshot of a decade-long process. A regional "national humiliation day" had been declared in Shenyang to commemorate the September 18th Incident. Many cities, including Hong Kong, annually commemorate July 7th as the national humiliation of Japan's invasion of China proper in 1937, while Nanjing set aside December 13th to commemorate the Nanjing Massacre that followed.

As early as 1995, people were calling for the government to "Please Establish 'National Humiliation Day'" in prominent publications.[24] Chen Yunjie, for example, argued that it was time to institutionalise the increasingly haphazard commemoration of National Humiliation. Many admitted that it was a strange sort of holiday; but they labor to point out that national humiliation days are not unique to China: a key article in the China Youth Daily recalls that other countries have a such a humiliation holiday – the U.S., Japan, France, Russia.[25] Thus in 2001, the National People's Congress decided that China also needed a nationwide national humiliation day. The first national humiliation day was celebrated on September 15th, in the shadow of the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington.

It would be easy to conclude this section by pointing, once again, to the successful cultural governance by the state of National Humiliation Days in the past

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[24] Chen Yunjie, 'Qing shi "guochi ri"' [Please establish 'National Humiliation Day']," Jiaoyu yu zhili No. 4 (1995):22; Su Zhiliang, "Wuwang guochi, wo de sandian jianyi [Never forget National Humiliation, my three proposals]," Tansuo yu zhengwu No. 12 (2000):9-11.

[25] Feng Chunmei, "Jintian shi diyige quanmin guofang jiaoyuri [Today is the first nationwide National Defense Education Day]," Zhongguo qingnian bao, 15 September 2001.

and present. Indeed, I could point out that both the ROC and the PRC used various methods to enforce a solemn patriotic commemoration of national humiliation day: in addition to schools and shops, bars, dancehalls and amusement parks were closed on May 9th. But this would only be telling part of the story. National humiliation day was, after all, originally declared and celebrated by civil society in 1915.

Moreover, new national humiliation days keep being declared in unofficial and semi-official spaces to address new national sovereignty crises. In 1919, May 4th was named a second national humiliation day, as was September 18th in 1931, and November 4th in 1946. More recently, national humiliation days have been mooted for the May 7th bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 and for the April 1st spy plane collision in 2001.[26] While the Century of National Humiliation focuses on European and then Japanese aggression, these recent humiliations focus on the United States. New enemies generate new humiliations, which in turn not only lead to a quest for military strength to deal with foreign threats, but to a new construction of national identity to rally the masses at home. Traditional and nontraditional security are thus joined.

Comparing the texts from the early 1990s and the early 2000s shows how the narrative of national humiliation never ends – although there was a grand celebration of the final cleansing of the national humiliation of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macao in 1999. Hence proclaiming National Humiliation Day continues to be a political act that constructs identity and security – and thus a nontraditional threat to state security – long after the Century of National Humiliation ended in 1949.

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[26] See Liu Jichang, "Guochi wei jing, guoxing wei di: aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu xin guanjiao [National Humiliation as the mirror, national renaissance as the meaning: a new approach to patriotic education]," Guizhou wenshicongkan No. 3 (2002):49-50. The U.S. was first targeted as a source of a national humiliation in 1946 when Chiang Kai-shek signed the Sino-U.S. Friendship and Trade Treaty on November 4 – the new national humiliation day. The CCP compared to the treaty to Japan's 21 Demands, and Chiang Kai-shek to the traitor Yuan Shikai. (See Jinian xin guochi [Commemorate new National Humiliation], Xingtai: Taixing junzong shudian, 1947).

III. How: Ritual Performances on Nation Humiliation Day

In Festivals and the French Revolution, Ozouf asks "can a festival that is ideally conceived as a festival of Enlightenment represent doom and gloom?… [A]nd anyway, how does one celebrate one's misfortunes?"[27] To Ozouf, these are rhetorical questions; of course there is no proper way to celebrate one's misfortunes. Even more, there is not proper way to celebrate a nation's misfortunes.

But the Chinese experience provides a concrete answer to Ozouf's rhetorical question. Chinese essayists address the same problem of unhappy holidays, but with the same techniques used for happy holidays. As we saw in the second section, in 1915 insecurity was added to security, and commemoration to celebration: the Chinese added "May 9th National Humiliation Commemoration Day" to "October 10th National Day." Not surprisingly, the practices in May were quite the same those in October. There were parades, conferences, speeches, flags, songs, poems, and editorials. Merchants flew National Humiliation flags and banners. Patriotic youths wore National Humiliation armbands, pasted up wall posters and performed street theatre to mobilise the masses.[28] Much like mass protests on May 4th (1919), these activities were often woven together for a full day of commemoration. Firstly, schools, shops, factories, entertainment venues were pressured to close for the day. Patriotic performances often started with a parade through the city that culminated in a meeting either at a public park, or in an auditorium. The agenda from a Shanghai meeting to commemorate a decade of national humiliation (1925) is typical: 1) opening ceremony; 2) chairman gives report; 3) salute national flag; 4) section heads report situation of the past year; 5) sing National Humiliation Anthem, 6) speeches from the floor; 7) more mourning, including speeches and theatrical performances; 8) take photograph of delegates; 9) close meeting.[29] Across town, a student meeting had

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[27] Ozouf, 1988:175, 180.

[28] For a vivid description of activities, including flirting with girls at the demonstrations, see Liao Guofang, "Yongyuan buwang: guochi jinian xiaoshuo [Never forget: a National Humiliation commemorative story]," Shenbao, 9 May 1928, p. 21.

[29] "Jinri zhongyang dahuitang zhi guochi jinianhui [Today the central convention center holds a National Humiliation commemoration meeting]," Shenbao, 9 May 1925, p. 13; also see Wasserstrom 1991, pp. 78-79.

a similar agenda, but ended on a more entertaining note. After the speeches, salutes and anthems, the last item instructed the children "to enjoy entertainment" including opera performances, stand-up comedy, traditional Chinese music, dancing, drama, story-telling, western music, a speech on women's rights, and finally to end the proceedings, a magic act.[30] Another Shanghai school included a "National Humiliation Commemorative Gymnastics" routine that equated physical strength and national strength.[31] National humiliation commemoration itself thus was a performance.

Such earnest activity also led to satirical comment about the transitory nature of Chinese patriotism. "An analysis of the five minutes of enthusiasm" brutally lists what <u>really</u> happened in annual events on May 9th:[32]

> 1st minute: Fly into rage. Be resentful. Gnash one's teeth. Be extremely antagonistic.
>
> 2nd minute: Have meetings and form associations. Unite to resist. Donate money. Love our country and resolve to do something.
>
> 3rd minute: Send a circular telegram and ask questions. Have a meeting to discuss the issues. Strategize to take a break. Politely pretend to agree.
>
> 4th minute: Speak up to avenge our national humiliation. Be incapable of action. One person alone cannot save the nation. Present no alternatives.
>
> 5th minute: Scheme for personal gain. Forget about hatred and national humiliation. Surrender to the foreigners.

Sadly, much of the fun and satire increasingly indicative of National Humiliation Day performances in the 1920s was lost after the GMD took over Shanghai in 1927. The GMD turned civil society associations into corporate groups linked to the party, and limited participation in the commemorative activities to the leaders of these chosen groups. Outwardly, the meeting agendas were much the same,

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[30] "Yong gongxuezhi guochi jinian [National Humiliation commemoration at Yong public school]," <u>Shenbao</u>, 9 May 1925, p. 13.

[31] Wang Huaiqi, <u>Guochi jinian ticao</u> [National Humiliation Commemorative Gymnastics], Shanghai: Zhongguo tixue chubanshe, 1929.

[32] Feng Shuren, "Wufenzhong redude fenxi [An analysis of five minutes of enthusiasm]," <u>Shenbao</u>, 9 May 1924, p. 18.

except a few items were added to celebrate the GMD and its ideology: the party flag was saluted, party anthem sung, and party slogans shouted.[33]

In 1929, the government proclaimed that unauthorised parades would not be tolerated, and declared that "Each person should not go beyond the limits of today's national humiliation commemoration" because "May 9th National Humiliation Commemoration Day is being used by reactionaries and communists to mislead the public and create chaos."[34] For the 15th anniversary of National Humiliation Day in 1930, the government declared that there would be no closure of factories, shops or schools. The official commemoration meeting was held in Shanghai's Fenglai Theatre for the leaders of corporate groups.[35] The GMD also churned out commemorative booklets to guide the activities and direct the meaning of national humiliation day.

After National Humiliation discourse was revived in 1990, numerous days of National Humiliation have been celebrated. Until 2001 there was no single nationwide humiliation holiday, so people marked national humiliation on a host of different commemoration days. These dates are quite similar to the GMD's calendar of 26 official national humiliation holidays. But in general, the temporal organisation of humiliation holidays is quite different in the 21st century. Rather than following a 12 month yearly calendar, the PRC's commemoration calendar follows a ten year decade calendar: key National Humiliation Days are celebrated according to their 50th, 60th, 70th, 75th, 100th, and 150th anniversaries. Thus Deng's quip about the Group of Seven being the usual suspects was part of the commemoration of ninety years since the Boxer Uprising and 150 years since the Opium War in 1990. Likewise, the textbook The Indignation of National Humiliation was published to mark the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Opium War. The 60th anniversary of the September 18th Japanese conquest of Manchuria was commemorated in 1991. In 1995 National Humiliation articles centred on the 50th anniversary of the World War II victory, and the 100th anniversary of defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. In 1997, the return of Hong

[33] "Beixinjing wuqi jinian dahui ji [The meeting to commemorate May 7th in Beixinjing]," Shenbao, 9 May 1927, p. 9.

[34] "Jinri guochi jinian fanwei [The limits of today's National Humiliation commemoration]," Shenbao, 9 May 1929, p. 13.

[35] "Jinri wujiu guochi jinian [Today's May 9th National Humiliation commemoration]," Shenbao, 9 May 1930, p. 13.

Kong was celebrated with fanfare, while the 70th anniversary of Japan's invasion 1937 of China proper was marked, along with the 70th anniversary of the Nanjing massacre. In 1999 there was a muted celebration of the return of Macao, and the national humiliation that that event cleansed. And then it started again, with the 100th anniversary commemoration of the Boxer Uprising in 2000, the 70th anniversary of the September 18th Manchurian Incident in 2001, and so on. Humiliation holidays are celebrated according to a decade-long calendar.

Many of the same activities as in the Republican period were held to mark these national humiliation days. Indeed, they carried the same logic, because people participated in state-organised activities primarily as members of party-sponsored corporate groups: students, workers, soldiers, party members, women, patriotic religious groups, national minority groups, and so on. But as Esherick and Wasserstrom point out, the PRC with its strong state-power was able to organise and control these political performances much more effectively than the GMD.[36]

A report on the activities planned for the handover of Hong Kong – one of the few national humiliation days where humiliation was cleansed – gives an idea of the party-state's comprehensive approach to cultural governance.[37] In a district of Beijing, 120,000 primary and secondary students were organised into activities that included lists of patriotic slogans for students to chant (including "cleanse national humiliation," "peace through strength," and "understand historical facts"), explanations of the history of Sino-British relations and Hong Kong's "Basic Law," songs to sing (including "Our Great China"), and a special countdown calendar of 200 days to the handover. Special textbooks were produced, including, "China's Hong Kong (1997)" and "Stories of the National Flag." These special activities took place according to 200 days, 100 days, 50 days, 30 days (and so on) on the countdown calendar. Students were able to rip off a page each day (each with a special message)

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[36] Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Acting Out Democracy: Political Theatre in Modern China," In Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, 2nd ed., Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds., Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994, pp. 32-69, 52, 54.

[37] Committee of leaders of the moral education in primary and secondary schools of Dongcheng district [of Beijing], "Huanqing XG huigui, xixue bainian guochi [Welcome back HK, cleanse the century of NH]," Beijing jiaoyu No. 22 (1997):7-8.

from another 100 day countdown calendar. The Moral Education Committee declared the campaign a success: a test of high school students showed that 70% had an understanding of the fundamental concepts of national humiliation and the return of Hong Kong.

Most national humiliation day meetings took place to commemorate a specific day. For example, the trade journal Contemporary Auditing reported on an outing of the Jingyu County Auditors Association to commemorate September 18th with a program called "Never forget national humiliation, rejuvenate China." At the patriotic site, "They cherished the memory of fallen heroes, visited the commemoration hall, reviewed history, and listened to the personal experiences recounted by heroic veterans who fought the enemy under the leadership of the CCP."[38] The auditors, the article tells us, vowed to audit with these lessons in mind. An editorial in the trade journal China Construction Materials also links the welfare of its industry with a cleansing of national humiliation: "For our country to be great and strong, our construction materials industry must be great and strong."[39]

Like in the 1920s, national humiliation days are commemorated with more traditional performances: film, storytelling, speeches, slogans, and songs. The feature film Opium War, which is about the Sino-British conflict where Hong Kong was lost, was a key sovereignty performance. It premiered to great fanfare in Beijing on June 9th (the national humiliation day when the unequal treaty in question was signed with Britain).[40] Poems by common people as well as by professional writers were a particularly popular way to commemorate the return of Hong Kong: for example, "Never Forget National Humiliation, Rejuvenate China" was published in Jiangsu

[38] Wang Guangjue and Wang Liansu, "Jingyuxian shenjiju kaizhan 'wuwang guochi, zhenxing zhonghua' de aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu [Jingyu county auditing department opens 'Never forget national humiliation, rejuvenate China' patriotic education] Dangdai shenji [Contemporary Auditing] No. 5 (2001):43.

[39] [Editorial], "Yinghuigui xueguochi jiancai gongye yao da er qiang [Welcome back, cleanse national humiliation, the construction materials industry must be great to be strong]," Zhongguo jiancai [China Construction Materials] No. 7 (1997):4.

[40] "China: Xinhua Feature on 1898 Signing of Hong Kong Lease," Beijing: Xinhua, 10 June 1997, FBIS-CHI-97-161.

Statistics.[41] Poetry has a long history of performing national humiliation: as the "Preface" to Ode to National Humiliation (1947) tells us, "National Humiliation poems have been written since the end of the Opium War."[42]

The celebration of national humiliation day over the past ninety years shows the interplay between security and insecurity, domestic and foreign as they construct national identity. The logic of national humiliation at its heyday in the 1920s is simple. The term "national humiliation" emerged in 1915 as a sign of China's new modern, national and republican government that was the outcome of its 1911 revolution. After China's entry into modern politics, Chinese intellectuals expected their nation to be treated with more respect as a "free and equal sovereign state". But the transition from empire to nation-state did not impress the European, American and Japanese governments who maintained their unequal treaties. As an editorial on National Humiliation Day in 1927 put it: "After the 1911 revolution we thought that things had changed, and that the great powers would change their previous attitude, and not bully newborn China." So Chinese were surprised and dismayed "in 1915 when Japan wanted to invade China with the 21 demands that would exterminate it." [43] Hence National Humiliation Day marked a national tragedy much greater than simply Japan's 21 demands; it reminded Chinese citizens that "friendly countries" (the contemporary designation for Britain and America) would not defend them against Japan. National salvation was in their own hands; they had to defend themselves against imperialism. Commemorating National humiliation day thus was one of the many sovereignty performances (including National Day) that sought to produce a strong Chinese nation.

But in the early 21st century, there is no such sovereignty crisis like in the early 20th century when imperialists were busy dividing up China. Rather with the Tian'anmen crisis and the disintegration of communism in the Soviet bloc, the CCP was facing a nontraditional security threat: regime security, ideological security, and

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[41] Yan Cun, "Wuwang guochi zhen Zhonghua [Never Forget National Humiliation, Rejuvenate China]," Jiangsu tongji No. 7 (1997):35.

[42] Wang Juchang, Guochi shihua [Ode to National Humiliation], Shanghai: Xinjiyuan chubanshe, 1947, p. 85.

[43] "Jinri guochi jinian, [Today commemorate National Humiliation]," Shenbao, 9 May 1927, p. 9.

cultural security. Thus after 1989, there was a shift from producing nationalism, as in the 1920s, to containing nationalism. To contain the nation, it is necessary to construct insecurities such as National Humiliation Day as a mode of cultural governance that limits the expression of identity to approved activities and feelings. As the National Defense Education Day poster told us, identity not only marks the border between us and them, but also contains "us" in China: "National Defense connects you, me and him to mark the national borders that peacefully hold together the millions and millions of families [in China]." Yet the state is never totally successful; nationalism and humiliation both keep crossing the official boundaries to go in unexpected directions to produce unorthodox identities.

IV. Conclusion: Containing National Humiliation

As these wide and varied examples of national humiliation day activities show, both civil society and the state in China have used cultural governance as a way to perform the nation. If history is a non/traditional security issue, then the conclusions of this essay are not encouraging. There was great fanfare in 1997 with the return of Hong Kong, which as we were repeatedly told, cleansed humiliation once and for all. But just a few days later, Japan was criticised in the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of July 7th invasion of China, and again a few months later with the anniversary of the December 13th massacre in Nanjing. Although National Defense Education Day is directed at a general enemy, new humiliations increasingly target new enemies, such as the U.S. (which only played a secondary role in the Century of National Humiliation). Far from memory fading with the march of time, recently there has been a proliferation of national humiliation days, textbooks, and other media products.

To achieve stability in East Asia, scholars such as Gong, Ikenberry and Mastanduno tell us that China, Japan, South Korea (and the U.S.) have to construct normal diplomatic relations by resolving the history question rationally and objectively. This essay has used the example of National Humiliation Day performances to show how Chinese texts are not reacting to a clear objective historical legacy, so much as constructing a particular history, in a particular context, as part of particular political projects. In Republican times, the humiliation holidays buttressed a history that sought to produce the proper Chinese nation as a modern entity in distinction to (both Chinese and foreign) empire. Since 1990, national

humiliation discourse has aimed to maintain and contain the Chinese nation by focusing on the external Other. While the early 20th century discourse used nontraditional modes of popular culture to address the dramatically traditional security problem of foreign invasion, discourse in the early 21st century uses a traditional vocabulary of war and foreign relations to address the nontraditional security issue of the waning power of the CCP. Patriotic education as a mode of cultural governance creates the foreign Other in order to recreate and redirect the Chinese nation.

It is common among scholars and officials in both China and the west to see nationalism as a "problem" that needs to be addressed by the state. Sociological constructivists tell us that foreign affairs would improve if Japanese and Chinese leaders, for example, simply revised their negative views of each other.[44] But national humiliation discourse is not completely directed at external Others – it has always targeted both foreign invasion and domestic corruption. The self/Other relations generated by national humiliation discourse will not cease if the leadership decides to change course because there is leakage from national containment, especially as the discourse is increasingly produced in the media market rather than by the party-state. The meaning of national humiliation thus is not exhausted by state-directed propaganda because the nationalism that it invokes reflects people's feelings and is enhanced by its circulation in the market.

It is thus necessary to think about more than how the state produces nationalism; we also need to consider how people consume National Humiliation Day. Not surprisingly, the Shenbao provides clues to national humiliation consumption. In addition to news, essays and editorials, it published advertisements that urged readers to commemorate national humiliation by purchasing "national products" in the form of patriotic cigarettes, straw hats, and face towels: "When you use the national humiliation towel every day to wash your face, think of how it is even better to wash away humiliation at the same time as you are washing your face."[45] National production thus is linked directly with national humiliation. But it would be

[44] Wu Xinbo, "Memory and Perception: The Chinese Thinking on Japan," in Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia, G. Gong, ed., Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2001, pp. 65-85.

[45] Shenbao, 9 May 1925, p. 13.

a mistake to limit our understanding of consumption to economic transactions. By focusing on what people do, rather than what they think, this essay has examined how Chinese have consumed humiliation and nationalism.

Hence it is helpful to rethink the issue of history in non/traditional security. The key to peaceful and productive relations is not just answering historical questions in the proper objective way as Gong, Ikenberry and Mastanduno suggest. Rather, we need to understand history in a different way, and think about how people consume history through activities like National Humiliation Day. By focusing on what people do, rather than what they think, we can see how the Chinese consume humiliation and nationalism – and alternatives to this pattern of identity consumption. For example, in response to China's Northeast Asia history project a South Korean commentator suggested a new way of consuming history: "It is imperative for Korea and China to develop and maintain mutual trust if they are to establish the kind of cooperative partnership that the two countries now desire. To do so, it is essential for both sides to accept a shared ownership of history. Rather than resorting to a dichotomous and jingoistic approach…."[46]

By sharing history China, Japan and Korea can recognise the contradictions of their different interpretations, without needing to resolve them. In this way history is transformed from a security issue into a site of commemoration and celebration – although different from that of National Humiliation Day.

[46] Park Doo-Bok, "History of Goguryeo Calls for Fact-based Approach," The Dong-A Ilbo, 27 January 2004, translated in Korea Focus (Jan-Feb. 2004), p. 36.