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**Author:**

*Aki Nakai*

*Mr. Nakai is a Ph.D. candidate in the Dept. of Political Science at Boston University. He is currently conducting research on the dissolution of security alliances, Japanese foreign and security policy, and U.S., Japan, and Chinese trilateral relations.*

**Contact:**

*anakai@bu.edu*

**Web:**

*www.bu.edu/asian*

## *China's Naval Modernization: Reflections on a Symposium*

The "rise of China" is on everyone's lips these days, with the conversation being driven both by China's rapid economic development and its military modernization. On November 9, 2010, the Boston University Center for the Study of Asia hosted a symposium that focused on one aspect of China's rise: its naval modernization. Professor Andrew Bacevich of Boston University kicked off the afternoon with an opening address that posed the central question: Are China and the United States on a collision course? This question was then explored by Lyle Goldstein, Nan Li, Peter Dutton, and Toshi Yoshihara of the United States Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and Professor Robert Ross of Boston College. Comments and questions were raised by Professors Joseph Fewsmith and Michael Corgan of the Department of International Relations at Boston University. The broad answer the group came up with was "not necessarily." Whether there is conflict or not depends on the capabilities and intentions of the United States and China, their ability to communicate reassurance to each other, as well as the impact of China's naval modernization on other regional powers, particularly Japan.

A few years ago, Chinese diplomatic behavior was often characterized with the term "peaceful rise," which suggested China is rising, but by reassuring other nations it would not behave aggressively. Deng Xiaoping's famous statement that China would "never act as a hegemon" was often quoted. In short, China was a status quo power, accepting of the interests of its neighbors – with the possible exception of Taiwan, which China has always considered to be part of its sovereign territory. However, in the past eighteen months or so, actual Chinese behavior especially in the near seas has seemed assertive or provocative, causing outsiders to begin to reconsider their views of China. This was the rationale for convening this symposium. Rather than simply digesting the views of the various speakers, this report reflects on some of the critical issues that were raised at the symposium, specifically: (1) historical diplomatic posture; (2) capability; (3) intentions; and (4) views and perceptions.