# EUSC EU-China Security Cooperation: performance and prospects

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## Countering Terrorism and Organised Crime: Chinese Perspectives

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### Introduction

A salient feature of 'new wars' is that the principal security threat to many states is no longer other states, but civilian groupings engaged in identity politics, including terrorists (Kaldor 2012). At the same time, there has been a marked rise since the end of the 1980s in several forms of organised crime (Albanese 2012: 4), which is at last being recognised by national governments and IOs (International Organisations) as a new type of security threat. Common to both terrorism and organised crime is their increasingly transnational nature and sophisticated use of technology. These developments mean that individual states can no longer counter such threats alone; there is a rapidly growing need for international cooperation. Based on 2011 data, China is now the EU's second largest trading partner, while the EU is China's largest trading partner. Given this, and the threats posed by terrorism and organised crime for domestic economies and international trade, it is vital that China and the EU cooperate in this significant security area. But are they actually working together enough to address this issue? If not, what are the obstacles?

This paper begins by considering the Chinese definitional approach to terrorism and organised crime, and then analyses Chinese perceptions of the threat from each. There follows a section on the measures China has adopted and is adopting to counter these two phenomena. The focus then shifts to the limited cooperation to date between the EU and China in combating terrorism and organised crime, followed by an analysis of China's approach in international fora. The conclusions highlight the obstacles to closer cooperation and consider likely future developments. It is argued that, in spite of a common interest in combating these two forms of threat, different approaches to sovereignty combined with ideological differences have been hindering Sino-EU cooperation in countering terrorism and, even more so, organised crime, but that there are encouraging signs. A final introductory caveat is that there are different views within China on many of the issues addressed in this paper; given space limitations, the emphasis is on official positions.

### Defining Terrorism and Organised Crime

China has ratified several international treaties relating to terrorism and organised crime. But some of the most significant do not provide definitions of these phenomena. Surprisingly, there is no generic UN convention on terrorism as there is for organised crime

(UN 2014). Most of the conventions and protocols concerning terrorism are specific, such as those on civil aviation and maritime navigation. The closest the UN comes to generic documents are its International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing (the Terrorist Bombing Convention, effective 2001) and its International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (the Terrorist Financing Convention, effective 2002). Unfortunately, neither contains a definition of terrorism as such, largely because of the inability of states involved in producing them to agree on key terms.

However, in adopting its resolution 49/60 of December 1994 and its Annex on the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, the UN specifically referred to its concern 'at the growing and dangerous links between terrorist groups and drug traffickers and their paramilitary gangs' – providing justification for analysing organised crime and terrorism together in this paper – and came close to defining terrorism:

> Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them. (Pt.1, Para. 3) (UN 1994)

Formally, China subscribes to this international approach. But for many centuries, it had no official definition of terrorism of its own. In late October 2011, however, the National People's Congress adopted anti-terrorism legislation that defines terrorist acts as 'those intended to induce public fear or to coerce state organs or international organisations by means of violence, sabotage, threats or other tactics'. Under the current legislation, 'instigating, funding or assisting' terrorism and terrorists also constitute terrorist acts (Mu Xuequan 2011; Avery 2011).

The Chinese authorities criticise what they perceive to be inappropriate Western reporting or labelling of terrorist attacks in their country. This principally applies to the US authorities and media. For instance, the US Department of State did not initially report the Kunming massacre of March 2014 as a terrorist attack (it rapidly changed its position on this – BBC 2014), while CNN has suggested that some Uyghur attacks should be described as the work of freedom fighters rather than terrorists (Beech 2013). Conversely, American media are sometimes seen as too ready to label attacks in China as terrorism when the Chinese authorities themselves do not (Chin 2013). These various examples upset the Chinese.

Some European sources have also irritated Chinese authorities for using inverted commas around the word 'terrorists' when reporting what clearly are terrorist attacks (see e.g. tj/msh 2013, which was carried by, *inter alia*, Agence France-Presse and Deutsche Welle).[1] But the labelling problem applies to both sides; the Chinese media themselves *initially* described the 2013 Tiananmen Square incident (see next section) as an accident, then the work of demented individuals, then went silent – before eventually recognising it as the terrorist attack that most Western media had been calling it.

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[1] A justification often given by foreign media for this practice is that the incidents were not witnessed by independent observers.

The leading international document against organised crime is the UN's Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, effective since 2003. While this does not define transnational organised crime (hereafter TOC; OC is used when referring either to purely domestic organised crime or to organised crime that is both domestic and transnational), it does identify its key characteristics. Thus it involves 'organised criminal groups' engaged in serious crimes:

> 'Organized criminal group' shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit (UNODC 2004: 5)

China was among the first states to both sign and ratify this convention – and thus to accept this definition – doing so in December 2000 and September 2003 respectively. Although China refused to be bound by Article 35, paragraph 2,[2] many other countries, including the USA, have also opted out of this requirement.

Despite its commitment to the UN Convention, Ming Xia (2008: 1-3) has highlighted the confusion that exists in official Chinese legislation and discourse on organised crime, and the fact that this confusion has sometimes been successfully used in Chinese courts to defend those charged with OC activity. For instance, an 'organised crime group' is officially defined in China as 'an organisation with an underworld nature' (Varese 2011: 153); some individuals prosecuted for involvement in organised crime have avoided conviction by arguing that their activities were not clandestine.

**Perceived Threats of Terrorism in China**

Nowadays, the principal ongoing terrorist threat in China is internal, from separatists, of whom Uyghur nationals have been the most active. The Uyghurs are Turkic Muslims, living mostly in Xinjiang Province in the far North-West of China. Xinjiang was incorporated into China in the 1880s, and then again by the Communists after 1949, and many Uyghurs have long sought independence from the PRC. Frustration in their aspirations has led a number of Uyghurs to engage in terrorist attacks. These were initially conducted within Xinjiang itself, and include bomb attacks on buses in Urumqi (capital of Xinjiang) in February 1992 and February 1997, and a string of other terrorist attacks within the autonomous region since; according to Chinese media reports, those between February 1998 and June 2013 resulted in some 130 deaths, including of several separatists. In recent years, Uyghur terrorists have taken their struggle to other parts of China. In October 2013, five Uyghurs crashed into a guardrail of the moat surrounding the Forbidden City on Tiananmen Square in Beijing, killing the occupants and injuring 40 people near the crash (Xinhuanet 2014). In March 2014, Uyghur terrorists attacked civilians in Kunming main railway station; a total of 29 people (including four terrorists) died as a result. And more than 30 were killed in another terrorist attack in Xinjiang in May 2014.

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[2] This relates to arbitration procedures if two or more states parties cannot agree on the interpretation or application of the convention.

But is there a transnational dimension to Uyghur terrorism? Uyghur nationalists began making contact with foreign Islamic movements as China liberalised in the 1980s. Following a terrorist attack in the Xinjiang city of Kashgar in mid-2011, a video produced by the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), which claimed responsibility for the attack, showed one of its members training in Pakistan. The Chinese authorities have claimed that Uyghurs have also trained in Afghanistan (Wayne 2008: 10), and that Uyghur terrorism is linked to the global jihad and Al-Qaeda – although Clarke (2007) argues that the extent of the transnational ties has been exaggerated.

To the south of Xinjiang lies Tibet. Tibetans are mostly Buddhists and, like the Uyghurs, many have sought independence from Communist China. Having previously been invaded by the Mongols, Tibet was essentially independent from the middle of the fourteenth century until the early eighteenth century, when the Qing (Manchu) dynasty turned Tibet into a protectorate and then incorporated parts of it into China. But Tibet was granted considerable leeway until the early twentieth century. With the fall of the Qing Dynasty (1911), Tibet enjoyed independence once again, though this is disputed by some Chinese historians, and there was certainly fighting between China and Tibet in the early 1930s. Moreover, parts of Tibet were ceded to British India during this period.

But following the Communist takeover (1949), China soon asserted control again over Tibet; in 1959, centuries of rule by the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, came to an end, when the fourteenth fled to India, where he continued to advocate the peaceful liberation of Tibet. In recent times, the most violent forms of political activism against what many Tibetans perceive to be unjust treatment by the Chinese authorities have not been terrorist attacks on others, but rather self-oriented violence in the form of self-immolation. But terrorist attacks in Lhasa against Chinese nationals were reported in 1996, while a bomb attack in Chengdu (capital of Sichuan) in April 2002 was attributed to two Tibetans.[3] It should be noted that one survey (Goldstein *et al*. 2006: 198) revealed that the vast majority of older Tibetan villagers considered life in recent years (i.e. under Chinese control) better than during Tibet's independence period, thus providing a more nuanced and complex picture of Tibetan attitudes than that often painted in Western media.

Terrorism is one of what the Chinese government calls the 'Three Evils', and it is clear how this relates to what Chinese authorities perceive to be the country's primary terrorist threats, since the other two are separatism and (religious) extremism (Xinhua 2012). This said, Chinese official spokespersons such as Chair of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Zhu Weiqun, stipulate that terrorism in China should not be seen as ethnically-based (Zhang Yunbi 2014).

Maintaining that terrorism should not be understood in ethnic terms might be hindering Chinese authorities' attempts to reduce violent separatist activism. Research by Howell and Fan (2011) suggests that Uyghur migrants to Urumqi do *not* appear to be disadvantaged relative to Han migrants, and that recent internal migration to Xinjiang has been largely self-initiated rather than state-sponsored. But perceptions are all-important in politics. Hence,

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[3] For very different perspectives on the Tibetan situation see Sautman and Teufel Dreyer 2006; Wang Lixiong and Tsering Shakya 2009.

the fact that the share of the Xinjiang population that is ethnically Han increased from less than 7 per cent in 1949 to some 40 per cent by 2008 is seen by some Uyghurs as a threat to their identity, and needs to be addressed. The Tibetan situation is somewhat comparable, although the proportion of Han Chinese in Tibet is much smaller than in Xinjiang. But in Tibet, too, there has been a significant influx of Han Chinese in recent years. China has often shown itself to be willing and able to analyse conflict from a deep 'root causes' perspective; addressing the Uyghur and Tibetan issues explicitly in terms of identity politics could move all sides closer to a resolution.

So far, the perceptions analysed have been those of the authorities. But it is also worth considering the threat perceived by Chinese citizens and the business sector. There are few data on this; but the World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Report* (*GCR*) has been including a relevant question since the first *GCR* was published in 2004. Responses are scaled 1-7, where 1 signifies that terrorism is seen as a major issue and 7 that it is no problem at all. In the 2012-13 *GCR*, to the question 'To what extent does the threat of terrorism impose costs on businesses in your country?' Chinese businesspeople scored 5.1, and China ranked 102 out of 144 countries surveyed. This said, it was not ranked among the 16 most problematic factors facing Chinese businesses (Schwab 2012: 138-9 and 401).

**Perceived Threats of Organised Crime in and from China**

China has a long history of organised crime in the form of the Triads. The Triads were originally a secret society devoted to overthrowing the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), since the Qings were Manchus, not Chinese. Some historians have traced the Triads back to the seventeenth century; they were certainly operating by the eighteenth century. In their endeavours to overthrow the Qing Dynasty and replace it with the (Chinese) Ming, the Triads used terrorist tactics, so that there is some blurring between terrorism and organised crime in China if an historical perspective is adopted. But by the late nineteenth century, these political terrorist groups had begun to mutate into organised crime gangs.

The Triads were active in China in the first half of the twentieth century. But when the Communists took power, they clamped down on organised crime, and the Triads moved primarily to Hong Kong, which was still under British rule. There was then relatively little organised crime in China for decades under the Communists. But the situation began to change as Deng Xiaoping's reforms began to take effect, and accelerated when Hong Kong reverted to Chinese control (1997) (Lintner 2004). In recent years, major groups such as the 14K gang have been moving into mainland China – initially just in the south, in cities such as Shenzhen and Guangzhou, and then northwards and eastwards, to cities such as Shanghai, Shenyang and Tianjin, although the extent and significance of their penetration is disputed (Varese 2011: 146-80).

As with terrorism, the World Economic Forum surveys businesspeople about their perceptions of the extent to which 'organized crime (mafia-oriented racketeering, extortion)' imposes costs on businesses in China; again, the scale is between 1 (to a great extent) and 7 (not at all). In the 2012/13 edition of the *GCR*, China's score was 4.7, and it ranked 98th out of 144 countries. Thus, organised crime is seen to be a cost to Chinese

business. But, like terrorism, it was not ranked by Chinese businesspeople among the 16 most problematic factors for doing business in China (Schwab 2012: 138-9, 403).

Regarding perceptions of the impact of Chinese organised crime, it is interesting to note that a survey of 1350 Chinese respondents conducted in December 2009 revealed that many Chinese citizens are embarrassed by their country's international reputation for counterfeiting and producing shoddy products, seeing it as second only to corruption in tainting the national image (Lin Zhi 2010).

Chinese organised crime is now the largest OC grouping worldwide, has become far more transnational in recent years, and has become a major threat within the EU (Plywaczewski 2002; Peng Wang 2013, esp. 11-14). EU countries in which Chinese organised crime is particularly strong include France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, though several others are also affected (Berry *et al*. 2003: 8-17; Siegel-Rozenblit 2011: 8-9). Whereas in the past such involvement was primarily in counterfeit goods (including documents, such as fake passports) and human trafficking for labour purposes, Chinese gangs have in recent years increasingly engaged in trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. In this, they have been cooperating with European organised crime gangs, especially Italian ones such as the Camorra (Europol 2011: 25-6; Lale-Demoz and Lewis 2013: 127); they are the first named group in a non-alphabetical list identifying the most significant non-European sources of illegal migrants – which includes many trafficked persons – into the EU in the 2011 Europol assessment of crime threats (Europol 2011: 17).

Moreover, whereas Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania and Brazil were for long seen as the leaders in international cybercrime, Chinese hackers and other online criminals have in recent years been added to the list (Glenny 2012: 146-7). While some of the most serious allegations about Chinese hackers have been directed against state agencies, TOC has also been involved, including on behalf of corporations for industrial espionage. Another form of TOC in which Chinese criminals have figured prominently in recent years relates to game-fixing in many sports, including soccer; Europe has not been immune to this (Siegel-Rozenblit 2011: 11-12).

Interestingly, the (brief) section on money-laundering in a recent EU report on Asian crime in Europe (Siegel-Rozenblit 2011: 15) refers to various Asian groups involved in this, but does not mention the Chinese. This is misleading; others (e.g. Berry *et al.* 2003: 9 - citing Faligot 2001: 155) have referred to the Chinese concept of 'flying money', which is a highly effective form of money-laundering used *inter alia* in Europe. Concerns about Chinese OC money-laundering were also a major topic at the first meeting in almost forty years between the French and Chinese Interior Ministers held in Paris in October 2002 (Berry *et al.* 2003: 11). Finally, Chinese gangs such as the 14K and Sun Yee On have become major players in drug trafficking into the EU, and in illegal gambling networks and protection (extortion) rackets in Europe.

One aspect of Chinese TOC needs further consideration here. China is still *the* major global player in counterfeiting, a form of organised crime typically treated less seriously than it should be; counterfeited pharmaceuticals, for example, can result in death and increasing resistance by super-bugs (Shelley 2012). A 2008 World Customs Organization report based

on a survey of 121 countries concluded that some 65 per cent of the world's detected counterfeit goods shipped abroad originated in China (UNODC 2010: 177). The UNODC claims there has been a huge growth in the export of counterfeit goods from China since the turn of the century; whereas in 2000 only 8 per cent of counterfeit goods detected in Europe originated in China, that figure had by 2008 soared to 55 per cent, or 66 per cent if Taiwan and Hong Kong are included (UNODC 2010: 176-7). A more recent UN report paints a similar picture: 'Based on seizure data, it appears that at least two-thirds of the world's counterfeits depart directly from China' (Lale-Demoz and Lewis 2013: 123). Much of the counterfeit production goes to Europe; between 2008 and 2010, 74 per cent (by volume) of counterfeit items seized by EU customs officers originated in China (Lale-Demoz and Lewis 2013: 124).

Despite all this, there *might* be some optimistic signs regarding Chinese OC activity in Europe. The latest Europol assessment of the threats from organised crime (Europol 2013a) does not single out Chinese crime gangs. However, this might be simply because gangs from other parts of the world have become even *more* of a threat than the Chinese, and does not in itself prove that the problem of Chinese TOC in the EU is receding.

**Chinese Measures to Counter Terrorism and Organised Crime**

China's authorities have adopted various measures in recent years designed to counter both terrorism and OC. For instance, they introduced measures for freezing suspicious funds and assets in October 2011, and further tightened these in January 2014 to render them applicable to 'overseas affiliates' of terrorist groups and requiring all financial institutions to report activities or persons suspected of being related to terrorist organisations (Staff Reporter 2014).

The authorities also often adopt traditional hard security measures for combating terrorism. Following the various 2014 attacks, for instance, they stepped up visible security in Beijing in May, with the deployment of many more armed police officers at street junctions around the capital. They also use methods that would not be used in the EU, such as holding a mass public trial – of 55 defendants – in a stadium (May 2014).

China has also been active in countering counterfeiting. For instance, the UNODC (Lale-Demoz and Lewis 2013: 124) has praised China for two major anti-counterfeiting campaigns – one in 2010-11, the other in July 2012 – that resulted in more than 11,000 arrests, seizures worth more than US$700 million, and the closure or destruction of some 15,000 illegal factories and other facilities across 190 cities.[4] Some sentences meted out for software piracy have been described by the UNODC as 'stiff' (UNODC 2010: 176). However, and despite noting that the Chinese authorities had now instructed all central government bodies to purchase only legal computer software, the UNODC report maintained that China still needed to do far more in combating software piracy, citing an estimate that almost 80 per cent of software purchased in China is counterfeit, and that even government agencies,

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[4] For further impressive data on the Chinese authorities' fight against counterfeiting and UNODC praise for this see UNODC 2010: 176.

especially at the sub-central level, sometimes use such illegal products. It thus seems likely that the Chinese authorities have not been placing as much effort into combating the export of counterfeit products to the EU and elsewhere as they could.

**EU-China Cooperation in Countering Terrorism and Organised Crime**

A China-EU Summit on various aspects of common concern has been held annually since 1998. Neither terrorism nor TOC has figured prominently at these. However, at the 10th in 2007, both sides agreed that, while the UN had to be recognised as the only truly global forum for combatting terrorism, they should bilaterally 'strengthen cooperation in areas such as anti-terrorism, combating transnational organized crimes, human smuggling and trafficking in persons and drug-related crimes' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2007).

While China-EU summits have not generally focused on terrorism or TOC, the two sides have discussed the former at length in ASEM (Asia-Europe Meetings) conferences on counter-terrorism. These were initiated in 2002 (post 9/11), and were being held almost annually; but none has been held since December 2011, suggesting that this topic is not as high a priority in ASEM as it once was. There has been even less cooperation within ASEM on TOC, although the 2002 Copenhagen Declaration on Cooperation against International Terrorism recognised that there are often links between terrorists and OC.

How have such formal declarations translated into practice? There are a number of obstacles to closer collaboration between China and EU member states. One is that the latter will not permit extradition to any country that allows for the death penalty unless that country guarantees not to execute an extradited person; China sees this as interference in its sovereignty. Moreover, many EU member states also refuse to extradite suspects or convicts to a country that permits torture in its prisons; again, China fails the test on this criterion. Finally, under Article 8 of its Extradition Law, China does not permit extradition of its own nationals (Chinese Government 2000); this, too, can be a source of tension between China and Europe in terms of investigating, prosecuting and convicting persons suspected of either international terrorism or TOC.

Another problem is that some forms of OC activity that have until recently often been (incorrectly) perceived as less serious, notably counterfeiting and the production of fake goods, can create employment for what would otherwise be large numbers of unemployed people in China. Although the Chinese authorities have clamped down on counterfeiting in recent years, in line with China's commitment to intellectual property (IP) rights since joining the WTO in 2001 and perhaps reflecting the public concern noted above, there is a limit to how far such anti-crime measures will and can be taken. This is partly because even the Chinese authorities, despite their reputation for being able to control access to the internet better than most states, have been unable to track online IP theft as well as would be desirable. But another possible factor is that high levels of unemployment can result in social and political unrest, which the Chinese authorities understandably want to avoid.

One other area in which, despite the EU and China using similar rhetoric, there might in reality be less political will in Beijing to combat OC activity than there is in Brussels is the smuggling of illegal animal parts and products. Traditional Chinese medicine places great faith in various products from endangered species, and too draconian a clampdown on the smuggling of such products might be perceived by the Chinese authorities as politically dangerous. A recent Europol report suggests that, while China is a major demand country for such products, endangered species' smuggling in Europe is in fact conducted primarily by EU nationals. However, the report also points out that European OC gangs collaborate with (unspecified) 'other' criminal networks to sell their products (Europol 2013b: 12-15); this almost certainly includes Chinese OC. There is also concrete evidence that Chinese gangs operating within the EU have been engaged in the smuggling of endangered species' products to Asia (Berry *et al.* 2003: 15). Finally, Europol (2011: 40) announced in 2011 that Chinese OC groups based in Hong Kong and China have been supplying traditional Chinese medicine products 'containing derivatives of endangered species' to companies in the EU, especially in Northern and Western Europe.

**Chinese Approaches in International Fora**

As noted above, the UN has two generic conventions on terrorism, commonly known as the Terrorist Bombing Convention and the Terrorist Financing Convention. China has not ratified the former, but acceded to it in November 2001. China signed the latter convention in November 2001 and ratified it in April 2006, so that it has the same relationship to the convention as most (25 out of 28) EU states.

As one of the five permanent members of the UN's Security Council, China is in a strong position to exert influence in the fight against both international terrorism and TOC. However, its continuing unwillingness to adopt clear and strong positions on most international and transnational issues has meant that China does not use this potential to any significant degree. Moreover, conventions – as distinct from resolutions – are generally the work of UN commissions, not the Security Council, and China is not as prominent in these as it is in the Security Council.

China is a key member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) that was established in June 2001 and that immediately adopted a Convention on the Struggle against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism. Two points worth noting are that this convention pre-dated 9/11 (i.e. it was not simply a response to that), and that the document is directed against exactly the same 'Three Evils' noted above, indicating the strong Chinese influence on the convention. In addition to the 2001 Convention, the SCO established a Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in June 2002. While the SCO has traditionally devoted less attention to TOC than to terrorism, it has recently become more aware of the dangers of the former. In September 2013, the SCO Attorney Generals' meeting announced its intention to step up the fight against TOC, especially activity relating to the trafficking of drugs and humans.

**Conclusions**

There are clearly several areas in which China and the EU can and need to improve mutual understanding and harmonise their approaches. In this short paper, those identified are labelling and definitions, and extradition. China would almost certainly benefit from analysing terrorism in terms of identity politics. Regarding security cooperation, the two sides need to reactivate the ASEM counter-terrorism meetings: both the EU and China have traditionally focused heavily on their immediate neighbourhoods; but as terrorism and OC have become global, each has had to reassess its focus.

Yet fundamental differences between Chinese and EU attitudes on several issues have sometimes hindered closer cooperation. One is sovereignty. China continues to have what is sometimes called an 'Asian' approach – viz. that one should not interfere in other countries' affairs – whereas the EU has advocated norm export, which explicitly involves attempting to influence other countries' political systems, including China's (Delegation of the European Union to China, n.d.).

Another deep-seated difference is their respective views on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. China is still a Communist state, its recent significant policy changes notwithstanding. If the allegations about 'Document No.9' – a confidential Communist Party document produced in 2012 and circulated to cadres in 2013 that warns against propagating basic Western values such as constitutional democracy, media independence and civil society (The Editors, 2013) – are true and represent the senior leadership's views, they provide clear evidence of these continuing ideological differences. These in turn render mutual trust, a vital component of close cooperation, more problematic.

Ideological differences are not the only problem. Another is that China, like many countries, sometimes finds it confusing dealing with a two-tier system – the EU itself and its member states. What might appear to an objective observer to be obvious EU-China partnerships for collaboration against the new security threats – such as between Europol or Frontex and the Chinese police or border control agencies – have developed few ties, whereas links have been developed between Chinese law enforcement agencies and their counterparts in individual member states, such as Germany and the UK, especially in the fight against TOC.

So what are the prospects for closer China-EU cooperation in the future? Despite their different mindsets, both sides are often more pragmatic than rigidly principled, and the Chinese leadership is well aware that the biggest threat to the Communist system is not Western ideas but internal corruption and declining economic growth rates. Since becoming president in March 2013, Xi Jinping has proven to be more proactive than his predecessor, Hu Jintao, and more seriously committed to addressing OC and corruption (terrorism was already high on the agenda); the Bo Xilai case is one symbol of this.

Moreover, as its power globally has increased, China has sought to present itself not merely as the world's factory, but also as a global diplomatic force. Given the increasingly transnational nature of both terrorism and OC, the Chinese authorities have had to adopt a broader, less ethnocentric approach; indeed, it has been criticised by Amnesty International for subscribing to the 'Western' discourse of a global war on terror. At the Nuclear Security

Summit held in the Hague in March 2014, President Xi called on more countries to sign up to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and referred to concrete collaborative projects undertaken with Russia and Kazakhstan to combat transnational trafficking of nuclear materials (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2014) that could be used for dirty bombs. The latter is another example of the potential interface between terrorism and TOC, as well as of China's willingness to go beyond mere rhetoric in combating these phenomena.

So there is cause for cautious optimism about closer Sino-EU collaboration in future on transnational threats to security. Over the past two centuries, closer cooperation between sovereign units has typically begun with closer economic and trade ties, and then gradually spread to other areas. This is true of the member states of the EU itself and of what is in many ways its most powerful member state, Germany. There are thus reasons to assume that the combination of a more outward-looking leadership team in Beijing and the mutual economic and trade interests of China and the EU – including China's desire and need for European assistance in dealing with one of its most serious problems, environmental pollution (for instance, by supplying clean coal technology) – will lead to greater trust and closer cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including security.

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