China’s grand strategy of ‘peaceful rise’: The Central Asian dimension

by Dr Michael Clarke

Within the Western scholarly discourse on China’s “rise” in contemporary international affairs there is little agreement as to what China’s goals are and how China will wield its emergent power in the existing international environment. Moreover, much of this scholarship concerning “China’s rise” focuses upon its potential impact upon the international relations and environment of the Asia-Pacific to the exclusion of China’s significant continental frontiers. This gap in contemporary China scholarship is especially noteworthy given the contemporary importance of Central Asia in international affairs in the post-11 September 2001 environment. This paper will pursue three related arguments, two that are contemporary and specific and one that forms a long-term framework through which to understand China’s approach to Central Asia. Therefore, this paper will argue firstly that China’s foreign policy since 1991 has been guided by the evolution of a grand strategy of “peaceful rise” that seeks to ensure China’s smooth transition to great power status. Secondly, a strategic preoccupation with Central Asia has become an important expression of and instrument for the achievement of this grand strategy. Framing these two arguments is a third overarching one that postulates that China’s foreign policy in Central Asia is not only intimately related to the strategy of “peaceful rise” but also to a particular, historically and geopolitically informed narrative of China’s “Inner Asian” power. Thus, this paper will place China’s contemporary imperatives, power and influence in Central Asia within a historically informed framework that will demonstrate the unprecedented nature of China’s consolidation and expansion of its position along its western frontier.

→ Thursday 29 March 2007
→ Room N72_-1.18 (Business 2)
→ Nathan campus,
→ 12.30-1.50pm

A light lunch will be served on arrival. To RSVP, please contact Jo Gilbert on (07) 3735 3730 or j.gilbert@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Monday 26 March.