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I am grateful to the reviewers for their serious examination of *Safe Passage*, and for giving me rich and demanding challenges to think about. Rather than repeat my argument—aptly summarized in the individual reviews—I want to instead address some of the core questions raised by each of the reviewers.

Ketian Zhang asks exactly the right overarching question: how much does the study of Anglo-American relations matter for understanding US–China relations? I think the Anglo-American case matters because it's the only example we have of a peaceful transition between great powers, so it shows what one instance of success looks like for a peaceful transition. It provides a starting point for exploring power transitions—and a chastening reminder of both how little we understand the phenomenon and how rarely peaceful transitions are.

But I share Zhang's skepticism that either academics or policymakers have adequately refined tools for measuring power, and that the tools we have prejudice China's success. That, in fact, China may not be "rising" at all, and what we perceive as rise is the intellectual laziness of straight line extrapolation of a non-linear phenomenon. She makes a strong case that economic interdependence may substitute for ideational commonality. I also agree with her point that much more work needs to be done on the conveyor belt from likelihood of conflict to conflict. We know much too little about what she terms "the periods in which 'peace' and 'war' are more or less likely to obtain."

Robert Ross raises a fascinating point in flagging the potential role of geographic inhibitors to great power competition. He makes a strong case that geographic propinquity is crucial—that the dynamics of great power competition matter less in Asia because of its maritime geography, whereas in Europe strong states were in direct contact and therefore more likely to be considered mortal threats to each other. His observation is inaccurate that all Anglo-American confrontations were in the western hemisphere: the strategic importance of the Spanish-American War was the Pacific theater; the World Wars were European theater, and their partnership in the Pacific was about preserving access to South Asian colonies. Still, his larger point remains persuasive that the US will be challenging China on China's geographic periphery and therefore accommodation may be more likely as the asymmetry of interests tilts towards China. It gives the basis for more confidence the US–PRC transition could be peaceful, provided the US disavows its alliance commitments (which may also precipitate wars, but not wars initially involving the United States).

David Kang's challenge centers on whether there is any basis for comparison between European and American power transitions and China, and whether perceived threats from China are valid. While he makes a very interesting case, I am not persuaded on either count. I agree with Kang that the European great powers are more than states. They are also cultures and ideologies. But that applies also to China, which certainly seems to perceive itself as a civilization and an ideology (at least on the part of the

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Chinese Communist Party). Which means there is no reason to assume distinct ideologies, cultures, histories, and so on limit the relevance of cases outside of Asia to the contemporary debate.

Nor do I agree with Kang's claim that nothing has changed in the behavior of the Chinese government since 2009, or that China is utterly unique and therefore no analysis can be made about the potential for conflict other than by those whose exclusive provenance is scholarship of China. I am not arguing that China will behave as European states have; instead, I am proposing that the most reliable predictor of China's international behavior is its domestic behavior.

Again, I argue in *Safe Passage* is that a country's domestic policy is the best indicator of its prospective behavior as a great power. The commonalities between British and American models of government created a sense of cultural commonality that allowed governments to make compromises during crises. Hence, the nature of the Chinese state and its relationship towards its people make me pessimistic about the ability of the US and China to compromise should China continue to rise. Kang concedes some of that argument towards the end of his commentary, writing that "China may be partially like other countries and partially a function of its own past," which I agree with.

Of course, Kang is right that in some areas China is working within global norms. However, China also appears to want to change the rules in important ways that socialize internationally its domestic political order. For Kang to offer China's bid to have UNHCR declare it a leading human rights defender is risible in light of a million Uiguer interned, and it is a great example of China trying to make the existing rules and norms and institutions meaningless.

Neither is the China threat simply theorists being "so blinded by theory we ignore what is in front of us." Neither the US government nor the governments of countries with claims in the South China Sea would support the Welch and Logendrarajah argument that Kang approvingly uses that "China has been cooperating surprisingly well" with the Hague Tribunal ruling over the South China Sea. China has refused to recognize the ruling and has continued predatory behavior in Philippine waters as well as the territorial waters of other South China Sea countries. Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia have all scrambled military forces to confront Chinese incursions. The Philippines have vacillated but are now insistent that China must honor—and is not—the Tribunal. So China may be working within many global norms, but not within some of the most important that tend to trigger military conflict, and not in the judgment of the governments most affected. And that's a pretty negative sign for the prospects of a peaceful hegemonic transition, should China continue to rise.

In the end, Kang makes a strong case that East Asian history simply does not comport with power transition theory because there was no transition for over a thousand years. And he rightly urges research on the lessons of China's successfully managed hegemony. Scholars of China—but also scholars of power transitions, historians of other regions, and defense and foreign policy analysts—should all be scrambling to understand whether China's history looks to be prologue, or whether the future of East Asia will unfold more like Europe and America's past.

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