

Research Series on the Chinese Dream  
and China's Development Path

Yunling Zhang  
Binhong Shao *Editors*

# China's International Relations

Evolving Landscape and Strategic  
Adaptations



 Springer

# **Research Series on the Chinese Dream and China's Development Path**

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Editors

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# Chapter 1

## Constructing Theories of Diplomacy: Preparing for China's Transition to Global Great Power



Jiemian Yang

**Abstract** China has been transitioning from a global power to a global great power. As it does so, it is important for those working on constructing theories of diplomacy to clarify not only the country's overarching foreign policy objectives but also the central theory construction tasks in different historical periods. The mission of construction goes in three phases in ascending order: peaceful coexistence, peaceful symbiosis and harmonious symbiosis. At present, the mission is transitioning from the first phase of peaceful coexistence to the second phase of peaceful symbiosis. The theory of peaceful symbiosis is designed to incorporate such concepts as endogenous growth, exogenous interaction and symbiotic construction. The remoter third phase of the mission is to develop the theory of harmonious symbiosis so that global relations can move up to a higher level both materially and spiritually. The focal points of foreign policy theory construction in all phases should fall on the consolidation of basic or guiding theories and the strengthening of operational theories so as to guarantee the unity of knowledge and practice in foreign policy theories governing China's transition to global great power. In terms of its theoretical development for the coming decades, China needs to build up its global great power theories under the general framework of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, transcend one-way or linear thinking, enhance theoretical consciousness and confidence, be pioneering and innovative, get into the habit of multi-dimensional and multi-directional thinking, build, disseminate and direct new theories, and expect greater contributions from Chinese thinkers and theorists.

**Keywords** Foreign policy theories · Peaceful symbiosis · Harmonious symbiosis · Practical self-consciousness

As it moves gradually from a global power to a global powerhouse, China is faced with an environment that is clearly different from what any rising power in history had faced. Correspondingly, the requirements for physical and theoretical preparation are vastly different as well. In terms of physical preparation, with the deepening of

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global integration, independent and exclusive development has become increasingly difficult and is being replaced by joint and shared development. Therefore, there is also a need for foreign policy theories that match joint and shared development. To be specific, as China constructs diplomatic theories befitting its transition to a global powerhouse, it needs both to define its mission during different phases and pinpoint key elements of theoretical construction in all phases.

It is a mission that goes in three phases in ascending order: peaceful coexistence, peaceful symbiosis<sup>1</sup> and harmonious symbiosis. With the gradual establishment of the theory of peaceful coexistence,<sup>2</sup> the first phase which began in 1949 has already been completed. In the current phase of transition from a global power to a global great power, China is developing a foreign policy theory of peaceful symbiosis through endogenous growth, exogenous interaction and symbiotic construction. Meanwhile, China should also focus on the next phase of its mission and promote the harmonious symbiosis theory together with other global powers and the rest of the world so that global relations can go a step further both materially and spiritually. The focal points of foreign policy theory construction in all phases should fall on the consolidation of basic or guiding theories and the strengthening of operational theories so as to guarantee the unity of knowledge and practice in foreign policy theories governing China's transition to global great power.

## 1.1 Interaction and Complementarity of Endogenous and Exogenous Theories

After completing the first phase of the mission to construct a foreign policy theory covering its transition to a global great power, China is currently engaged in the second phase of the mission, which is to develop a foreign policy theory of peaceful symbiosis. To make it happen, China needs to continue to build its foreign policy theories with Chinese characteristics (endogenous theories) while absorbing the outstanding theoretical achievements of all civilizations in the world (exogenous theories) and, through positive interaction between endogenous and exogenous theories, achieve the purpose of uplifting and optimizing the theories, thus fulfilling the

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<sup>1</sup> The dictionary meaning of "symbiosis" is any interdependent or mutually beneficial relationship between two persons or groups, also known as "mutually beneficial symbiosis." In its broader sense, it refers to mutual relationship(s) between two or more organisms that live together, usually a mutually beneficial relationship established through the abiding of one living organism in or on another living organism (See *Ci Hai* compiled by Xia Zhenong & Chen Zhili, Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 2009, pp.730–1). In recent years, the word "symbiosis" has become a term in international relations that has appeared in government documents (such as the white paper on *China's Peaceful Development*) and a number of academic papers. This paper is an analysis of global power theories from "endogenous," (inside a country) "exogenous" (outside a country) and "symbiotic" (interdependence co-established by the international community) perspectives.

<sup>2</sup> There has been a lot of research on the diplomatic theory of peaceful coexistence, though it has never been systematically discussed as one of the phases of the mission to construct China's diplomatic theories for transitioning to a global great power.

peaceful symbiosis of China's foreign policy theories and laying a solid foundation for the third phase of harmonious symbiosis.

### **(I) Construction of endogenous theories**

Although China has a history of more than 5,000 years, it has never as yet become a global power in its true sense. After entering the modern age, China got bogged down in long-term economic and political stagnation and even retrogression. Furthermore, China was severely bullied and oppressed by Western powers when it was forced to open up its ports in the aftermath of the Opium Wars. Today, international relations and foreign policy theories dominated by Western powers are still full of pride and prejudice against China and they would even reject or pummel at China from time to time.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, as China marches to its goal of becoming a global great power, it is faced with an urgent need to build an endogenous foreign policy theory based on its domestic and foreign policies, especially its main practice and theories of peaceful development.

1. Basic conditions are met for developing endogenous foreign policy theories for China's transition to global great power

China has the world's largest population, second largest economy and third largest territory. It is also a great sports and cultural powerhouse. Two major state policies—reform and opening up and peaceful development—have triggered the country to make universally acknowledged achievements. With sustained rapid growth of its overall national strength, China is playing such an increasingly important role in current international affairs that it has effectively become an advocate and initiator of reform of the international system. Meanwhile, theories of socialism with Chinese characteristics are becoming ever more sophisticated. The treasury of China's foreign policy theories now includes Mao Zedong diplomacy, Deng Xiaoping diplomacy, Jiang Zemin diplomacy, and Hu Jintao diplomacy. The Chinese characteristics theory, the Chinese road of development and the China success model have not only filled the country with faith in its road, theory and system, but have also made it a development model for many other countries.

2. China's great philosophical and cultural traditions are an important source of its global great power foreign policy theories.

In exploring and analyzing the trajectories of historical development, the Chinese nation has established an excellent cultural tradition marked by the interplay of culture, history and philosophy. In traditional Chinese culture, national power does not refer to economic and military strength alone, but also cultural and moral force. China's pre-Qin Hundred-School philosophers saw China's rise and fall from the perspective of the nation's development cycles and proposed many consequential ideas of national empowerment. Their consensus was that order among different states depended on the nature of leadership among the states, namely, whether it was a matter of rule by authority or by hegemony.

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<sup>3</sup> As many researchers have stated, international relations and diplomatic theories today remain an "American science." See [1–3].

Seeing state power as a moral authority, Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi believed that moral cultivation and benevolent rule were the essence and foundation of governance. Xunzi believed that a morally cultivated person is one who “knows all sound doctrines,” and a benevolent governor is one who “knows all laws and decrees.”<sup>4</sup> Laozi thought the way of governance was a prestige based on a moral spirit to suffer for the people that would draw the world to unity. Using the ocean that embraces the water of hundreds of rivers as an analogy, he said that “rivers and oceans could rule over hundreds of valleys because they are willing to bend down.”<sup>5</sup> Han Fei thought governance should be maintained by military force and legal systems, saying that the ruler should be good at attacking people and that “the law is the foundation of the ruler’s power.”<sup>6</sup> The ones who wrote more about hegemony and made a detailed comparison between that and governance were Mencius and Xunzi. Mencius believed that governance was to be maintained by moral ethics, while hegemony depended on material forces. As he put it, “He who uses force to make a pretense to benevolence is the leader of the princes. A leader of the princes requires a large kingdom. He who uses virtue and practices benevolence is the sovereign of the kingdom. To become the sovereign of the kingdom, a prince need not wait for a large kingdom.”<sup>7</sup> Xunzi believed that rule by authority and hegemony both needed to be maintained by material power and moral strength, but the sway of moral strength in maintaining governance surpasses that of material power. As he put it, “The wise minister of governance takes appropriate actions guided by etiquette and justice and abides by the law when making various decisions on public affairs.”<sup>8</sup>

3. Construction of China’s foreign policy theories of global great power is possible if we conform to the trends of history and time.

China’s foreign policies theories of global great power are not geared to seek hegemony in the world, but to pursue the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by peaceful means. The goal of building a comprehensively well-off society fully spelt out at the 18th CPC National Congress has reaffirmed this. In its long-term practice, China has adhered to the principle of not seeking hegemony or bossiness. After the breakout of the 2008 global financial crisis, China has unequivocally opposed the “Group Two” proposal (a.k.a. “Sino-American rule”) while pulling it together with many countries of the world. The new leadership team under Xi Jinping has reiterated on numerous occasions that China has no intention of becoming the leader of the world. This shows that the theory and practice China has been adhering to will ensure that we will continue to march on the path of peaceful development and gain more recognition and support of the international community.

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<sup>4</sup> Xunzi: *Undoing Fixation*.

<sup>5</sup> Laozi, Chap. 66

<sup>6</sup> Han Feizi, *Five Vermin, A Pathological Analysis of Politics*.

<sup>7</sup> Mencius: *Gong Sun Chou I*.

<sup>8</sup> Xunzi: *The Rule of a True King*.

4. Principle and pragmatism in China's foreign policy theories of global great power  
 When theories and reality do not conform, China would adjust its theories instead of pointing fingers at reality. The practice of "wading across the river by feeling at the stones" demonstrates China's explorative and pragmatism in theory construction, a feature that will continue on for a long time to come. In the next 30 years or longer, China will make a transition from how to become a global great power to how to be a global great power. So, corresponding theoretical adjustments have to be made, which can include broadening the theoretical bases of interests and values, expanding the geographical and subject areas to which the theories would be applied, improving theoretical systems and increasing the validity of the theories.

## **(II) The peaceful coexistence of endogenous and exogenous theories**

Today, we live in an era that places new demands on interaction between endogenous and exogenous theories. In this symbiotic era of globalization and interdependence, China's peaceful development cannot but be realized in a symbiotic global environment. The 18th CPC National Congress mentioned that a spirit of "equality and mutual trust, tolerance, mutual learning and win-win cooperation" needs to be promoted in international relations to meet the contemporary need of peaceful development. Since the beginning of reform and opening, China has been voraciously learning the good theories and practices of other countries and in doing so it has also adapted the theories to the Chinese context. Since international relations necessarily involve more than one country, China needs more than ever to construct global theories based on the world's collective wisdom. Hence, besides constructing and developing endogenous diplomatic theories, it must also diligently absorb the cream of exogenous theories, seek the peaceful coexistence of endogenous and exogenous theories and develop them through cooperation and competition.

To begin with, China needs to know about exogenous foreign policy theories of global great power. In the recent 500 years since the great geographical discovery, during which capitalism spread throughout the world, the political and academic circles of capitalist, colonial and imperialist countries have undergone frequent interaction, and have established a complete theoretical system in the global theoretical framework and in the sub-theories of economic, political, and diplomatic relations.

Britain's theory of "balance of power" during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and Oliver Cromwell served the purpose of expanding its huge colonial empire overseas as it maintained relations with other countries of the European continent. France's Napoleon I and Napoleon III advocated and trumpeted expansionism. Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's balance of power diplomacy outwitted Kaiser Wilhelm II's theory of global hegemony and conquest because the former sought the most favorable international environment for countries that had not yet matured as a great power. Catherine II and Alexander I, heirs to the expansionist Peter the Great of Russia, both attached great importance to promoting Russia's position in Europe and the rest of the world through system and order. During the early 20th century, US Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt both had world views, systems and values of their times. Meanwhile, through the joint efforts of political, business and academic circles in the US, international relations gradually became

an independent branch of science whose impact on the global elite has persisted to this day. After World War II, the completion of European unity became an important source of international relations theories.

Similar historical experiences and common historical missions of China and other developing countries provide a unique political, economic and social foundation for theoretical interaction. During their process of seeking national liberation or independence from colonial and semi-colonial oppression and during their process of national construction, a great many developing countries have been trying hard to establish more effective and more epoch-making theories through the combination of endogenous and exogenous theories. At the end of World War II, during the climax of national independence and liberation in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Bung Sukarno, former president of Indonesia, proposed "Pancasila," namely, five principles for Indonesian independence (i.e. nationalism, internationalism, democracy, social prosperity and faith in Allah); Nkrumah Kwame, the "Father of Ghana," advocated pan-Africanism; and Juan Domingo Peron, former president of Argentina, authored Peronism which stood for "political sovereignty, economic independence and social justice." China's struggle for national liberation, which lasted more than a century, culminated in the birth of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People and the later Mao Zedong thought which would become new ideological and theoretical weapons for China and some other developing countries.

One the other hand, China's foreign policy theories of global great power need to be tested and modified through interaction. In a probe that lasted about two centuries, Chinese theoreticians have raised slogans such as "Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical application." People like Li Hongzhang and Sun Yat-sen had focused their efforts on getting input and inspiration from Western theoreticians. In its three decades of revolutionary wars prior to seizing state power, the CPC had been through successes and setbacks in its theoretical and practical journey. It was only after initiating reform and opening up in 1978 that China began to be mature and effective in its theoretical and practical endeavors. Theoretical interaction takes the form of comparison and clash of various ideas, concepts and ideologies both at home and abroad. Compared with tangible, material interaction, intangible, spiritual interaction is even more profound and comprehensive.

China's endogenous theories need to interact closely with exogenous theories in order to make headway. Each power theory may have its uniquely objective and scientific features, but each also has its inevitable limitations. China has a dual responsibility in terms of theoretical complementarity in the future. Apart from absorbing the cream of advanced theories in the outer world, China needs to inform the outer world of the worth and insight of its own theories. Just as China has won a share of the world market through complementarity of commercial goods in the past three decades or so, it needs to be more proactive and aggressive in promoting its own theories on the market of ideas. Only when we win more understanding and recognition from the international community can our theories of peaceful development and non-hegemonic great power benefit the rest of the world.

## 1.2 Innovation in the Symbiotic Theory

Phase Three of the theory construction mission is to materialize the upgrading from peaceful symbiosis to harmonious symbiosis. “The degree and height any country’s ‘self-actualization’ could reach, excluding that country’s own internal conditions and efforts, are not just indispensable from other countries’ fruits of ‘self-actualization’, but also are reachable only in the process of other countries’ ‘self-realization.’<sup>9</sup>” In fact, it is globalization that has made international symbiosis possible and imperative. In the process of China’s rise along with the massive rising of other emerging powers, China needs to join hands with these other countries in pushing for innovation in the development of symbiotic theories.

### **(I) Hold fast to the theoretical cornerstone and consolidate the symbiotic foundation**

All global great power theories so far have originated from single nations and have been exclusive. Moreover, hegemony theories developed by the US and the European powers bear clear marks of the bully and oppressor. But in the era of globalization and multi-polarization, resources needed for common and shared development have made it possible to construct the theory and practice of great power symbiosis for the first time. China’s concepts of a harmonious world, peaceful development and a new type of big-power relations are part of its theoretical exploration and practical endeavor. To push for political multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversity and socialization of information is to add to the foundation of symbiotic and win-win cooperation in the international community. The world we live in is first and foremost material, and so, reinforcing cooperation in world economy, trade, finance, security and social work is a top priority. However, the international community still needs to go beyond the material perspective to deepen its understanding of the world’s material relationships, to regulate the interrelated rights and interests with a common system, and to strive for more and better symbiosis and win-win situations with a common ideal. In addition to accentuating material wealth, we also need to build spiritual wealth and increase the magnitude of investment in theoretical construction. Striving for the win-win of national interests and the common interests of humanity is the cornerstone underpinning China’s global great power theories, while reinforcing the building of a global community of shared destiny is the goal of the international symbiotic society. Only from such strategic height and long-term perspective can the symbiotic foundation of the international community be established and consolidated.

### **(II) Joint construction of a symbiotic theory system**

Despite the urgency and the weight of the task of building the global great power symbiotic theory, construction of theories related to the international community can neither be fragmented nor expedient. Construction of a theoretical system requires discernment and comprehensive and careful planning. A deep understanding of the

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<sup>9</sup> Jin [4, 5].

historical background and the requirements is a prerequisite. We are now at the crossroad of transition from multilateral relations to global relations. If the human society could grab the historical moment, it may for the very first time in the history of human civilization realize the ideal of win-win and peaceful symbiosis of all global great powers. If the opportunity is lost, humanity may have to keep exploring for a long time to come. Secondly, there must be a precise definition of the theories' main connotations and conditions. The territories and fields that theories of global great power symbiosis involve are innumerable, though its main connotations should be focused on core concepts such as "equality and mutual trust, tolerance and mutual learning, and win-win cooperation." As far as conditions are concerned, what is needed is not reactive description alone, but to a greater extent, creative portrayal as well, so that based on changes, more favorable conditions would be created.<sup>10</sup> Thirdly, basic laws and logic must be probed. In the past nearly 500 years of history dominated by Europe and America, the dramatic play of different forces has often led to the squeezing and deformation of political and economic plates, forcing emerging powers and established powers into military showdowns.<sup>11</sup> Whether these laws and logic would repeat in the new period depends largely upon the judgment and reaction of the international community on the time and situation. The last phase of the mission is repeated test and trial use. Practice is the sole test of truth. Whether China's global great power diplomacy theory is true or not must be tested in practice. To this end, the first step is to put ideas into constant practice before upgrading them into theories. China would also need to strive to facilitate other actors to act together in practicing the global great power symbiosis theory, revise it and update it so that it would become more sound and mature.

### **(III) React effectively to various theoretical and practical challenges**

Although we are striving for the ideal of win-win symbiosis, we still need to recognize and effectively deal with various forms of competition, gaming and conflicts. Currently, we are faced with the practical and theoretical challenges of increasingly serious global issues and related global governance mechanism deficiencies. In terms of practical challenges, China should work together with the international community to address the increasingly serious issues of environmental protection, climate change, population, energy and security of strategic resources, food and water, and provide the world with relevant material and theoretical public goods. In terms of future challenges, China and the international community will need to work together to build up consensus on the logical reasoning of China's global great power theory, chart the future course of the world, establish an international system, strengthen

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<sup>10</sup> For more information on the discussion on the great powers' bid for hegemony and war, see Paul Kennedy: *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers - Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (Chinese version translated by Wang Baocun et al), Beijing: Qiushi Press, 1988; Qin Yaqing: Hegemonic system and international conflicts, Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1999; Zhou Piqi: Hegemonic stability theory: criticism and correction, *Pacific Journal*, 2005 (1), pp. 13–23.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the discussion on the great powers' bid for hegemony and war, see [6–8].

relations between emerging and established powers, reinforce social management and promote cultural diversity. An integrated and coordinated plan to meet current and future challenges is an even higher-level challenge on the theory and practice of global great power symbiosis, a challenge China has to face off more effectively from this time forth.

#### **(IV) Addition of Chinese elements to the symbiotic theory**

The unprecedented rise of China will inevitably greatly impact global balance of power, the global system and global trends. Apart from huge material resources, China also wields great ideological and cultural influence. First, the global great power symbiotic theory needs to develop on the material and spiritual foundation of a global scale. As an indispensable member of the international community, China has to be an important part of that. Secondly, Western theoretical and discourse hegemony has done injustice to the world in modern history and now is the time to make things right. As an important Eastern country, China has been advancing with the times. Just as emerging market countries add to the vitality to world economy, China and other emerging powers are injecting new connotations to global theories. Last, since China is the most successful developing country so far, its theories are carrying more and more global significance, and the international community wants to see more of the Beijing Consensus, the Chinese Road and the China Model.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.3 Construction of Guiding and Operational Theories**

One commonality of the three-phase mission of China's great power diplomacy theory is that they all have to pay attention to the key elements of both guiding and operational theories, without preferring or prejudicing either category. Otherwise, the problem of separation of theory from practice is bound to occur—either the theory is too novel to be operational or too far behind practice to avoid falling into “theoretical poverty.”

#### **(I) Guiding theories**

In terms of global great power theory preparation, guiding theories are the basic theories on seeking global great power status, which include the German balance of power theory that lasted from the Prussia era to post-Cold War era Germany, the European balance of power concept under which Britain engaged in colonial expansion, and the American isolationist theory that existed for more than a century after the US gained independence. Post-reform China, on the other hand, has been adhering to the path of peaceful development and socialism with Chinese characteristics.

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<sup>12</sup> China needs to supply not only material public goods but also strategic and ideological public goods concerning global security. See [9].



## 1. General meaning

Global great power guiding theories consist of three components. The first is overall objective. Since modern times, most of the countries that seek to be global great powers have set their eyes on dominating the world, and end up using beggar-thy-neighbor policies and forging ahead by trampling on other countries. This is the case with the Netherlands, Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, the United States, Germany and Japan. Since the end of World War II, however, new changes began to take place. Within the international community there arose a growing consensus to expand individual interests through the increase of overall interests of the general public. The strategy works to make peaceful symbiosis possible through joint planning and regulation. After the 2008 global financial crisis, a significant increase in mutual consultation and coordination within the international community effectively fended off a replay of the Great Depression that occurred in the 1930s.

The second component is basic connotation. Different goals can lead to difference in basic connotations. In European and North American countries, theories on pursuit of global great power essentially follow the same logic, be it race supremacy (God's elect), living space or ideology (political system).<sup>13</sup> China, however, insists on the theory of peaceful development with an emphasis on win-win cooperation.

The third component is theory promotion. Although goals and connotations differ, the ways and means through which the countries promote their theories are largely similar. In the course of pursuing global great power status, European and North American countries all attach a lot of importance to theory promotion by making them predominant theories domestically and guiding theories internationally through platforms such as public opinion channels, school and education systems, meetings and seminars and non-governmental exchanges.

## 2. Special meaning

Based on the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party, the guiding theories governing all aspects of work in China, including diplomacy, are Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of "three represents," and the scientific approach to development. However, since global great power theory is a new subject in China both in theory and practice, the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, or Sinicized Marxism as we may put it, is the most important and most immediate guiding theory.

The 18th CPC National Congress called for "holding high the banner of peace, development, and win-win cooperation," upgrading the previously economic concept of win-win cooperation to comprehensive win-win cooperation in global traditional and non-traditional affairs, thus further highlighting features of globalism or the sense of global village. This big goal is quite a challenge to China because its theory of global great power diplomacy has to go beyond its own interests so that it may see itself and the rest of the world with a broader mind and from a larger and longer-term

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<sup>13</sup> Zhao [10].

perspective, and on top of that, find the ways and means of reaching the common goal of a win-win situation both in theory and practice.

## **(II) Operational theories**

Obviously, the importance of operational theories lies in its applicability or operability. It can be divided into three theories based on time span: long-term theory (ten years or more), mid-term theory (five-ten years) and short-term theory (within five years).

### **1. Long-term operational goal theories**

Long-term operational theories carry both guiding and operational features, but their focus is strategic planning and implementation. There is no lack of examples of such theories in the modern history of international relations. The flying geese paradigm put forth by a Japanese scholar can be traced back to pre-World War II. Following World War II, two French men—statesman Robert Schuman and political economist Jean Monnet initiated the theory of European integration meant to bury the hatchet and unite for self-empowerment. China's three-step development strategy and 20-year strategic opportunity period geared towards fulfilling rejuvenation of the Chinese nation fall into the same category. Contemporary world affairs and internal and foreign affairs of the countries need to be guided by long-term theories and strategies. Due to the two-term tenure of office system in most countries, only a limited few theorists and politicians of insight would endeavor to construct operational theories that would guide political programs covering more than a decade, which is definitely a theoretical shortfall for contemporary politics and international relations.

### **2. Mid-term action plan theories**

As mentioned above, due to term limits, the governments of most countries can usually only make action plans ranging from five to ten years, which makes it hard to develop sophisticated theories. And the theories that exist often tend to focus on "early returns." Of course, there are exceptions too. Examples include West Germany's "change through engagement" theory targeting East Germany between the 1970s and the 1980s, the conservative governing concepts of US President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s, and "the third road" governing concepts proposed by Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair between the 1990s and the early 2000s.

### **3. Short-term operational implementation theories.**

The focus of short-term operational implementation theories during major powers' pursuit of global great power status lies in their stratagem and responsiveness. The Clinton Administration's Engagement Policy towards China and India's Look East Policy fall in here. Though the emphasis of short-term operational implementation theories is responsiveness, they are often more of a planning and systematic nature than "policy without theory" scenarios, because theory-guided policies are more stable and reproducible.

## 1.4 Tasks at the current phase

As the saying goes, “a thousand-mile journey begins with the first step.” The task of theory construction has a long way to go, and the most pressing need is to set practical and feasible objectives for the current phase (2013–2022) from the perspective of developing overall and long-term theories.

### **(I) Improving nationwide recognition of predominant theories**

As an important component of the diplomatic theory with Chinese characteristics, global great power theory requires nationwide understanding and recognition. The top priority for China’s political and academic circles is to work out sound and applicable theories that are systematic and scientific. Secondly, theoretical construction should not be limited to the academia. The current focus should be put on education in two areas. One is to improve the theoretical and cognitive level of party, state and military leaders. Frankly speaking, during the past three decades, when China has concentrated on building the economy, leaders at all levels have had the tendency to maintain one-sided and pragmatic thinking on issues of international relations and diplomacy. In many cases, the leaders and the led are on the level in terms of theory and information and the role of leadership and guidance is deplorably missing. There is therefore an urgent need to reinforce the training of cadres in their theoretical knowledge of international relations and foreign policy. On the other hand, in the contemporary context of broad participation of the masses in international relations, lack of theoretical instruction and guidance has led to the growing rise of narrow nationalism and populism. Hence, there is a need to strengthen the training and popularization of international relations and diplomacy theories.

### **(II) Repositioning of values and ideological factors in theories**

In the historical transition from theories of revolution and war to theories of peace and development, China needs to re-comprehend and redefine the status and role of values, ideology and culture in theoretical construction. During the period of reform and opening up, China took the practical approach of exploration without theoretical debate on issues such as market economy. This was a special measure under special national conditions that should not become permanent. In its march to global great power, China cannot keep staying away from the theoretical debate and competition. Hence, we should make good and full preparations for having the international community theoretically acknowledge China as a global great power. Admittedly, this work has gotten off to a good start. In building its theories, China tends to advance principles, guidelines and concepts in correspondence to the evolving situations. Examples include the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, Asian Spirit, and Harmonious World. The principles, guidelines and concepts advocated by China actually reflect its values and ideology. The key is to comb through their logical relations and gradually render them an integral part of its theoretical system.

### **(iii) Making full use of the growing integrated power and systemic advantages of the country**

Currently, three imbalances exist in China's global great power theory preparation. The first is systemic imbalance in the overall coordination between the practical and theoretical departments; the second lies in the cognition of the importance of natural sciences vis à vis social sciences; and the third imbalance, within the confines of social sciences, concerns disparities between "domestic theories" and "international theories" as well as between "applied theories" and "foundational theories." Furthermore, there are problems of improper and inequitable allocation and use of the limited funds for global great power theory research. Obviously, China has a long way to go before its "five great advantages"<sup>14</sup> could be actually utilized.

## **1.5 Conclusions**

In order to become a global great power, China not only needs a strong material foundation, but also a solid theoretical foundation. Both involve arduous work, though the task of theoretical construction is even more challenging. In the coming decades of theoretical development, China needs to gradually accomplish the following four tasks

First, China needs to update its global great power symbiosis theory in a larger theoretical framework. Since it was created through the practical interaction of domestic and foreign situations and it grew through the interaction and collision between endogenous and exogenous theories, the symbiosis theory needs to go far beyond diplomacy theory in its narrow sense and needs to be constructed and developed in broader theoretical and practical spheres. In other words, the branch of global great power symbiosis theory needs to be grafted to the tree of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Second, China's global great power diplomacy theory needs to transcend the linear mental trajectory. China's concepts and theories, such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, Harmonious World and New Model of Major Power Relations, are largely unidirectional and lack reverse thinking, which may easily lead to inconsistency between what is expected and what is real, separation of guiding theories from strategic thinking and the conflict between operational theories and real-life policies. All these issues command sound solution in China's future development.

Third, China's theoretical self-consciousness and self-confidence need to accrue as it constructs its global great power symbiosis theory. Any theory, however good, will not be able to provide any guidance if it stops at the theoretician's own appreciation and does not get propagated and recognized globally. China is pursuing a

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<sup>14</sup> In the past 91 years, the CPC has made great strides and built up advantages in theoretical, political, organizational and mass work as well as systemic reform, Xi Jinping said at a national conference commending excellent innovators and workers on June 28, 2012. *People's Daily*, June 30, 2012, A1.

road of national strengthening through peaceful development, which is innovative and epoch-making. We therefore need to have an innovative and pioneering spirit to construct, proliferate and spearhead new theories.

Fourth, construction of China's global great power symbiosis theory necessitates the emergence of applicable thinkers and theorists. China's state leaders have set a good example and have made great contributions in this regard, but we still need the joint efforts of more political thinkers, strategists, diplomats, experts on international studies, economists, jurists and socialists. And on top of that, we need to forge a batch of topnotch experts and scholars so that they become leaders of the global great power symbiosis theory.

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# Chapter 2

## The Implications of Xi Jinping's Thinking on Comprehensive National Security



Zicheng Ye

**Abstract** Corruption and lax law enforcement are the biggest factors of political insecurity in China today. Numerous problems and conflicts accumulated during 30 plus years of reform and opening to the outside world are now entering a period of sensitivity, abruptness, multiplicity, fragility and complicity. Chief among them are problems of political corruption, lax and opaque law enforcement, rule of power instead of law, and unfair distribution etc., which have caused mass grievances in many areas.

### 2.1 The Composite Nature of Security Risks Facing China

A lot of domestic and international factors affect China's comprehensive security today, but the principal and most proximate factors comprise the following:

#### (I) Domestic factors

1. Corruption and lax law enforcement are the biggest factors of political insecurity in China today. Numerous problems and conflicts accumulated during 30 plus years of reform and opening to the outside world are now entering a period of sensitivity, abruptness, multiplicity, fragility and complicity. Chief among them are problems of political corruption, lax and opaque law enforcement, rule of power instead of law, and unfair distribution etc., which have caused mass grievances in many areas. Meanwhile, antagonistic forces such as those calling for Taiwan independence, Xinjiang and Tibet separatists and the followers of Falun Gong are taking the opportunity to foment disturbances, thus posing considerable threat to political security.

2. Security problems associated with China's economic transformation. Economic transformation in China covers transitions in six facets: from a predominantly export-oriented economy to a predominantly domestic consumption-oriented economy, from a high-energy consumption and high pollution economy to a green economy,

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from a manufacturing-based economy to a service industry based economy, from low-cost labor to human capital with high productivity, from high-speed development to medium high-speed development, from focus on aggregate volume to focus on balance of volume and quality and further to focus on prioritized quality, and from unbalanced distribution to fairer and more reasonable distribution. During economic transformation, numerous uncertainties can have complicated impact on national security.

3. Air, water and land pollution has become a sticking-point issue affecting national security. In recent years, economic development has done a lot of damage to the environment, causing serious water, land surface and air pollution, including, worse still, large areas of haze. This not only has drastically increased the costs of conservation and environmental protection and seriously jeopardized the physical and spiritual health of the people, but has also imposed huge pressure upon the sustainability of the Chinese economy and has at times triggered diplomatic rows with neighboring countries.

Xi Jinping's national security strategy is based on an idea of comprehensive security, with political security as the core, economic security as the foundation, military, social and cultural security as the guarantee, and public safety and security as the goal. The strategy has distinct Chinese characteristics that can be summarized as a combination of internal and external security, inclusive and exclusive security in one, integration of conventional and unconventional security, national security and civil security in one, and the intermingling of political, economic and cultural security.

## **(II) External factors**

1. The US factor. The US is a global great power that has the capability and will to challenge China's national security. Although US officials have made remarks welcoming China as a strong power, strong anti-China forces do exist in the US. Moreover, the US has been containing China through arms sales to Taiwan and it has been further reinforcing its military alliance with Japan and South Korea in the pretext of the so-called return to the Asia-Pacific.

2. Sovereign security and South China Sea disputes. After resolving historical land border delimitation disputes with neighboring countries, maritime delimitation became a major territorial sovereignty issue and a severe challenge for China. China is faced with Japan's provocation on the Diaoyu Islands, while multiple islets and reefs in the South China Sea are occupied by neighboring countries. Hence, China's maritime rights and interests are seriously violated.

3. Other external factors affecting China's economic security.

China's economy is an open economy subject to increasing influence of the external environment, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects: (A) an unfair and unreasonable international economic order poses severe challenges to developing countries. Western countries control the pricing power of bulk commodities, the invention patents of core technologies, and controlling power of the major markets, the issuing right of major currencies, and the decision-making power of

major international economic organizations. (B) China's heavy dependence on the international market makes its economy highly vulnerable and volatile. For example, in 2009, China imported 630 million tons of iron ore, indicating external dependence of 69%; and in 2011, China imported 256 million tons of oil, with external dependence of 56%. (C) Exceedingly great influence of foreign capital in China's open industries has led to declining competitiveness of her national enterprises. The top five enterprises in each of the industries already open in China were almost all controlled by foreign investors. Foreign capital controls the majority of assets of 21 of China's 28 leading industrial sectors. (D) Financial security predicament. In the era of globalization and informatization, as financial elements circulate around the world, financial crisis of other countries could quickly spread into China and shock her economy and finance. The US financial crisis of 2008, for example, sparked a worldwide economic meltdown, whose negative effects are felt even today.

## 2.2 Comprehensive National Security: A Supremely Complex Entity

Under such circumstances, past concepts of national security can no longer adapt to the complex security situations we are faced with today. In view of that, in his address on national security, Xi Jinping not only attached primary importance to national security, but also proposed a new concept of comprehensive national security based on the changes and developments of internal and external situations.

Take food as an example. The food issue is a survival issue directly related to the well-being and security of the people. Ample food supply is the preconditions for peace and stability, while food shortages can lead to turmoil and peril that threaten political and social stability. Food production, transportation and preservation are not just matters of economic security, but matters of resource security as well, because food is the most important national resource. See food as a futures commodity, and we'll have a financial security issue. And since food production is related to the quality of arable farmland, we need to come to grips with land security. Food importers may come across external security issues, while ensuring smooth food transportation can become an unconventional military security concern. All links of the food industry today, from production, transportation to preservation, are inseparable from information networks which can be hacked by hostile forces via the Internet and thus have something to do with conventional security. Moreover, valuing and not wasting food and maintaining integrity, professional ethics and a good conscience during the food and foodstuff processing are a cultural security issue. In sum, food has to do with security in all sectors except the nuclear industry. Therefore, all security issues are complex issues. Security based on any one unit or institution will inevitably incur huge gaps or loopholes.

The so-called comprehensive national security is a concept that regards national security as a supremely complicated system. Xi Jinping said that national security



in China today has more profound implications than any time in history. “The kind of time frame and space it is involved with are broader and more extensive than any time in history and its internal and external factors are more complicated than any time in history.” So, we must attach importance to both internal and external security, both homeland security and security of the people, and both conventional and unconventional security because they are part of a comprehensive national security system that together constitutes political security, land security, military security, economic security, cultural security, social security, technological security, information security, ecological security, resource security, and even nuclear security. In the comprehensive security system, security in every specific area has a focus of its own, but it first has to be closely linked with and inseparable from security in all other areas. National security issues can never be understood in an isolated and piecemeal manner.

The concept of comprehensive national security is the extension of the idea of composite security developed in China in recent years. The two concepts belong to the same category, except that the former is higher, deeper and broader in scope. The intermingling of political security and economic security can be said to be composite security, but do not yet constitute comprehensive security. Apart from political and economic security, comprehensive security must also take into consideration issues such as military, cultural, civil, resource and other aspects of security. In other words, comprehensive security has to be a more comprehensive kind of composite security.

### **2.3 The Chinese Characteristics of Comprehensive Security**

The concept of comprehensive national security is a Chinese concept with Chinese characteristics. Both its systemic structure and specific connotations manifest distinct Chinese characteristics. As Xi Jinping has pointed out, China’s comprehensive security will go the way of national security with Chinese characteristics, which embodies the people’s security as its purpose, political security as the essence, economic security as the foundation, military, social and cultural security as the guarantee, and promoting international security as the pillar of support.

Firstly, comprehensive security reflects the cream of China’s traditional cultural thinking. Security awareness is essentially a crisis consciousness. In his speech at the first National Security Council meeting, Xi Jinping highlighted the importance of consistently strengthening crisis consciousness and of being prepared for danger in times of security, calling it a key principle for state and party governance. Security consciousness is a risk-prevention concept. In traditional Chinese culture, security and risk are interconnected. Security means freedom from internal and external danger. Security consciousness is consciousness of the complete and whole picture. *The Book of Changes* has distinct big-picture mentality and other Chinese classics such as *Guan Zi* also stresses the integration of politics, economics, military affairs and culture.

Secondly, political security is the essence of China's comprehensive security. As a big power with extremely complicated national conditions, proper treatment of domestic political issues is the most crucial state power security issue. All security issues would just be empty talk if China failed to maintain normal political order and stability. Conversely, with political security on board, other security issues become relatively easy to solve. The very fact that political security is set as the core of comprehensive security mirrors the complexity, protraction, and level of difficulty of maintaining national political peace and stability, order and harmony.

Thirdly, China's comprehensive security sees the people's security as its ultimate goal. After all, all security problems are felt, determined and evaluated by the people, and any insecure factors will first and foremost directly affect the public. The people's security is the development and expansion of the people-oriented ideology in the security sector.

Fourthly, a security community with security for all as its goal. In recent years, Xi Jinping has made frequent mention of the concept of "community of shared destiny." At the first National Security Council meeting, Xi once again raised the issue of security community. He said that China must pay equal attention to self-security and common security, forge a community of shared destiny and propel all parties to move towards the goal of mutual benefit and common security. A security community is both the development of joint security of the past and the application of the community of shared destiny in the security sector.

## **2.4 Cultural Security as a Breaking Point of Comprehensive Security Construction**

At present, the greatest insecurity for China is neither foreign invasion nor war, nor any serious internal political turmoil or instability. China's political, economic and military security issues are predictable and controllable, but the same cannot be said of culture security. Due to a medley of both internal and external factors, China is now in a serious state of cultural insecurity. A country of prosperity is culturally prosperous, and a country that's culturally dead is truly dead. The aforesaid political and economic security are both tangible and have largely been recognized and have become the focus of national security measures. Cultural security, by contrast, is invisible and intangible, even though it has become the most serious security issue in China because a country or nation without faith or a value system is the most insecure.

Of all security problems that emerged during China's reform and opening, cultural security is a sticking point. Partly due to lack of ability to use factors of the cultural market to build advanced culture, China is culturally insecure in the following four areas:

Firstly, the popularity of Western culture and ideas in China. In the process of learning from the West, many people do a bad job identifying the fruits of Western

civilization. They consciously or subconsciously see Western values as applicable to all fields in China or as codes of conduct to be followed by the Chinese. Mainstream Chinese thinkers and cultural elites have largely adopted Western thinking and values. The thinking of both proponents and critics of American values are in fact based fundamentally on American ideas. In the international community, China has become a blind follower of Western culture. Under the siege of powerful Western culture, China is pushed to a defensive position, with no strength to fight back.

Secondly, although China is a country with a long history and rich culture, due to the influence of Western ideas of freedom, democracy, human rights, and Marxist ideologies of class analysis, China's mainstream thinking has consciously or subconsciously rejected the key achievements of traditional Chinese culture on the ground that they are feudal, backward, totalitarian, undemocratic, non-liberal or exploiting class ideology.

Thirdly in the process of China's rise, there arose a craze for traditional Chinese culture, which has somewhat boosted the Chinese people's confidence in their own culture, although no consensus has been reached as to what the cream of traditional Chinese culture is. The so-called sinology fever has brought both advanced and superstitious concepts, the good and the bad, into play, so that cults such as Falun Gong began to prevail.

Fourthly, because the Chinese cultural model, best known for martial arts, Confucius, the four great inventions and the Great Wall lacks power of influence and appeal, China cannot provide a better and more advanced value system than the West is offering with its doctrines of democracy, freedom, and human rights. The historical influence of the quintessence of traditional Chinese culture is encapsulated in concepts such as the Chinese Dream, putting the people first, rule by law, the harmony of humanity and nature and the new view of national interests. As a matter of fact, these concepts are none other than ideas of state governance advocated by Xi Jinping.

The 18th CPC National Congress proposed the building of a regime for inheriting the cream of traditional Chinese culture and for promoting traditional Chinese virtues and new social mores in the new era. Chinese president Xi Jinping suggested that promotion of traditional Chinese culture should start with kids and students by injecting it into textbooks and classrooms and raise the public awareness of it. These are very important and timely measures. In a dialogue with students at Peking University, Xi Jinping emphasized the idea of cultural security raised by *Guan Zi* more than two thousand years ago: "When the four dimensions of culture, i.e. senses of propriety, justice, honesty and honor are not promoted, a country will soon perish." He suggested making the core values of traditional Chinese culture the foundation of national security. Hence, promotion of traditional Chinese culture is not only crucial for enhancing the nation's civic and moral standards, curtailing the occurrence of mass incidents, and strengthening social stability, but also for building a spiritual home for the Chinese people, defending against foreign cultures that have disintegrating effects on China's national solidarity. As an action plan for rebuilding the Chinese civilization, it has great strategic significance for China's long-term peace

and stability and for lifting up her cultural influence in the international community. Only by constructing a core value system with Chinese characteristics based on traditional Chinese culture can we provide a fundamentally strong ideological and cultural shield of national security.

## **2.5 Construction of an Comprehensive Security System Calls for Top-Level Design**

Establishment of the National Security Council was the first step in comprehensive security construction. There is a lot more to do to complete the entire project.

First, there must be a national security strategy that reflects the features, missions, principles and goals of China's security situation. Despite consistent and ongoing studies on national security strategy, no complete research report has been worked out so far. Therefore, completion of such a report has become imperative.

Second, there must be a national security law reflecting comprehensive security. Previously enacted laws and regulations concerning national security were limited to certain departments or sectors only, e.g. food safety, production safety, transportation safety, national security and political security. So an all-inclusive, comprehensive national security law is missing and even sector security laws are incomplete. For example, we still lack legislation in economic security, financial security, Internet security and cultural security.

Third, complete the structuring and rule setting of the National Security Council as quickly as possible. For example, hundreds of billions of state assets are now flowing out of the country, revealing huge loopholes in state asset supervision and calling for special financial security control and supervision. Furthermore, many of China's important industries are being controlled by foreign capital, making it necessary to set up a special organization to review and evaluate the impact of foreign investment on national security.

Fourth, from a cultural perspective, strengthen national, social and public security awareness. Security concerns not only the fate of the country but also the fate of every individual. The people are not only the ultimate beneficiary of national security, but also the great driving force of strong national security. People's security awareness must be strengthened so that they would consciously resist whatever is harmful to national and public security and defend whatever is good for national and public security. Start with the small things, start with ourselves and start at our workplaces.

# Chapter 3

## Great Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics



Zhiyong Li and Zhengqing Yuan

**Abstract** When Western countries experience relative decline, China has become the second largest economy in the world. Faced with dramatic changes in international situations and relations between China and the rest of the world, China's current diplomacy is faced with great opportunities and challenges in a period of transition. Having witnessed survival-related revolutionary diplomacy and construction-related development diplomacy, China now finds itself in the new period of great power diplomacy during which she is committed to realizing the great national rejuvenation. The practice of China's great power diplomacy must meet the needs of global, national and current situations and conditions. China's great power diplomacy is characterized by the country's commitment to new great power diplomacy of peace that promotes world harmony while working on her own peaceful development. It is a complete departure from the traditional great power diplomacy and power politics.

**Keywords** Great power diplomacy · Hegemonism · The rise of China · Harmonious world · Chinese characteristics

The world today is undergoing unprecedented changes. Globalization and informatization have been rapidly developing and accelerating in various fields, including politics, economy, culture and society. Interdependence and internal and external interactions have become outstanding features of the world. On the one hand, the countries are being knit together as a community of shared destiny with integrated interests; on the other hand, they are faced with common global challenges that are becoming increasingly complicated. Not only developed countries in Europe and North America came across bottlenecks for development, a vast number of developing countries, such as those in West Asia and North Africa, went through drastic changes as well. Meanwhile, some emerging countries, including China, rose out of crises. China's GDP, expected to overtake the largest economy in the world, is

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maintaining a momentum of continuous growth. In the face of radical changes in the international situation and in the relationship between China and the rest of the world, diplomacy in China is confronted with huge opportunities and challenges in a time of great transition. On June 27, 2013, in a speech at the Second Session of the World Peace Forum, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that China today is proactively seeking a path of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.<sup>1</sup> In that case, how does it differ from the policy of keeping China's true strength hidden that the PRC has been advocating since its founding? What special historical import does it have? What is causing China to break out of its usual practice to implement great power diplomacy? What are the Chinese characteristics of this new great power diplomacy? What Chinese programs or ideas will be provided for global governance? This paper will attempt to answer these questions in good order.

### 3.1 The Evolution of China's Diplomacy and the Historical Import of Great Power Diplomacy

C. F. Hermann, the eminent foreign policy analyst, believes that change is a universal feature of all foreign policies.<sup>2</sup> Ever since the introduction of the Westphalia system to researchers and practitioners of diplomacy in China, they have been trying to make the adaptations necessary for realizing the Chinese Dream.

#### (I) Historical evolution and comparison of China's foreign policies

A self-styled "celestial empire" or "superior power" with many vassal states was forced to abandon its "heavenly" dignity and condescend to the sweeping waves of Western modernization<sup>3</sup> after encountering well-armed Western countries. This should be the fundamental starting point for studying many of China's problems today. Therefore, how to deal with relations between China and the modern (capitalist) international system and restore the lost great power status becomes the core issue in China's foreign affairs. Proceeding from it, China's diplomacy has experienced two phases: revolutionary challenges and rational integration. It now finds itself in the third phase of creative molding. Accordingly, judging from the main objectives and means for reaching these objectives in different time periods, China's diplomacy can be divided into three manifest phases: revolution diplomacy, developing diplomacy and rejuvenating or great power diplomacy<sup>4</sup> (see Table 3.1).

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<sup>1</sup> Explore the Path of Great Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics—Minister Wang Yi's Speech at the Luncheon of the 2nd World Peace Forum. [http://www.fm-prc.gov.cn/nifa\\_chn/wjb\\_602314/wjbz\\_602318/zyjhs/tl053901.shtml](http://www.fm-prc.gov.cn/nifa_chn/wjb_602314/wjbz_602318/zyjhs/tl053901.shtml).

<sup>2</sup> Hermann, [1].

<sup>3</sup> Li [2].

<sup>4</sup> The main feature of rejuvenating diplomacy consists of socialized diplomacy and great power oriented diplomacy, which will be two mega-trends of China's diplomacy today. In view of the fact that the main subject matter of this paper is great power of diplomacy instead of social diplomacy, we

**Table 3.1** Historical evolution and comparison of China's foreign policies

Time period	Basic theme	Ultimate objective	Paradigm	Pragmatic objective	Ideal objective	Diplomatic basis	Diplomatic means
1949–1978	Revolution diplomacy	National survival	Challenges of revolution	Diplomatic recognition	Revolution	Ideology	Strategic alliance
1979–2009	Development diplomacy	Economic development	Rational integration	Attract investment	Modernization	Domestic development	Keeping China's true strength hidden
2010	Great power diplomacy	China's rise	Proactive molding	Responsible great power	Harmony	International image	Pragmatic diversity

China's revolution diplomacy began in 1949 and ended in 1978, when the policy of reform and opening was initiated. Revolution diplomacy focuses its end and means mainly on politics and deals with international affairs with challenging stances, while economic and other objectives are secondary to political objectives.

When the CPC led the people to victory over the Kuomintang (KMT) government, China was faced with special national conditions: firstly, a socialist system was established, but no set plan was made as to how to build socialism; secondly, China was involved in a confrontation of different social systems in the Cold War environment; thirdly, China's civil war was not yet over. The KMT and the CPC were vying for political and ideological dominance. In view of that, relative to the international system, China adopted the fundamental position of "revolutionary rebellion." China's foreign policies went from anti-capitalism alone to both anti-capitalism and anti-Soviet "revisionism" and then to anti-Soviet "revisionism" in alliance with the US, all of which were rife with revolutionary ideologies and political overtones.

During the phase of revolution diplomacy, China's foreign policy had six main features: firstly, the fundamental purposes were preservation of regime and political independence, secondly, non-recognition of and antagonism against the existing Western international system, thirdly, the main goal of China's diplomacy was to seek maximum diplomatic recognition, fourthly, the highest goal of China's diplomacy was to promote revolution around the world, fifthly, ideology was the main basis for China's diplomatic thinking; sixthly, strategic alliance was the main means of China's diplomacy.

The developing diplomacy phase started with the unveiling of reform and opening up and ended with the hosting of the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC. A typical feature of this phase was "focus on economic construction," so diplomacy was to serve the needs of modernization and economic development.

After the first 30 years of construction, exploration and practice, China's political survival has basically been guaranteed, which paved the way for her to get rid of the cold war mentality at a relatively early stage. Despite the economic achievements already made, China was far behind economically when compared with other countries of the world and the Chinese people's living standard saw no significant improvement. Therefore, following the trend of the times, Deng Xiaoping proposed the basic line of "focusing on economic construction." Since then, China's diplomacy has marched into a new phase of serving domestic economic construction and realizing modernization. In light of that, and relative to the international system, China towed the basic line of "rational integration" and tinted its diplomacy with a strong cast of pragmatism since the start of reform and opening up.<sup>5</sup>

The phase of developing diplomacy has six main features: firstly, realizing economic development is the fundamental objective of China's diplomacy; secondly,

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are using the concept of great power diplomacy rather than the concept of rejuvenating diplomacy to describe diplomatic feature of this phase.

<sup>5</sup> For further reading on pragmatism in China's diplomacy, refer to *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior* by Zhao Suisheng, ed., M. E. Sharpe Inc. 2004.



China gradually engaged and recognized the Western international system, and took the stance of rational integration; thirdly, the main purpose of diplomacy was to attract investment; fourthly, the supreme goal of modernization was to boost national strength; fifthly, economic interests were the main basis for judging China's diplomatic direction; sixthly, nonalignment and a low profile were China's primary means of diplomacy.

In 2010, China became the world's second largest economy, surpassing Japan in GDP. Since the formation of a new collective leadership under Secretary General Xi Jinping, a series of new diplomatic measures have been adopted to generate new concepts and new looks in diplomacy that will help China realize its goal of national rejuvenation known as the Chinese Dream. China's diplomacy in the new era encompasses a broader global vision and a more enterprising and pioneering spirit. Arguably, based on inheriting the fine traditions of the PRC's diplomacy over the past 60 years, China today is in the process of actively seeking a path of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. Relative to the international system, China has grown into a great power for real and the time has come for her to be able to put forward her own theory of international order to proactively practice it. The main features of this phase should be robust productivity and creativity and the ultimate goal of this phase should be to push for the rise of China as a great power through foreign relations and to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The great power diplomacy phase has six main features: firstly, the ultimate goal of China's diplomacy is the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation; secondly, as an important member of the international system, China has already taken an active role in the molding of the system; thirdly the main objective and operative feature of China's diplomacy are to shoulder great power responsibility by means of creative molding; fourthly building a harmonious world is the supreme ideal and objective of China's diplomacy; fifthly, strategic consideration of national image is the main basis for judging the direction of China's diplomacy; and sixthly, using flexible, diverse and integrated diplomatic means to enrich China's art of diplomacy in accordance with the international status quo.

## **(II) Historic import of China's great power diplomacy**

In the wake of the Opium War, the place, time and situation China was faced with determined that the core issue of her diplomacy was to seek a balance between the historic mission it was involved with and the actual reality in order to regain its lost great power status.<sup>6</sup> Once that balance is broken, a new need for balance will cause her to readjust her diplomacy and guiding ideology. So far as the historic evolution of her diplomacy is concerned, what is reflected in different time periods is essentially a law of fluctuation between balance and imbalance surrounding this issue. Revolution diplomacy solved China's problems of independence and survival, while the subsequent developing diplomacy basically solved the issue of integration with the existing international system. However, both revolution diplomacy and developing diplomacy essentially fall into the category of weak or small country

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<sup>6</sup> See Li [3].

diplomacy, because China's diplomacy during these phases was deeply shrouded in the shadow of a "victim mentality"<sup>7</sup> and was immersed in the inferiority complex of "weak country diplomacy." Conversely, great or strong power diplomacy marks the beginning of China's extrication from the "victim mentality" and the regaining of confidence, consciousness and dignity. Therefore, the rise of great power diplomacy is bound to enrich China's diplomacy and gradually help it get rid of its historical fluctuations and realize the transition from revolution diplomacy to developing or weak diplomacy, and finally to normal great power diplomacy. In the process of creative molding, a balance between integration and independence would be maintained for the purpose of ultimately realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Obviously, China's goal of becoming a 'normal' country was not reached in the past 150 years, but is most likely going to be reached today.<sup>8</sup> For China, a so-called "normal country" means to change the impression that "China failed to make contributions to the international community commensurate with its actual national strength." It further means to be a dignified great power rather than a "helpless weak country."<sup>9</sup> Consequently, China's diplomatic transition in the twenty-first century differs greatly from any of the past, because it happens after the task of integration has largely been fulfilled. The new transition is one from weak and small power diplomacy to strong and great power diplomacy, during which China would realize great power diplomacy that protects its national interests befitting a normal country under new domestic and international circumstances and to take on responsibilities befitting a great power. This is the specific historical connotation and the very nature of China's diplomatic transition, a transition that realizes renewal of its normal great power diplomacy. Because this transition coincides with the rise of China and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, its success or failure will be the key determinant of China's diplomacy and even the future of the world. So it can well be said to be a "great transition." In that case, why does a socialist country which has always

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<sup>7</sup> As to China's "victim mentality" and its impact on diplomacy, see Qian Hao. *Dragon Culture, Great Power Mentality, & Sino-US Relations: A Historical and Theoretical Study of the "Victim Mentality"*. *International Review*. No. 2, 2004, pp. 25-30. Yuan Nansheng. *China's Millennium Diplomacy and National Mind-Set*, *Tong Zhou Gong Jin*, No. 11, 2011, pp. 65-68.

<sup>8</sup> Pang Zhongying, *Global Great Power and Normal Country: On normal country pattern and the reshaping of national world view*, *World Economy and Politics*, No. 11, 2002, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Pang Zhongying elaborated on the meaning and criterion for "normal country." Based on his view, this paper suggests that a criterion for normal country does not exist in the international community. Generally speaking, however, if there are big differences between the country and the international community, the country will need to be made a normal country. Since the founding of the PRC, its diplomacy policies are based on strengthening regime and winning diplomatic recognition. After implementing the policy of reform and opening up, China embraced economic pragmatism and followed a low profile diplomatic strategy. For a long term, China's diplomacy has served domestic affairs with little involvement in external affairs. Both the international community and China herself realize that China has not made contributions to the international community commensurate with its national strength. Therefore, being a normal country means to be a dignified country. This is the fundamental connotation of bringing a country back to normal as illustrated in this paper. Pang Zhongying, *Great Power in the World and a Normal Country: On the normal country model and the reshaping of national world view*, *World Economy and Politics*, No. 11, 2002, pp. 12-16.

been reluctant to refer itself as a “great power” start practicing great power diplomacy now? In other words, why wouldn’t China stick to the model of developing diplomacy that has proved rather successful since the start of reform and opening?

### 3.2 Advocacy of Great Power Diplomacy and Proposal of Chinese Characteristics

Great powers are associated with the pursuit of power to begin with. In traditional Chinese thinking and culture, however, open pursuit of power is considered immoral. In addition, due to the historical memory of repeated invasion and oppression by Western powers in modern China, great power in modern Chinese thinking is in fact synonymous with power politics and imperialism. Consequently, “great power” has been a phrase that’s best avoided in discussions about China’s diplomacy. However, with a long history and culture, a large population and a vast territory, China is a natural great power that will have to deal with the great power topic sooner or later.

During the 1990s, Chinese scholars held heated discussions on whether China should pursue great power diplomacy,<sup>10</sup> but they didn’t seem to have gotten anywhere. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially after the outbreak of the global financial crisis, discussions about China’s great power diplomacy seem to have gone past the need for great power diplomacy to include the specifics of that topic, including the content, methods and strategies of great power diplomacy.<sup>11</sup> When Foreign Minister Wang Yi disclosed that China “is in the process of exploring the road of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics,” discourses on great power diplomacy became even more frequent.

Ye Zicheng argued at the turn of the century that, given the increasingly grim international situation China has faced since the end of the Cold War and the value of great power diplomacy for boost a country’s overall national strength, China’s pursuit of great power diplomacy is all but inevitable. Ten years later, the world not only went through the march of globalization, the sweeping changes of informatization, the devastating “9-11” terrorist attacks, the continued ripple effect of the global financial crisis, the balkanization of non-Western countries and the massive rise of emerging powers. China today is still faced with a grim international situation, but she clearly has more opportunities than before. How should China react to the increasing strategic pressure from the West after they had won the Cold War? That is the question Chinese scholars of the 1990s have to answer promptly. For China today, the question has become “what should China react to the relative decline of the West and China’s sustained and rapid rise?” In Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s words,

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<sup>10</sup> Zicheng Ye, China’s Compelling Need to Implement the Strategy of Great Power Diplomacy: Thoughts on China’s Diplomatic Strategy, *World Economy and Politics*, 2000, No. 1, pp. 5–10; Liu Shengxiang, China Not Yet Ready to Implement the Strategy of Great Power Diplomacy, a Discourse with Ye Zicheng, *World Economics and Politics*, No. 7, 2000, pp. 76–80.

<sup>11</sup> Jin [4], Zhou [5], Jin [6], Wu [7].

the questions are: “What role would a great power with 1.3 billion people play in global affairs? What foreign policies would she pursue? What impact would she have on the rest of the world?” Since the twenty-first century, what factors or situations at home and abroad have determined that the great power diplomacy is imminent way to go for China?

First, China is an undisputed great power with unshakable responsibilities. In 2010, Japan’s GDP was USD5.4742 trillion, USD404.4 billion less than China’s. China surpassed Japan to become the world’s second largest economy. With strong political and diplomatic clout and overall national strength, China will soon overtake the US. She is already standing in the center of the international arena and its involvement in various international affairs has become indispensable. China has evolved from “China’s China” to “China of the World,” with capacity to play a greater role in the international arena, take on more and greater responsibilities, fulfill more obligations, take more initiative to mold international relations and resolve global issues so as to offer her wisdom in handling contemporary international relations and make her own proposals for improving global governance and fulfill her great power responsibilities.

Second, China has become a key power with potential to determine the destiny of the world. How China and the US would coexist peacefully and get out of the Thucydides Trap<sup>12</sup> have become a major diplomacy issue that China must resolve. Despite different perceptions on connotations of anarchy, anarchy has undoubtedly become the essence and primary feature of modern international society. The continued existence of anarchy also determines that world peace depends to a great extent on whether peace could be established and maintained among great powers. On the other hand, the journey from competition to confrontation and even conflict between the emerging power and the ruling power and their eventual fall into the Thucydides Trap which results in the human tragedy of great power politics seems to have become an inextricable historic destiny and a permanent dilemma in the theory and practice of international relations. As a rising power soon to overtake the US, China must face up to instead of neglecting this “historic destiny,” neither blindly believing in repetition of history (to prevent “self-imposed fulfillment of prophecy”), nor blindly believing in subjective commitment to peaceful development, but rather proactively face brutal and complex reality while staying cautiously optimistic, and on top of that, use Chinese wisdom to steadfastly work out a realistic road of peaceful development. Thus, the path of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is both

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<sup>12</sup> The Thucydides Trap means that the structural stress and subjective fears vis-à-vis emerging great powers and existing great powers make war between the two inevitable. This has almost been seen as an “iron law” and the “destiny” of international relations. See Graham Allison, Cuban Missile Crisis at 50: Lessons for US Foreign Policy Today, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 4, 2012; See also Graham Allison, Avoiding the Thucydides Trap, *Financial Times*, August 22, 2012; Chen Wenxin, Can China-US Relations Avoid the Thucydides Trap? China National Defense Daily, May 8, 2012; Sun Yingde and Deng Lizhi, Promote New Type of Great Power Relations to Avoid the Thucydides Trap, *China Defense Daily*, June 11, 2013; Sun Zhe, China and the U.S. Must Avoid the “Thucydides trap,” *People’s Daily*, July 5, 2013.

an effective means of countering historical fatalism and a practical probe into the implementation of the subjective commitment to peaceful development.

Third, while interdependence has provided greater room for the international system to play its role, the efficacy of that system in global governance will necessarily involve China's participation, support and molding. The strengthening of global interdependence has led humanity into an era of transnational threat. "We find ourselves in a world where national security and global security are interdependent and unilateral action of a sovereign state can no longer protect its own citizens,<sup>13</sup> nor effectively deal with various global issues. The international system has become a less than fully satisfying but more effective problem-solving platform under a state of anarchy. With the relative decline of the US and the rapid rise of China, the functioning of the international system has become more and more dependent on China's participation, support and molding. Without China's active participation, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other important international organizations will have a hard time playing their roles effectively, and global issues such as the climate change, environmental deterioration, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism will not be easily or effectively resolved.

Fourth, global governance requires China's participation, philosophy and proposals. Most of today's global governance solutions are based on Western experience, which tend to fail or backfire when applied to the non-Western world. Not only do they fail to be solutions, they sometimes become sources of new problems. As a representative of East Asian civilization, after more than 200 years' experience of dealing with the West, China has explored a path of development based on her own national conditions. Since the beginning of the current century, heated discussions on the "Beijing Consensus" and "China Model" in the international community and the interest of African and Latin American countries in China's governance experience fully demonstrate that as a fellow developing country with common experiences, China may be in a better position to offer more inspiring and valuable experience to the developing countries than are Western countries. Therefore, global governance in the era of transnational threat requires not only China's actual participation, but also contribution of her governance experience to the world so as to bring the existing programs of global governance to perfection. Such contribution necessitates in a compelling way China's bold pursuit of a path of great power diplomacy.

Fifth, great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is a firm and clear answer to the world's various expectations of China. Various speculations about China's future, as reflected in theories of "China Threat," "China Collapse," "China Opportunity," and "China Hardball" indicate that China has stepped into the spotlight of the world. Of the eyes cast on China are eyes of appreciation, suspicion, praise, criticism and, to a greater extent, expectation. In other words, what a powerful China really means to the world has become a question that China must answer. If peaceful development and a harmonious world is a kind of subjective answer or commitment, then its credibility will need to be tested in the future. And yet, a world of anarchy

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<sup>13</sup> Jones et al. [8].

will only base credibility on reality rather than a certain subjective commitment to the future. Thus, what realistic and trustworthy answer to give to the world becomes more of a practical issue in China's foreign policy. The path of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is none other than that realistic and credible answer.

Sixth, China's great power diplomacy is a natural extension of the road of development with Chinese characteristics, and the nuts and bolts of the road of peaceful development with Chinese characteristics. Throughout the process of reform and opening up over the past 30 years, China has found a path of development with Chinese characteristics based on the conditions of the country and of the world and on positive and negative experiences of national construction. It is a Chinese road that has absorbed the positive elements of the development paths of advanced Western countries but has also maintained China's own unique characteristics. China has definite confidence in her road of development, guiding theories and political system. Great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and the road of political and cultural development with Chinese characteristics constitute the diplomatic expression of the Chinese road. They are the externalized and concrete expression of the path of peaceful development with Chinese characteristics.

Seventh, great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is a legacy and the transcendence of developing diplomacy. Since the initiation of reform and opening up, China has consistently adhered to the basic line of "focusing on the central task of economic construction" and all diplomatic work has been conducted along this basic line. However, with the rise of China's international status, underperforming "pragmatic diplomacy" engrossed in serving domestic economic construction is now feeling the pinch of meeting the demands of responsible power image-building. But given the fact that development remains the main problem facing China, China needs to be much more proactive, independent and political in her efforts to strengthen diplomacy. Apart from dutifully serving economic development, China's diplomacy must be more committed to serving the needs of peaceful development and of image-building as a responsible great power. The current collective leadership's advocacy of the Asian concept of security and their proactive shaping of numerous international hot-button issues show that China's diplomacy has begun a transition from small-power diplomacy dominated by economic interests to great power diplomacy giving priority to security and political interests so as to better promote China's peaceful development. Moreover, China has also put forward a series of major cooperation initiatives, such as the Upgraded Version of the ASEAN Free Trade Zone as part of the One Belt One Road Initiative, establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor and the CMB Economic Corridor. On July 14, 2014, President Xi Jinping said during a joint interview with four Latin American countries at the 6th BRICS leaders' summit in Brazil: "We will play a more active role in international affairs, commit ourselves to improving the international governance system, and make vigorous efforts to increase the representation and voice of developing countries in international affairs. We will

offer more Chinese solutions, contribute Chinese wisdom and provide the international community with more public goods.”<sup>14</sup> These major initiatives and diplomatic commitments reveal China’s self-confidence and the new posture of great power diplomacy.

Therefore, in response to the development of the times and the needs of the country, China put forward in a timely manner the historical mission of exploring the road of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in order to meet the needs of the world, the country and reality. The success of China’s transition from small-power diplomacy to great power diplomacy will surely secure China’s expanding national interests and contribute more of her wisdom and solutions to international peace.

### 3.3 Distinctly Chinese Diplomatic Paradigm and Objectives

For developing countries that have historically suffered from aggression or oppression by colonialism, militarism, and hegemony, great powers are often synonymous with power and hegemony, while great power diplomacy means whatever the great powers say counts. While exploring her path to great power diplomacy, China, as a former victim of great power diplomacy, does not want to replay the old game of power politics that great powers used to play. On the contrary, great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics will put more emphasis on win–win cooperation, promote common development and safeguard world peace. This is the key characteristics and quintessence of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics not only vertically has the historical features of resuming normal great power diplomacy, but also horizontally has traditional features of great power diplomacy reminiscent of great power hegemony. It is a peaceful road of great power diplomacy that promotes the world dream of a harmonious world. Specifically, great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics incorporates diplomatic ideas with Chinese characteristics, the diplomatic purpose of national rejuvenation, the ideal of a world order, handling of diplomatic relations among big powers, diplomatic postures towards smaller countries, great power image and national mentality.

#### (I) Great power concepts: peace, development, cooperation and win–win results

Great power ideology, which is a great power’s basic assessment of the theme of the times and of the global situation, will determine the basic orientation of great power diplomacy. For example, concepts of diplomacy during the revolutionary periods were based on China’s optimistic prediction of the situation of global revolution. The quintessence of the theory of greatpower diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is the new concept of greatpower diplomacy of peace, development, and win–win cooperation. Peace and development proposed by Deng Xiaoping and upheld consistently

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<sup>14</sup> Xi Jinping accepts a joint interview by media from Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, and Cuba, July 15, 2014, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2014/0715/cl024-22,580,466.html>.

in contemporary China are the themes of our time. Cooperation is a new concept of Chinese diplomacy that has been stressed since the 16th CPC National Congress, while the win-win concept is one proposed at the 18th CPC National Congress. China's diplomacy will further emphasize mutual benefit and the win-win cooperation based on the heritage of peace and development. It is the very diplomatic concepts of peace, development, and win-win cooperation that have determined the basic international environment for greatpower diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and have provided the basic ideological conditions for China to follow the path of peaceful development.

### **(II) Great power objective: Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation**

Great power objective is where fundamental national interests lie. National interest constitutes the most fundamental motivator of any country's external behavior. It is the most enduring and most influential factor in international politics, the engine of international politics and the basic criterion of diplomacy. But it is the determination and realization (or non-realization) of great power interests that can truly and fundamentally influence the peace and stability of the international system. Traditionally, great power interests tended to target diplomacy on plundering other countries' land, resources or invading and colonizing other countries. In that scenario, conflicts and war are commonplace. President Xi Jinping pointed out that "[R]ealizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people in modern times." The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, as the objective of China's great power diplomacy, is not based on horizontal comparison with others, but on the longitudinal pursuit of its own 5000-year civilization. The establishment of this vertical coordinate system determines that the purpose of China's diplomacy is not pillage, invasion or hegemony, but the rejuvenation of civilization and the fulfillment of dreams, mainly with on our own efforts and without harming or intimidating any other country.

### **(III) Great power vision: world dream of lasting peace and common prosperity**

A great power must have a fundamental vision of a basic world order and of the destiny of itself and the world as a whole. The scope of a framework determines the scope of the cause. The rise and fall of a country is always closely related to its view of a global framework. In the era of globalization, the fate of a country is closely linked with that of the world, and great power vision must be based on the concept of a global framework. Traditionally, great power vision has typically set the great power itself as the center of the world, while world order is the extension and reflection of the power of that great power. Great power vision under the tributary system is the infinite radiation of a cultural order centered on a Celestial Empire. In the past 500 years, great power vision has been hegemonic conquest, domination and taming of the world. Such self-centered great power vision ignores the equal subsistence, development rights, independence and dignity of others, and often aims at bullying the smaller countries. It is often faced with challenges and confrontation and ultimately dies prematurely because of fragility. Unlike traditional great powers, China insists that all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal.



She respects the diversity of world civilization and the diversification of development paths, advocates the consciousness of the human community of shared destiny, gives consideration to the reasonable concerns of other countries in her pursuit of national interests, and gives greater prominence to mutual benefit, win-win cooperation and common development. Therefore, contrary to the traditional great powers' pursuit and consolidation of hegemony, China is sincerely committed to promoting harmony with the rest of the world, greater democracy in international relations, and the just and reasonable development of an international order. This great power vision corresponds both to the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and to the World Dream of pursuing a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity. The World Dream and the Chinese Dream not only complement each other, but are also consistent and connected with the individual dreams of other countries of the world. It is therefore also an everlasting great power dream of sustainable development.

#### **(IV) Great power relations: new great power relations**

Analysis of shift of power in more than 500 years of modern history shows that, although established great powers and emerging powers may not necessarily face off in violence, the decline of established powers and the rise of emerging powers are often accompanied by conflicts and wars of varying scale. It's an undeniable historical fact. Even so, history can only provide revelations and lessons for the future, but cannot map the path and trajectory for the future because too much has changed in terms of historical conditions and backgrounds over the past five centuries. The contemporary international environment of globalization has changed the sources of state power, the modes of international competition, and on top of that, has changed international relations, especially a lot of the "zero-sum" features of great power relations. Globalization has already established an interest link in which the nations of the world may either thrive together or decline together. In analyzing China's future international role, Shaun Breslin, the renowned international relations scholar at Britain's University of Warwick, argues that in the long run, China will likely continue to work to change rules and norms without compromising stability or causing global crisis, as crisis will undermine her ability to drive economic growth and maintain political stability. He says that promotion of peaceful change is not just an issue of undertaking global responsibility, but also a guarantee for the actualization of a country's own interests.<sup>15</sup> Obviously, it is neither wise, nor realistic, nor hardly possible for China to follow the beaten path of "hegemony of big powers" once she grows strong. Based on this rational understanding, since the end of the Cold War, China has consistently stressed the need to transcend the traditional strategy of alliance and balance of power and has actively promoted a strategic partnership of non-alignment, non-confrontation, and non-targeting any third-party. So far, China has established more than 72 strategic partnerships with numerous global great powers, regional powers and some important international organizations, and has trail blazed a road of peaceful

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<sup>15</sup> Breslau [9].

great power diplomatic relations with Chinese characteristics that differs from traditional alliances. “Long-term, stable and healthy development of new great power relations” is a new proposition elaborated in the report to the 18th CPC National Congress. Its connotations are of the same strain with strategic partnership, but with distinctive contemporary characteristics and a new focus. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, under the leadership of Secretary General Xi Jinping of the CPC Central Committee, new progress has been made with China’s path of new great power relations. The China-Russia “new great power relationship” based on equality, mutual benefit, reciprocity, win–win cooperation, mutual respect and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, has set an example for new great power relations. China and the U.S. are now engaged in positive strategic dialogues on how to construct new great power relations featuring non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win–win cooperation. Both countries are committed to diplomatic exploration of “new great power relations” and have opened up new pathways for cracking the “Thucydides trap.”

#### **(V) Great power posture: equal treatment and shared destiny**

Great power posture is the basic attitude and manner of dealing with other countries, especially smaller ones. Great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is not just “diplomacy with great powers.” Its essence is what kind of diplomatic concepts, practices and models China as a “great power” should follow in dealing with smaller countries in the international community. Traditional great power posture features chauvinistic, behind-the-scenes, bullying and winner-take-all practices. China’s great power posture of equal treatment and shared destiny is reflected in a series of basic diplomatic values, such as adhering to the principle of equality among all countries, whether big or small; opposing any form of hegemony, promoting democratization of international relations, opposing the phenomena of the big bullying small, the strong bullying the weak, and the rich oppressing the poor; insisting on solving problems through dialogues and negotiations, opposing unnecessary use of force, encouraging mutual tolerance and mutual learning among different civilizations, advocating the consciousness of a human community of shared destiny, and promoting common development of all countries while pursuing national development.

#### **(VI) Great power image: responsible great power**

Great power image and national image are different but interrelated. As an important part of national image, great power image is the specified international image of a great power because of its ability to influence international situation. Such great power image is closely related to people’s understanding of great power responsibility that comes along with great power authority. Historically, international political theorists have been paying more attention to the theory and practice of the rise and fall of great powers, than to the corresponding international responsibility of great powers. Hedley Bull said that “[T]he kind of right that great powers claim to possess or have been endowed with is the right to play decisive roles in major issues involving the peace and security of the entire international system. Such powers are obligated

to readjust their policies based on the administrative responsibilities they take on.”<sup>16</sup> Evidently, great power not only means authority and rights, but also responsibility and obligation. If a great power has authority and rights, but no corresponding responsibility and obligation, it will have no good and positive great power image or even no great power image at all.

Historically, due to specified environment, although great power image has never taken any core position in China’s foreign policies since 1949, pursuit of its responsibilities in foreign affairs has always been there. In the stage of revolution diplomacy, emphasis on ideology has made the support and even promotion of global revolution the responsibility of China’s diplomacy. In the stage of developmental diplomacy, while the main responsibilities of China’s diplomacy is to serve the needs of domestic economic development and realization of modernizations, the main international responsibilities of China’s diplomacy is to establish a new international political and economic order. In the stage of great power diplomacy, responsibilities of China’s diplomacy will rest upon her relationship with the international system. It will be obligated to reflect a “responsible great power with integrity” commensurate with China’s national strength. Such responsibility comes gradually in tempo with the rise of her actual international status and image after achieving regime survival and economic development, and is based on comprehensive strategic considerations. China’s practice as a responsible great power began in 1997, China announced that she would not let the RMB devalue and that she would provide economic assistance to neighboring countries who were faced with the impact of the Asian financial crisis in 1997. The barebones image of a responsible great power consists of the new concept of security based on the core values of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation; the new development concept of putting people first; the new concept of peaceful rise; the new order concept of being committed to building a harmonious world together; the new surroundings concept of highlighting affinity, sincerity, benefit and tolerance; the new civilization concept of mutual respect, mutual inclusiveness, and learning from each other; and the new righteousness and benefit concept of giving equal attention to righteousness and benefit and stressing righteousness over benefit. The escort mission against piracy in Somalia, the UN peacekeeping mission, debt relief, increased foreign aid, active mediation of the North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues, active provision of international public goods and other practical acts of diplomacy have further secured China’s new image as a responsible power. In short, China is assuming greater and more international duties and responsibilities by working hard to make a difference, and actively shaping a new great power image commensurate with its status of “a rising power soon to overtake the US.”

### **(VII) Great power mentality: confidence, composure, and responsibility**

National mentality, as an important basis and reference for formulating diplomatic strategy and tactics, can influence and impact diplomatic situation.<sup>17</sup> The so-called

<sup>16</sup> Bull [10].

<sup>17</sup> Nansheng Yuan, China’s Millennium Diplomacy and National Mind-Set, *Tong Zhou Gong Jin*, No. 11, 2011, p. 65.

great power mentality is the rational psychological expectation of a great power and its people that can correctly comprehend the power and responsibility of the great power status. Such mentality will not bring about fury caused by frustration due to exceedingly high expectations, nor lose the opportunity to safeguard self-interests due to overly low expectations. Throughout her history, due to her unique international status and experience, there used to be an egocentric and overweening “celestial dynasty mentality” nurtured by a long-lasting agricultural civilization, a “victim mentality” caused by national humiliation in the modern era and PRC’s “revolutionary mentality” that underwent deep ideological influence for the sake of safeguarding political independence. Combination of the three states of mind filled the Chinese people with a sense of inferiority mixed with admiration before Western developed countries and with potential arrogance and suspicion towards the cultural and political intentions of Western countries. Under such circumstances, in order to keep the other party from seeing one’s own “weakness and inferiority complex,” an unconventional self-esteem will cause it to react in many unrealistic ways, although such reaction may drag it into a situation of “no-return.”<sup>18</sup> Under the influence of this mentality, China tends to become a “prisoner of history.”<sup>19</sup> Throughout the history of Chinese diplomacy, China’s diplomacy has often oscillated between over-arrogance, excessive self-abasement and excessive self-esteem, kept deviating from the diplomatic base line of rational national interests, and has resulted incalculable loss in diplomacy.

Thus, how China’s diplomacy walks out of the psychological influence of her “glorious past,” “humiliating modern era” and “revolutionary recent past” has become the psychological prerequisite of China’s true rise. Ye Zicheng pointed out early in 2001 that China must construct her national mentality now rather than after she has become powerful because national mentality is an indispensable psychological basis for great power diplomacy.<sup>20</sup> In the current century, when she has already grown powerful, China must accelerate nurturing her people’s great power mentality. What kind of great power mentality should China have? In combination with her unique historical experience and actual national conditions, her great power mentality should at least incorporate the following facets: firstly, self-confidence. “victim mentality” causes China to lack staying power and self-confidence when dealing with Western countries, and even subconsciously feel inferior, and some Chinese even worship everything foreign. Judging by all kinds of preferential or priority treatments given to foreigners but not to Chinese nationals, an open or covert foreigner-worship mentality caused by the century-old “victim mentality” is still relatively common. Inferiority complex is neither in line with China’s current international status, nor with the basic rules of normal international communication, nor is it any good for the preservation of national interests. As China rises, she must be full of confidence with its own

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<sup>18</sup> Qian [11].

<sup>19</sup> Orville Schell, Prisoner of its Past, *Salon Magazine*, June 8, 1999, quoted from Long-Term Sino-US Dialogues compiled by Tao Meixin and Zhao Mei, China Social Sciences Press, 2001, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Ye and Li [12].

great power status, social system, and politics and culture. The 18th CPC National Congress has clearly pointed out that the whole party must have firm confidence in the country's path of development, guiding theories and social system. This can be regarded as the starting point where China clearly builds up her great power confidence. Secondly, sense of composure. The "celestial dynasty mentality" generated by a sense of cultural superiority developed among Chinese nationals and a condescending and sovereign great power attitude towards the rest of the world. A variety of nicknames given to the neighboring country Japan, such as "foreign country in the east," "Japanese bandits," "foolish country," "Japanese devils" and "Japs" reflect China's subconscious "celestial dynasty mentality." Moreover, the "celestial dynasty mentality" further affected by the "revolutionary mentality" and the "victim mentality" includes an Ah Q-style lust mentality and a quixotic mentality. The combination of "celestial dynasty mentality," "Ah Q-style mentality" and Don Quixote mentality often puts Chinese diplomacy in either one of two extremes—taking itself too seriously and thinking itself superior to others—making it impossible for China to react with reason and composure to countries which are unfriendly to her in word and action. In dealing with some normal friction and conflicts in relations with other countries, China is frequently overshadowed by theories of conspiracy and aggression. Therefore, she must re-examine her own history and learn to transcend her 5,000-year civilization and her recent century of humiliation. Only by learning how to face history with self-composure will China face reality with self-composure. Thirdly, sense of responsibility. "keeping China's true strength hidden" was the caveat on China's diplomacy given by Deng Xiaoping in view of the world's and China's then situations, which is still generally valid today. But China as a great power must contribute to the world. This was also what her earlier generations of leaders were expecting. As a great power, China must have a sense of great power responsibility, take on the corresponding great power responsibilities, and act as a responsible great power. This sense of responsibility not only includes maintenance of international peace, promotion of global development, but also promotion of the comprehensive and free development of human beings and the effective governance of many global issues.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Great power diplomacy is the starting point where China truly gets rid of her "victim mentality," regains her diplomatic self-confidence, diplomatic consciousness and diplomatic self-esteem, and where she truly attempts to take on responsibilities commensurate with her great power status. In consideration of situations at home and abroad, great power diplomacy in China is inevitable because she is already a great power. Without great power diplomacy, she will neither effectively preserve her growing global interests nor effectively shoulder her ever-increasing global responsibilities. Therefore, she must become a responsible great power. However, in view of the special historical experience of her diplomacy, great power diplomacy with

Chinese characteristics is the return and transformation of diplomacy from that of a weak country or small country to that of a normal great power. Such transition definitely must not repeat the characteristics of being dominated by any great power or power politics; but must instead promote mutual benefit and common development of the world through her own peaceful development under new historical conditions. In global governance faced with challenges and opportunities, she must take on responsibilities and administer justice as a great power through her power and wisdom. She must promote realization of the world dream of building a harmonious world in the process of realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Therefore, China's great power diplomacy is characterized by the fact that she is committed to new great power diplomacy of peace that promotes world harmony while working on its own peaceful development. It is a complete departure from her traditional great power diplomacy and power politics.

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# Chapter 4

## From Keeping China's True Strength Hidden to Striving to Shine



Xuetong Yan

**Abstract** Since 2012, a number of Chinese and foreign scholars have argued that China's aggressive foreign policy is doomed to fail. But judging by the fruits of China's foreign policy in the past two years, China has improved rather than worsened relations with other countries. Compared with the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden," the strategy of "striving to shine" is more effective for shaping an external environment that benefits national rejuvenation. The author uses the theory of moral realism to explain the strategy of "striving to shine," believing that moral power can both improve the emerging power's global political clout and political legitimacy. The difference between the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" and that of "striving to shine" is that the former focuses on economic interests, while the latter emphasizes political support. That's why the former highlights while the latter neglects moral power. Due to the difference of strategic objectives, the strategy of "striving to shine" differs from the low-profile strategy in basic principles, general layout, work plans and implementation. So far, fruits of the strategy of "striving to shine" have gone beyond people's expectations for Xi Jinping. Xi's strong political leadership might become the best and latest example for explaining the theory of moral realism.

**Keywords** Keeping China's true strength hidden · Striving to shine · Moral realism

Both in terms of China's international status and her relations with some East Asian countries, 2010 was a year of transition during which China's GDP surpassed Japan's to become the world's second largest economy next to the United States. Also during the year, China's relations with the United States, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam became more stressed, which further intensified the dispute as to whether the low-profile strategy proposed by Deng Xiaoping between 1990 and 1991 still needs

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<sup>1</sup> Bingguo Dai, "Persist in Pursuing Peaceful Development," December 7, 2010, <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2010/12-07/2704985.shtml>.

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to be adhered to.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, this debate has been ongoing for years. On October 24, 2013, Xi Jinping delivered a speech at a peripheral diplomacy forum that formally proposed the strategy of “striving to shine,”<sup>2</sup> marking a strategic transition from “keeping China’s true strength hidden” to “striving to shine.” After the speech was released, many scholars have been questioning whether the latter will create a better international environment than the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden.” In view of that, this paper discusses from the perspective of moral realism the role of the strategy of “striving to shine” in creating an international environment conducive to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

## 4.1 The Rationale Behind the “Keeping China’s True Strength Hidden” Strategy

In the 1990s, no one in China questioned Deng Xiaoping’s strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden,” except that at the international level, creators of the China Threat Theory attempted to translate the strategy as China’s measure of expediency in hiding its true power so as to seek time for revenge. In 2002, some Chinese scholars began to question the soundness of that strategy, arguing that it was Deng Xiaoping’s response to the international situation of the early 1990s and does not apply to China of the twenty-first century.<sup>3</sup> However, the mainstream view in China then still stressed the importance of the low-profile strategy in China’s foreign affairs and the need to hold on to that.<sup>4</sup> After coming to power in 2001, then Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi paid annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine honoring Japan’s World War II war criminals during his term of office, which intensified the conflict between China and Japan. Subsequently, the momentum to criticize the low-profile strategy grew.<sup>5</sup> What is puzzling is that despite growing criticism inside the country, foreign support for the strategy grew more and more, even from those

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<sup>2</sup> Qian Tong: Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the Conference of Diplomatic Work toward Surrounding Countries, *People’s Daily*, October 26, 2013, A1. From October 24 to 25, 2013, all members of the CPC Politburo Standing Committee attended a conference on diplomatic work. This conference was the highest level meeting on foreign policy decisions since the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949. Before 2006, the Chinese government only held diplomatic envoy conferences when the president or the premier would deliver a speech on foreign policy to ambassadors and heads of institutions working on diplomacy. The 2006 foreign affairs conference marked the first time provincial government officials were present along with heads of government institutions. Hu Jintao, then president, delivered a speech at the conference but other members of the CPC Politburo Standing Committee were not present.

<sup>3</sup> Ye [1].

<sup>4</sup> Qu [2].

<sup>5</sup> He Zongqiang: “Our New Diplomatic Philosophy: Readjustment of the World Favorable to China’s Adherence to the Strategy of Keeping China’s True Strength Hidden, *Global Report in the 21st Century*, January 2, 2003, <http://news.sohu.com/73/53/news205415373.shtml>; Xing Yue and Zhang Jibing: Rethinking the Strategy of “Keeping China’s True Strength Hidden”-How to Establish a Good International Image for China, *International Observer*, No. 6, (2006), pp. 13–19.



who used to see it as a “conspiracy.” Overall, over the past 20 years or more, most Chinese nationals were supportive of the low-profile strategy. Even after President Xi had replaced that with “standing out of the crowd,” there were still firm and massive supporters of the low-profile strategy in China.

### (I) Interpretation in the political circle

Many people in China's political circle think that the low-profile strategy needs to continue. Some senior diplomats see it as a cornerstone of China's foreign policy. One diplomat says that the low-profile strategy needs to keep going for at least for another 100 years, since China remains weak and has a long way to go before she gains clout.<sup>6</sup>

The last interpretation of the low-profile strategy by the Chinese government at the higher level came from an article written by State Councilor Dai Bingguo, which was published in 2010. His core argument was that if China had dropped the low-profile strategy, she would find it impossible to maintain a peaceful political environment conducive to economic development. In the article, the main connotations of the low-profile strategy were summarized as the policy of “modesty, prudence, not taking the lead, not carrying the banner, no expansion, no hegemony, and stay in line with the road of peaceful development.”<sup>7</sup> The low-profile strategy was first put forward by Deng Xiaoping during the early 1990s.<sup>8</sup> “Not taking the lead and not carrying the banner” meant that China would not challenge America's global leadership and that she would avoid a zero-sum game between her drive to realize national rejuvenation and the United States' established global leadership position that has been unchallenged since the end of the Cold War, lest the US would amass her resources to contain China's rise as a global superpower. “No expansion and no hegemony” means other countries would not need to worry about China's rapid growth. During Hu Jintao's presidency, the emphasis was put on “modesty and prudence” and “peaceful development.” What is noteworthy is that the words “modesty and prudence” preceded the other words in order to minimize negative understanding of the low-profile strategy.

Interpretation of the low-profile strategy in China's political circle is faced with challenges from three aspects. First, after hosting the Beijing Olympics in 2008, China has been faced with growing pressure from the international community to take on more responsibilities in security issues. Both developed and developing countries have criticized China for her “nonperformance” and lack of sense of responsibility. They interpret China's stance of “not taking the lead” as refusing to participate in global security affairs not directly concerning herself. They further argue that China positions itself as a developing country because she is not willing to provide economic aid to developing countries. Second, in 2010, the Obama administration

<sup>6</sup> Jingcai Wu and Jing Li: Wu Jianmin Describing China's Diplomacy of 60 Years: keeping China's true strength hidden Should Be a Guideline for 100 Years, June 1, 2009, <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/news/2009/06-01/1713676.shtml>.

<sup>7</sup> Bingguo Dai: Keep to the Road of Peaceful Development, December 7, 2010. <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2010/12-07/2704985.shtml>.

<sup>8</sup> *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (1982–1992), Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994, p. 350.

began implementing the strategy of Asia-Pacific rebalancing, with their eyes set on containing China in East Asia. Accordingly, people are thinking that the low-profile strategy will not prevent the US from seeing China as its main strategic competitor. Third, China's maritime rights disputes with Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam in 2009 once again demonstrate that the low-profile strategy will not placate neighbors. These facts show that the low profile strategy can no longer provide China with favorable international and peripheral environments. On one hand, the effectiveness of the strategy saw obvious decline; on the other hand, great challenges remain in trying to drop the strategy.

## (II) Defense from the domestic academia

The low-profile strategy has previously won vast support among Chinese scholars in China, even though it is confronted with multiple challenges today. As mentioned above, in 2010, the United States initiated the strategy of Asia-Pacific rebalancing in efforts to contain China's rise. That same year, maritime territory disputes broke out between China and Japan over the sovereignty of Diaoyu Islands, culminating in the Japanese government's detention of Chinese fishing boats that had operated near Diaoyu. The incident sparked off a heated debate over whether China should continue to adhere to the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden." At the end of 2011, the *Global Times* sponsored a public debate on the low-profile strategy.<sup>9</sup> In the face of increasing tension between China and the US and between China and Japan, many Chinese scholars maintained the official stance of "keeping China's true strength hidden" and defended the strategy. Qin Yaqing, president of China Foreign Affairs University and a leading figure of the school of constructionism in international relations theory, stressed the role of Chinese culture rather than the role of material capability.<sup>10</sup>

Besides Qin Yaqing, some famous international relations scholars from Peking University, Fudan University and Renmin University of China concurred on sticking to the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" from 2011 to 2012. These three universities were the earliest ones that established the international politics major in China under the guidance of then Premier Zhou Enlai in 1964 and they ranked among the top three schools in the international politics major listed by the Ministry of Education in 2012.<sup>11</sup> Wang Jisi, then dean of the School of International Relations of Peking University, argued that China was superficially strong but actually quite weak and therefore she should stick to the strategy of keeping China's

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<sup>9</sup> Scholars' Heated Debate over Keeping China's True Strength Hidden: Peaceful Rise Won't Exclude Armed Aggression. 17 November 2011. <http://china.huanqiu.com/roll/2011-12/2273974.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Zhou Zhaojun: *Special Interview on Qin Yaqing: China Pays More Attention on Bilateral Stage after the Seventeenth National Congress*. Oct. 21, 2007. <http://cpc.people.com.cnGB/64093/64099/6369987.html>. Wang Zhao: Being tough may be the biggest downside. Jan. 1, 2013. <http://roll.sohu.com/20130101/n362170348.shtml>.

<sup>11</sup> China Academic Degrees Center: *Discipline Evaluation in Colleges and Universities Rankings: 0302 Politics* (2012). Jan. 29, 2013. <http://edu.sina.com.cn/kaoyan/2013-01-29/112370365.shtml>.

true strength hidden.<sup>12</sup> Shen Dingli, associate dean of the School of International Studies at Fudan University, reckoned that forgoing the low-profile strategy would be wrong because the long process of China's rise dictates that the strategy should be long-term.<sup>13</sup> Jin Canrong, associate dean of the School of International Relations at Renmin University of China, also believed that China should continue to keep a low profile because it will help improve external conditions and help China focus on domestic development.

The above-mentioned scholars may belong to different schools of international relations theory, but their reasoning is very similar, i.e. because the US is stronger than China, China should then keep a low profile so as to avoid confronting the US. These views, however, contain major flaws. Since the 1990s, keeping China's true strength hidden has been China's consistent foreign policy, even though this constant fails to explain the ups and downs of Sino-US relations. After the Cold War, Sino-US relations have gone through many crises, such as the Yinhe Incident in 1993, NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in former Yugoslavia in 1999, the US Spy Plane Incident over South China Sea in 2001, and the Sino-US confrontation during the World Climate Conference in Copenhagen in 2009. Those incidents indicate that the US would not quit confronting China even if she upheld the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden." The Obama administration's "rebalancing" strategy in Asia in 2010 is another typical case in point.

### (III) International support

Since 2010, more and more foreign scholars, especially American scholars, have begun to worry that China might give up its low-profile strategy. During the 1990s, many foreign scholars thought of that strategy as a Chinese "conspiracy." Back then, China's hard power was much weaker than it was around 2010. In July that year, Yang Jiechi, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, had a round of confrontational exchanges at the ASEAN Regional Forum, after which foreign scholars began to accuse China of adopting assertive policies and they suggested that China should not give up its strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden." Even John J. Mearsheimer, an eminent scholar of offensive realism, maintained that China should be prudent and stick to its initial strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" because neighboring countries may challenge her due to their fear of her rise. "China has plenty of time and shouldn't make too much noise,"<sup>14</sup> he said, "China will not be able to build better ties with other countries anyway as she keeps growing stronger and stronger."<sup>15</sup>

Mearsheimer represented many foreign scholars' incoherent view on the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden." On one hand, they rebuke China for using

<sup>12</sup> Wang [3].

<sup>13</sup> Shen Dingli: Speech at the Annual Meeting of Global Times. Jan. 14th 2012. [http://www.360doc.com/content/12/01/14/11/3163972\\_179318980.shtml](http://www.360doc.com/content/12/01/14/11/3163972_179318980.shtml).

<sup>14</sup> Xuetong Yan, Mearsheimer: *Can China Rise Peacefully?* Nov. 5, 2013. [http://www.21ccom.net/articles/qqsww/zlwj/article\\_20131110594793.html](http://www.21ccom.net/articles/qqsww/zlwj/article_20131110594793.html).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

this strategy to mask its national strength; on the other hand, they criticize her for replacing it with more proactive or “aggressive” policies.<sup>16</sup> The fact is, whether or not China abides by or abandons the low-profile strategy, most foreign strategy analysts will methodically view her post-Cold-War rise as a threat. Evidently, their opinions fail to explain why, in contrast to the 1990s, China has improved relations with many countries since she has adopted more assertive foreign policies starting in 2010. In 2013, China strengthened her ties with most neighboring countries except for Japan and the Philippines, further indicating that the above-mentioned views cannot interpret the new phenomenon. In December 2013, China adopted an unprecedented tough policy towards Shinzo Abe after he had paid homage to Yasukuni Shrine that honors convicted WWII war dead. A Foreign Ministry spokesman made it clear that Abe had closed the door of dialogue with China’s top leaders,<sup>17</sup> which meant that Chinese government leaders would not meet with Japanese government leaders as long as Abe stayed in office. While China’s tough policy aggravated foreign policy disputes between China and Japan, it has also generated a positive outcome, i.e. condemnation of the Japanese government from the international community. Such condemnation did not come from Western media alone, but from Japan’s main ally the United States as well. The US government ordered its embassy in Tokyo to issue an official statement expressing its “disappointment” towards the Japanese government.<sup>18</sup> Never before has the US so unequivocally criticized Abe for visiting Yasukuni Shrine.

If we were to follow the logic of those who support the low-profile strategy, the said strategy should be able to prevent Abe from paying homage to Yasukuni Shrine. Conversely, a tough policy towards Japan should be able to bring US and Japan closer together so that the two would stand together on the issue of Abe’s shrine visit. However, just the opposite is true. Hence, we have yet to explain the inconsistency between theoretical expectation and empirical facts. We need a new theoretical perspective to help us accurately understand the practical effects of keeping China’s true strength hidden in the new era as well as its relationship with the strategy of “striving to shine.”

## 4.2 Theoretical Framework

Ever since President Xi Jinping has changed China’s diplomatic strategy from “keeping China’s true strength hidden” to “striving to shine,” many foreign scholars of international relations made different predictions on the effectiveness of such

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<sup>16</sup> David Pelling, No One is Immune from Beijing’s “Gravity Machine,” *Financial Times*, December 11, 2013. <http://www.ft.com/intl/comment/columnists/davidpilling>.

<sup>17</sup> “FM: Abe Shut Door on Dialogue with China,” January 7, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/video/2014-01/07/c\\_133024577](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/video/2014-01/07/c_133024577).

<sup>18</sup> Takashi Oshima, “U.S. Expresses Disappointment at Abe Visit to Yasukuni Shrine,” *The Asahi Shimbun*, December 27, 2013. [http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/politics/AJ201312270048](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201312270048).

strategic readjustment. However, these predictions failed to give full consideration to the respective international environments in which they originated, or analyze the strategic influence exerted by them on international politics. To figure out which of the two can provide more favorable international conditions for China's rise in the trend of polarization of the international setup, we first need to clarify their respective roles. This essay will use moral realism as the theoretical framework to pinpoint the impact of the strategy of "striving to shine" on various relationships, including Sino-US relations, Sino-European relations, Sino-Japanese relations and relations between China and developing countries.

### **(I) Moral realism: a new analytical perspective**

The analysis here is based on three core hypotheses of realism. First, anarchy is the natural property of an international system and the predicament of security is inevitable. Because one country is super-sensitive to the relative power gap with other countries, the world's second largest power finds it hard to hide its clout during the developing process of a bipolar international system. Second, the objective of diplomacy is maximized national interests, and the international clout of a great power is one of the main national interests. The international standing of a country determines the priorities of its national interests. As far as the second largest power is concerned, counteracting the largest superpower and reinforcing strategic alliance are far more important than pursuit of economic benefits. Third, power competition is as good as a zero-sum game in which structural conflict between the emerging power and the hegemonic power is inevitable. When the annexation strategy fails to work, strategic competition will turn into competition for more allies.

The hypothesis of this article is that compared with the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden," the strategy of "striving to shine" will be able to attract more allies so as to better serve the strategic objective of rejuvenating the Chinese nation. One necessary condition for the successful rise of a great power is to establish an international leadership based on one's reliable strategic credibility. If an emerging great power fails to provide security protection and economic benefits for other countries, especially neighboring countries, it will have no way of establishing its international strategic credibility. The strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" is only directed at growing China's economy through economic cooperation, while the strategy of "striving to shine" is designed to allow other countries to benefit from China's development so as to win over more strategic partners. Therefore, "striving to shine" can do a better job of achieving the strategic objective of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The author begins by analyzing the differences between the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" and the strategy of "striving to shine," followed by evaluation of their impact on China's diplomatic policies. As a matter of fact, we find it very hard to define exactly when China readjusted her diplomatic strategy. In November 2012, Xi Jinping was elected as Secretary General of the CPC Central Committee. Prior to that, he had already participated in China's foreign policy decision-making. In February 2012, in his capacity as vice president, Xi initiated

a new type of great power relations between China and the US.<sup>19</sup> On July 7 that year, Xi delivered a speech on China's security policies at the first World Peace Forum hosted by Tsinghua University. He said that "if a country wants to develop itself, it has to allow other countries to develop; if a country wants security for itself, it has to guarantee the security of other countries as well; if a country wants to do well, it must allow other countries to do well too."<sup>20</sup> A new type of great power relations and the concept of win-win cooperation constitute a significant part of his diplomatic strategy of "striving to shine."

In March 2013, when Xi Jinping took office as China's president, three important documents comprehensively laid out the strategy of "striving to shine," namely, a speech given by Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the second World Peace Forum in July, an article by State Councilor Yang Jiechi published in the August issue of *Qiushi Journal*, and a speech on peripheral diplomacy by President Xi Jinping published in *China Daily* on October 26. The strategy of "striving to shine" mentioned in President Xi's speech had nothing to do with "keeping China's true strength hidden" both logically and semantically. I'm not saying President Xi's speech marked the shift of China's diplomatic policy from "keeping China's true strength hidden" to "striving to shine," but I do believe it laid a foundation of legitimacy for China's diplomatic transformation. To understand the connotations of the latter strategy, one must carefully analyze and comprehend the above-mentioned three documents.

I will first of all make a distinction between the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" and that of "striving to shine" before using four cases to test the hypotheses of this paper. The four cases, which involve 2012 and 2013, are Sino-US relations, relations between China and major European countries, relations between China and developing countries, and Sino-Japanese relations. In February 2012, President Xi put forward the idea of a new type of major power relations between China and the US. Therefore, this paper will examine the impact of the strategy of "striving to shine" through relations between China and other major powers between 2012 and 2013, and the influence of the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" through bilateral relations during the 2000–2011 period. The case of Sino-US relations will be used to test the validity of "keeping China's true strength hidden" and "striving to shine" in maintaining stable bilateral relations in the entanglement of structural conflict between the emerging power and the hegemonic power. The case of Sino-European relations will be used to test the role of "striving to shine" in consolidating strategic cooperation between China and other major countries. The case of relations between China and other developing countries will be used to test the influence of "striving to shine" in terms of reducing the fear of relatively weaker countries for an emerging power. The case of Sino-Japanese relations will

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<sup>19</sup> Xi Jinping: *Work Together for a Bright Future of Sino-US Cooperation Partnership*. Feb. 17, 2012. <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/17137277.Html>.

<sup>20</sup> Xi Jinping, "Work Together to Maintain World Peace and Security," *Foreign Affairs Journal*, No. 5, 2013, p. 3.

be employed to test whether there is a causal relationship between the strategy of “striving to shine” and the deterioration of relations between China and Japan.

On the basis of qualitative analysis, a quantitative analysis will be done in this paper on Sino-US, Sino-European and Sino-Japanese relations and the China's international relations data used here are extracted from the database of the Contemporary International Relations Institute of Tsinghua University. Regrettably, this database does not incorporate data concerning relations between China and other developing countries. Therefore, the author can only do a qualitative analysis of relations between China and other developing countries.

## (II) Strategic credibility and international morality

In my opinion, establishment of global strategic credibility is a critical factor for creating a better international environment for rejuvenating the Chinese nation. Over the past two decades, the strategy of “keeping China's true strength hidden” has successfully created a favorable international environment for China's economic development rather than for rejuvenating the Chinese nation. Between 1992 and 2011, China's total foreign trade volume rose from 0.02% of the world's total to 10% of the world's total, while relations between China and other countries and regions failed to see substantial improvement.<sup>21</sup> An international environment favorable for economic development neither brought China more strategic friends nor helped China build up a good international image. The China Threat Theory has persisted. Without a positive national image based on international strategic credibility, China will have no way of reaching her goal of rejuvenating the Chinese nation. Therefore, creating an international environment favorable for national rejuvenation and emphasizing the strategy of “striving to shine” which builds up strategic credibility is of critical importance.

Strategic credibility is a minimal requirement in international morality. Xunzi said that “Humane authority follows after establishing morality and hegemony follows after establishing credibility.”<sup>22</sup> He argues that strategic credibility is the minimum requirement for a country's pursuit of recognized international leadership. Some scholars label me a moral realist because of my argument that China will be overshadowed by the US in her strategic bid for upgrading her international leadership, unless she implemented the strategy of humane authority.<sup>23</sup> Many people assume that a realist theory should not be concerned about the role of morality in international politics. This might be true for structural realism and offensive realism, but not for classical theorists. For example, two of the six principles of political realism suggested by Hans J. Morgenthau, the father of realist theory in international relations, are about morality. In his most read book *Politics among Nations: The*

<sup>21</sup> See <http://unctadstat.Unctad.org>.

<sup>22</sup> *Xunzi*, translated into modern Chinese and annotated by Sun Anbang and Ma Yinhu, Taiyuan, Shanxi Classics Press, 2003, p. 115.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang Feng, “Tsinghua Approach and the Inception of Chinese Theories of International Relations,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2012, p. 96.

*Struggle for Power and Peace*, he has a chapter that specifically discusses international morality. He reminds people that international morality could be erroneously used for bad purposes despite its important role in international politics.<sup>24</sup> He further warned that “[A] discussion of international morality must vigilance toward the two extremes of either overrating the influence of ethics upon international politics or underestimating it by denying that statesmen and diplomats are moved by anything but considerations of actual capability.<sup>25</sup>”

In Mearsheimer’s opinion, international morality has been what the United States claimed or what Morgenthau termed “they pretend to observe” or “declare they ought to observe.<sup>26</sup>” That’s why he thinks China will be more threatening to others when her foreign policy gets more concerned about morality. Different from the “pretended” morality termed by Mearsheimer and Morgenthau, the terms “strategic credibility” and “morality of humane authority” in this article refer to the moral rules actually observed by the international community rather than those used to cover up military aggression. Different from liberalism which exports the ideology of democracy and free trade with military might, moral realism follows the doctrine of “no rejection to those who come to learn and never go out to lecture others.”<sup>27</sup> Undoubtedly, imposing one’s ideology or morality on others would inevitably lead to conflicts, even wars. Nevertheless, civility, not conflicts, would follow when moral constraints have been internalized. For moral realism, the goal of foreign policies featuring moral self-constraint is not to manufacture a favorable international image of oneself but to secure more international support. Regarding the political moral principles that China proposed to the international community, Xi Jinping told Chinese officials: “We should first practice those ideas ourselves.”<sup>28</sup>

Although moral realism and classical realism agree that morality has an impact on the making of foreign policy, they are different in three aspects of morality. First, classical realism views the function of international morality as being the protection of human life, while moral realism asserts that international morality also plays a role in the legitimization of policy and the growth of national power.<sup>29</sup> These two functions of international morality will be discussed in the following section. Second, classic realism thinks that if diplomacy adheres to international morality, national interests will therefore be sacrificed. By contrast, moral realism believes that moral diplomatic policies are more conducive to gaining strategic interests for

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<sup>24</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th edition. Revised by Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> From *The Book of Rites: Specific and Small Etiquette*, “It was said that people proactively learn etiquette rather than being urged to learn. It was said that people learn etiquette from teachers rather than teachers come to teach.”

<sup>28</sup> Qian Tong: Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the Conference of Diplomatic Work toward Surrounding Countries.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, pp. 241–247.



the emerging power,<sup>30</sup> chief among them being the building of a new world order. However, the emerging power will not achieve that goal if its foreign policy is fundamentally contrary to international morality. Third, classic realism maintains that nationalism lacks humanitarianism while moral realism argues that the nationalist policy of a humane authority state can be humanitarian when that policy is guided by the concerns of global leadership.<sup>31</sup> Humane authority is an ancient Chinese political concept about the highest form of world leadership based on both material strength and morality. Moral realism modernizes the morality of humane authority with its principles of fairness, justice and civility.<sup>32</sup>

### (III) Power and strength

To understand the importance of morality in the “striving to shine” strategy, we need to distinguish between political power and national strength. In this article, “power” is defined as one country’s influence on the minds and actions of other countries, which is similar to Morgenthau’s definition.<sup>33</sup> “Strength” is defined as elements of national capability. This definition is similar to the “principles of national power” mentioned in Morgenthau’s book.<sup>34</sup> The English word “power” has several meanings, including “possession of control, authority and influence” and “ability to act, physical force, and mental or moral efficacy.”<sup>35</sup> Morgenthau confused his readers by using the word “power” to stand for both “influence” and “capability.” In Chinese, *quanli* (power) and *shili* (strength) are two separate words that do not cause ambiguity as do “influence” and “capability.” As a result of the dominating influence of American International Relations studies, the concepts of “power” and “strength” are often mixed up in international relations theory studies.

To avoid confusion between goals and tools in analyzing the “keeping China’s true strength hidden” strategy and the “striving to shine” strategy, this article will regard “power” as a foreign policy goal and “strength” as the tools used for boosting international clout. Among elements of national strength, political leadership is a key factor that is, to a great extent, affected by political morality. Xunzi argued that humane authority is the highest end of world leadership which is based on the morality of the leading great power.<sup>36</sup>

Upholding international morality can legitimate a country’s behavior so as to boost its international lobbying power. On condition of equal strength, a moral country can make more friends and gain more allies and international support than an immoral one. Generally speaking, foreign policies aiming at making friends will dedicate more attention to morality than those targeting economic interests. That is why the

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>32</sup> Xuetong Yan, *Ancient Chinese Thought Modern Chinese Power*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, pp. 86–88.

<sup>33</sup> Xuetong Yan, “New Values for New International Norms,” pp. 30 and 113.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122–162.

<sup>35</sup> *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, Massachusetts: G. & C Merriam Company, 1977, p. 902.

<sup>36</sup> Xuetong Yan, *Ancient Chinese Thought Modern Chinese Power*, pp. 86–88.

strategy of “striving to shine” suggests a new concept of morality and interests and a community of shared destiny, which first appeared in Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s speech in June 2013, when he pointed out that China would vigorously uphold a new concept of morality and interests and establish a community of shared destiny with other developing countries.<sup>37</sup> Since then, these concepts have frequently appeared in official speeches and documents.

#### (IV) National rejuvenation and alliance

In my opinion, the idea of national rejuvenation is the catalyst for the emergence of the “striving to shine” strategy. President Xi defined national rejuvenation as the supreme strategic objective and the core of the Chinese dream.<sup>38</sup> The literal meaning of national rejuvenation is that China wants to regain its historic status as the world’s most advanced country just as it was during the Reign of Zhenguan (627–649) of the Tang Dynasty (618–907). Specifically, the phrase refers to China’s efforts to catch up with the US in terms of comprehensive national power and national defense power. When the Chinese government assigns national rejuvenation as the goal of the “striving to shine” strategy, the competition for international leadership between China and the US will be inevitable. As the only superpower, the US regards global domination as its most important national interest served by its foreign policy. In his State of the Union address of 2010, President Obama said at Congress that he would not accept second place for the United States of America.<sup>39</sup> The structural conflict between China and the US for the leading position will drive them to compete for more strategic allies.

Since ancient times, alliance-making and annexation have traditionally been two major strategies for great powers to seize global leadership. However, the former became the only available strategy after the UN Charter banned annexation of other countries’ territories in 1945. The failure of Nazi Germany and Japanese militarism in WWII indicates that the annexation strategy was impractical in the modern world. During Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union established the NATO and the Warsaw Pact, respectively. To maintain world leadership, the United States adopted in 2010 a rebalance strategy that sought to consolidate cooperation with its traditional allies, make non-NATO alliance with new friends and develop strategic cooperation with non-aligned states. As long as China sets rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as the objective of her diplomacy, she will have to abandon her non-alliance principle adopted in 1982.<sup>40</sup> The following section will discuss the differences between the “striving to shine” strategy which aims at “making friends” and the “keeping China’s true strength hidden” strategy which aims at “making money.”

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<sup>37</sup> Wang Yi, “Exploring the Path of Major Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics,” *Foreign Affairs Journal*, No. 5, 2013, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Kristie Lu Stout, “Is Xi Jinping’s Chinese Dream’a Fantasy?” July 17, 2013, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/05/26/world/asia/chinese-dream-xi-jinping/index.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Obama’s State of the Union Transcript 2010: Full Text, January 27, 2010, [http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0110/32111\\_Page2.html](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0110/32111_Page2.html).

<sup>40</sup> Yaobang Hu [4].

### 4.3 The Difference Between the Two Strategies

Most China watchers are familiar with the specifics of the “keeping China’s true strength hidden” strategy, but few of them clearly understand the differences between that strategy and the strategy of “striving to shine,” because the Chinese government never provided any official clarification. To differentiate them, we need to meticulously read the three documents by Xi Jinping, Yang Jiechi, and Wang Yi, respectively. Xi Jinping’s speech is particularly helpful for understanding the goals, tenets, general layout, working approach, and methods of the “striving to shine” strategy.

#### (I) Political orientation versus economic orientation

The strategy of keeping China’s true strength hidden is to strive for a peaceful peripheral environment for China’s economic development. On the Korean Peninsula issue, for example, China’s priority is to prevent war rather than to denuclearize the region. The goal of the “striving to shine” strategy attaches equal importance to regional peace and stability and to a foreign policy that serves the needs of national rejuvenation rather than those of economic development alone. The concrete agenda of national rejuvenation is to establish a moderately prosperous society by the hundredth anniversary of the CCP in 2021, and a rich and strong socialist country by the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the PRC in 2049.<sup>41</sup> In his speech, Xi stressed that the strategic goal of China’s diplomatic work regarding surrounding countries is to serve the implementation of national rejuvenation, to consolidate a friendly neighborhood, to protect national sovereignty, security and development, to improve political relations with surrounding countries, to strengthen economic interdependence, to deepen security cooperation, and to establish close cultural relations.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the strategic goals of China’s diplomacy are mainly political and are different from the economic goals of the “striving to shine” strategy. Even though the latter also sets the target of strengthening economic interdependence, that target is still set out of political rather than economic concern. We can therefore simplify the different goals of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” and “striving to shine” into “making money” and “making friends.”

The change in the goals of Chinese foreign policy from serving the needs of economic development to national rejuvenation injected new initiatives into China’s foreign policy. The strategy of keeping China’s true strength hidden can only make China passively adapt international changes. By contrast, the “striving to shine” strategy requires that she take proactive measures to shape her external environment in a favorable direction. President Xi Jinping asked diplomats to keep the big picture in mind in their work and he interpreted that as “striving for a favorable external environment for national reform, development and stability, and defending national

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<sup>41</sup> Report by Hu Jintao at the 18th National Congress of the CPC. Nov. 17, 2012 [http://news.xinhuanet.com/18cpcnc/2012-11/17/c\\_113711665](http://news.xinhuanet.com/18cpcnc/2012-11/17/c_113711665).

<sup>42</sup> Qian Tong: The Important Speech Given by President Xi Jinping at Neighboring Diplomacy Work Conference, *People’s Daily*. Oct. 26, 2013, A1.

sovereignty, security and development interests.<sup>43</sup> It is obviously more difficult for China to shape a favorable international environment for national rejuvenation than to maintain a peaceful environment for economic construction. Compromise is an effective approach against conflicts, but it may not be the optimal method to gain a favorable environment. To obtain a favorable international environment for rejuvenating the Chinese nation, China needs to proactively shape external environment rather than passively adapt to the changes of external situations. President Xi encouraged Chinese diplomats to courageously shoulder responsibilities, actively innovate and proactively engage in peripheral diplomacy.<sup>44</sup>

## (II) Undertaking responsibility versus undertaking no leadership

Different objectives lead to different basic principles governing the strategies of “striving to shine” and “keeping China’s true strength hidden.” The basic principles of the strategy of “striving to shine” are mainly illustrated by the four Chinese characters of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness,” while basic principles of the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” are to “undertake no leadership, insist on non-alliance and give top priority to relations with the US.” In Xi’s speech, “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” means that China should get closer to surrounding countries than before, build up strategic credibility among neighbors, let them benefit from China’s economic growth, and develop regional cooperation with an open mind.<sup>45</sup> According to Yang Jiechi, President Xi emphasizes that China’s policy toward surrounding countries should politically insist on the principles of justice, fairness, and morality rather than economic interests.<sup>46</sup> This indicated that Chinese neighboring policies should focus more on establishing strategic relations rather than engaging in economic cooperation.

“Amity” toward surrounding states does not only mean improving relations with neighbors but also implies that China will no longer take a neutral stance or side with the US when the latter gets involved in conflicts with China’s neighbors. After the Cold War, China has been giving first priority to her relations with the US. In 2010 and 2011, Chinese scholars had a debate over whether Obama’s pivot to Asia diplomacy was a tactical ploy to win election or a strategic policy to stop China’s rise. When Obama won his second term in November 2012, he chose ASEAN countries as his first international destination and noted that it wasn’t a coincidence.<sup>47</sup> Chinese policy makers realize that it is no longer possible to expect the US to continue its strategic focus on the Middle East, and the efficacy of the “keeping China’s true strength hidden” strategy is now down to zero. Consequently, the phrase “structural conflict” has been used in official speeches to describe strategic competition between

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Yang Jiechi: China’s Diplomatic Theory and Practice Innovation under the New Situation. *Qiushi*, No.16, p. 9 (2013).

<sup>47</sup> Li Yuxin: President Obama’s Whirlwind Tour of Southeast Asia Sees Asia as Diplomatic Priority. Nov. 19, 2012. <http://www.chinanews.com/gj/2012/11-19/4338670.Shtml>.

China and the US, and the Chinese government has begun to take a second look at the importance of her neighboring countries. As Xi said in his speech at the Neighboring Diplomacy Work Conference in October 2013, "Our peripheral areas are strategically extremely important to our country in terms of geography, natural environment and bilateral relations."<sup>48</sup> The word "extremely" indicates that China will regard her neighboring countries at least as important as the US, if not more. This change was also seen from the level of the conference at which he delivered his speech. Those who attended the conference included all members of the CPC Standing Committee, all members of the Politburo, all secretaries of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, all State Councilors, members of the Foreign Affairs Leadership Group, all provincial party secretaries and governors, ministers of the party, the central government, leaders of military and non-governmental institutions, heads of related financial institutions and of major state enterprises.<sup>49</sup> It was the highest level conference on diplomatic work in China since the founding of the PRC in 1949.

In traditional Chinese political ideology, "sincerity" was considered a key factor for an outstanding leader, and hence strategic credibility is an important precondition for becoming a humane authority or a hegemon. The fact that President Xi adopted "sincerity" as one of the four basic principles of diplomatic policy shows that China's foreign policy is being transformed from weak-state diplomacy to strong-power diplomacy. In Chinese official documents after the Cold War, major power diplomacy has always referred to diplomatic relations with countries stronger than China, such as the US, Russia, Japan, Germany, France and the UK. However, the meaning of this phrase changed in Wang Yi's speech titled "Exploring the Path of Major Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics" in June 2013. Thus, major power today refers to China *per se*<sup>50</sup> rather than a country China has diplomatic relations with. In addition, the principle of "credibility" also implies that China will undertake more international responsibility on international issues, especially security issues. Conversely, the strategy of "keeping China's true strength hidden" excludes that concept due to its tendency to avoid taking on international responsibilities and undertaking leadership. "Credibility" is the opposite of "undertaking no leadership."

"Mutual benefit" has the unequivocal meaning of providing economic assistance to developing countries. President Xi said China should let her neighboring countries benefit from her development and provide more aid to developing countries within the scope of her ability.<sup>51</sup> Yang Jiechi cited President Xi as saying that China should pay more attention to the economic interests of countries that support her and not

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<sup>48</sup> Qian Tong: The Important Speech Given by President Xi Jinping at Neighboring Diplomacy Work Conference.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Wang Yi, Exploring the Path of Major Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics, pp. 10–23.

<sup>51</sup> Qian Tong: The Important Speech Given by President Xi Jinping at Neighboring Diplomacy Work Conference.

just to her own economic interests.<sup>52</sup> This principle is very foreign to most of the Chinese officials who grew up with the tenet of “being rich is glorious” and they do not yet understand why diplomacy should give first priority to morality rather than economic benefits which had been the priority of the “keeping China’s true strength hidden” strategy for more than two decades.

“Inclusiveness” reflects the principle of openness. President Xi specified that the Asia-Pacific region is big enough to include development of every country and China should promote regional cooperation with a more open mind and a more active attitude.<sup>53</sup> Both the strategy of “striving to shine” and the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” encourage regional cooperation, but there are two differences between them. First, the former requires more initiative and is more active than the latter. In accordance with this principle, the Chinese government developed a general plan to establish three sub-regional economic communities, which are the Silk Road economic belt in Central Asia, the economic corridor of China, India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar in South Asia, and the maritime silk route in Southeast Asia. Second, regional cooperation revolving around the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” is exclusively economic, while regional cooperation revolving around the strategy of “striving to shine” involves multiple sectors, including political, security, cultural, and economic sectors. The Chinese government has proposed to establish a community of shared destiny and to deepen security cooperation with neighboring countries. In the speech titled Jointly Establish a Community of Shared Destiny between China and ASEAN, President Xi illustrated the community of shared destiny as consolidated political and strategic mutual trust, upgraded free trade zone, new concepts of comprehensive security, common security and cooperative security for regional peace and stability, extensive social and cultural exchange, and mutual respect for each other’s civilization.<sup>54</sup> Apparently, a community of shared destiny differs from military alliance, even though it remains to be seen whether it is more closely or loosely linked than military alliance. For better or worse, military cooperation in a community of shared destiny is what the strategy of keeping China’s true strength hidden tries hard to avoid.

### (I) Political morality versus economic benefits

On the working approaches of the “striving to shine” strategy, President Xi argued that we should find the common ground and meeting point with neighboring countries, uphold the right concept of morality and interests and work in the spirit of principles, friendship and morality.<sup>55</sup> These working approaches differ significantly from the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” in many aspects.

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<sup>52</sup> Yang Jiechi: China’s Diplomatic Theory and Practice Innovation under the New Situation. p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> Qian Tong: Important Speech Given by President Xi Jinping at Neighboring Diplomacy Work Conference.

<sup>54</sup> Xi Jinping. Work Together to Build the China-ASEAN Community of Common Destiny. *People’s Daily*. November 4, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Qian Tong: Important Speech Given by President Xi Jinping at Neighboring Diplomacy Work Conference.

First, the “striving to shine” strategy emphasizes strategic cooperation based on larger common interests, while the strategic cooperation advocated by the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” is based on enhanced mutual trust. “Finding the common ground and meeting point of interests” means that China will continue to pragmatically and proactively develop strategic cooperation with neighboring countries without the premise of mutual trust. In fact, states often use lack of mutual trust as an excuse to cover up its lack of faith in cooperation. Through seeking the idea of common interests as the basis of cooperation, it is very important for China to carry out cooperation with neighboring countries in the area of security where the level of mutual trust is low.

Second, the new concept of morality and interests is one of the two international relations theories proposed by the Xi administration. It has the same theoretical meaning as the Chinese Dream that he put forward at the Closing Session of the 12th National People’s Congress in March 2013.<sup>56</sup> The new concept of morality and interests gives priority to morality over economic concerns, while the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” does the contrary.

Finally, the idea of working in the spirit of principles, friendship and morality indicates that China will make policy toward a given country according to the character of her relations with that country. While the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” was being practiced, many Chinese scholars called it a Cold-War mentality in diplomacy to distinguish friends and enemies.<sup>57</sup> Under the guidance of the strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden,” China used to try to develop friendly relations with all countries indiscriminately. The “striving to shine” strategy will probably cause China to categorize countries she has relations with into four types: strategic fulcrums such as Russia and Pakistan, normal countries such as Germany and India, global competitors such as the United States, and hostile countries such as Japan and the Philippines. The “striving to shine” strategy also tries to establish moral reputation and strategic credibility for China by letting neighbors benefit economically from her growth. This approach differs from the “keeping China’s true strength hidden” principle of economic equality and mutual benefits in China’s international economic relations.

Because the goal of the “striving to shine” strategy is to seek more friends and potential allies rather than economic interests, China’s diplomatic policies will gear more toward political orientation and principle. This change sets higher targets for China to achieve. That’s why President Xi wants government officials working on foreign affairs to put more energy in their work and proactively achieve good results in diplomacy with neighboring countries.<sup>58</sup> Some international political analysts discovered that President Xi’s foreign policy is cooperative in nature but assertive

<sup>56</sup> Speech on Chinese Dream Delivered by Xi Jinping at the Closing Session of the Twelfth National People’s Congress, March 17, 2013, <http://bj.people.com.cn/n/2013/0317/c349760-18308059.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Zhang Shengjun: No Way to Give up the Zero-sum Game Mentality in China’s Foreign Policy, Nov. 28, 2013, [http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion\\_world/2013-11/4608457.html](http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2013-11/4608457.html).

<sup>58</sup> Qian Tong: Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at Neighboring Diplomacy Work Conference.



in practice.<sup>59</sup> This evaluation is quite appropriate for the “striving to shine” strategy because it has the characteristics of humane authority highly advocated by moral realism.<sup>60</sup> Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd argues that the external expression of moral realism is acute nationalism.<sup>61</sup>

#### 4.4 Effects of the “striving to Shine” Strategy

In addition to foreign criticism on the assertiveness of China’s foreign policy practices under Xi’s “striving to shine” strategy, many Chinese also question if this strategy is harmful to China’s foreign relations. Some veteran diplomats even publicly criticized the short-sighted shift from “keeping China’s true strength hidden” to “striving to shine.”<sup>62</sup> China’s diplomacy in 2012 was still at the stage of strategic transition, so the influence of the strategy of “striving to shine” was still limited. By 2013, however, we could see the role of such strategy from China’s diplomatic achievement. In 2013, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang visited Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe, met with over 300 foreign politicians and welcomed more than 60 heads of state or heads of government to China. Meanwhile, China signed nearly 800 cooperation agreement with other countries.<sup>63</sup> This paper is set to evaluate the influence of the strategy of “seeking to achieve” on China’s diplomacy through exploring the changing relations between China and the world’s major powers and between China and her neighboring countries since 2012, including policy adjustments in 2012. Next, I evaluate the impact of the “striving to shine” strategy on China’s foreign policy through examination of the changes that have taken place in China’s relations with major powers and neighboring countries since 2012 even though that year was a transitional period.

##### (II) Stabilize Sino-US relations

After President Xi’s visit to the United States in February 2012, the Obama administration suspected that Xi’s idea of establishing a new type of major power relations was rhetorical for covering up a rather superficial bilateral friendship. Even after China reiterated this idea at the China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogue (SED)

<sup>59</sup> He Kai and Feng Huiyun, “Xi Jinping’s Operational Code Beliefs and China’s Foreign Policy,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2013, p. 211.

<sup>60</sup> Xuetong Yan, *The Inertia of History: China and the World in the Coming Decade*, Beijing: CITIC Press, 2013, pp. 180–215. Yan Xuetong: *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*, pp. 99–106, 142–144, 216–221.

<sup>61</sup> Comments on *the Inertia of History* by Kelvin Rudd.

<sup>62</sup> Wu Jianmin Claims that China Upholds the Strategy of “keeping China’s true strength hidden” and that Contrary Views Are Weak Country Mentality, Jan. 2, 2014, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2014-01-02/052829139004.shtml?ADUIN=31995387>.

<sup>63</sup> Wang Yi Summarizes the Achievements of China’s Diplomacy This Year and Looks Ahead to Next Year’s Diplomatic Work. Dec.19, 2013, [http://news.china.com.cn/2013-12/19/content\\_30937823.Html](http://news.china.com.cn/2013-12/19/content_30937823.Html).



in May 2012, Washington still doubted Chinese sincerity. Hilary Clinton, the US Secretary, ordered American diplomats in Beijing to investigate the content of this suggestion. Next, on different occasions, American diplomats frequently questioned the substance of this concept. The Obama administration did not realize that the concept of a new type of major power relationship does not entail close friendship, but healthy competition, or at least peaceful competition. The so-called “new type” is different from Cold War era US-Soviet relations, while major power relations refer to relations between the emerging power and the hegemonic country. As Yang Jiechi put it, the main objective of establishing new-type great power relations is to explore new methods to manage differences between China and the US.<sup>64</sup>

Washington gradually recognized China's sincerity to try to stabilize Sino-US relations. In June 2013, President Obama met with President Xi in Annenberg Retreat, California, though he could not completely accept the idea of a new type of great power relations, the parties reached a consensus on establishing a new type of strategic cooperation. One reason for Washington's doubt is that China did not clarify whether this concept applies to all major powers or to China-US relations only. Yang Jiechi tried to distinguish China's relations with the United States from other major powers in his article in August 2013, saying that “pushing for constructing a new model of major power relations between China and the United States and achieving healthy interactions and win-win cooperation with other major powers are important ideas of the Party's Central Committee led by Party Secretary Xi Jinping in operating major power relations.”<sup>65</sup> Obviously, the above mentioned new type of great power relations refers to Sino-US relations only.

In November 2013, this idea was first formally accepted by the Obama administration when Susan E. Rice, the National Security Advisor, delivered a speech on American policy toward Asia. She said: “When it comes to China, we seek to operationalize a new model of major power relations. That means managing inevitable competition while forging deeper cooperation on issues where our interests converge in Asia and beyond.”<sup>66</sup>

In November and December 2013, two unexpected events tested this new type of major power relations between China and the United States. First, China announced to designate the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone in November 23, and Sino-US relations endured the test, while Japan had a very sentimental response. China-US political relations survived the test of China's declaration of an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea on November 23. Tokyo responded to China's declaration with an emotional policy, requiring China to rescind the decision and asking Japanese air companies not to report their flight

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<sup>64</sup> Yang Jiechi: Innovation in China's Diplomatic Theory and Practice under New Situations.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> American Future in Asia, Remarks Prepared for Delivery by National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice at Georgetown University, Gaston Hall, Washington, D. C., November 20, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/21.7>.

plans to the Chinese government.<sup>67</sup> The Japanese government even suggested that American Vice President Joe Biden, who visited Japan in December 2013, issue a US-Japan joint statement asking China to rescind the ADIZ. Biden turned down the Japanese proposal and described US-China relations as being “hugely consequential.” He also expressed the hope to use his connections with Chinese leaders to help defuse the crisis between China and Japan.<sup>68</sup> The second incident took place on December 6, 2013, when the US navy missile cruiser Cowpens confronted one of the warships of China’s navy aircraft carrier formation Liaoning within a distance of no more than 500 yards.<sup>69</sup> After the incident, China and the US held high-level dialogues immediately to avoid breaking off relations between the two navies. When similar cases happened over the past two decades, China and the US suspended navy communication several times. In addition, in February 2014, President Obama chose to meet with the Dalai Lama in the Map Room of the White House rather than the Oval Office, which was full of journalists and photographers.<sup>70</sup> Other than vocal protest, China didn’t take any substantial revenge action. This indicated that both countries adopted careful strategies to compete with each other.

Besides the relatively peaceful outcome of the ADIZ issue and the level of danger involved with navy ship collision, quantitative studies of China-US relationship by Tsinghua University also demonstrate improved stability of bilateral relations after China adopted the “striving to shine” strategy. Figure 4.1 shows that China-US relations became less bumpy during 2012–2013 than during 2009–2011.

Figure 4.1 shows that the degree of variability of Sino-US relations between 2009 and 2011 is 1.7 (range between 0.4 and 2.1) and 1.3 during 2010–2011 (between 0.8 and 2.1). When China switched her foreign policy strategy to “striving to shine,” the degree of variability went down to 0.7 during 2012–2013 (range between 1.6 and 2.3). The standard deviation for the above mentioned three time periods were 0.499, 0.471 and 0.227, respectively.<sup>71</sup> The larger the standard deviation, the worse the stability. More importantly, since August 2012, Sino-US relations began improving. The numbers show that the new type of great power policy may have eased the “fake friendship” between China and the US, because both countries admitted that the core of their relations was competition rather than cooperation. When one country

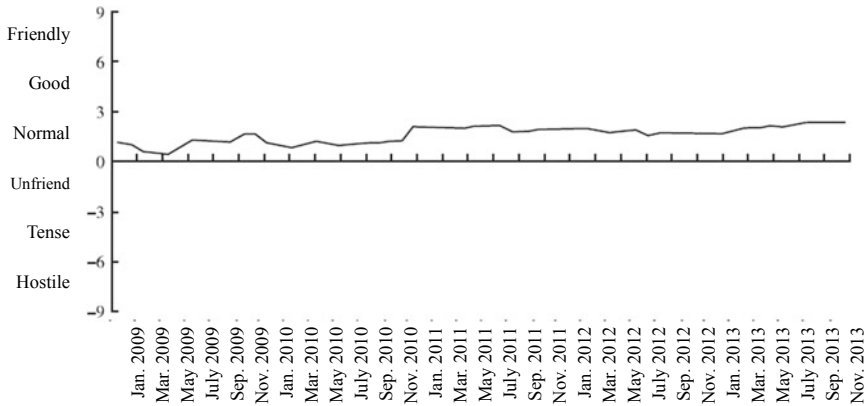
<sup>67</sup> Mu Xuequan. China’s Top Legislature Rejects Japanese Resolution on ADIZ, December 12, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-12/08/c\\_125823879.html](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-12/08/c_125823879.html).

<sup>68</sup> David Nakamura. Biden Opens Visit to China Aimed at Easing Tensions in Northeast Asia, *The Washington Post*, December 5, 2013, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/biden-opens-visit-to-china-aimed-at-easing-tensions-in-northeast-asia/2013/12/04/b9466ec2-5cbf-11e3-bc56-c6ca94801fac\\_story.html?wprss=rss\\_homepage](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/biden-opens-visit-to-china-aimed-at-easing-tensions-in-northeast-asia/2013/12/04/b9466ec2-5cbf-11e3-bc56-c6ca94801fac_story.html?wprss=rss_homepage).

<sup>69</sup> Barbara Starr. U.S. Chinese Warships Come Dangerously Close, December 13, 2013, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/13/politics/us-china-confrontation>.

<sup>70</sup> Obama Meets Dalai Lama at White House, China Protests. *New York Post*, February 22, 2014, <http://nypost.com/2014/02/22/obama-meets-dalai-lama-at-white-house-china-protests>.

<sup>71</sup> Standard deviation of Sino-US relations:  $\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu)^2}$   $\sigma$ : Standard deviation, n: quantity of numeric value, xi: single numeric value,  $\mu$ : mean.



**Fig. 4.1** Trend in Sino-US relations, 2009–2013. (Source The Institute of Modern International Relations, Tsinghua University, China-foreign Relations Data, <http://www.imir.tsinghua.edu.cn/publish/iisen/7523/index.html>)

views the other as a competitor, it wouldn't expect too many favors from the other. Meanwhile, it will be less emotional about the other's hostility.<sup>72</sup>

## (II) Consolidate Sino-European relations

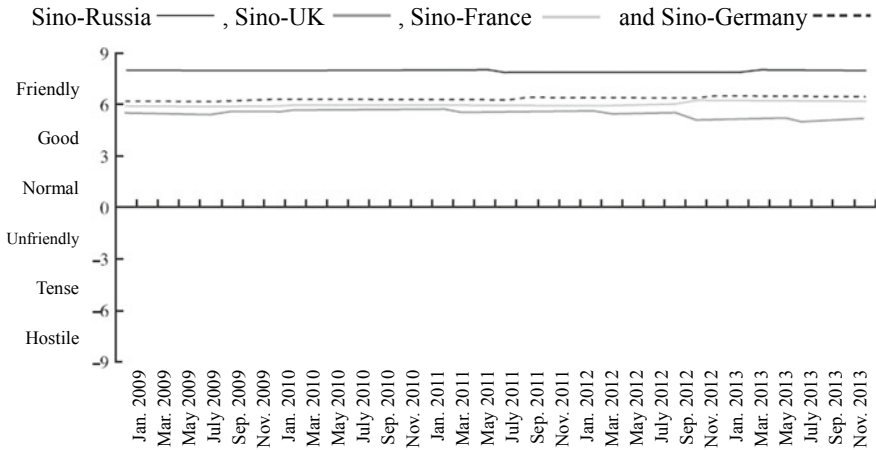
After implementing the strategy of “striving to shine,” we not only saw increased stability of Sino-US relations, but also discovered that relations between China and European countries including Russia also got improved. Figure 4.2 reflects the trend of improved relations in 2013.

After the Cold War, China has been on much better terms with Russia than with the US. In fact, Sino-Russian relations are the best among relations between China and other major powers of the world. Since the mid-1990s, Russia has also been the only country that has had large-scale military cooperation with China. Even though Sino-Russian relations are already at a high level, we see further consolidation of strategic cooperation with Russia after China has changed her strategy from “keeping China's true strength hidden” to “striving to shine.” Figure 4.2 shows that China-Russian relations have improved by 0.1 point in 2013.

Meanwhile, several incidents showed that strategic cooperation between China and Russia was strengthened between 2012 and 2013. China and Russia cooperated to veto UN motions proposed by Western countries (e.g. resolutions on sanctions against Syria and Iran). In June 2012, China and Russia issued joint statements through Shanghai Cooperation Organization against military intervention against Syria by major Western powers.<sup>73</sup> After being elected president in March 2013, Xi Jinping chose Moscow as his first destination for state visits. During his visit, China

<sup>72</sup> Xuetong Yan. The Instability of China-US Relations, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2010, pp. 280–285.

<sup>73</sup> The SCO Statement Opposing Military Intervention in Syria, *Reference News*, June 8, 2012, <http://china.cankaoxiaoxi.com/2012/0608/46311.Shtml>.



**Fig. 4.2** Trend of relations between China and major European countries 2011–2013. *Source* Institute of Contemporary International Relations of Tsinghua University, Research Achievements, China and foreign relations data, scores for China-Russia, China-UK, China-France and China-Germany relations from 1950 to 2013. <http://www.imir.tsinghua.edu.cn/publish/iisen/7523/index.Html>

and Russia issued a joint statement expressing mutual support for each other's territorial and sovereignty stands.<sup>74</sup> The statement shows that China and Russia agree to cooperate in terms of territorial disputes with Japan. Despite a long history of territorial disputes between China and Japan and between Russia and Japan, China and Russia have previously never openly supported each other on those issues. In July 2013, China and Russia conducted military exercises, including joint navy maneuvers that were of the largest scale joint military exercise with other countries ever.<sup>75</sup> By the end of 2013, Foreign Minister Wang Yi cited progress in China-Russia strategic cooperation as top diplomatic achievement for 2013 in his year-end summary report.<sup>76</sup> When leaders of all Western countries were absent from the Sochi Winter Olympics in February 2014, President Xi Jinping went to Russia in person to congratulate Vladimir Putin on the event. In response, President Putin expressed his support on China's stance of isolating Japan in East Asia by agreeing to commemorate with China the 70th anniversary of the victory of WWII in 2015.<sup>77</sup> After the 2014 Ukraine crisis, Western countries imposed economic sanctions on Russia while China

<sup>74</sup> A Joint Declaration by the Heads of State of China and Russia. March 23, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/2013-03/23/c\\_124494025.Html](http://news.xinhuanet.com/2013-03/23/c_124494025.Html).

<sup>75</sup> Simon Shuster. The World According to Putin. *Time*, September 16, 2013, pp. 22–23.

<sup>76</sup> Wang Yi Summarizes the Achievements of China's Diplomacy This Year and Looks ahead to Next Year's Diplomatic Work. Dec. 19, 2013, [http://news.china.com.cn/2013-12/19/content\\_30937823.Html](http://news.china.com.cn/2013-12/19/content_30937823.Html).

<sup>77</sup> Meeting Putin, China's Xi Praises Sochi Games, Cooperation between 2 Nations, February 7, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/02/07/meeting-putin-china-xi-praises-sochigames-cooperation-between-2-nations>.

and Russia reached agreements on energy cooperation, for which Putin expressed gratitude.<sup>78</sup>

China-Germany relations were also further consolidated after China had adopted the “striving to shine” strategy. For many years, Germany has been China’s largest economic partner in the European Union, with bilateral volume of trade reaching USD161.13 billion in 2012, almost accounting for one third of total China-EU trade.<sup>79</sup> In 2012, China’s actual investment in Germany amounted to USD1.45 billion, an increase of 28.5% year-on-year growth, even though the number of China’s investment projects was third behind the US and Switzerland.<sup>80</sup> Despite this, Sino-German relations remain the best of China’s relations with all other major Western powers, and this relationship further improved from 2012 to 2013. Chancellor Angela Merkel visited China in August 2012 and Premier Li Keqiang visited Germany in May 2013. Merkel repeatedly stated that Germany attaches great importance to relations with China and hopes to work with China to maintain high-level exchange, strengthen pragmatic cooperation and realize common development.<sup>81</sup>

As shown in Fig. 4.2, China-France relations also saw improvement in 2013. Hollande was the first head of state of a major Western country to visit China after Xi Jinping took office as president. Hollande was accompanied by a high-ranking business delegation hoping to get a larger share of China’s growing economy. During his visit, Airbus signed an order of 60 planes worth an estimated USD7.7 billion from Chinese airlines, French nuclear giant Areva and the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) talked about the construction of a nuclear waste treatment facility, and car-maker Renault looked into negotiations on a proposed factory in Wuhan that would produce 150,000 vehicles per year.<sup>82</sup> Eight months later, French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault visited China to finalize those projects. During his visit, he oversaw a letter of intent signed by Areva and the CNNC for a joint venture to develop a zirconium facility; a contract in a consortium with Siemens to supply instrumentation and control systems for Fuqing Units 5 and 6; and a partnership agreement with China General Nuclear on renewable energy cooperation.<sup>83</sup> To mark 50 years of full diplomatic relations between Paris and Beijing, French Foreign

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<sup>78</sup> Russia and China Signed Huge Gas Deal, and Sino-Russia Energy Cooperation Causes Europe Worry. *The Spectator*. May 22, 2014, [http://www.guancha.cn/Project/2014\\_05\\_22\\_231545.shtml](http://www.guancha.cn/Project/2014_05_22_231545.shtml).

<sup>79</sup> “Li’s Visit to Elevate China’s Ties with Germany and the Rest of Europe,” May 24, 2013, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013livisit/2013-05/24/content\\_16529145.Html](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013livisit/2013-05/24/content_16529145.Html).

<sup>80</sup> Li Keqiang’s Visit to Germany to Focus on Managing Economic and Trade Issues, May 25, 2013, <http://www.best-news.us/news-4540366-Li-Keqiang-39s-visit-to-Germany-for-managing-focusing-economic-and-trade-issues.html>.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Small Ball. France Hopes Billion-Dollar China Airbus Deal Is First of Many, April 26, 2013, <http://www.france24.com/en/20130425-china-france-airbus-francois-hollande-businesseconomy>.

<sup>83</sup> “China and France Strengthen Nuclear Collaboration,” December 9, 2013, <http://www.worldnuclear-news.org/C-China-and-France-strengthen-nuclear-collaboration-0912137.html>.

Minister Laurent Fabius announced that travel permits for tourists from China will be processed within two days starting January 27, 2014.<sup>84</sup>

Improvement of China-UK relations is a typical case illustrating how the “seeking to achieve” strategy helps improve China’s deteriorated relations with Western powers. Then British PM David Cameron insisted on meeting with the Dalai Lama in London in May 2012, regardless of China’s warning, which resulted in the suspension of high-level contact between two countries for a year and a half. After much hard diplomatic work, Cameron got an invitation from Beijing and visited Beijing in December 2013. He publicly reaffirmed her respect for China’s territorial integrity and sovereignty and her core interests and major concerns and said that the UK would persistently adhere to the one China principle.<sup>85</sup> His statement was met with “appreciated” from his Chinese counterpart, Premier Li Keqiang.<sup>86</sup> He and Li Keqiang oversaw the signing of 10 agreements, including deals on space exploration, media exchanges and patent protection. Standing next to Cameron, Li Keqiang expressed that there had been a ‘breakthrough’ agreement on high-speed rail development between the two countries as well as Chinese investment in civil nuclear power. Improvement of political relations resulted in substantial economic cooperation. During the visit, Cameron led the largest trade mission ever to China and he said to Premier Li Keqiang, “The scale of the delegation reflects our huge expectation of Sino-Britain partnership, and we especially hope to explore various opportunities of economic openness, and Britain’s openness to Chinese investment.”<sup>87</sup> Cameron and Li Keqiang saw together the signing of 10 cooperation documents, ranging from space exploration, media exchange and patent protection. Li said that the two countries have conducted breakthrough cooperation in the domain of high-speed railway and civilian nuclear power.<sup>88</sup>

### (III) Improve relations with other developing countries

In 2013, China improved relations with other developing countries as well. In March, President Xi took a trip to Africa, visiting Tanzania, Congo, and South Africa, attending the BRICS summit in Durban, South Africa, and meeting with national leaders from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the African Union.<sup>89</sup> At the BRICS summit, President Xi reached an agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, and South African

<sup>84</sup> Laura Zhou: France to Fast-track Visa Approval for Tourists from China. *South China Morning Post*, January 15, 2014, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1405763/francefast-track-visa-approval-tourists-china>.

<sup>85</sup> UK’s Cameron Emphasizes Business in China Visit, December 2, 2013, <http://news.yahoo.com/uk-Cameron-emphasizes-business-china-visit-065906352.html>.

<sup>86</sup> British PM Emphasizes Business in China Visit, December 3, 2013, <http://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/20118269/British-pm-emphasizes-business-in-china-visit>.

<sup>87</sup> UK’s Cameron Emphasizes Business in China Visit.

<sup>88</sup> British PM Emphasizes Business in China Visit.

<sup>89</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. Media Advisory on President Xi Jinping’s State Visit to Russia, Tanzania, South Africa, and the Republic of Congo on his Attendance at the 5th BRICS Summit. March 21, 2013, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/dozys/xwlb/t1023948.shtml>.

President Jacob Zuma to set up a development bank for mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in the BRICS, as well as other developing countries. They also agreed to explore the construction of a financial safety net through the creation of a Contingent Reserve Arrangement.<sup>90</sup> At the first BRICS Leaders-Africa Dialogue Forum, Xi reaffirmed China's promise to give zero-tariff treatment to 97% of the tariff items of exports to China from the least developed nations having diplomatic ties with China.<sup>91</sup> This is a typical policy of the strong should be benevolent to the weak.<sup>92</sup>

From May 31 to June 2, 2013, President Xi visited Latin America. Prior to visiting Costa Rica and Mexico, President Xi held bilateral meetings in Trinidad and Tobago with leaders from Antigua, Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Surinam and Jamaica, respectively.<sup>93</sup> In September, President Xi visited Central Asiannations such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and attended the Group of 20 Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia and the summit of the SCO in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.<sup>94</sup> In October, he paid state visits to two important Southeast Asian states, Indonesia and Malaysia while attending the 21st leaders' meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Obama's cancellation of attending the APEC forum as a result of the US government temporary shutdown put Xi in the spotlight at the APEC.<sup>95</sup> The idea of "a community of shared destiny" proposed by President Xi during his visit to Southeast Asia prevented Indonesia and Malaysia from siding with the US or the Philippines against China.

In 2013 Premier Li Keqiang also visited some developing countries and met with many of their leaders. In May, Premier Li visited India and Pakistan.<sup>96</sup> His visit to India strengthened mutual trust between China and India, though Indian media tried to sow the apple of discord on Sino-Indian border issues, the Indian government insisted on improving political relations with China. In January 2014, India proactively proposed to hold a Sino-Indian military conference to seek effective

<sup>90</sup> BRICS Summit Delivers Tangible Results, March 28, 2013, [http://www.china.org.cn/world/2013-03/28/content\\_28381372.html](http://www.china.org.cn/world/2013-03/28/content_28381372.html).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> See *Mencius: King Hui of Wei* (Vol. 2). Emperor Xuan of Qi asked, "Is there any method to develop neighboring state relations?" Mencius replied, "Yes. Only benevolent men can serve a small country when they are great. That is why Shang Tang served the State of Ge and King Wen of Zhou served Kunyi. Only wise men can serve a great country in their insignificance. That is why the Great King of Zhou served Xunyu and Gou Jian served the State of Wu. The great serves the small because they want to please Heaven. The small serves the great because they fear Heaven. The former protects the world, while the latter protects their own countries."

<sup>93</sup> Xi's Latin American Tour to Promote Cooperation, May 3, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-05/30/c\\_132417733.html](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-05/30/c_132417733.html).

<sup>94</sup> Mu Xuequan, Xi's Central Asia Trip Aimed at Common Development, Win-Win Cooperation, September 15, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/15/c\\_125389057.html](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/15/c_125389057.html).

<sup>95</sup> Geoff Hiscock, Obama Withdrawal Puts China's Xi Jinping in APEC Box Seat," October 7, 2013, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/06/world/asia/apec-obama-xi-putin/index.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Ananth Krishnan, China Announces Premier Li Keqiang's Visits to India, Pakistan. *The Hindu*, May 14, 2013, <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/china-announcespremier-li-keqiangs-visits-to-india-pakistan/article4713049.ece>.



ways to avoid or solve the problem of crossing the actual control line.<sup>97</sup> In September 2014, President Xi visited India and reached an agreement with India's Premier that the parties would solve boundary line disputes through acceptable methods and withdraw their respective troops from boundary areas in the aftermath of the visit.<sup>98</sup>

In October, Premier Li Keqiang attended the 8th East Asia Summit held in Brunei and visited Brunei, Thailand and Vietnam. Besides, he attended the 23th ASEAN Summit and addressed the plan to upgrade the China-ASEAN free trade zone, including the establishment of China-ASEAN Infrastructure Investment Bank to promote infrastructure construction linking China and ASEAN.<sup>99</sup> Premier Li's visit to Vietnam helped soften Vietnam's policy toward South China Sea disputes and caused other ASEAN members to keep a distance from the Philippines on this issue. In November, Premier Li visited Romania, marking the first time a Chinese leader ever to visit the country over the past two decades.<sup>100</sup> He attended the China-Central and Eastern Europe Economic and Trade Forum in Bucharest where he met leaders of 16 Central and Eastern European nations. After that meeting, he headed to Uzbekistan to attend the 12th Prime Ministers' Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States.<sup>101</sup> Except those two major meetings, Premier Li Keqiang nearly had bilateral dialogue with all leaders. Besides these two conferences, he also held bilateral meetings with almost every participating counterpart.

### (III) Tensions with Japan

Sino-Japanese relations between 2012 and 2013 were an exception that made some people use it to disprove the effects of the "seeking to achieve strategy." However, that is not the real case. After the Cold War, Sino-Japanese relations took a sharp turn for the worse ever since Junichiro Koizumi visited Yasukuni Shrine for sixth time during his reign.<sup>102</sup> Another major backsliding of Sino-Japanese relations happened in September 2010, when the Naoto Kan cabinet purposely detained a Chinese trawler captain for 18 days due to a collision between a Japanese coast guard patrol ship and a Chinese trawler in waters off the Diaoyu Islands. The two deteriorating incidents happened during China's implementation of the "keeping China's true strength

<sup>97</sup> India Invites China for DGMO-level Talks. *Deccan Herald*, January 16, 2014, <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/380384/india-invites-china-dgmo-level.html>.

<sup>98</sup> Ladakh Stand-off: India, China Agree to Withdraw troops by September 30. *The Times of India*, September 26, 2014, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Ladakh-stand-off-Chinese-troops-start-withdrawing-from-Chumar/articleshow/43543478.cms>.

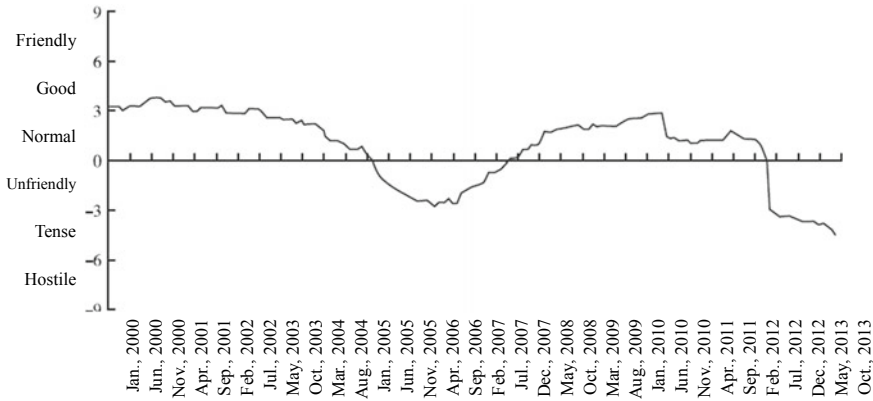
<sup>99</sup> Hou Qiang, News Analysis: Li's Visit to Further Strengthen Bilateral Ties between Hanoi and Beijing, October 18, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/18/c\\_132808810.html](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/18/c_132808810.html).

<sup>100</sup> Kit Gillet. China Cosying up to Eastern Europe." *Aljazeera*, November 26, 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/11/china-cozing-up-eastern-europe-2013112513118391613.html>.

<sup>101</sup> Zhu Ningzhu. Chinese Premier to Visit Romania, Uzbekistan. November 18, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-11/18/c\\_132897930.html](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-11/18/c_132897930.html).

<sup>102</sup> Koizumi Visits Contested World War II Shrine, August 15, 2006, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/14351560/ns/world\\_news-asia\\_pacific/t/koizumi-visits-contested-world-war-ii-shrine/#.UslAb4GIWcE](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/14351560/ns/world_news-asia_pacific/t/koizumi-visits-contested-world-war-ii-shrine/#.UslAb4GIWcE).





**Fig. 4.3** Trend of Sino-Japanese relations between 2000 and 2013. *Source* Institute of contemporary international relations of Tsinghua University, China-Japanese Relations, Score of Sino-Japanese relations during 1950–2013, <http://www.imir.tsinghua.edu.cn/publish/iisen/7523/index.html>

hidden” strategy, which suggests that this strategy has no way of keeping Sino-Japanese relations afloat. Figure 4.3 shows the two major drops in Sino-Japanese relations.

The current confrontation between China and Japan was a direct result of the Yoshihiko Noda government’s nationalization of the Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea in 2012 and, bilateral relations have since further deteriorated<sup>103</sup> after Abe Shinzo had paid homage to Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013.<sup>104</sup>

Figure 4.3 shows that Sino-Japanese relations under Abe fell down to even lower level than that during the rule of Koizumi’s government. The deep reason for this rapid sliding of Sino-Japanese relations since 2000 is a structural conflict between China and Japan, i.e. Japan cannot psychologically accept the fact that China is replacing it as the second largest economy in the world. The two long-term relapses in Sino-Japanese relations imply that the current confrontation between China and Japan was not caused by China’s “Seeking to Achieve” strategy.

Although China’s “Seeking to Achieve” strategy could not soften the Abe administration’s confrontation with China, it has effectively isolated Abe and has consolidated relations between China and other countries. For instance, South Korea, Russia, and the United States all sided with China against Abe’s visit to Yasukuni Shrine. South Korean President Park Geun-Hye has adopted the same policy as China to

<sup>103</sup> Anh Huyen. Japan’s Nationalization of Senkaku Islands Infuriates China. September 11, 2012, <http://vovworld.vn/en-US/Current-Affairs/Japans-nationalization-of-Senkaku-Islandsinfuriates-China/106516.vov>.

<sup>104</sup> China Says Abe not Welcome after War Shrine Visit. *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2013, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/china-says-abe-not-welcomeafter-war-shrine-visit/2013/12/30/bc30314e-7133-11e3-bc6b-712d770c3715\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/china-says-abe-not-welcomeafter-war-shrine-visit/2013/12/30/bc30314e-7133-11e3-bc6b-712d770c3715_story.html).

refuse any meeting with Abe since he assumed the presidency in February 2013.<sup>105</sup> Putin adopted a tough policy over Russia's territory disputes with Japan. His Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that there would be no swift solution to the territorial dispute that has prevented the signing of a formal peace between the two countries since the end of World War II.<sup>106</sup> In 2014, Putin constantly postponed his plan to visit Japan, leading to deterioration of Japan-Russian relations. Since 2012, the Obama administration has urged Japan to return to the United States more than 300 kg of mostly weapon-grade plutonium that it exported to Japan for research purposes during the Cold War era. In October 2013, ASEAN countries, except for the Philippines, all rejected a joint stance suggested by Japan on the issue of the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone at the Japan-ASEAN Special Summit in Japan.<sup>107</sup>

## 4.5 Conclusion

This article tries to explain why pursuing political leadership based on humane authority can help a rising power create a favorable international environment. Both classical realism and moral realism emphasize the importance of international morality, but the former does not distinguish different levels of international morality. By contrast, moral realism analyzes relations between international morality and different types of international power and infers that international strategic credibility is not only a prerequisite for a rising power to establish a world leading power status, but also a necessary condition for a rising power to attract more allies than the existing hegemon.

Because of the anarchical nature of the international system, a rising power will inevitably challenge the existing hegemon and threaten its neighbors due to a structural imbalance between the rising power and the status quo hegemon as well as other major powers that causes a "rise-dilemma" for the rising power. The stronger the rising power is, the heavier pressure it will receive from the international system. According to the principle of moral realism, the rising country will face deteriorated international environment unless it proactively creates a favorable international environment for its rising. In order to see that happen, the rising power will need to undertake more security responsibilities to prevent natural deterioration of relations with neighboring countries. The keeping China's true strength hidden strategy cannot work out a favorable environment for China's national rejuvenation because it evades the undertaking of international security responsibility, which presents to other states an image of an "irresponsible" power. Political leadership of humane authority sees

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<sup>105</sup> Julian Ryall. China, South Korea Reject Complaint from Japan over Statue of Assassin. *South China Morning Post*, January 27, 2014, <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1360486/china-south-korea-reject-complaint-japan-over-statue-assassin>.

<sup>106</sup> Steve Gutterman. Russia's Putin Accepts Japan Invitation, Minister Says, January 21, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/21/us-russia-japan-idUSBREA0K0SF20140121>.

<sup>107</sup> US Presses Japan to Hand back 300 kg of Plutonium. January 27, 2014, <http://www.vancouverdesi.com/news/us-presses-japan-to-hand-back-300-kg-of-plutonium/706755>.

strategic credibility as an important national interest that can serve as the foundation of international authority. The Seeking to Achieve Strategy adopted by President Xi aims at increasing China's strategic credibility, including provision of security protection for neighboring countries. Moral realism regards security cooperation as the basis for reliable strategic relations between the rising power and other nations because only security cooperation can lessen neighboring countries' fear, increase the reliance of smaller countries and win more and greater strategic backing.

Under the guidance of the Seeking to Achieve Strategy, China made visible diplomatic achievements in 2013. Moral realism believes that these achievements are primarily the result of a shift from economy-dominated diplomacy to politics-dominated diplomacy. Unlike the strategy of keeping China's true strength hidden which focuses on economic interests, the Seeking to Achieve Strategy sets political integrity on a higher par than economic interests. For the sake of political integrity, the Seeking to Achieve Strategy sets "befriending the nations" as the priority target of China's foreign policy. China has improved her relations with the bulk of the countries in the world as she goes about doling out economic assistance to foreign countries from the perspective of strengthening strategic ties rather than expanding her own economic interests. In order to create a favorable environment for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, President Xi also put forward the concept of "a community of common destiny" governing the building of relations with neighboring countries. Any "community of common destiny," be it tighter or looser than any international alliance, must at least involve military cooperation. To establish a community of common destiny, China will need to enhance her strategic credibility and implement moralistic policies toward members of the "community of common destiny." Before that community is established, the Seeking to Achieve Strategy can at least assure that most countries choose to keep a neutral stance in the strategic competition between China and the US.

Based on moral realism, the Seeking to Achieve Strategy stabilized China-US relations between 2012 and 2013 mainly because it repositioned the bilateral relations from the superficiality of friendship to the reality of peaceful competition, or as a new type of major power relations. When the strategy of keeping China's true strength hidden was used, it could temporarily ease Sino-US tension despite raising unreasonable expectations of positive activities from both parties. However, overly high expectations can result in one party's overreaction to the other party's unfavorable action. When China insisted on the strategy of keeping China's true strength hidden, both China and the US were unwilling to admit the existence of any structural imbalance and both adopted the strategy of fake friendship, which was both relational and strategic.<sup>108</sup> By admitting that Sino-US relations are competitive, the parties would have lower expectations of favor from each other and hence experience greater stability of relations. Contrary to the strategy of keeping China's true strength hidden, the Seeking to Achieve Strategy is built on the assumption that

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<sup>108</sup> Xuetong Yan and Haixia Qi: Football Game rather than Boxing Match-China-US Intensifying Rivalry Does not Amount to Cold War. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2012, pp. 109-113.

a structural conflict exists between the rising power and the existing hegemon. In August 2011, Chinese President Xi Jinping and then US Vice President Joe Biden reached a consensus on engaging in healthy competition.<sup>109</sup> The parties admitted that they have a competitive relationship and thus they began to lower their expectations of favor from each other and their relationship began to stabilize. This statement can be backed by what Biden had said during his 2013 visit to China: “You are candid, you are constructive.” “Developing this new relationship, both qualities are sorely needed. Candor generates trust, and trust is the basis on which real change, constructive change, is made,” Biden added.<sup>110</sup>

In the course of polarization of international situation, it’s impossible for the rising power to hide its true strength. The strategy of keeping China’s true strength hidden requires that China keeps away from international responsibilities even when the international community is putting a lot of political pressure on China to undertake such responsibilities by labeling China an “unfriendly” and even “immoral” country. Taking a different approach, the Seeking to Achieve Strategy encourages China to take up international responsibilities consistent with her national interests, national strength and her status as the second largest economy in the world. Such a strategy will help China build her image as a moral and responsible major power. Between 2013 and 2014, China’s global image improved significantly among developing countries, especially those in Africa. The main reason of this change of image in Africa (from an “economic colonialist”) was that China has deployed peacekeeping troops in South Sudan, which reflected China’s policy of undertaking international security responsibilities.<sup>111</sup>

The main reason the Seeking to Achieve Strategy can create a favorable international environment for rejuvenating the Chinese nation is that it includes a new value or new concept of morality and interest, the essence of which is that morality stands higher than economic interests. And the specifics of such morality are fairness and justice,<sup>112</sup> which are significant components of universal international morality and common values for the majority of countries.

That is why the strategy can help China gain more international support while the core value of the keeping China’s true strength hidden is mere accumulation of wealth, which is seen as selfish in any civilization. That means continued adherence to the core value of the keeping China’s true strength hidden strategy will inevitably tarnish China’s international image and make it impossible to create an international environment beneficial to the fulfillment of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

So far, many scholars, Chinese as well as foreign, believe that the Seeking to Achieve Strategy is doomed to fail. Some have even compared it to the policy of

<sup>109</sup> Remarks by the Vice President at Sichuan University. August 21, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/21/remarks-vice-president-sichuan-university>.

<sup>110</sup> David Nakamura. Biden Opens Visit to China Aimed at Easing Tensions in Northeast Asia.

<sup>111</sup> China Sends Peacekeeping Troops to South Sudan for the First Time. *Reference News*, September 26, 2014, p. 1.

<sup>112</sup> Yang Jiechi: China’s Diplomatic Theory and Practice Innovation under the New Situation.

Germany before World War I or that of Japan before World War II. This article does not argue that the new strategy will definitely succeed; it argues instead that it will do a better job of creating an environment favorable to China's rise than the old strategy. The greatest risk of the Seeking to Achieve Strategy is not war with the US, but rather military confrontation with some of China's neighbors, particularly with Japan. As China's gap of strength with her neighbors grows, the Seeking to Achieve Strategy can easily be perceived as an aggressive strategy. Therefore, China needs to implement it in a very delicate way so that she may not be seen as a reckless power. Meanwhile, China needs to prevent the international community from backing those countries that deliberately challenge her.

Because China has pursued the Seeking to Achieve Strategy only for a very short period of time, an assessment of its effects still needs to be tested by future events. However, the Chinese government led by President Xi Jinping has already gained a positive reputation both domestically and internationally.

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# Chapter 5

## Key Concepts and Features of China's Diplomacy Since the 18th CPC National Congress



Canrong Jin and Hao Wang

**Abstract** Since the 18th CPC National Congress that concluded the once-in-a-decade leadership transition, the newly elected CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as General Secretary has proposed a series of new concepts in regard to China's diplomacy. These new concepts reflect changes in both domestic and international situations. Numerous innovations in diplomatic theory and practice show that major changes in China's diplomacy have taken place. The new concepts and features of China's diplomacy that emerged after the closing of the 18th CPC National Congress, which are of great significance to China and the rest of the world, have provided a valid framework for observing China's diplomacy in the future.

**Keywords** Peaceful development · Chinese dream · New type of great power relations · Bottom-line principle · East-West balance

The closing of the 18th CPC National Congress in November 2012 marked the end of a successful transition of CPC central leadership and a brand new stage of China's reform and development. As far as diplomacy is concerned, the start date of this new stage was January 28, 2013, when the 18th Politburo of the CPC Central Committee held its third group study session. During this study session, the new collective leadership under Secretary General Xi Jinping presented for the first time a series of new concepts governing foreign affairs which were later supplemented, expanded and further developed. In tempo with that, diplomatic practices of the new administration began to exhibit many brand new features and set in motion a very good beginning. In this article, we will focus on analyzing innovative theories and practices in China's diplomacy since the end of the 18th CPC National Congress and explore their great significance to China and the rest of the world from the perspective of international politics, and in the meantime, try to provide a valid framework for observing China's diplomacy in the future.

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## 5.1 Key Concepts of China's Diplomacy Since the 18th CPC National Congress

### (I) Overall diplomacy: connect the Chinese Dream with the rest of the world on the basis of peaceful development

As stated earlier, many of China's new concepts of diplomacy put forth in the aftermath of the 18th CPC National Congress originated at the third group study session of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee where the Party's Secretary General Xi Jinping gave a speech titled "Consolidating the foundation of the path of peaceful development with due consideration for both domestic and international situations."<sup>1</sup> In that speech, Xi systematically expounded the new collective leadership's foreign affairs master plan. In sum, the speech contained the following main points: firstly, reaffirmation of China's commitment to the road of peaceful development; secondly, emphasizing that China's development must follow the trend of world development so that global opportunities could be converted into China's opportunities and vice versa; thirdly, sticking to the road of peaceful development, without giving up China's legitimate rights or sacrificing its core interests. In the meantime, other countries must go the way of peaceful development as well because that is the only way for the countries to develop together and coexist in peace.

In my opinion, the most important point of the speech is that China will endow the "Chinese Dream" with global meaning as she keeps going the way of peaceful development, and the specific new concepts of diplomacy driving the fulfillment of this objective are mainly reflected in the second and third points of Secretary General Xi's speech, which I want to summarize as "interaction between two opportunities" and "the dialectical unity of peace and development." As known to all, Secretary General Xi explained the specific meaning of the Chinese Dream when newly elected members of the Politburo Standing Committee of the 18th CPC Central Committee visited the "Road to Rejuvenation" exhibition in Beijing. "To realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the Chinese nation since the beginning of modern history," Xi said.<sup>2</sup> In June 2013, in a meeting with US President Barack Obama at the Annenberg Retreat in California, Xi said that China would strive to realize the Chinese Dream which "is connected to the American dream and to all the beautiful dreams people in other countries may have".<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, this meant that realization of the Chinese Dream has global significance because it is a dream of common development and win-win outcomes through which China is connected with the rest of the world as a responsible emerging power. In this article, I will focus on the two new diplomacy concepts aimed at leading China to

<sup>1</sup> Xi Jinping: Better coordinate domestic and international situations, and consolidate the foundation for taking the road of peaceful development, *People's Daily*, January 30, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Zhang Shuo: Pass on the baton and continue to march toward the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. *People's Daily*, November 30, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Xi Jinping: The Chinese Dream is connected to the dreams of all of the world's people. *Qianjiang Evening News*, June 9, 2013.

the fulfillment of the dream: “interaction between the two opportunities” and the “dialectical unity of peace and development.”

First of all, the concept of “interaction between two opportunities” shows for the first time that, as a responsible rising power, China will continue to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by globalization to propel its development and will focus on growing into the main driver of world development. Since the initiation of reform and opening up, China has witnessed remarkable achievements by actively merging into the global system. From the perspective of international politics, the Lockean culture developed under the leadership of post-WWII US began to change the theme and trend of international politics from erstwhile colonial war and foreign expansion to peaceful cooperation and joint development.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, what China has achieved over the past three decades relied on the progressiveness of international non-governmental culture and the theme of peaceful cooperation in international politics today. As CPC Secretary General Xi said at a group study session, “Global progress is like a tidal wave: ride with it and you will prosper, sail against it and you surely will perish. World history shows that armed aggression and expansion are always doomed to failure. This is the law of history. Global prosperity and stability represent an opportunity for China, while China’s development can represent an opportunity for the world.” Our interpretation of that is China will gradually evolve from a beneficiary of international public products to a bearer of international responsibilities. Such a transition will do a lot of good to the solution of many global issues and help China become a respected global power. Therefore, “interaction between two opportunities” is an effective strategy to deepen mutual benefit and win-win outcomes under new conditions.<sup>5</sup>

Second, the concept of “dialectical unity of peace and development” highlights on the one hand a precondition for China’s path of development—peaceful development, which is a need shared by the rest of the world, and suggests on the other hand that China as a responsible country needs to be both thorough and prudent in its strategic considerations and be clear and firm on issues of principle. For instance, on the Korean issue, President Xi Jinping warned that “no one would be allowed to throw a region and even the whole world into chaos for selfish gains.”<sup>6</sup> Foreign Minister Wang Yi also emphasized that China would not allow war or instability on its threshold.<sup>7</sup> These views show that China’s diplomacy is still serving the needs of domestic economic development. However, rather than implying any compromise of her principles, peaceful development can only mean that China will become one of the major forces for upholding world peace. As we all know, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has been taking a more and more active part in UN peacekeeping operations to maintain regional peace and stability. Furthermore,

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<sup>4</sup> Wendt [1].

<sup>5</sup> Jin [2].

<sup>6</sup> Xi Jinping: Work together to create a bright future for Asia and the rest of the world, *People’s Daily*, April 8, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Wang Yi: Troublemaking in China’s neighborhood not allowed, *People’s Daily*, April 7, 2013.



China firmly safeguards the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, vigorously promotes nuclear disarmament and persists in solving the Iran and North Korea nuclear issues through dialogue and consultation. Besides, China appointed special envoys to help advance the Middle East peace process and to deal with regional conflicts and humanitarian crises [5]. In sum, as China increasingly becomes a key participant and molder of the international system, peaceful development is no longer just a strategic choice, but has also become a major international responsibility in its capacity as a responsible emerging power.

## (II) Great power diplomacy: establishing a new type of great power relationship

The concept of “a new type of great power relations” was first mentioned by former State Councilor Dai Bingguo at the second US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in May 2010.<sup>8</sup> When Xi Jinping, then vice-president of China, visited the US in February 2012, he reiterated that China and the US should “constantly build a cooperative partnership and make concerted efforts to mold the two countries’ relationship into a new type of great power relationship in the twenty-first century.”<sup>9</sup> Thereafter, the two governments had multiple positive interactions around the “new type of great power relations” concept, culminating in a bilateral consensus for implementation in June 2013 at the Sunnylands summit between the heads of state in California. Moreover, the Chinese government led by President Xi Jinping further applied this concept in relations with other major powers. For instance, Xi chose Russia as his first country for a state visit after taking office as president and made Sino-Russian relations a fine example of the new type of great power relations.<sup>10</sup> In one word, the proposal, interpretation and implementation of the “new type of great power relations” are a great strategic innovation of the new leadership in handling relations with major powers.

Based on Xi’s speeches on multiple occasions, a new type of Sino-US great power relationship should include at least three components: firstly, no conflict or confrontation; secondly, mutual respect; and thirdly win-win cooperation.<sup>11</sup> From the perspective of the history and reality of international relations, the primary goal of the new type of Sino-US great power relations is proper handling of disputes and conflicts and deterring the historical recurrence of “great-power political tragedies” or the so-called “Thucydides’ trap.” As far as diplomatic practice is concerned, the consensus has not only had an extensive impact on bilateral relations, but also on the Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole, and has become a hot topic in global politics. Undoubtedly, such power of influence originates from the unprecedented

<sup>8</sup> The origin of a new type of major power relations between China and the US, Xinhua News Agency, [http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-06/06/c\\_116064614.htm](http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-06/06/c_116064614.htm).

<sup>9</sup> The origin of a new type of major power relations between China and the US, Xinhua News Agency, [http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-06/06/c\\_116064614.htm](http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-06/06/c_116064614.htm).

<sup>10</sup> Yu Sui: Xi Jinping’s fruitful visit to Russia and the global meaning of a new type of major power relations [http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2013-04/03/content\\_28433981.Htm](http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2013-04/03/content_28433981.Htm).

<sup>11</sup> Xi Jinping’s summary of new type of major-power relations between China and the US: no conflict or confrontation, mutual respect, and cooperation for win-win outcomes. [http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-06/10/c\\_116107914.htm](http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-06/10/c_116107914.htm).

complexity and importance of current Sino-US relations. On the one hand, as the world's top two economies of greatest international influence, China and the U.S. have unprecedented interdependence both in bilateral economic and trade relations and in combating various global challenges. On the other hand, as two distinctively different civilizations with structural conflicts in actual strategic interests, the issue of mutual strategic distrust is one of the hardest issues to deal with in the history of great power relations. Particularly, with China's sustained and rapid rise, the structural conflicts between the two countries will inevitably become more and more prominent. For this very reason, forging a new type of great power relationship between China and the US has both practical and historical significance. In sum, the construction of a new type of Sino-US great power relationship involves both favorable conditions and restricting factors. Thus, the key issue is whether both sides could successfully pursue their interests while avoiding harm and develop a correct "perception" of each other so as to avoid strategic misunderstanding and mutual suspicion.<sup>12</sup> One of the feasible models of this new type of relationship is a "functional partnership" built on the basis of "co-evolution" proposed by Henry Kissinger. Both sides of this partnership will share international power and responsibilities and meet various global challenges so as to benefit each other and make greater contributions to the world.<sup>13</sup>

### (III) Peripheral diplomacy: amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness

On October 24, 2013, the CPC Central Committee held its first peripheral diplomacy work conference in Beijing. At the meeting, Secretary General Xi Jinping proposed basic policies for China's peripheral diplomacy—the brand new concept of treating neighboring countries as partners, with amity, sincerity, mutual-benefit and inclusiveness and fostering a harmonious, peaceful and prosperous neighborhood.<sup>14</sup> The unveiling of this new concept reflects not just the extreme importance of peripheral countries, but also the fact that China is adjusting its peripheral foreign affairs policy based on the changed international and regional situations.

First of all, peripheral diplomacy has been China's top priority in its "multi-directional diplomacy." As a major power in East Asia, China's main diplomatic stage is in Asia. For this reason, whether or not China can properly deal with its neighboring countries will directly impact the overall status of China's diplomacy in the world. After the Cold War, commensurate with the fundamental changes in international relations, China began to promote and improve relations with its neighboring countries with brand new economic, diplomatic and security concepts. Economically, China began to further open up and expand economic and trade exchanges with its neighboring countries. Diplomatically, China began to extensively involve in regional and multilateral organizations and institutions such as ASEAN 10+1 and APEC, thus consolidating its diplomatic ties with neighboring countries on the basis

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<sup>12</sup> Jervis [3].

<sup>13</sup> Kissinger [4].

<sup>14</sup> Hong Gu, The four-word mantra of diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-11/08/c\\_118063342.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-11/08/c_118063342.htm).

of bilateral relations. In terms of security, China adopted a new security concept as the core ideology for peripheral strategy aimed at minimizing mutual suspicion, enhancing mutual trust and maintaining regional peace and stability. It goes without saying that China's neighboring diplomacy has gained remarkable achievements in the post-Cold War era.

Secondly, in recent years, with the escalation of Asia's status in the world's political and economic landscape, and the shift of US strategic focus to the East, some sticking point issues originally hidden under the umbrella of regional economic cooperation, particularly sovereign and territorial rights disputes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, became hot and prominent in the global political arena. Under these changed circumstances, China is in urgent need of adjusting its peripheral diplomacy and guiding its foreign affairs with brand new concepts. The concept of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness is a reactive approach that keeps pace with the times. On the one hand, the concept is a renewal of the traditions of China's peripheral diplomacy, which include pursuing good relations with its neighbors, advocating the strategy of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and persisting in the attitude of inclusiveness and opening up. On the other hand, it further showcases China's concern for its "shared community of common destiny" and its drive to increase its amity towards its neighbors and to further eliminate the so-called "China threat" so that a peripheral environment most favorable for solving numerous problems could be created. I also believe the concept of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness is established on the basis of the two overall diplomacy concepts of "interaction between two opportunities" and "the dialectical unity of peace and development." In particular, the word "sincerity" expounds a new thought in China's peripheral diplomacy—the increase of "equivalence," because part of being sincere means not avoiding conflict and not retreating from the principle or bottom line, but rather jointly facing and solving problems on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. Therefore, on the issue of marine territorial dispute with some of its neighbors, China stresses the need to cope with it peacefully through equal consultation. However, if some countries take an irrational attitude of confrontation, China will treat them differently on the basis of the "dialectical unity of peace and development" and "equivalence," which is both reasonable and indicative of China's sense of responsibility for its core interests and for regional peace and stability.

## **5.2 New Features of China's Diplomacy Since the 18th CPC National Congress**

As mentioned earlier, currently, China's peripheral diplomacy concepts have undergone some fine tuning based on changed circumstances. On the one hand, mainstream concepts of peace, development and cooperation have remained unchanged; on the other hand, during the process of resolution of existing conflicts, emphasis has been

laid on reactivity, bottom-line principle and differentiated treatment. These major changes are reflected in the new features of China's diplomacy after the 18th CPC National Congress.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China's diplomacy has unveiled quite a few noteworthy new features. As far as I am concerned, these new features are not just closely related to the new concepts discussed in the first part of the paper, but are also the result of the kind of international environment China is faced with. On the one hand, with the dramatic rise of China's comprehensive national strength, the world's expectation of China to play greater roles in international affairs is evidently growing. On the other hand, "systemic pressure" caused by fast development has also driven China to face more and more repercussions from the external world. The two faceted background mentioned above both requires that China readjust her strategies and policies in a timely manner so that she could obtain optimal external environment in the vicissitudes of complex global politics and economy. In particular, the new collective leadership of the CPC Central Committee is showing the following new features in diplomatic practice.

### **(I) Proactiveness: Self-centeredness**

First of all, since the 18th CPC National Congress, China's diplomacy has taken on very obvious "proactiveness," which means, compared with the past, a greater emphasis has been put on "taking the initiative." Since the start of reform and opening up, due to the fact that foreign policy was overwhelmingly subject to economic construction, China's diplomacy has mostly been "reactive" and "issue-oriented." That is, resolution of conflicts took place only after their emergence, which was quite passive. A typical example was the Taiwan Strait crisis of the mid-1990s. Ultimately, this was determined by China's relatively weak national strength, or the reality that domestic issues took precedence over foreign issues. Now, however, with the significant growth of her comprehensive national strength, the expansion of her overseas interests and the increasingly deepened involvement in global governance, the role of diplomacy in national development strategy is no longer what it used to be. That's why China's diplomacy is clearly more proactive than before. At present, the thrust of China's diplomacy lies in two respects: strategic mistrust between China and the US, and maritime territorial disputes among China and some of her neighboring countries. If we followed the logic of the past, the new collective leadership would probably first address these two major issues. However, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Russia and parts of Africa less than a week after taking office. After that, he went on to visit multiple countries in Latin America before meeting with Barack Obama at the Annenberg Retreat in California in June. It is not difficult to see that the new administration's diplomatic opening featured a policy of "perimeter first and interior second," which is to consolidate the "rear positions" first before addressing the key issues, reflecting a distinct "egocentric" initiative rather than following other people's agenda or being led by the nose. Judging by the outcomes, the new alternative added to China's negotiating chips, as evidenced by the US side's invitation to Xi Jinping for a state visit in June.

## **(II) Omni-directionality: public diplomacy**

Another new feature of China's diplomacy is omni-directionality. This new feature is first manifested in the fact that China's leaders have visited a broad geographical area covering almost all continents of the world. For instance, in June last year, President Xi Jinping visited the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean, a country which China has had diplomatic ties with since 1974. Xi's visit marked the very first time that a top Chinese leader had visited the country in almost 40 years. Also during the past year, President Xi visited Russia, Africa, the Americas, Central Asia and Southeast Asia and Premier Li Keqiang visited a number of countries in South Asia and Central and Eastern Europe. Second, the substance of China's diplomacy is also omnidirectional. In the past, proceeding from the pragmatism of national interests, China paid more attention to developing relations with major and surrounding powers while neglecting regional cooperation. Today, as problems of global dimensions in all corners of the world become increasingly prominent, China has begun to attach great importance to participating in global governance and promoting public diplomacy. For example, President Xi elaborated on global governance during a conference marking the 10th anniversary of the inauguration of the Boao Forum for Asia held last year. This shows that China, as a major participant in global governance, will provide the international community with public products and make greater contributions to poverty reduction, disaster relief, and financial and trade stability. Furthermore, the new administration is sparing no efforts to deepen China-US cultural exchanges and promote Chinese language studies etc., which means the importance of public diplomacy in China's diplomacy is increasing. In short, a series of new trends occurring in China's diplomacy are telling manifestations of the use of "two interactive opportunities," a point of emphasis in the first part of this article.

## **(III) Hold onto the bottom line to safeguard China's own interests and clearly define her preconditions for peaceful development**

On numerous occasions, China has repeatedly emphasized her "bottom-line principle" on foreign affairs, reflecting her heightened resolve to safeguard her interests and define her preconditions for peaceful development. For instance, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang have both reasserted China's resolve never to surrender her core interests nor trade them for something else. That is none other than the spirit of the bottom line principle. It is not hard to see how the new leadership has elaborated on this issue more clearly than before, reflecting both China's self-confidence and her due righteousness as "a responsible major power." In my opinion, as she faces maritime territorial disputes with some neighboring countries today, China can, instead of triggering the so-called "China Threat" concern, proactively reduce strategic uncertainty and lower the risk of misfires by informing the outside world of her bottom line on these issues while emphasizing peaceful cooperation. As China and the US engage in dialogues, for example, informing the US of China's strategic bottom line will help eliminate the possibilities of strategic miscalculation. In addition, China's non-equidistant diplomacy towards her neighboring countries is also a

reaffirmation of her bottom-line principle and of her preconditions for peaceful development. This is also conducive to safeguarding her national interests and enhancing her power of influence on her peripheral areas.

#### **(IV) Balancing measures: go beyond Asia and go west**

In response to America's pivot to Asia strategy, China has begun to pay more attention to "East-West balancing," which is to increase the proportion in the use of "going west strategy" while seeking to actively "go beyond Asia." For the past 30 years since the start of the policy of reform and opening up, China has put the focus of her economic development on her east coast because of its geopolitical advantage of easy access to the outside world. For the same reason, she has initially oriented the focus of her diplomacy towards Southeast Asia. As a matter of fact, this strategy alternative has made an indelible contribution to the sustained and rapid growth of China's economy. Nevertheless, given the ever increasing strategic pressure China is faced with in the South and East China Sea areas, which is aggravated by the sticking-point issues that have surfaced in the past two or three years as a result of America's strategic shift to the East. In order to balance out such pressure and expand her strategic space, China has adopted the strategies of "going beyond Asia" and "going west." Such strategies will be implemented through the greater role of organizations such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well as new plans such as the Silk Road Economic Belt proposed by President Xi Jinping during his state visit to the four Central Asian countries last September. These innovative strategic measures will deepen the economic, social and cultural ties among Eurasian countries and promote mutual benefit and win-win outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

#### **(V) Going towards the seas: safeguard China's maritime interests and promote national defense modernization**

As an indispensable step for her future development, China has stepped up the pace of her seaward expansion and national defense modernization drive to meet the needs of her power and interest growth. Currently, China's marine economy accounts for 10% of her total economic volume, and is continuing to grow at a rate faster than the rate of GDP growth during the same period. As an indispensable component of China's economy, marine economy involves the vital interests of various industries and sectors. Because of that, the Chinese government is paying and will continue to pay greater attention to the protection of maritime national interests as it faces more and more social and civic pressure to do so [15].<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Xi Jinping: Promote friendship between the peoples and work together for a great future, *People's Daily*, September 7, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Canrong Jin & Hao Wang: Background of China's maritime territorial rights issues and measures for solution, *Contemporary International Relations*, No. 8, 2012.

## **(VI) Image of leadership: distinctive personalities and work styles of China's new leaders**

The distinctive personalities and work styles of China's new leaders are an important part of the new features of China's diplomacy and their proactive, exemplary leadership has become a big boost to China's public diplomacy. For instance, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang are good at using plain and simple words to express themselves so that people can easily understand them. Besides, their rich knowledge and good communication skills and use of examples and stories to illustrate their ideas have worked well to enhance international understanding and narrow the gap with the relevant parties China deals with.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In sum, China's new leaders have made proactive foreign policy adjustments based on current domestic and international situations, resulting in major changes in diplomatic theory and practice since the closing of the 18th CPC National Congress. Therefore, focus on these new changes will help us better comprehend and grasp the characteristics and future trends of China's foreign policy. Given the conspicuous features of historical continuity in China's diplomatic strategies, it will also be very helpful to examine such strategic changes from a historical perspective while due emphasis is being given to innovation.

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# Chapter 6

## Strategic Planning of China's Foreign Policy During Strategic Transition



Fan Wang

**Abstract** Focusing on the transitional period of the international system, the author analyzes various challenges and problems China is faced with, examines the country's diplomatic missions and goals during the transition, points out the flaws in previous foreign policy strategy planning, elaborates on the basic concepts, key links and focuses of foreign policy strategy planning during transition, and proposes design concepts for strategic planning. China's foreign policy strategies need to be planned within the general framework of broad and full consideration, avoidance of potential risks, balance between development and stability and between cost and benefit, and implementation of new projects.

**Keywords** Strategic transition · China's foreign policy strategy · International system · Strategic planning

As mentioned in the Report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the international system is now undergoing a period of transition that puts China's foreign policy in strategic perspective as the country grows in strength. What then, are the characteristics of this transition? What changes have taken place in the strategic missions and goals of China's diplomacy during the transitional period? How can we do a better job of planning China's foreign policy strategy during transition? These are the questions this paper attempts to answer.

### 6.1 General Characteristics of the Transitional Period

Since the end of the Cold War, the international system has entered a period of transition marked by constant change. It is a period in which the original balance of power is broken and a new balance of power has yet to be formed and the world faces growing uncertainty. We find ourselves standing at a historical turning point

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where international relations are going through the most profound changes since the end of WWII. However, with the change of times and subject to the deterrence of interdependence and nuclear threat, different trends are showing up in major power relations. For example, Sino-US relations have grown strained to some extent, but not out of control. Generally speaking, major power coordination has kept a good momentum.

A transitional period generally exhibits the following characteristics:

Firstly, **long time span**. Periodic changes may be short, but structural changes may go the way of billows and produce ripple effects. Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has undergone several major transitions that witnessed massive upheavals. The September 11 attack at the turn of the century has had a dramatic effect on the international security situation and has made anti-terrorism a theme of the times and security cooperation among major powers has grown. The impact of the 2008 global financial crisis is felt worldwide even today. Moreover, financial turmoil, systemic reform and rebalance of power are boosting changes in international structure and situation. Compared with the 30-year intervals of the twentieth century, contingencies of huge impact have been occurring at increasingly short cycles, down from 12 years between 1989 and 2001 to 7 years between 2001 and 2008.

Secondly, **strained relations between major powers**. Major powers in transitional periods have historically been through tense relations and heated conflicts on hot-button issues. As former Chinese president Jiang Zemin pointed out, “World structures have formed and evolved over the years, manifesting a common phenomenon of great powers standing in sharp conflict with each other, with tension pervading the international community.” However, with the change of times and subject to the deterrence of interdependence and nuclear threat, different trends are showing up in major power relations. For example, Sino-US relations have grown strained to some extent, but not out of control. Generally speaking, major power coordination has kept a good momentum.

Thirdly, **synchronized internal and external transition**. Changes in transitional periods also involve changes within societies of all countries. Judging from situations in different countries, all countries, developing and developed countries alike, are faced with problems such as increased unemployment, wealth disparity and other issues. And so, narrowing the wealth gap remains a serious and urgent issue of the times. Both developing and developed countries are faced with new socioeconomic transition and transformation. Conflicts triggered by transition are very likely to spill over into the process of international transition and increase the complexity of international transition. Economic restructuring within countries of the Asia-Pacific region is part of the process of international transition.<sup>1</sup>

Fourthly, **transitions are times of increasing complexities**. During the process of change, in attempts to break through such complexities, all countries have reinforced

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<sup>1</sup> Jiang argues that international transition has two components: preliminary industrialization of emerging developing countries and re-industrialization of developed countries. See Lingfei Jiang, Asia Should Heed Crises Triggered by Transition, *Global Times*, Dec. 6, 2012.

the magnitude of policy readjustment. As global governance issues keep emerging and demands on governance increase, methods of governance have become a new topic in international politics.

Judging from the nature of international incidents, conflicts are becoming complicated and convoluted and uncertainties have increased. In the age of globalization and multi-polarization, "complexity" has become the most important concept for understanding political and economic relations among countries of the world. They are complex because the plurality, diversity, interrelatedness, ambiguity, uncertainty, and unknown factors of the international situation are unprecedented.<sup>2</sup> Ecological problems are also posing serious security risks. With continued degradation of the ecological environment, natural crisis is evolving into social crisis. Eco-politics and geopolitical ecology are carrying more and more weight and many problems are going beyond global politics. With the approach of the era of maritime industrial civilization and the sharp rise in demand for energy resources, maritime disputes are bound to intensify. Future maritime conflicts will go in multiple ways, including conflicts for business, energy, strategic geographical locations and political power. The plurality and complexity of security challenges gave rise to a new conundrum, which is the simultaneous emergence and complex intermingling of some previously unrelated issues. For example, in the aftermath of the international financial crisis, in attempts to shift the crisis to other countries, some countries incited security incidents that could easily escalate into potential conflicts. Volatile variables in West Asia and North Africa pose high risks that could potentially trigger new geopolitical changes. Clearly, with the disorderly aggrandizement of changes and development in the international situation, things are not all going the way of rule or law.

In short, as a special time period, the transitional period is full of uncertainties. The distribution of power, interests and ideas will bring about new combinations, new trends of development, and new uncertainties and possibilities. And a relatively long-term reality that we must come to terms with is that major power relations during transition are bound to be built around interests and international influence and competition for international organizations and hot spots. Meanwhile, as the international community, including most countries in the Asia-Pacific region, are resorting to full-dimensional diplomacy, inter-country relations under tension will become more complex and changeable combinations and peripheral relations will interact with major powers relations in complex ways. Therefore, Chinese diplomacy in transition is faced with greater uncertainties and fortuities and will be at higher risks of hitting a particular crisis, even though opportunities for China to reinvent herself and remold the international situation coexist. Whether or not the transitional period will remain China's period of strategic opportunities or even better strategic opportunities will depend on our understanding and our ability to grab them.

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<sup>2</sup> Cui [1].

## 6.2 Challenges and Target Positioning of China's Diplomatic Strategies During Transition

Since both the international situation and China's diplomacy are in strategic transition, the strategic transition of the international system and that of China's diplomacy are synchronized and in tandem. To a certain degree, transformation of the international system effectively facilitates China's readjustment of her diplomacy. In fact, since her initiation of reform and opening up, China has been faced with two kinds of pressure and challenges from within and without, which are the predicaments of emergence and development. These predicaments are here to stay throughout the transitional period, and as such period approaches, the risks posed by the challenges are increasing as well.

### (I) Clear impediments to China's rise

The fundamental question related to China's rise lies in whether or not China can rise in peace, how it will accomplish that, and how to get rid of or avoid the non-peaceful rise of China.

One of the strategic predicaments against China's rise lies in her endeavor to maintain territorial integrity and national reunification. Historically, one prerequisite for the rise of a major power is national reunification, which is the very foundation of that power's rise. Reunification alone can create a viable environment in which a power can rise and in which a nation's potential and drive can be fully incited. However, China can choose between military action and peaceful initiatives only, which means that a military solution cannot be ruled out. Hence intervention of external forces by way of arms sales to Taiwan, for example, becomes a big headache.

Maintenance of territorial integrity is an even greater challenge. In recent years, Tibetan and Uyghur separatists supported by some external forces have become quite active, threatening China's territorial integrity. Thus, China needs to find a solution to its maritime disputes. China does not want to see military disputes because military solutions will do fatal harm to her peaceful strategy and peaceful development. On the other hand, she cannot do without military upgrading and arms race. Once China takes military action or becomes a military threat, her image of seeking peaceful development will be seriously tarnished and thus lose trust of other countries. Nevertheless, China's advocacy for peace can also be seen by some countries as not daring to seek military solutions, which then gives rise to preemptive actions to break up the status quo. Actions of this nature consequently pose new challenges to China's military-shy strategy and to her peaceful rise. In addition to China's own reunification problems, reunification or separatist issues in her neighboring countries also constitute direct or indirect influence on China's security.

To sum up, China has to face threats mainly from the following sources: Firstly, domestically, China is faced with the risks and costs of national split or reunification, potential risks of structural transformation targeting the building of a fair and just society; secondly possible direct or indirect conflicts with major powers and the costs thereof. These could involve major power relations, including relations with

the US, Japan and India. Thirdly, possible conflicts with other countries and the costs thereof. To some extent, China is more likely to come into conflict with its neighboring countries than with major countries in and outside the Asia Pacific region, though we cannot separate that from direct or indirect conflict with major powers. Crises arising from such conflicts are easier to break out, more complicated and harder to solve.

## **(II) Serious challenges to development**

China is faced with the dilemma of slowed growth of developed countries and fast domestic development. Her large-scale development can take away available natural resources and squeeze up the room for development and therefore run into conflict with countries that struggle to maintain the political and economic status quo.

As far as the country's own development is concerned, China needs to solve the problem of dependence on foreign energy resources and deal with the relationship between dependence and self-reliance from a strategic vantage point in addition to solving problems of high energy consumption, high costs and energy insufficiency. Another challenge for development is related to the issue of how to solve the problem of development security. Besides equipping herself with the power to safeguard her security, China must also refrain from giving a false impression of threat to other countries.

China must be more fully integrated into the existing international system and take up corresponding international responsibility. Besides, China must also abide by the rules and regulations of the existing system and accept the restraint, supervision and restriction of the system. The ensuing interdependence between China and the existing system has brought about even more complicated and uncontrollable issues of interdependence, thus entailing new risks and opportunities for China's security environment. Proper treatment of this two-way interactive relationship will provide China's security environment with broader scope of guarantee.

## **(III) China's strategic objective**

To meet the twin challenges of rise and development, China must link together the readjustment and resetting of her strategic goals during the transitional period. In other words, the resetting of strategic goals during the transitional period must generally cover the process of solving the two hard problems. China's strategic goal during the transitional period is to realize her transformation from a regional major power to a regional great power of global influence. Specifically, she needs to become a global economic powerhouse, play a critical role in regional security affairs, and have great say on global issues. In one word, China must become a regional great power with global influence. China's process of fulfilling her transformation from a regional major power to a regional great power of global influence is the process of properly solving the two hard problems of rise and development.

Based on the above analysis, revolving around the issues of rise and development, China must set the following strategic targets during the transitional period: firstly, maintain national stability, prevent destruction caused by internal and external disruptive forces; secondly, safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity; thirdly,

maintain and expand the economic lifeline of energy resources and develop diverse energy sources; fourthly, maintain regional stability and global order; fifthly, serve the needs of global trade and economic construction. The basic order of these five targets is as follows: firstly, national sovereignty and stability, secondly geopolitical interests, thirdly, international standing, and fourthly, international clout. During the transitional period, China's strategic targets should not be restricted to issues such as sovereignty and territory, but must timely and reasonably shift to the strengthening of her international clout.

During the transitional period, three things must be given special emphasis: firstly, homeland security, national reunification and peripheral security. The key here is to create a peaceful environment, prevent any country from sabotaging the environment of China and neighboring countries, dissolve hostile and antagonistic countries and forces and stand against extremism and separatist forces. Secondly, energy exploration and the opening up of maritime passageways which are closely related to economic development, reinforcement of national defense and anti-interference capacity. Thirdly, prevent the emergence of anti-China neighboring countries.

In order to break up the dilemmas of rise and development, China also needs to develop and explore fields and factors, such as soft power, new energy, outer space, cyberspace, ocean and polar regions, that help promote growth of the economy and national strength.

### **6.3 China's Diplomatic Planning During the Transitional Period**

Based on the challenges and target positioning of China's diplomacy during the transitional period, we must design a clearer plan to cope with challenges and reach strategic goals.

#### **(I) Problems in previous strategic planning**

In general, two major issues existed in China's previous strategic planning and implementation.

##### **1. Lack of unity**

Firstly, lack of a panoramic or holistic point of view and the proclivity of a China-centric perspective. A weak sense of design and command of the whole picture from the facet of a global system. In Iain Mills' opinion, due to China's Sino-centric mainstream worldview, the world beyond China's "core interests" is being neglected. Despite a unified framework, the chief concern of China's strategic planning mechanism is still domestic issues and heated geopolitical issues of peripheral countries. Moreover, "due to China's policy of noninterference in the affairs of other sovereign countries, Chinese planners are either politically restricted or simply unconcerned about more distant strategic arenas. Although this is consistent with the Chinese

government's official position, it clearly has put significant limitations on the planners' capabilities, thus making it impossible for them to predict and prepare for major international events and new trends." This situation does not fall in line with the fact that China's national interests are growing in the international community and it doesn't go well with China's chief goal of becoming a global great power of influence. Changes in China's relations with the outside world are reflected in her extensive and close links with the rest of the world, her deeper interdependent ties with the international system and her strategic partnerships with many countries in multiple realms. As she opens up further to the outside world, China will go even further and deeper in its process of integrating into the international system. From an overall perspective though, as her interests are being expanded, China is faced with unprecedented systemic risks. If the system faults due to issues in any one link, China will see dramatic increase in the costs it has to bear. Thus, China's strategic foreign policy planning will have to be more holistic and systematic.

Secondly, poor coordination and organization, which basically indicates a failure to see the forest and not just the trees. Even if an overall plan were available, the process of implementation could still be fragmented. Lack of organization between parts of the whole, lack of departmental coordination, and lack of overall integration can all lead to fragmentation of strategy implementation. Due to lack of clear consensus on direction, the departments tend to overemphasize the threats they are faced with individually. As a result, China's strategic planning is showing signs of chaos both in theory and practice. Besides, some of the strategies become disjointed during the implementation process and directly affect the coordination and implementation of strategic plans. Meanwhile, lack of guiding status of China's foreign affairs sector strategic decision-making bodies, international and domestic coordination and management capacity are unable to meet the needs of strategic planning, unable to generate a stronger guiding function. Furthermore, due to overemphasis on current performance, the departments concerned tend to care more about current affairs than medium and long-term plans. Hence, medium and long-term plans are denied active support. Meanwhile, due to lack of a leading policy-making body in China's foreign affairs departments, China has no coordination or management capacity to meet the needs of strategic planning. As a result, she can in no way play any guiding or leading role in any more powerful way.

Thirdly imbalance between domestic and foreign interaction. Despite emphasis on the interaction between domestic and international situations, the former has basically played the role of the influencer. Whether in terms of situation assessment or policy implementation, the subservient and subordinate role of foreign policy strategies has largely remained unchanged, thus resulting in asymmetrical interaction, which is in disagreement with the dual interaction in which the international situation has a greater impact on domestic economic and social stability.

## **2. Lack of flexibility**

Both system and strategy are under the restraint of a huge and complicated bureaucratic decision-making process in which preliminary strategic plans are limited and even limited available plans are put under restrictions so any acts of turning

back, shifting or readjustment are necessarily stalled and slid within blurred lines of responsibility.

Due to the traditional policy of noninterference in other countries' internal affairs, China is faced with more and more pressing challenges in her drive to expand her interests overseas. Increasing dependence on imported energy sources, maritime supply chains and transportation networks are also placing limits on China's foreign strategy options. Worse still, China is faced with unprecedented risks of terrorism, separatism, and infiltration of cross-border Internet technology. In sum, the situation is getting more and more complicated, the threats are becoming increasingly pluralistic, while the inclusiveness of strategic planning and plans of flexible reaction obviously fall short.

The focus of transitional strategy is sustainable development, which stresses change rather than passive defense. China must adjust her strategic plans to changes in domestic and international situations in a timely and effective manner. She must show strategic patience for long-term strategic guiding principles while maintaining flexibility.

## **(II) Basic principles of china's foreign policy strategy planning**

The peaceful nature of China's transitional strategy has not changed and will never change. For this purpose, we must have a good command of our interactive relations with other countries during the process of strategic planning, prudently deal with various emergencies and hot-button issues and strengthen cooperation against common threats.

### **1. Overall thinking on strategic planning**

Firstly, we must emphasize the general guiding principles of peace, cooperation and development. China's peaceful strategy essentially involves several large aspects: peaceful reunification, peaceful settlement of disputes, and peaceful development and growth. The strategy of peaceful development requires that China pay attention to issues in two aspects. The first is a strategy based on development. There is a huge difference between strategies based on threat and strategies based on development. Generally speaking, the latter is superior to the former, because the former is designed for political security alone, while the latter serves more comprehensive purposes. A strategy meant to address threat would culminate in an anti-containment strategy that concentrates on minimizing the possibility of being contained by the United Nations. Clearly, China's strategy of peaceful development is a comprehensive strategy based on development. There are differences between strategies addressing common threats and those addressing threats from a particular country. Instead of regarding threats from a particular country as top priority, China prioritizes common threats as the logical starting point of her theories. That's why she positions herself and other countries as part of the same community. It's none other than this positioning that makes sure her cooperative strategies with other cooperative partners get implemented. To see a major breakthrough in foreign policy strategies during transition, China will have to give consideration to the overall situation, plan far ahead and take steady steps. By addressing the world's common threats instead of individual

country threats, China may be able to resolve her dilemma of emergence in a great way and clearly define her direction of peaceful development in a fundamental way.

Secondly, emphasize positive interaction with the international community. China's transitional strategies are strategies for use during the process of development and growth, or strategies bridging her transition from a country of large size to one of substantial strength, from a sizable major power to a quality major power, and from a peripheral major power to a central major power. A major challenge will be to find ways to get the countries in pivotal position to accept China. From the global perspective, China will find herself in a process of constant internal growth and external development, which is nothing less than an organic and interactive combination of reform and opening to the outside world. The process of external development has a dual influence on the international society, which is a blessing on one hand and the pressure of competition on the other. Therefore, she has to hold on firmly to the policy of mutual benefit and win-win in order to go after benefits and avoid harm and be accepted and recognized by the international community.

Thirdly, strike a balance between stability and development. Transitional strategy needs to focus more on the relationship between maintenance of stability and striving to shine. There needs to be offense and defense, advancement and retreat, and proper and timely transition to making accomplishments. So far as China's transitional diplomatic strategies are concerned, moderateness and balance have become the key to strategic planning. China must both resolve problems and crises proactively and maintain a proper balance and act according to her capacity. China's grand strategy should be to expand her international influence without triggering counterbalancing reaction from other countries.<sup>3</sup> Since the initiation of reform and opening up, China has been seeking a relatively comprehensive national security plan that prevents nuclear proliferation, safeguards regional stability, protects core interests, and maintains international cooperation. Apart from avoiding regional conflicts sparked off by territorial disputes, the plan must effectively and reasonably contain crises, seek true partnerships, enhance the validity of cooperation without jeopardizing cooperation with third parties, and finally, maintain a proper balance on multiple major issues. Although remarkable achievements have been made in these regards, there is still room for further improvement and stronger systemic guarantee.

Fourthly, maintain a well-coordinated relationship between national strength and corresponding international responsibilities. As she keeps rising out of the international community, China has made the shift from the "if" to the "how" in terms of her commitment to take up international responsibilities. What responsibilities to take up, how to fulfill them, and in what areas we can do the greatest good to global public—these have become increasingly pressing and unavoidable topics of discussion. Judging from her current and future trend of development, China can play a more positive role in peacekeeping, disaster relief, assistance in international development, public infrastructure construction, fair and just international rule-making and international ethics orientation.

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<sup>3</sup> Goldstein [2].



## 2. Basic thinking on transitional-period strategic planning

To sum up, China's strategic planning during transition must have a matching, multi-layered, progressive and interrelated design that takes into consideration proper balancing, risk avoidance, maintenance of independence, and circumventing over dependence on external or global factors. In taking all factors into consideration, emphasis must be given to key points, overall planning, integrated balancing, proper give and take, and interaction of all interests. In other words, strategic planning during transition must highlight unity, system, coordination and especially collaboration. There must also be integrated organization of complicated systems and reinforced, uniform, interrelated, well-devised and structured designs.

So far as the basic conceptualization of strategic planning is concerned, there must be a broad scope of vision, strategic highlights and practical and feasible strategic ways and means of implementation.

The Cold War strategy was a transitional strategy through which the US made its transition from a regional major power to a global superpower. He proposed a concept mainly targeting the five major forces based on climate conditions, industrial capacity, population and traditional conditions etc. He reasserted that America's main interests in global affairs lie in the guarantee that any other power center will not fall into the hands of opponents. At the same time, he further stressed the importance of the avenues needed for industries, raw materials and defense affairs and he clarified that, of all powers existing in the international arena, industrial and military powers are the most dangerous. Therefore, he said, the US needs to concentrate on the control thereof. Kennan further pointed out that out of concern for limited capability and resources, various interests had to be taken care of by order of priority.<sup>4</sup>

On the precondition that no direct military conflicts occur, after doing an in-depth study, Kennan worked out the strategy of peaceful containment against the Soviet Union, the then potential rival of the US. Specifically, the Marshall Plan, through a bifurcated approach of military alliance and economic aid to its economic competitors, defeated the Soviet Union by putting Europe under control, which was made possible by using West Germany as the forefront and breaking point. The strategy of turning enemies into friends definitely played a significant role in America's stabilization of post-WWII sphere of influence and the political division of Europe. However, the typical strategy of hegemony based on the political logic of power politics served to aggravate global political conflicts and confrontation.

After the strategic focus and basic principle were determined, the US Cold War strategy concentrated on military alliance build-up. Alliance strategy was one of the most important pillars of America's post-WWII global strategy. After years of construction, an alliance network covering almost all developed countries of the world has been built up. The network plays a prominent role in collaborative defense, responsibility sharing and regional checks and balances. Suffice it to say, American allies are the basic safeguard for maintaining American hegemony and the hegemony and alliance strategies are well-matched in political logic.

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<sup>4</sup> *Twenty Lectures on Strategy* compiled by Shi Yinhong, Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing House, 2008, p. 286.

After the Cold War, taking advantage of the strategic timing and its unique position as an exclusive hegemon, the US kept focusing on an overall strategic concept and continued to implement its new transitional deployment. The concept consists of two strategies: a geopolitical strategy and a checks-and-balances strategy. Highlighting the Eurasian heartland and its peripheral belt, and with an eye on energy resources, the geopolitical strategy concentrates on Central Asia which is located between the Middle East and the Eurasian soft heartland, prevents emergence of challenging forces or alliance of forces in the Eurasian continent, and takes control of important strategic sources worldwide. The checks and balances strategy is related to the alliance strategy, which creates and uses crisis as a driving force to consolidate alliance. The three work closely together by focusing on geopolitical strategy and utilizing the other two as auxiliaries. These two strategies have been put into use consistently ever since the Cold War era.

There are fundamental differences between China's peaceful development strategy and America's hegemonic strategy. In planning for foreign policy strategies, the usual practice is to refer to the country's strategic objectives and its changes in national strength.

First of all, China's foreign policy strategy must, from the perspective of a new global strategy, implement larger-scope strategic coverage, reach more wide-ranging and effective strategic goals and develop greater strategic balancing capabilities, which are essentially capabilities at critical junctures to maintain constraint and impose strategic pressure on looming organizations or forces that could sabotage world stability. China's foreign policy strategy is fundamentally different from that of the United States, because the former seeks peaceful cooperation while the latter seeks hegemony. As the second largest economy, China has economic cooperation with numerous countries around the globe. As her national interests keep expanding, China encounters all types of challenges related to conventional and unconventional security issues. Therefore, she must maintain the effectiveness and emphasis of her strategies, take control of her strategic fortress and take an active part in resolving global crises and hot-button issues.

Second, using new partnerships as the main means of strategic implementation. China must adhere to the strategy of non-alignment, abstain from the checks and balances strategy aimed at alliance and hegemony, and strengthen the selection, cultivation, and consolidation of strategic partners. She must form new relationship networks on multilateral cooperation platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the G20 to strengthen functional cooperation. Meanwhile, China's strategic partners are relatively loosely connected and unsystematic, not as organically united as alliances, and find it hard to form a combined force to face common threats. Therefore, there must be a reinforced synergy between the strategic partners. While selecting strategic partners, we should seek both the strong and the weak and try not to weaken other partnerships and cooperatives for the purpose of strengthening any one combination.

Third, there must be a clear definition of the stages of China's geopolitical transformation. There must be three phases in China's transition from a weak country to a powerful nation. The first phase will focus on implementing the regional strategy

or traditional peripheral strategy. The second phase is the pan-peripheral strategy expanding China's interests to the outer rims of its conventional environs. The third phase is a global strategy which is not the equivalent of a hegemonic strategy. On the contrary, it pays great attention to the overall balance between regional strategy and offshore strategy and attaches greater importance to the combination of the Eurasian and maritime strategies. Currently, China is in the stage of focusing on the implementation of regional strategies, which are geared to create and maintain a stable peripheral development momentum, avoid escalation of crisis and the outbreak of major military conflicts. While implementing her regional strategies, China also needs the guarantee of overall major power balance and the collaboration and complementarity of other regional strategies. As strategic transition moves ahead further, China should make the further transition from defensive regional strategy to the pan-peripheral strategy.

It's vitally important that China should make foreign policy strategies with a good command of her periodic targets and timing in line with her actual national strength. Any rash leap forward will create equally serious problems as delay in mission completion. During her transition from a regional big power to a regional major power, China must avoid any strategic rashness, and try to avoid falling into the pit of rashness set by other countries. From a strategic perspective, it was the country's one-sided pursuit of military power and its bid for hegemony with the US contrary to its national interests that ultimately led to the collapse of the former Soviet Union. This is a very impressive lesson for us.

### **(III) Key links of diplomatic strategy planning**

In view of complex changes in international situation during transition, China must be thoughtful, stay focused, have a good command of the big and major issues, grab the good opportunities, and take the initiative as she takes a proactive approach in implementing her foreign policy strategies.

#### **1. Take advantage of, use and create a situation**

Create and seize opportunities through timely and wise use of balance of power or changes in relationship. The word "situation" has two implications: static general layout, which refers to dynamic mainstream trend or circumstances, conditions and trends. Static layout can contain dynamic trends that reflect both the objective law of development in things and the subjective initiative of the acting agent's imposition of control. In Chinese culture, "situation" has consistently been regarded as a key determinant factor of success or failure.<sup>5</sup>

One of the keys to strategic implementation is skill in taking advantage of or using "situation." According to Sun Wu, "a skillful commander manages to make the best use of the situation but does not make excessive demand on his subordinates. Thus,

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<sup>5</sup> Pan [3].

the situation a skilled commander creates is like the momentum of a round rock quickly rolling down from a thousand-feet-high mountain.”<sup>6</sup>

Taking advantage of a favorable situation is like going seafaring with a borrowed boat or using eggs to hatch chickens and combining the surreal with the real. “Through the use of situation and buildup of momentum, you can appear powerful even when you actually have far less power.”<sup>7</sup> The trend of economic globalization and interdependence is one of the things that can be utilized or made good use of. Control of the interdependent relationship is the heart of America's new strategy and a main reason why the country invests its resources in seeking international leadership.<sup>8</sup>

Besides making use of situations, politicians should be also good at creating them. The philosophy of the Chinese game of *go* is protecting the overall situation at the expense of individual “pawns” or “stones.” In the same way, Chinese diplomacy focuses on long-term effects rather than short-term interests. The idea is to create a favorable situation to gain an advantage, build up on that advantage and achieve. Any strategic plan must not neglect the creation of a favorable situation.

While it is important to take advantage of a certain situation, creating a favorable situation is even more important. The key to creating a favorable situation is to seize a strategic vantage point, push for the establishment of an environment or mechanism good for one's development. For example, China will improve the current international system while merging further into it and convert its ever growing international influence into problem-solving strategic capability.

## 2. Development of rules and regulations

As one scholar pointed out, “Today, the definition of real strength in international competition is the ability to control rules in one or more fields.”<sup>9</sup> An important source of national power is a country's cultural universality and its ability to set up self-serving rules and systems that can dominate the sphere of international activities.<sup>10</sup> Foreign policy strategy planning should also include the planning of soft power development and fully stress the importance of invisible strategic elements. In the international community, there is an inevitable link between a country's international status and the fulfillment of its strategic objectives. International status and international influence are closely related. The power of a country's international influence is fully reflected in its rule-making ability in the international system.

Rule-making power is crucial for strategic power because it will play a greater role in rule-making in the international mechanism, which is good not just for the seeking of self-interests, but also for gaining better understanding and recognition from the other countries and for developing even more beneficial cooperative models.

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<sup>6</sup> *Sunzi on War: Momentum*, see *The Craft of Fraud in War—On Reading Sunzi* by Li Pan, China Bookstore, Beijing 2006, pp. 199–200.

<sup>7</sup> *By Hook or by Crook—36 Tricks of War* compiled by Pu Yinghua and Huang Mingliang, China Materials Publishing House, 1994, Beijing, p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> Nye [4].

<sup>9</sup> Boniface [5].

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p. 28.

From a historical perspective, the formation and development of America's major power status are closely related to its rule-making and controlling power in the international order. So it's a system-based systemic hegemony. Different from erstwhile "gunboat diplomacy" which overpowered weaker nations with military weapons, systemic hegemony resorted to soft power which can be more and it is penetrating long-lasting. US hegemony is based on two factors: domestic and international. The former refers to its own political, economic, military, scientific, technological and cultural strength; while the other refers to what Zbigniew Brzezinski calls "American global power exercised through a global system of distinctively American design." This means American hegemony is manifested as a series of international cooperation and related mechanisms promulgated and cultivated by the US, such as the US-led global alliance system and the dollar-dominated global currency system. International institutions that the US has helped to establish not only affect the way other countries pursue their interests, but also the way they define their self-interests and understand their behaviors."<sup>11</sup>

With the rise of emerging countries like China, changes are taking place in the world's political structure, economic distribution and interest configurations. As emerging powers' demand to transform the current international system increases, the international system dominated by traditional powers is imposing more and more institutional limitations and pressures on the emerging powers. As the current international situation seems to be spinning out of control, China should play an important role in transforming the international order.

In the future, China should hold onto multilateralism and try to extend its influence to multilateral platforms with multiplying effects. And the key to exerting greater influence on the multilateral platform is the rule-making power. Moreover, it should demonstrate itself as an honest, cooperative and law-abiding country around the globe. Meanwhile, China must not only need to strengthen her rule-making capability, but also call for compliance and faithfulness and promote the publicity of cooperative protocols.

### 3. Path selection

The core of path selection is to strengthen and enrich path selection options and avoid dependence on a single path. When making the strategies, China must come up with different backups so as to decrease the dependence on a single source. Reaching a target involves more than one path and many supporting tools, such as diversification of energy sources and backup plans to cope with risks and crises. In the path selection link, one must put prevention first, innovation second and constant plan optimization last but not least.

**Prevention.** Conceptualize prevention as more important than solution. For example, put the emphasis on crisis prevention and control rather than solution when a crisis spins out of control. On the issue of war, for example, the key should be how to avoid war rather than how to counter it. Even war readiness must focus on avoidance of war and holding war in check with military power.

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<sup>11</sup> Nye [4].

**Innovation.** We must dare to trail a new path rather than cling to a risk-free old road. The former might be risky, but the cost is necessary as China is en route to make a breakthrough in her diplomacy.

**Optimization.** The success of China's future strategy lies in the full use of her backhand advantages. And in order to realize transcendence, she will need to keep optimizing her strategic design plans so as to kill two or more birds with one stone. The idea is to use the multiplying effect to generate optimal results at the least cost. Moreover, the strategy must be flexible enough to allow more choices and changes. There has to be a proper balance between offense and defense and the strategy has to go where it has to go and stop where it has to stop.

#### (IV) Strategic focuses during transition

From the perspective of strategic principles and strategic planning concepts, the strategic focus during transition is to break out of the Asia-Pacific dilemma, expand strategic coverage, circumvent possible indefinite factors and risks and seek strategic development. Based on the above considerations, transitional strategic design projects will mainly solve the following problems.

##### 1. Geostrategic deployment

China's geopolitical strategic planning and the further development of her foreign strategy, strategic endurance and resilience are organically combined. Therefore, China needs a new round of geopolitical deployment.

In recent years, geopolitical sense of space has kept growing and the importance of maritime geographic space has kept rising too. China's geopolitical thinking has consistently lagged behind some major powers, which has to a certain extent led to the backwardness of modern China's development. Today, as the surrounding environment gets increasingly complex, and her development strategy keeps extending, China will have to adapt to shifts to even larger platforms. Expanding to the ocean has become one of the indispensable choices. The maritime environment that China is faced with is extremely complex and special. Maritime disputes may also become the ignition or starting point of some countries' drive to contain China. How to better defend her maritime rights and interests is the new task China's diplomacy is faced with.

Meanwhile, as a mainly inland country with no natural geographic advantages, China has limited radiating and outreaching power. As a coastal land country devoid of buffer zones or an intermediate zone, China faces direct and simultaneous threats from land and sea. This is utterly different from the uniquely secure geographical environment of the US. From the perspective of geographical security, a coastal land power is better off having at least two maritime outfalls, but China has only one at one side of the Pacific Ocean, with the rest of the inland area being relatively closed. However, with a large expanse of Chinese land connected to Central Asia in the Eurasian Central belt and a long coastal line to the east, plus a series of coastal neighbors connected by the ocean and seas, China can both gain continental advantages and expand her maritime power.

Therefore, her geographical strategic planning necessarily involves the construction of complex land and sea relations. A few years ago, China's academic circles have had a heated debate on the importance of land and sea power.<sup>12</sup> In fact, based on China's geographical features, China must attach equal importance to land and sea development, without jeopardizing either of the two. From a geo-strategic perspective of land and sea combination, whether going east or west, China must fully mobilize and give full play to her geopolitical advantages, meet the strategic deployment combining sea and land, go east and west simultaneously and plot for the big game of a Eurasian Union and make best use of the geopolitical advantages of Eurasian union. Only in this way can China overcome the containment and blockade imposed by any other major power and achieve the pluralistic radiation layout of energy trading and transportation. Seeking Eurasian union will be the long-term geographical strategy of China. A combination of maritime and land development will be one of the ways to go for China's development. In short, as a coastal land country, China will advance westward on land and expand eastward over the sea and so her strategic planning along this line of thinking becomes especially important.

Hence, China's overall development concept for the future will necessarily involve all four directions. The eastward expansion strategy is a Pacific Ocean dominated maritime strategy covering vast regions of Northeast and Southeast Asia and involving the resolution of a series of maritime disputes, strategic resources reserves, sea outlet and strategic space expansion, diversified dependence on external energy resources. China's strategic priorities include construction of maritime strategic barriers, maintenance of strategic hubs and the security of energy lifeline and strategic passageways. Militarily, the eastward expansion strategy involves the buildup of offshore defense and maritime combat capabilities. During the process of navy construction, we have to pay attention to reasonableness and appropriateness, abide by the overall principle of peaceful development, take neighboring offshore countries' security concerns into consideration and conduct reasonable assessment of some major powers' strategic reaction. For example, as the US sees China's navy construction as a competition with the US for maritime domination, China should not ignore the strategic significance touched off by this issue. A more reasonable choice for China should be to develop maritime resistance forces.<sup>13</sup>

The Western Advancement Strategy or Opening to the West Strategy is a predominantly inland strategy denoting connection to the geopolitical heartland of the Eurasian continent. Currently, in Central Asia, economic and security cooperation centered on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is being carried out and the geopolitical layout developing further connection with Europe revolving around construction of the New Silk Road has already been put in motion.

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<sup>12</sup> There are basically three opinions on the positioning of Chinese sea and land power: (1) Sea power outweighs land power argued by Wenmu Zhang and Lexiong Ni; (2) sea power is subject to land power argued by Zicheng Ye; and (3) sea power and land power are equally important argued by Yihu Li and Yongjiang Liu.

<sup>13</sup> Tang [6].

The Southward Strategy, mainly involving India and Pakistan, aims at the construction of the Indian Ocean strategy in resonance to the Pacific Ocean Strategy so as to form the two wings spreading to the oceans. A key link of the Southward Strategy is Myanmar, one of China's major energy transport routes, which can, to some extent, free China from the restrictions of a singular maritime transport artery from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.

The Northward Strategy aims at strengthening traditional cooperation with Russia and economic development and cooperation with Mongolia. A main point of the Northward Strategy is energy exploitation cooperation with Russia in Northeast Asia and economic development and cooperation with Russia and Korea on the Korean Peninsula. Another strategic main point is involvement in the development of the North Pole region.

Future geo-strategy will have to be more holistic and panoramic, better promote regional economic integration, and exert greater influence. China's geo-strategic layout must serve her economic strategy for opening to the outside world and help create a peaceful and secure environment that benefits China. In other words, there have to be diversified transport routes that are safe and beneficial and supported with strategic buffer zones. There have to be strategic partnerships, fully committed strategic partnerships and special partnerships and maritime strategies that serve the needs of maritime trade and maritime exploitation as well as space strategies indispensable for the future. China's foreign policy strategy necessitates matching and more comprehensive strategic concepts.

In sum, China must hold high the banner of unconventional security cooperation, network and plan new types of strategic partnerships and keep expanding her circle of strategic partners. A long-term geo-strategy development objective should be to open to the west and promote the integration of Europe and Asia and push forward towards the east the development of the Pacific strategy based on peripheral cooperation and establish an all-round general structure joining land and sea together.

## **2. Avoiding or resolving risks**

One of the strategic problems of national development is an exclusive single option. An example is the predicament of deficiency of strategic resources. To prevent that, there will have to be maintenance of national self-sufficiency and prevention of over dependence on the outer world. One of the strategic problems of national development is an exclusive single option. An example is the predicament of deficiency of strategic resources. To prevent that, there will have to be maintenance of national self-sufficiency and prevention of over dependence on the outer world. Dependence on external resources may affect autonomy and reduce the number of strategic options. Hence, the level of dependence on external sources must be kept within a reasonable limit.

Currently, there is an escalating demand for energy resources in China while new energy resources are hardly sustainable. The over dependence on foreign energy resources is all too obvious: over dependence is, to a great extent, equivalent to delivering a country's economic development to the mercy of uncontrollable global factors. The international market and the risk of political and social volatility in other



countries will directly impact the stability of domestic economic development. On the issue of dependence on external energy resources and other key strategic goods, whoever takes the initiative in addressing over dependence will gain an upper hand, and whoever is ahead of the game of tiding over the energy crisis will be able to stand out of the crowd.

In order to reduce external dependence and keep it at a scientific and reasonable level, pay more attention to balanced development, emphasize strategic reserves, a long-term strategic option will have to be expanding and improving the domestic market. China will have to keep reinforcing her reserves of strategic resources, take all precautions to avoid the negative influence of excessive dependence on external resources which will end in limited options of foreign policy strategies. Timely purchase of strategic oil reserves for foreign policy purposes has become a pressing issue. The significance of strategic gold reserve to the multi-polarization of reserve currency cannot be underestimated either.

To solve the problem of decreasing dependence on external supplies, China has to strive for a balanced development, accumulate strategic reserve and consider expanding the domestic as our long-term target. To balance dependence with self-reliance, China must enhance her strategic endurance and flexibility, expand the scope and depth of her strategies, which boils down to the strengthening of her strategic flexibility.

## **6.4 Improvement of Crisis Management Capacity**

China is facing new and old crises ranging from international economic crisis, financial crisis, global governance issues, security issues between China and its neighboring countries, including some of the thorniest hot-button issues, such as the “Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan Independence” issues (are seeking independence), which threatens China’s sovereignty. Other issues include nuclear security problem involving international arms control and nuclear nonproliferation. So far as nuclear security is concerned, China’s neighbor North Korea’s nuclear issue still poses a major threat. As most China-related crises are complicated, long-lasting, historical and difficult to solve, China will be under huge shock if any one of them spun out of control.

Therefore, for crises that are hard to resolve, there must be magnified prevention and control measures, full consultation with other countries, enhanced trust, and reinforced system design on multiple facets. Fundamentally, crisis management and control must be placed within the framework of overall strategic planning and crisis resolution will take place in the form of long-term and whole-picture approaches.

Solution to development issues will not prove effective unless it got started from the perspective of comprehensive governance. As a belated rising country, China must do a good job of planning and drafting as she takes the lead in introducing new methods, new ideas, and new topics of discussion. In such a complex situation, if

China were to realize sustainable development, she will have to realign her innovative mechanism and innovative topics with new diplomatic ideas.

## 6.5 Conclusion

During more than three decades of reform and opening up, China's foreign policy strategy underwent grand strategy directional change, a change from revolutionary diplomacy to development diplomacy. She put forward a series of grand objectives such as "a harmonious world," charted out relevant routes, such as major power relations focusing on the forming of strategic partnerships with major powers, peripheral relations built up on the principle of enriching and befriending neighboring countries, the merging into the current international system, and the multilateral diplomatic strategy playing the role of proactive molding, all of which are part of China's major contribution to its economic development, the well-being of her people and world peace.

The current international situation is going through many complications and changes and the evolution of the international structure is posing greater risks. China's diplomacy is also faced with unprecedented mission. The task is heavy and the road is long. Strategic planning during transition must be in line with the themes of the times, value strategic thinking, stand on high ground, get a panoramic view, examine and deal with issues from the vantage point of the whole situation, and have a good command of the macroscopic situation from the perspective of new connection, holism and systemic changes. Through analysis of complicated interaction and changes at different levels, with good and detailed consideration, fact-based prevention, and beneficial implementation, the plan will lay a strong and solid foundation for China's diplomacy and offer a clearer blueprint for the building of a moderately prosperous society in the primary stage of modernization.

As this article goes to press, the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee held in Beijing adopted the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform". The meeting further endorsed a decision to "establish the Council of State Security to improve the national security system and strategies to guarantee national security."<sup>14</sup> The measure fully demonstrates that China's top leaders have a macroscopic and in-depth understanding of the international and regional situations China is currently faced with and of the magnitude of national security measures and strategic planning she will have to come up with. In sum, China's future foreign policy planning must focus fully on the themes of the times, accentuate strategic thinking, stand tall and above to observe the overall situation, have a keen sense of the trends of development during transition, discern and deal with

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<sup>14</sup> Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform, *People's Daily*, Nov. 16, 2013.

issues from an overall perspective, develop new ways of thinking, break through traditional patterns of thinking, improve dialectical thinking, and overcome extremism, lopsided and lineal thinking. To design a more scientific and systematic, China must balance stability and development, costs and benefits. Only in such case, can Chinese strategic planning achieve transformation and improvement. Furthermore, strategic planning will have to stay focused, balanced, excel at synthesis and integration, resolve conflicts by suiting to the occasion and take a step-by-step approach in averting risks and perils. There will have to be a proper balance between development and stability and between costs and benefits so that future strategic planning will be more scientific and systematic. Only in this way can China's diplomatic strategies successfully transition and upgrade.

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# Chapter 7

## Does China's Diplomatic Innovation Need Diplomatic Revolution?



Zhimin Chen

**Abstract** During the past two years, the new Chinese leadership has adopted a series of new measures in its diplomacy. It is a period with most intensive and forceful diplomatic innovations since the beginning of the reform and opening-up. This article identifies five such innovations: innovations in self-identity, in strategic thinking, in institution-building, in use of instruments, and in choice of methods. With these diplomatic innovations, China is exploring great power diplomacy with distinctive Chinese characteristics. At the same time, these innovations do not represent a diplomatic revolution. The basic diplomatic principles and ways of conduct in Chinese diplomacy have not changed. China still wants to be a new type of great power; development is still a central diplomatic agenda; China will continue its non-alliance partnership diplomacy; China will uphold the sovereignty equality principle and restrict the use of force in foreign policy. Even by the year of 2030, unless there is an unlikely fundamental deterioration of the external environment, China shall have no reasons to change these basic principles and ways of conducting its diplomacy. China needs more diplomatic innovations, but should not rush to a diplomatic revolution.

**Keywords** China's diplomacy · Diplomatic innovation · Diplomatic revolution · Great power diplomacy · New-type great power

### 7.1 Introduction

The past two years marked a spell when diplomatic innovations were most frequent and powerful since China's started off with her reform program. It was a period when new foreign policy measures kept evolving and new ideas and new initiatives kept emerging. Diplomatic innovation means the change and update of the original diplomatic thought and practice, while in-depth diplomatic innovation has opened up people's vision of diplomatic revolution in the future. Driven by these innovations,

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will China need any material change in the fundamental guiding principles and behavior patterns of her diplomacy?

In Encyclopedia Britannica, the phrase “diplomatic revolution” is listed as the antonym of “alliance reversal.”<sup>1</sup> Simply put, it refers to one country’s alliances with a former enemy to confront a former ally. In past diplomatic relations, alliance reversal represented a dramatic change in diplomacy strategy and practice, so it’s appropriate to see that as diplomatic revolution. Shi Yinhong, a Chinese scholar, pointed out in an article that the term “diplomatic revolution” is a term commonly used in the world diplomacy history circle. It is derived from dramatic changes in inter-power frontline alliance directly related to the War of the Austrian Succession in the eighteenth century, especially the drastic change from hostility to friendly cooperation. In the extended sense, Shi Yinhong argues, “diplomatic revolution” refers to fundamental or nearly-fundamental and even dramatic change (or dramatic “rapprochement” in relations between two former opposing countries in the context of overall international situation. For example, Nixon’s visit to China in 1972 can be seen as a “diplomatic revolution” in this sense between China and the US.<sup>2</sup>

The fundamental transformation of the alliance strategy has throughout history been a salient feature of diplomatic revolution. In the author’s opinion, the fundamental nature of a country’s diplomacy is not limited to that. In addition to the alliance strategy, the diplomatic objectives pursued by a country, the position on sovereignty principles taken by that country, and the manner in which the country resorts to use of force, are all constituents determined by that country’s diplomatic nature. The fundamental changes that take place in these respects will all be revolutionary.

This article will firstly summarize the current status of China’s diplomatic innovation, analyze the rationale thereof, and explore its ways of expression. Based on the definition of diplomatic revolution mentioned above, the article argues that the existing diplomatic innovation is not yet a diplomatic revolution in its true sense. Following that, the article discusses the kind of conditions needed for a diplomatic revolution in China. The paper’s conclusion is that unless the external environment deteriorates en masse, the basic diplomatic guiding principles and practice patterns formed after the initiation of reform and opening up are of long-term legitimacy that requires no fundamental change at all: China needs diplomatic innovation, but not imminent diplomatic revolution.

## 7.2 Ongoing Diplomatic Innovation in China

By the standard set in this paper, at least three diplomatic revolutions have taken place in the history of the People’s Republic of China. The first was during the earlier days after the founding of the PRC, marked by the declaration that China would join the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://global.Britannica/Rechecked/topic/164621/Diplomatic-Revolution>, Login date: August 20, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Shi [1].

socialist camp to confront the West, which is figuratively a policy of “leaning to one-side” and “cleaning up the room before inviting the guests to dinner.” The second revolution was marked by the 1972 Sino-US reconciliation and joint confrontation against the former Soviet Union. The third diplomatic revolution started from the revolutionary change in China's diplomatic goals at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, when the priorities of China's diplomacy changed from struggle against imperialism and hegemony and the preparation for the war to the creation of a peaceful external environment needed for economic development. In 1982, China declared an independent foreign policy of peace and established the new principle of non-alliance diplomacy. These definitions of the objectives and priorities of the alliance strategy, together with the reaffirmed Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, constitute China's third diplomatic revolution since the start of reform and opening up.

After more than 30 years' practice of reform and opening up, China has made a great leap-forward in economic development, and its international status and clout are growing on daily basis. Under new historical conditions, China's diplomacy needs innovation to adapt to new circumstances at home and abroad. Motivated to do great things in domestic and foreign affairs, China's new leaders are taking comprehensive measures of innovation to drive diplomatic transformation. In summary, we can sort out diplomatic innovation in five major aspects listed below:

### **(I) Innovation in foreign policy positioning to match China's new international status**

In 2010, China surpassed Japan to become the largest economy in Asia and the second largest economy in the world, which means that China has developed from a political and military power of the past to a major power in terms of overall strength. Although China is still a developing country in terms of GDP per capita, her aggregate economic volume has escalated to the forefront of the world. In 2013, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi solemnly stated in an important speech that contemporary China must seek “a road of great-power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics,” which meant a new positioning of China's diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> First of all, this means that China's major power consciousness in its foreign policy decisions has been upgraded. Deng Xiaoping said during his talk with Singapore's First Deputy Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong in 1987, “Despite her poverty, China has become one of the three sides of the triangle of the international political arena because of her big size.”<sup>4</sup> Now that China is no longer just big in size but also big in overall national strength, her major power diplomacy consciousness has found a more solid footing than ever before. This means China's diplomacy claims as a major power will grow bigger and bigger. China's major power diplomacy will not be limited to diplomacy among major powers, but will be expanded to “diplomacy based on her major power status.” It is defined as diplomacy based on her interests and objectives and her own overall understanding of herself or diplomacy matching her major power status and capacity. Such major

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<sup>3</sup> Wang [2].

<sup>4</sup> Policy Research Office of CPC Central Committee [3].

power diplomacy seeks the maximization of national interests in the world as well as greater influence on global affairs.<sup>5</sup> Finally, it also implies that China is ready to take on more responsibilities as a major power. China has been pushed to the center of the international arena and must play her role of a major power in addressing regional and international issues.

## **(II) Innovation in foreign policy strategy to meet the needs of new international situation**

China's new status as the world's second largest economy implies that China has achieved a critical leap in her weakest area, thus effecting a change in the pattern of international balance of power denoting great geopolitical and economic significance. Western powers who have long presided over the international system are reassessing their relationships with China, and the US which is the world's sole superpower, has initiated an Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy seeking to focus its strategic resources on the Asia-Pacific region so as to contain China's influence in the region and maintain US predominance. In the meantime, the US and other Western powers have negotiated trade deals that exclude emerging powers through two regional economic and trade protocols known as the trans-Atlantic system and the trans-Pacific system in attempts to continue their dominance in the making of international economic and trade rules. A few neighboring countries also believe that, in view of China's new status as Asia's largest economy, they need to strengthen their ties with the US so as to play against China and gain solutions that serve their interests. That has become a factor that further complicates the situation in the region. The gaming between Russia and Western countries striving for influences in the surrounding areas of Russia has escalated to serious confrontation. Russia's amalgamation of Crimea, the civil war in eastern Ukraine, and US and the EU's economic sanctions against Russia and the freezing of Russia's seat in the Group of Eight show that the specter of a new cold war is floating in the air of Europe again. In addition, the rise of Islamic militants in the Middle East is posing serious threat to regional stability. In the face of such a complex international situation, China cannot but revamp her diplomatic strategy and work out new ways to resolve various external challenges and take the initiative to charter plans that will influence the future trends of the external world.

Against this backdrop, the newly elected Chinese leadership defines the basic feature of its diplomacy as "taking a proactive approach."<sup>6</sup> Guided by the strategic thinking of keeping China's true strength hidden, China's past diplomacy has "generally adopted a low-profile approach, or a basically defensive and reactive approach."<sup>7</sup> By contrast, diplomacy today must go the way of transformation to striving for achievement in a proactive and creative manner. China's diplomatic mission is not just to deal with external crises and challenges, solve the external contradictions

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<sup>5</sup> Wu [4].

<sup>6</sup> Wang Yi's Answer to Chinese and Foreign Journalists' Questions at the Press Conference on China's Foreign Policy and Foreign Relations held by the Second Session of the Twelfth National People's Congress, *People's Daily*, March 9, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Cui [5].

China's development is faced with, guarantee the peaceful and stable external environment for China's development, but also to participate in the molding of the external environment by creating a momentum so as to resolve or counteract external challenges from the origin. To this end, the new government has constructed its own framework of diplomatic strategy through a series of new diplomatic discourses: firstly, the use of the "Chinese Dream" to unite the people, secondly, demonstration of diplomatic will with "great power diplomacy" and "bottom-line thinking," thirdly, promotion of the BRICS cooperative mechanism among emerging powers, fourthly, use of "cordiality, sincerity, grace and inclusiveness" to guide critical peripheral diplomacy, fifthly, use of the "new Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "Maritime Silk Road" to construct and extend China's continental and maritime partnership network, sixthly, use of a "new type of great power relations" to stabilize relations with the world's major power centers, especially relations with the US, and seventhly use of a "new concept of justice and interest" and "community of shared destiny" to consolidate and expand relations with developing countries. All that means that the forward-looking nature of strategic planning is all the more intensified, the systematic nature of strategic thinking is more comprehensive, and the relevance of strategic means is more clearly defined. It has become a consensus of all parties that China's diplomacy has become increasingly important strategically.

### **(III) Institutional innovation to make use of the synergy of China's diplomatic system**

Compared with other countries, China has the institutional advantage of implementing grand strategies. For example, Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross argue that "among all the great powers, China has the greatest freedom of action in the rational pursuit of national interests, makes alliance transformation in accordance with the strategy of large-scale operations, and adopts strategic foreign policy."<sup>8</sup> However, with the deepening of China's reform and opening up, the government and non-government actors are involved in the country's foreign relations, and the diversification of the role of China's diplomacy is becoming increasingly prominent.<sup>9</sup> This has brought about the problem of overall foreign policy coordination, and so the call for the strengthening of top-level design has grown louder and louder. In order to strengthen overall coordination, since its inauguration, the new administration has completed two major institutional reforms in the field of foreign affairs or foreign-related affairs. In March 2013, the first session of 12th National People's Congress decided to reorganize the former State Oceanic Administration (SOA) and put it under the administration of the Ministry of Land and Resources. The SOA has under it the China Marine Surveillance (CMS) and the China Coast Guard (former under the Ministry of Public Security), which would coordinate with China Fisheries Law Enforcement Command under the Fishery Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Maritime Anti-Smuggling Police under the General Administration of

<sup>8</sup> Nathan and Ross [6].

<sup>9</sup> Lecompton [7]. See also Linda Jacobson and Dean Knox, *New Foreign Policy Acton in China*, SIPRI Policy Paper No. 26, September 2010.



Customs. Since then, the State Oceanic Administration began carrying out maritime law enforcement in the name of China Coast Guard under the professional guidance of the Ministry of Public Security. The reorganization was meant to solve the problems of decentralization of maritime law enforcement, inefficient law enforcement and insufficiency in safeguarding rights. In November 2013, the Third Plenary Session of 18th CPC National Congress proposed the establishment of the National Security Commission. In January 2014, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee eventually named the new organization the National Security Commission of the CPC Central Committee, with Xi Jinping serving as the chairman, Li Keqiang and Zhang Dejiang as vice-chairmen, who had under them several standing committee members and members. The National Security Commission of the Communist Party of China, as the decision-making and deliberative organ of the CPC Central Committee on the work of national security, serves under the CPC Politburo and the Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee Politburo and coordinates in a comprehensive manner major matters concerning overall coordination and national security. Some scholars believe that the National Security Commission was founded to strengthen coordination among the departments concerned and to give full play to the synergy.<sup>10</sup>

#### **(IV) Innovation of means of diplomacy to reflect China's enhanced overall national strength**

Since the start of reform and opening up, the central task of China's diplomacy has been to create a favorable external environment for domestic development. Due to the limitations of national strength, China gives priority to the attractive use of hard and soft power resources in her choice of diplomatic means. This specifically is reflected in the following three aspects: First and foremost is use of the moral appeal of China's foreign policy of peaceful cooperation. As Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang put it, "China's greatest soft power in the world is that she upholds justice in words and action, refrains from hegemony, and advocates peaceful development and win-win cooperation. In my opinion, that is where China's greatest soft power lies."<sup>11</sup> The second aspect is to give play to the benefit attraction of China's open market. In the past 30 years, China absorbed USD1 trillion worth of foreign direct investment, and its annual import volume reached USD1.95 trillion in 2013, becoming the second largest importer just behind the US. Through direct and indirect foreign investment, China is also becoming an important source of external funds. Such mutually beneficial economic relations have resulted in China's dependence on the world economy and the dependence of the outside world on the Chinese economy, and furthermore, they have motivated certain countries to develop stable cooperative relations with China based on economic interests. The third aspect is cultural appeal disseminated

<sup>10</sup> Meng Xiangqing: China's Establishment of the National Security Commission at the Right Time, *PLA Daily*, November 22, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman and Director-General of the Information Department of the Foreign Ministry, Qin Gang on Public Diplomacy, <http://fangtan.people.com.cn/GB/147550/17592355.html>, login date: September 28, 2014.

by China's long history of civilization. Especially after China initiated the strategy of cultural soft power in 2007, the interest of the general public overseas in Chinese culture have been heating up steadily, and the global-going Confucius institutes and the number of foreign students studying in China rose rapidly. Clearly, in diplomacy, China's use of attractive strength prevails over her use of coercive strength. This is in stark contrast with the concurrent use of attractive and coercive means in the US and developed European countries.<sup>12</sup>

If China's diplomacy used to be soft and appeal was the main means used to influence the behavior of the external world or other countries, China's diplomacy in recent years is more focused on a combination of hard and soft approaches. While upgrading her appeal strategy, she also focused on the role of counter-force and push so that "soft approaches may become softer, and the hard approaches harder." China does a number of things in her drive to upgrade her appeal: firstly, the undertaking of international responsibility in foreign policy and the promotion of new things that facilitate global justice and fair play, e.g. the BRICS cooperation; secondly, seeking to benefit other countries in foreign economic policy. During his visit to Mongolia in August 2014, President Xi Jinping proposed the theory of "Chinese version of free-riding." "We welcome you to ride the train of China's development, regardless of regular ride or freeride,"<sup>13</sup> he said. Thirdly, use of military force to participate in international peacekeeping. For the first time, China dispatched fully equipped combat troops for the first time to South Sudan. Meanwhile, when her critical interests are challenged, China can also react resolutely based on her overall national strength, and launch strong counterattack and counter spell. For example, after Japan had "nationalized" the Diaoyu Islands, China's maritime law enforcement forces entered the territorial waters of Diaoyu Islands for normal cruising, and established an air defense identification zone on the East China Sea.

#### **(V) Innovation of diplomatic means to strengthen the guideline of proactive diplomacy**

In respect of bilateral diplomacy, China has established various forms of partnerships with a number of countries under the strategic guidance of past partnership strategy of diplomacy and has formed partnership networks of different degrees of closeness. In the new era, China's partnership diplomacy has focused more on the strategic use of different degrees of closeness in inter-state relations, defined relations with some countries and regions as the priority direction of China's diplomacy, e.g. Russia, Europe, India and ASEAN. She has concentrated on directing her key resources on the development of a partnership of win-win cooperation so as to construct a strategic pillar of support for China's grand diplomatic strategy. Conversely, she has cooled

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<sup>12</sup> Chen and Chang [8].

<sup>13</sup> Xi Jinping: Offering Timely Help, Jointly Creating New Era in the Development of Sino-Mongolian Relationship—a speech at the State Great Khural in Mongolia, [http://www.fmprc.gov.ca/mfa\\_cha/wliao\\_611306/zyjh\\_611308/t1184896](http://www.fmprc.gov.ca/mfa_cha/wliao_611306/zyjh_611308/t1184896). Steal, login date: September 22, 2014.

down relations with countries that tend to challenge her key interests, e.g. Japan, Norway and the Philippines, and have pressurized them to initiate changes.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of multilateral diplomacy, China has historically highlighted participating in the existing international system so as to seek reform of the existing system from within so as to achieve a fairer international order. China has also facilitated the establishment of some multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (FTA). Generally, though, these organizations were founded in fields or regions where the existing international system is lacking, therefore constituting no challenge to the existing system, but serving as an addition to the system. Such complementarity can take three possible forms: firstly, development of a “parallel compensatory system,” which goes in parallel with the existing system and is mainly built up in the blind areas of the existing system, e.g. the Asia-Europe summit mechanism; secondly, development of a “nested reinforcement system” which is grafted to the existing system mainly to enhance the governance capacity of the existing system and to make up for its deficiencies. For example, the East Asian foreign exchange reserve bank with a pool of USD120 billion was founded in 2010 through multilateralization as advocated by the Chiang Mai Initiative. At the outset, only 20% could be allocated by member countries to assist any member country faced with difficulties in balance of payments, while the remaining 80% is bundled together with the aid programs of the IMF, the release of which must follow the IMF’s aid resolutions. Thirdly, creation of a “future-led system” aimed at the seeking of a more progressive model of international relations, regardless of regional, multilateral or global dimensions. For example, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has, by virtue of the “Shanghai Spirit” of cooperative security, provided a paradigm of for a new type of international relationship of security and cooperation on the basis of non-alliance and non-targeting of third parties.<sup>15</sup>

However, as revealed in the US Congress’s refusal to ratify the IMF’s share reform agreement in 2010 and the US and Japan’s unwillingness to grant China with the Asian Development Bank’s decision-making power commensurate with China’s economic status, presiding countries of the current international regime are still reluctant to make any necessary reforms so as to adapt to the new reality of international balance of power. Against this backdrop, China and other developing countries are pushing for the establishment of some new international regimes such as the BRICS Development Bank, the BRICS Emergency Reserve and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Because these new international regimes have overlapping functions with the existing system and can make independent decisions, they have certain competitiveness and replacement potential. Predictably, if the current

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<sup>14</sup> Zhou Fangyin argued that in the fields of neighborhood diplomacy, “under the premise of adhering to the overall development of friendly relationship with neighboring countries, implement policy having certain degree of differentiation to the neighboring countries, and appropriately increase the differential policy efforts.” See Zhou Fangyin, “Target, Resources and Policy Choice of China’s New neighborhood Diplomacy around the World”, *Oriental Morning Post*, January 14, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> See Chen [9].

regime fails to be duly reformed, the new international system will be endowed with more competitive and replacement potential so that the countries concerned may be willing to and find it necessary to reform the existing order in a timely manner.

### 7.3 Diplomatic Innovation is Not Yet Diplomatic Revolution

Although many diplomatic innovations have emerged, they have not yet culminated in diplomatic revolution as per the basic definition proposed in this article.

First, major power diplomacy refers to that of developing socialist countries rather than the traditional major power diplomacy of hegemony. Although China has shifted the focus her diplomacy to major power diplomacy, there has been no fundamental change in her basic characteristics as a developing socialist country. As a developing major power, China's central task is to promote further socio-economic development and play the role of major power diplomacy to back the country's development. "We know deeply that China will remain the largest developing country in the world for a long time to come. We will need to make tremendous efforts to improve the living standard and quality of life of over 1.3 billion people," Chinese President Xi Jinping said during his state visit to Germany. Two basic conditions will be needed for China to concentrate on building the country: a harmonious and stable domestic environment and a peaceful and tranquil international environment.<sup>16</sup> Vice President Li Yuanchao also pointed out during his state visit to Zambia and Tanzania in June 2014 that, China's GDP had exceeded USD 9 trillion in 2013, but her GDP per capita was only USD 6,700, ranking the 84th globally. Urban-rural development remained quite unbalanced. More than 600 million farmers have per capita incomes of less than USD 1,500 annually, and more than 200 million people are living below the poverty line defined by the World Bank, and 60% of the population living in the central and western regions of China have per capita GDPs equivalent to just half of those living in coastal developed areas. The urbanization rate is 53.7% in China, while developed countries generally have per capita GDPs of more than 80%. China still has a long way to go to build an all-round well-off society by 2020 and to basically realize modernization by the mid-twenty-first century. Based on this, the positioning of China as the world's largest developing country has not changed.<sup>17</sup>

China's socialist system also requires that its diplomatic policy reflects progressiveness and impartiality. Foreign Minister Wang Yi pointed out that one major characteristics of China's diplomacy is rooted in the socialist concept that China adheres to. To stick to this road and concept, China needs to pursue fairness and justice, common prosperity and social harmony internally and uphold justice and equity, stand for principle and do what is right externally. China's diplomacy must

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<sup>16</sup> Speech of Xi Jinping on the German Kolb Fund, March 28, 2014, Germany Berlin, [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-03/29/content\\_j2649512.html](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-03/29/content_j2649512.html), login date: August 22, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Li Yuanchao: the position that China is still a developing country has not changed, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2014/0708/c1001-25254455.html>, login date: August 22, 2014.

reject any law of the jungle, stick to the principle of equality of all nations regardless of size, insist on opposing any form of hegemony, persist in promoting democracy in international relations, oppose the practices of the big bullying the small, strong repressing the weak, the rich oppressing the poor and interference in other countries' internal affairs. China has always persisted in solving today's international and regional hot-button issues through dialogue and negotiation. She opposes the supremacy of military forces and engagement in regime change. China is not a sheer keeper of private interests, but safeguards the basic guidelines of international morality and international relations.<sup>18</sup>

Second, the striving-to-achieve diplomacy serves the overall state of affairs of domestic security and development. It's not a new central task of replacing domestic operations with operations overseas. This means that China must seek a proper balance in her increasing involvement in overseas operations, which means she must avoid rashness and impetuosity and know what to do and what not to do. This is first determined by China's central task at the current stage. To break away from the "mid-income trap" and engineer sustainable socio-economic development, China still needs to focus its efforts on domestic construction. Second, this is caused by the limitations of China's comprehensive national strength in the current stage. Although China has become the world's second largest economy, the major developed countries China is faced with have already established a US-centered alliance system. Therefore, power distribution of the international system cannot be judged by the strength of any individual country. And so, there should not be any over exaggeration of China's power in molding a new international order. Thirdly, this is determined by the special circumstances of China's rise as a major power in the current stage. As the largest and fastest growing emerging power, China is a force having the greatest impact on the current international system, and as such, has aroused the vigilance of existing presiding powers and has been treated as the object of counterbalancing by some countries concerned. Therefore, in this sensitive stage of power shift, China needs to avoid any serious mistake in handling international affairs. Finally, this was molded by China's diplomatic tradition. In Shi Yinhong's opinion, "maintenance," as one of the long-term themes of China's history, implies the heavy task of maintaining the unity and integrity of China as a gigantic sovereign state and to keep her in peace and stability. For traditional China, its emphasis lies on how different dynasties have withstood alien invasion, conquest and internal rebellion. For contemporary China, it highlights the perseverance, flexibility and talent of China's political leadership as reflected in their great and protracted effort and struggle. In other words, despite the colossal changes brought about by unusual reform, China still managed to maintain national unity, political stability and social prosperity.<sup>19</sup>

Third, comprehensively coordinated diplomacy requires balanced national security and development, and not replacing security diplomacy with development diplomacy. Since China initiated her policy of reform and opening up, in order to

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<sup>18</sup> Wang Yi: Exploration on Great Power Diplomatic Road of the Chinese Characteristics, Decision-Making, No. 1, 2014, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> Shi [10].

serve the central task of economic development and protect her core interests from vulnerabilities,<sup>20</sup> she has been striving for “basic security” as part of her security strategy.

With the rapid uplifting of China's overall national strength due to rapid economic growth, China and the rest of the world are faced with increasingly complicated security challenges. At the current stage, China should not stop at basic security, but must achieve enhanced security, upgrade the security guarantee level of her core interests, strengthen the security guarantee level of the country's other important interests and strengthen the construction of national security capacity and means.

However, the orientation of enhanced security should not come at the expense of the core interest of development, nor should national security diplomacy replace national development diplomacy. The goal should be balanced and organic promotion of security and development. Therefore, national security strategy should aim at pursuing effectiveness and take into account the balanced realization of various core interests of the country. While pursuing enhanced national security, an effective national security strategy should seek relative rather than absolute security, open rather than closed security, sustainable rather than temporary security, omnidirectional rather than traditional security, developing rather than stagnant security, common rather than single-country security, overall rather than fragmented security, law-based rather than excessively secure security.<sup>21</sup>

In the foreign policy arena, China has two major decision-making authorities: the long-established Foreign Affairs Leadership Group of the CPC Central Committee headed by President Xi Jinping and Vice-President Li Yuanchao and the newly established National Security Commission. In a situation where two institutions coexist, we need to clarify our thinking and perfect our mechanisms as we attempt to organically coordinate security strategy with diplomatic strategy, reach other core goals of national diplomatic strategies while pursuing enhanced security in order to effectively play the leadership and coordination roles of the top-level mechanisms, and avoid replacement of development diplomacy with security diplomacy.

Fourthly, both hard and soft approaches should be adopted to comprehensively utilize China's power resources, rather than to shift from appeal diplomacy to coercive diplomacy. Contemporary China is already equipped with considerable power to use her appeal and coerciveness simultaneously. As the role of appeal often involves the giving of a lot of benefits and no return is actually guaranteed, traditional major powers will often resort to the use of coercive force, such as sanctions or military intervention, so as to more quickly change the behaviors of other countries. However, history since the twentieth century proves that barring endorsement from the international community, the use of coercive means, especially military means, often leads to unintended consequences, such as humanitarian disasters inflicted by the two world wars. In other scenarios, either the intervening country can be dragged into a protracted war of contrition, as in the case of the US War on Iraq, or the

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<sup>20</sup> Liu [11].

<sup>21</sup> See Fudan State Council's Strategic Report Writing Group: Fudan China's National Security Strategy Report—Security, Development and International Co-progressiveness, November 2014.

intervened country could be plunged into the status of a failed state, as in the case of the war on Afghanistan that the US has won. Nevertheless, as in the case of the US which failed to resist the temptations of a unipolar hegemony in the beginning of this century, a country with huge coercive power often cannot resist the temptations of power. For example, repeated involvement of the US in military maneuvers across the world has often backfired.

Undoubtedly, China's diplomacy has become more daring in the use of coercive force than ever. In dealing with countries that sabotage peace and countries where crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and genocides are being or have been perpetrated, and where peaceful means of diplomacy failed, China should also, based on consensus of the international community, endorse use of all kinds of coercive means, including military intervention as the last resort. In bilateral relations, China must first play the deterrent role of a coercive power to prevent the implementation by any external force of any policy that harms China's core interests. Secondly, give play to the restraining role of the coercive force to frustrate the practices of any external forces to jeopardize China's core interests. Finally, we need to give play to the backup role of the coercive force and cause relevant countries to use peaceful means to solve inter-state disputes. During this process, China should first use various forms of non-military sanctions and civil enforcement forces to safeguard her core interests and adhere to the use of backhand strategic posture when using military forces.

Meanwhile, China must have a clear understanding of the limitations of coercive forces, oppose the abuse of military interference and sanctions, adhere to the basic diplomatic principles of peaceful dispute resolution by prioritizing the use of appeal diplomacy to safeguard China's interests and upgrade China's international clout and status.

Fifthly, method innovation is used to strengthen our ability to mold bilateral relations and international multilateral order, rather than to shift from partnership to alliance diplomacy, or from close-alooft diplomacy to enemy-friend diplomacy, or from reform of the international system to revolutionary diplomacy.

Partnership diplomacy is a core feature of China's new diplomacy that has achieved remarkable results, including the winning of a favorable external environment for China after the Cold War and developing mutually beneficial cooperation with various countries. With the rapid rise of China's international influence and the strengthening of external counterbalancing power, calls for initiating alliance diplomacy in lieu of the non-alignment diplomatic line came to be heard.<sup>22</sup> According to the alliance theory, the alliance strategy can certainly provide a country with additional external support and can do a better job countering external security challenges. At present, the major developed countries and Russia have their own alliance systems to upgrade their security levels and to enhance their abilities to predominate in international affairs. Alliance often also imply security protection commitment to allies and risks of being abandoned and implicated within the alliance, possible escalation

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<sup>22</sup> Xuetong Yan: China May Consider Changing the "Non-Alliance Strategy", *Defense Times*, June 8, 2011.

of security dilemmas outside the alliance, and consequently negative effects on the security of a country. Therefore, we need to consider the feasibility of the alliance strategy through a cost and benefit analysis. At the current stage, nuclear deterrence makes it possible for major nuclear powers to mainly rely on their own capabilities to prevent invasion by other countries.

Through partnership diplomacy, China can develop relations with countries with different degrees of closeness, including military cooperation. Under partnership diplomacy, China can reap many benefits of cooperation on the one hand, and avoid the negative effects of security obligations, internal abandonment, collateral damage, and escalation of external opposition. Therefore, partnership diplomacy, which agrees with China's consistent non-alignment principle, is a product of rational choice that we need to insist on. In partnership diplomacy, China needs to differentiate her level of intimacy with other countries. On one hand, this is an objective expression of differences in cooperation level; on the other, China can also strengthen her cooperative relations with friendly countries through the conscious use of close-aloof diplomacy, and form effective pressure on less-friendly countries, and influence China policy debates in these countries so as to direct these countries towards a more constructive China policy. However, close-aloof diplomacy is no equivalent to friend-foe diplomacy. During the Cold War era, China found itself in the middle of an oppositional or confrontational international system that rationalized friend-foe diplomacy. Today, however, no country explicitly sees China as an enemy. Even though there are conflicts and disputes between China and certain countries, co-existence of competition and cooperation is still the basic norm of bilateral relations. China does not need to define countries that are not yet enemies as enemies, and thus, as constructivists put it, produce "self-fulfilling prophecies" that eventually place these countries in enemy seats. This runs counter to China's consistent diplomatic principles and does no good to her interests.

In multilateral diplomacy, China will seek to reform the existing international system. As Western powers keep postponing reform of the IMF and the World Bank, China needs to develop an in addition to an intra-system reform strategy, thus creating a situation where out-of-the-system reform promotes intra-system reform. With the advent of the BRICS National Development Bank and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, China's external reform strategy is now in full swing.

#### **7.4 Under What Conditions Will Diplomatic Innovation Require Diplomatic Revolution?**

If China in the current stage has seen no diplomatic revolution or no need for such, under what conditions should or must future China carry out diplomatic revolution? Here, we need to consider which of the major factors influencing a country's foreign strategy may change so that fundamental changes in the cardinal principles and means of China's diplomacy may occur. In considering these major factors, this



paper proposes that future changes in three aspects will command our attention: national strength, external environment and diplomatic consensus.

First, the prospect of outstanding comprehensive national power. Realists believe that one of the core principles of international relations is that power would interests are defined by power. The general understanding is that interests a country can pursue are commensurate with the power it has. From this perspective, if China's national power reaches a brand new height in the future, definition of interests and the way they are pursued will definitely or most likely change accordingly and go the way of diplomatic revolution. For a country like China, based on her nature of a new type of socialist power, China's diplomacy goes after something that surpasses realism. Meanwhile, reality politics has always been an important reference point for formulating strategies and policies. Therefore, we need to think from the platform of reality politics whether China's future development will cause enough pressure to push forward a diplomatic revolution.

As a rising great power, China is the most important variable causing significant changes to the power structure in the international system in the future. China is now a major political and military power in the world plus the second largest economy in the world in her capacity as a developing country. Despite the slowdown, China still maintained more than double the rate of growth of the current dominant power. This means the absolute size and relative position of China's overall strength will continue to rise in the future. By Hu Anyang's estimate, if the Chinese economy could sustain an average annual growth rate of 8% and 7% in the 2011–2020 decade and the 2020–2030 decade, respectively, China's GDP would reach USD19.8 trillion in 2019. By then, China would have surpassed the US to become the world's largest economy. Her GDP would have reached USD66.4 trillion by 2030, almost twice the size of the US economy and her per capita GDP by then could reach USD 40,000. By then, China would have become a country with the greatest contribution to the world, the world's largest engine of growth, and a leader of global great transformation.<sup>23</sup> Yan Xuetong also believes that China will catch up with the US in economic strength in 2023, but her military and cultural strength will remain behind the US and that "the overall strength gap between China and the US can only be narrowed down to the same level, but China will not catch up with the US in all respects."<sup>24</sup>

The US National Intelligence Council estimates that by 2030, China's overall strength would be on an equal par with the US by 2030, if calculated according to the four components of power, which are GDP, population, military spending and technology.<sup>25</sup>

So we can safely conclude that if the world's major powers continue to growth by the current trajectory, China's overall national strength can be basically equal to or even surpass that of the US by 2030, well ahead of other major powers or the European Union. This transformation in the power structure would be historic and would be manifested as the first time since the industrialization era that the overall

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<sup>23</sup> Hu [12].

<sup>24</sup> Yan [13].

<sup>25</sup> National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, December 2012, p.16.

strength of a non-Western country would have surpassed that of any Western country. This means China can basically achieve the development goals it is striving for. It also means China will have deeper involvement in international affairs and even stronger national strength to back such intervention. Thus, diplomatic innovation of greater dimensions is bound to emerge.

But such historical change in power structure is not yet revolutionary. Based on the said estimates by the National Intelligence Council, China and the US would each possess about 17% of the world's total power by 2030, which is less than the one fourth or so dominant position that the US enjoyed in 2010. Moreover, the EU and India's overall national strength would also surpass 10% of the world's total.<sup>26</sup> In other words, by 2030, the world's power structure would still be characterized by "two superpowers and multiple major powers." Neither China nor the US would have achieved comprehensive and overwhelming advantage in the world, and they would still be subject to a variety of mutual and external constraints. In that sense, from now till 2030, the international balance of power will benefit China, but China will be less likely to achieve overwhelming dominance. Thus, her improvement in power status may most likely be unable to constitute any fundamental challenge to the existing basic principles and means of diplomacy. As for developments after 2030, this paper cannot provide any meaningful discussion due to the greater uncertainty of forecast.

Second, the possibility of fundamentally worsened international environment. Another key factor affecting the choice of diplomatic strategy is abrupt change of external environment. If changes occur in the fundamental basis of China's diplomatic strategy today and characteristics of the era of peace and development are fundamentally reversed, diplomatic strategy will have to change accordingly. Richard Haas wrote in an article that the current time marks the end of an era of 25 years after the Cold War and the beginning of a new era of disorder. During the past US-dominated era, the majority of the world's people shared the benefits of the growth boom, and a large number of relatively open social and political systems emerged, wide-ranging peace reigned and considerable levels of cooperation existed among major powers. Today, such an era has ended and is being replaced by a more disorderly and less than peaceful era.<sup>27</sup> Since the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis, the international situation has undergone major changes: Russia's confrontation with the US and Europe has escalated and economic sanctions have been imposed both ways, and Russia's seat in the Group of Eight has been suspended. The new confrontation between Russia and the West is seen as the beginning of a new Cold War. Moreover, under the guidance of the Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy, the US has increased its security cooperation with its Asian allies, strengthened its frontline deployment, and has taken sides on territorial disputes between certain countries and China, thereby intensifying its strategic competition with China. As major changes occur to geopolitics, economic globalization which has long benefited China has faced more and more

<sup>26</sup> National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, p. 1, 16.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Haas, "The Era of Disorder," Project Syndicate, October 27, 2014, <http://www.project-syndi-cate.org/commentary/new-era-of-global-instability-by-richard-n-haass-2014-10#qUH31dHfDvSIIZfm.99>, Login date: October 30, 2014.

scrutiny and the call for de-globalization has gained increasing momentum. Trade in goods between China and Japan and the EU dropped in absolute value between 2011 and 2013, marking the first drop ever since the start of reform and opening up in China. Trade protectionist measures taken by the Western countries against China's export products emerged one after another, and Westerners are becoming more and more negative on the impact of globalization. As indicated by negotiations on the Transpacific Partnership Agreement (TTP) and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement (TTIP), Western countries are building cross-regional trade systems meant to exclude China. Against this backdrop, are peace and development still the basic features of this era?

Undoubtedly, certain unfavorable factors have emerged in the international environment in recent years that are incompatible with the modern themes of peace and development. However, if viewed from the global and long-term perspective, we can discover that the severity of Russia's confrontation with the West cannot be compared with what was happening during the Cold War era. As far as geographical area is concerned, the confrontation is confined to a small part of Europe alone, which is different from the global nature of the Cold War era. This confrontation has far-reaching implications for Russia's external environment, and implies both challenge and opportunity for China's international environment. On one hand, the EU, Russia and Ukraine are all cooperative partners of China. Today, as the cooperative partners fall into sharp confrontations, China is bound to get caught in a dilemma or even trilemma as she seeks to develop relations with the three parties. However, such challenges are manageable because they do not involve China's core interests. On the other hand, Russia, under the shock of the Ukrainian crisis, the European Union, Ukraine and the US all have more reasons to seek to develop cooperative relations with China, either by way of strategic backing from China, strategic neutrality of China, or by way of Chinese market access and funding. Even if the US implements the Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy, due to its financial difficulties and the chaos in Europe and the Middle East, its newly added strategic resources in Asia is limited and it has no solid backing in Asia except from a limited few countries. Therefore, as long as China uses the right strategy and invests the necessary resources, any military and economic hard perimeter wall strategy against China would fail. Based on experiences from the past two years, we can conclude that despite intensified geopolitical competition between China and the US, China can cope with challenges from the US and its Asia-Pacific allies by relying on existing strategies and policy innovation. At the APEC summit in November 2014, China and the US reached new consensus on a number of issues, indicating that Sino-US new great power relations are promising.

We therefore should not lose faith in the era theme of peace and development. The economic predicament Western countries are facing indicates that development is a never-ending task. Even with developed country status, in the backdrop of an increasingly integrated global economy, a country will not make continuous progress unless it makes unremitting efforts and keep innovating. In the wake of the theories and practice of de-globalization, China can, through actions of her own, step up efforts to open up the market and promote the opening up of her neighboring countries

and the further opening of economies at the global level. China can drive global development through her own development and avoid beggar-thy-neighbor trade wars. Meanwhile, at a time when global trade enters the low growth period, China can use the “one belt one road” strategy to achieve land and sea interconnection and link the economies of the world closer together through rapidly growing investment and assistance overseas over the past few years.

Third, an overall directional shift in diplomatic consensus has occurred. Even with no revolutionary change in the status of national strength and external environment, a diplomatic revolution could still occur if a revolutionary change in diplomatic consensus takes place inside China. Of course, any change in internal consensus must occur in a mega environment and under the influence thereof. However, the constructivism tells us that concepts may take lead as concepts are molded into strategies and policies. In my opinion, if new diplomatic consensus on concepts such as China-centrism, radical nationalism or offensive realism is reached in China, diplomatic revolution can take place in China as well, but such a revolution is obviously not something we want.

For a long time in history, China has been a central country in Asia and has maintained a China-centered tributary system. Compared with Europe, this system has resulted in greater stability.<sup>28</sup> However, a central feature of this system is the hierarchical system between large and small countries, which conflicts with the basic principles of the modern international system. After the founding of the PRC, China re-emerged as a great power in Asia. Premier Zhou Enlai paid special attention to the issue of equality between big and small countries, because China is “a great power who can easily show disrespect for smaller countries, and that’s why we often tell our people to be vigilant against a chauvinistic mentality.”<sup>29</sup> Today, as China re-emerges as the greatest power in Asia, the ideology of China-centrism can easily re-surface with or without our knowing it. If the traditional patriarchal system becomes the predominant thinking in dealing with smaller countries, the basic principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in other countries’ internal affairs would discontinue.

China experienced nearly a century of semi-colonial history in modern times, and the country was almost decapitated. Among many national salvation thoughts, the nationalist thought from the Western played the most important role. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the achievements in accomplishing the goal of being rich and powerful were remarkable, but the efforts striving for national reunification are still to be completed, and the external interference in China’s internal affairs has never ceased. The national self-confidence and national frustration are easily intertwined with radical nationalist sentiment, and the win-win cooperation is excluded under the slogan of supremacy of national interests, so that the external use of force becomes legitimized. In addition, some Chinese people regard that since the

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<sup>28</sup> Kang [14].

<sup>29</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs, CPC Central Committee Document Research Office. *Chou En-lai's Diplomatic Papers*, Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 1990, pp. 131–132.

Western powers still form alliance everywhere today, and implement the policy of power and military intervention in various names, then why not China follow when possessing the ability?

These thoughts enjoy certain recognition in China. However, in the author's view, as long as there is no fundamental deterioration of the external environment, these thoughts are basically impossible to become the dominant Chinese diplomacy. At the decision-making level, the diplomatic line of the Party and the country continues to stick to the core principles of China's diplomacy. At the civilian level, the mentality and stance of the Chinese people on foreign affairs are generally healthy as well. A recent Chinese poll by some Australian scholars has shown that Chinese people are most supportive of measures to reinforce the position declarations internationally against the maritime disputes in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. The approach to negotiated settlement is also supported by the majority, and the number of people in favor of sending out the troops at the time of crisis is less than half.<sup>30</sup>

## 7.5 Conclusion

China needs diplomatic innovation in a new era when the national strength of China is increasing and the external challenges are more sophisticated. This paper reviews the Chinese diplomatic innovations in five aspects, namely: positioning innovation, strategic innovation, institutional innovation, means innovation and methods innovation. China's diplomacy has shown more extensive and far-reaching changes. But these innovations cannot be termed as diplomatic revolution. The fundamental principles and methods of China's diplomacy, such as the basic orientation of the new powers, the core position of the development diplomacy, the partnership without alliance, the respect for sovereign equality, and the strict restriction of the use of force, have not yet changed qualitatively. Looking ahead, the basic principles and methods of China's diplomacy will not need to be changed radically until 2030, unless the international environment will have undergone fundamental deterioration.

This does not require China to stick to these diplomatic principles and methods dogmatically. Even if there is no diplomatic revolution, China's diplomacy will also have important evolution in defining its goals, positioning itself, using its means, and laying out its strategic layout: the characteristics of great power diplomacy will continue to be prominent and play leading roles in the world; any overseas intervention will not replace the development diplomacy, but its importance will continue to improve. On basis of respect for national sovereignty, China will get more involved in other affairs. China will have greater space to promote smart strength diplomacy, and engage greater efforts in giving play to the attraction and coercion of overall national strength. The strategic nature of bilateral diplomacy and multilateral diplomacy has been better reinforced.

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<sup>30</sup> Eric Fish, "A Glimpse into Chinese Nationalism," *The Diplomat*, November 7, 2014, <http://thediplo.mat.com/2014/11/a-glimpse-into-Chinese-nationalism/>, login date: November 12, 2014.

In this process, China needs to learn from the positive and negative experiences of the countries used to dominate, resist the enticement brought by power, and adhere to the principles and norms of progressive diplomacy, integrate progressive socialist characteristics, globalized national interests appeal and introverted China strategic culture, and play the role of new power with sustained diplomatic innovation.

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# Chapter 8

## Cosmopolitanism in China: A Theoretical and Institutional Study of Foreign Relations



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**Abstract** This article explores what the creatively transformed Tianxiaism, or a new form of Chinese cosmopolitanism, can contribute to the world in terms of constructive ideological resources. Originated in the Zhou Dynasty and evolved over a long time from the Qin to the Ming and Qing dynasties, cosmopolitanism in China has profound connotations and far-reaching elements that constitute the core of China's Tianxiaism, including concentric circles that can be stretched infinitely, status-order concept of the same inner and outer structure and a self-confident and introspective cultural structure. Underneath this structure, the identity of the acting agent can change. There is no absolute other party but only relative "us-others," and eventually the world can become a harmonious "home." Such cosmopolitanism, after being deprived of its unequal components and going through transformative creation, can become vital ideological resources for the future world. It will be a constructive ideological concept that Chinese culture can contribute to the world. The concept comprises five special features: China's cosmopolitanism is inclusive rather than exclusive. It is convertible by cultural rather than military means. It relies on attraction and appeal. The conversion is voluntary rather than coercive and the ultimate ideal of China's cosmopolitanism is that the world can be a harmonious home.

**Keywords** Cosmopolitanism · Tianxiaism · Traditional Chinese culture · Confucianism · China's foreign relations

### 8.1 Introduction

Generally speaking, "cosmopolitanism" is a concept that sees problems and issues from the perspective of a global citizen. Etymologically, the word "cosmos" refers to "world" or "universe," and "cosmos" is seen as the universe with a harmonious system. In the West, cosmopolitanism originated from ideologies of Greece and Rome. It was said that when Socrates was asked of his place of origin, his answer

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was “cosmos” instead of Athens. The Grecian concept of order in Stoicism is transcendence over differences of laws in different places. It is a comprehensible natural order rooted in reason. In the subsequent centuries, it was combined with the Christian doctrine of universal equality. The Stoic doctrine of natural law inspires the Christian ideal of the city of God and eventually finds its way into the natural law theories of modern political thought. “[A] *kosmopolites* is one who distances him- or herself either in thought or in practice from the habits or laws of his city and judges them from the standpoint of a higher order....”<sup>1</sup> Some scholars argue that cosmopolitanism in Western history of philosophy refers to the building of an inclusive and singular community in which all ethnic and individual members are equally treated.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not this definition is accurate or not may be open to discussion, but cosmopolitanism is certainly a “universally minded” ideological concept that sees the world from a holistic perspective.

In this sense, China has its own cosmopolitanism that has developed for a long time and fully embodied the Chinese view of *Tianxia*. Thus, Chinese cosmopolitanism is largely *Tianxiaism*.

*Tianxia* is a widely used term that, like many other terms, is not used on the basis of common cognition and consistent understanding. As a polysemy, it commands close scrutiny from the researcher. To a considerable degree, owing to the publishing in 2005 of philosopher Zhao Tingyang’s book *Tianxia System—Introduction to World System Philosophy*<sup>3</sup> and his elaboration on the theory of *Tianxia*, the *Tianxia* issue has drawn a lot of attention in the academia of international relations and has aroused heated discussions. Historian Wang Gengwu discussed similar issues at the Tsai Lecture in 2006.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter, multiple scholars in China discussed related issues.<sup>5</sup> Among them, Feng Weijiang explored the “*Tianxia* system” from the competition and cooperation perspectives in economics, although he missed out on discussing *Tianxia* from historical and ideological perspectives and failed to define the “*Tianxia* system.” Other scholars, mainly foreign, seriously misunderstood the topic of discussion by connecting this academic development with governmental policies and thinking, misconceiving this discussion as China’s attempt to seek hegemony.<sup>6</sup> Zhao’s elaboration on *Tianxia* on the philosophical and ideological platform and his failure to back up with historical facts have been criticized as “idealistic.” Despite that, the value of his research has been widely acknowledged.

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<sup>1</sup> Benhabib [1].

<sup>2</sup> Jiang [2], Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Zhao [3].

<sup>4</sup> Wang [4].

<sup>5</sup> These papers were published in recent years in *World Economics and Politics*. They are, by order of time of publication: “A Brief Description of *Tianxia* System,” by Zhao Tingyang (No. 10, 2008, pp. 57–65); “On the order characteristics, survival principles and system heritage of *Tianxia* system” by Feng Weijiang (No. 8, 2011, pp. 4–29); “On Order Features, Survival and Death Principle, and Institutional Legacy of *Tianxia* System,” by Li Mingming (No. 12, 2011, pp. 109–125).

<sup>6</sup> William A. Callahan, “Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-hegemonic or a New Hegemony?” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2008, pp. 749–61.



The thoughts above originate from people's reflection on major issues in the world today. We live in a world of turmoil and multiple problems, where Western ideologies are bottlenecked and inadequate in finding solutions. When the Cold War was over, Francis Fukuyama declared that history would see its end in liberal democracy. Several years later, Samuel P. Huntington observed the phantom of cultural conflicts in world politics.<sup>7</sup> The September 11 attacks in 2001 shocked the world and seemed to have put the conflict between different civilizations in reality show. Next, the US waged the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq that produced results other than it had hoped for and had to end them in a dim light. Confronted with a complicated Islamic world, the US and other Western powers appear to be at the end of their tether. During the first half of 2014, the world was shocked by the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis. Actually, the fragile balance originally existing between the east and the west of Ukraine is also a fragile balance between Russia and the West and that balance was broken when Yanukovich was overthrown. Next, Russia took immediate action to annex Crimea, and the Ukrainian government in Kiev took military action against the eastern region under backing from the West. Instead of solving problems of the world, more often than not, Western-style "freedom and democracy" have only made things worse. Facts show that Western-style, simplistic thinking cannot solve any complex issue in the world.

In this context, China can and should make contributions to the world with her ideology, and that has been recognized by many thinkers in the world. Fei Xiaotong's view that "countries should respect each other's interests and advance the common interests of all while pursuing their own" has been impressively sensational.<sup>8</sup> The problem is that ideological resources in this regard need deep delving and creative transformation. As Lin Yusheng, a visiting scholar in the US has pointed out, "we must redefine the modern significance of the essence of China's civic tradition."<sup>9</sup> The profound and rich thought of *Tianxia* is deposited with such "excellent and beautiful qualities." The Chinese-style thinking grows out of the soil of Chinese culture dating back a long time ago and extending far into the future. This paper argues that, through creative transformation or transformative creation, China's cosmopolitanism featuring *Tianxiaism* may provide the future world with a new alternative and present a constructive prospect. In this paper, the author will first probe into the concept of *Tianxia*, the *Tianxia* point of view and *Tianxiaism* before looking into the global significance of *Tianxiaism* through comparative analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" in *Foreign Affairs Agenda, The New Shape of World Politics: Contending Paradigms in International Relations*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997, pp. 1–25.

<sup>8</sup> Described by Fei Xiaotong, this sentence was proposed in December 1990 when he attended East Asia Social Studies International Symposium held in Tokyo. See Fei Xiaotong: *Study of Humans in China—Personal Experience in Study of East Asia Society* compiled by Institute of Sociology and Anthropology of Peking University, Peking University Press, Beijing, 1993, pp. 10–19; Fei [5].

<sup>9</sup> Lin [6].

## 8.2 What is *Tianxia*?

*Tianxia* originates with *Tian* (literally heaven). For ancient Chinese, *Tian* is something faraway and, unknowable but nonetheless indubitably in existence. It inspires in people a sense of awe and sacredness. In agricultural civilization, people offer sacrifices to Heaven and pray for good weather conditions, bumper harvests and other blessings. Intangible as it is, *tian* is formless, but also animate, judgmental and ubiquitous in the thinking of the Chinese people and maintains the order of nature and of our lives. For this reason, occurrences of natural disasters are often interpreted as precursors of shift of sovereign power.<sup>10</sup> In order to establish their authority, rulers often cite the name and authority of Heaven, just as emperors would call themselves “sons of Heaven” and their empires “heavenly empires.”

During the long period of the Zhou Dynasty, referred to as “Pax Chou-ica” (peace under the Zhou Dynasty) by Benjamin I. Schwartz,<sup>11</sup> relative order and stability were created in the vast “civilized” world.

According to research done by some scholars, the words “China” and *Tianxia* first appeared in the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty. *Tianxia*’s first written record was in the *Book of Zhou: Duke Zhao’s Letter*. “If this Tao is adopted across the world, the king’s virtues will be revealed.” *Tianxia* here refers to all states that were paying tribute to the emperor. By the end of Western Zhou Dynasty, *Tianxia* began to take on broad and narrow meanings. In its broad sense, it refers to wherever the sun shines and wherever human beings are. In its narrow sense, it refers to “China.”<sup>12</sup> One important concept that the people of Zhou Dynasty inherited from the Shang Dynasty is the idea of internal and external levels developed from the service system. The service system included dukes at the outer level and ministers and other officials at the inner level. Thus, a structure took shape in which the emperor in the center is surrounded by dukes. Consequently, there gradually emerged a multi-level defense structure with the emperor in the center surrounded by dukes and foreign countries at the outer rings.<sup>13</sup> This is the prototype and basic form of the Chinese concept of *Tianxia* which includes concepts of direction and level.

However, a concept more important than direction and level and having a more profound impact is something cultural. An important feature of this concept is that Zhou Dynasty people call themselves Xia or Zhuxia (China), but call the culturally inferior or less developed surrounding foreign tribes as Yi, Man, Rong and Di. Furthermore, in their efforts to depict the loftiness and beauty of their culture, the Zhou people coined the new term *Huaxia* (China). According to *Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Period* in the 10th year of the reign of Duke Ding of Lu, “China is known as Xia for its great etiquette and as China for the beauty of her service

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<sup>10</sup> Lin [7].

<sup>11</sup> Schwartz [8].

<sup>12</sup> Xing [9].

<sup>13</sup> Yitian Xing, *Ibid*, pp. 443–445.

system.<sup>14</sup> Thus, *Tianxia* with its cultural connotations was now made up of the more culturally developed Huaxia region and the less culturally developed “barbarian” tribes.

In other words, people in the Zhou Dynasty built up a cultural confidence that enabled them to distinguish themselves and others through cultural differences. Similar to people in the culturally precocious Axial Age Civilizations, Ancient Greeks also regarded those surrounding them as “barbarians.”<sup>15</sup> Schwartz holds that “culture” is an independent field in which the undefined individual organism born as a man can be transformed into a member of the human race.<sup>16</sup>

This difference or sense of superiority on the part of the Zhou people naturally originates from the different degrees of productivity development and lifestyle differences.

*Book of Rites: The Royal Regulations* reflects this cognizance and a cohesive view of *Tianxia*: “The people of the five regions, the central states and the “barbarian” tribes surrounding them all had immutable natures of their own. The tribes in the east were tattooed *yi* who wore their hair loose and ate uncooked food. Those in the south were called *man* who tattooed their foreheads, had their feet turned in towards each other and also had the habit of eating raw food. Those in the west were called *rong* who wore animal skins and preferred loose hair styles and some of them did not eat grains. Those in the north were called *di* people who wore bird feathers and dwelt in caves and some of them did not eat grains either.”<sup>17</sup> From the above we see that those who “ate uncooked food,” those who “did not eat grains,” and those who wore animal skins and bird feathers were obviously aliens and “barbarians” following eating and clothing habits different from the Huaxia people. They had a culture inferior to that of Huaxia. As Chinese rulers administered the country through “poetry, books, rites, music and laws and regulation, alien and “barbarian” tribes in the outer rings of China were hardly any match for her. Evidently, the ancestors of the Chinese people had in the early ages seen themselves as a cultural entity with a set of implemented ritual system and a symbol of civilization, while their concepts of political boundaries were comparatively weaker.

What is noteworthy is that the *Xia* and *Yi* cultures were different and had different levels of development, but other than diametrically dichotomous, they were instead absorbable and transformative. *Huaxia*’s peripheral tribes were naturally less developed culturally, but they could become more civilized by learning from *Huaxia*. On the other hand, despite its high level of civilization, *Huxia* did not stop learning from other tribes, as evidenced by its acquisition of alien fashion style and the arts of horsemanship and archery and further evidenced by its absorbing of Buddhism and the localization of Buddhism in China.

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<sup>14</sup> Li [10].

<sup>15</sup> Berki [11].

<sup>16</sup> Schwartz [8].

<sup>17</sup> See *Annotations of Li Ji* by Wang Wenjing, Zhonghua Book Company, Beijing, 2001, p. 176.

The historian Xing Yitian has summarized *Tianxia* as “a framework of positioning, stratum and culture.” He pointed out that “China’s view of *Tianxia* gradually evolved from the Spring and Autumn Period to the Warring States Period and became systemized or stimulated more imaginations by the thinkers of the pre-Qin period.”<sup>18</sup> This framework is interwoven with irrelevant views of positioning, hierarchy and cultural blending of *xia* and *yi*. *Tianxia* is composed of *Zhuxia* and surrounding tribes including *man*, *yi*, *rong* and *di*. As a country administered with poetry, books, rites and music, China or *Zhuxia* was part of the internal service system and occupied a central position. By contrast, *man*, *yi*, *rong* and *di* were part of the external service system and they were located in the remoter regions. With China as the center, the azimuth and location of *Tianxia* can extend indefinitely and *Huaxia* culture featuring poetry, calligraphy, ritual and music can also expand indefinitely. The ultimate ideal is that the hegemon always sees *Tianxia* as one family and tries to achieve common prosperity. This great insight is an important basis for further exploring the doctrine of Tianxiaism.

According to Chen Lai’s study of Zhou Dynasty ideologies and their transformation, China’s humanistic ideologies found their origin in the ritual and music culture of Western Zhou Dynasty and saw further development in the Spring and Autumn Period. Chinese thought and culture in the Spring and Autumn Period is featured by the clear decline of deity-oriented concepts and the sweeping emergence of people-oriented ideologies. Western Zhou’s ritual and music culture is essentially not the law of the deity, but that of ceremony based on human organizational structure. The spiritual activities that took place in such remote civilized eras have influenced a tradition that would later become our starting point.<sup>19</sup> Social changes that took place in the middle and latter half of the recent 300 years during the Spring and Autumn Period reinforced the development of practical reason since the Western Zhou Dynasty, which accelerated the transformation of the ritual and music culture to a new spiritual world, whether political, moral or cosmic. In the Spring and Autumn Period, people shifted their focus on ritual from formality to rationality. Formalistic ritual systems were still to be kept, but what the literati cared more about was the practical embodiment of ritual as a principle of rationality. The literati and officialdom all saw the political and administrative significance of ritual as greater than its courtesy or ritualistic significance. This has caused the focus of ritualistic culture to shift from “ritual and music” to “ritual and politics.” The development of ritualistic culture causes ritual to become a norm and an important form of China’s cosmopolitanism. This change in the meaning of ritual is extremely important. From this point forth, ritual is no longer seen as the cultural sum total of system and ritual—what stands out now is the core principle of ritual as a political order and the meaning of principle as ethical standards.<sup>20</sup>

Taiwanese scholar Bih-Jaw Lin holds that *Tianxia* represents the concept of “great unity” or universal harmony without national borders and dominated by culture and

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<sup>18</sup> Xing [12].

<sup>19</sup> Chen [13].

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

civilization.<sup>21</sup> This is very important because it is essentially an “advanced cultural” consciousness that from inside out extends farther and farther away indefinitely in its relations to the outside world. Because it looks at the outside world from within itself, it is actually placing itself in a central position from which it sees relationship with others. Under that concept, what’s “inside” becomes relative and malleable in a way that resembles rippling when a rock is thrown into a pond. And that’s when “the world as one family” becomes possible. Of course, the ripples die down as they spread farther and farther away from the center. For instance, the sovereign-subject relationship in which “the minister is at the beck and call of the sovereign” is no longer realistic in external affairs or has become out of reach. Thus, the concept of a “unified world” is either the self-satisfaction of the founder of a dynasty after he has defeated other warlords or simply a conceptual existence. What is even more noteworthy today is the idea of “the world as one family.”

This is still a culture-based concept. As Mencius put it in *Mencius: Duke Wen of Teng*: “I have heard of the conversion of barbarians into *Xia* and not the other way round. Chen Liang was a native of Chu who was pleased with the principles of the Duke of Zhou and Confucius and came north to the Central Plains to learn.” Thus, the relationship between *huaxia* and *yi* is not immutable but mutable and *The Analects: Zi Han* chronicled that Confucius had wanted to “inhabit among the nine barbarian tribes.” Someone asked, “What if they were vulgar?” Confucius said, “How can you call it vulgar when a gentleman lives there?” That means *yi* would be changed or transformed whenever a true gentleman lives in their midst.” So the difference between *huaxia* and *yi* lies in culture rather than ethnic groups. After Shang was overthrown by Zhou, Jizi who could not stand being a minister in the new dynasty went to Korea and King Wu “enfeoffed Jizi as ruler of Korea, but did not regard him as his subject.” After arriving in Korea, Jizi “taught the people there eight principles and transformed the *yi* into *xia*.”<sup>22</sup> Zhao Tingyang holds that “in general, when the view of *Tianxia* prevails, the *huaxia*-centered mentality would be weakened; and when the latter prevails, the former will weaken. China-centered mentality is in prevail, the view of *Tianxia* will be weakened. In a further sense, the concept of *Tianxia* stands directly opposite the *huaxia*-centered mentality.”<sup>23</sup> That statement is rather questionable. Although the view of *Tianxia* and the *huaxia*-oriented mentality are not one and the same, the two are actually inseparable and we have no need to deny that. Making a distinction through cultural differences is an inherent part of *Tianxia*ism, although it could be discarded by people today. What we need to value is the convertibility therein. Schwartz the historian holds that “throughout history, China had not been challenged by any surrounding great power, and no country’s propositions could cause China to give it any serious cultural consideration.”<sup>24</sup> The first

<sup>21</sup> Bih-Jaw Lin, *International Politics and Foreign Policies*, p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> See *Wen Hui Daily*, Jan. 27, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Zhao [14].

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Schwartz, *China’s View of World Order*, compiled by John King Fairbank, translated by Du Jidong, *China’s World Order*, Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, 2010, pp. 298–299.

half of this judgment does not agree with the facts. For instance, the Han Dynasty was challenged by the Huns for real and the Song Dynasty met with such huge challenges from Liao that it had to sign a humble treaty of truce under duress and later it had to shift itself in the severed dynasty of Southern Song. Further after that, there came establishment of the Mongolian Yuan Empire etc. So the second half is true and accurate. This cultural confidence did not waver until modern times, when Western powers started attacking and invading China militarily.

Schwartz notes that the Chinese people are no different from other agricultural nations in that they see their own culture as the best. Therefore, he says, Chinese neglect of the universal proposition of the chiefs of the Huns or Turkic Khans does not indicate that the Chinese are any particularly arrogant.<sup>25</sup> Similar cases existed in other parts of the world as well. “For the Greeks, Persians and Egyptians “barbarians,” while Greek city-states are the most advanced form of human organization.<sup>26</sup> This is an interesting phenomenon. This sense of superiority complex and self-centeredness among ancient people may well be universal given their very limited knowledge in geography and other aspects. Culturally precocious or developed nations are more likely to develop such a view. That makes sense, but with the passage of time, it can turn into something negative, out of which could grow arrogance and a flimsy, imaginary and self-centered mindset of a “celestial empire.”

In the concept of *Tianxia*, what is internal is not entirely separate from what is external. The handling of “foreign” relations marking the extension of domestic social political principles and order is something highly ethical that is reminiscent of what Liang Shuming had termed “ethics-oriented society.”<sup>27</sup> Ethical relations are characterized by equi-distance and order as well as friendship and compassion. Thus, in a society denominated by such relationships, the guiding principle is friendship and love rather than love and obligations rather than rights and interests.<sup>28</sup> China is ethics-oriented both in terms of internal and external relations, while foreign relations are in itself extension of internal affairs. External ethics-oriented relations are reflected in the external party’s “contribution for the sake of thirst for righteousness” and in etiquette and courtesy. Due to the fact that China’s *Tianxia* order is in essence ethical rather than legal, no legislation typical of Europe’s rule of international law have ever coming into being. Huang Zhilian believes that *Huaxia* Peace under the Imperial Rule of Rites System is not established by force, but through the other party’s cultural identification and acceptance of *Huaxia* culture and civilization. That’s why Wang Gengwu said, “*Tianxia* is the ideal world view of Confucian thinkers and officials and a realm of universal value that determines what is civilized and what is not.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Benjamin Schwartz, *China’s View of World Order*, compiled by John King Fairbank, China’s World Order, pp. 298–299.

<sup>26</sup> Schwartz [15].

<sup>27</sup> Liang [16], Chap. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Lai Chen, *Ancient World of Ideology and Culture-Religion, Ethics and Social Thinking* during the Spring and Autumn Period, pp. 3–4.

<sup>29</sup> Gengwu Wang, “*Tianxia* and Empire: External Chinese Perspective,” Inaugural Tsai Lecture, Harvard University, May 4, 2006.

Accepting and encouraging foreign “tributes” and the enfeoffment of foreign kings were products of concepts of then Chinese such as “oneness,” “fulfillment of oneness,” “unity,” and ideologies such as “clarity,” “pacification,” and “peace,” and were things needed to sustain certain world views or views of the universe. According to these views, what lies underneath this “Heavenly God” is a rather broad “cosmic system” centered on this “innate sage” who is the sustainer of all things.<sup>30</sup> Based on that, Chinese rulers further developed the philosophy of treating people from afar with softness and control. The focus of *Tianxia* order has always been “a soft approach towards those from afar” or “softening those far away.” What does that mean? It means nothing more than giving them political recognition and economic benefits so that the Chinese emperors’ graciousness and kindness would be revealed so as to touch any potential opponents. As for “control,” it can be explained as “currying favor with and buying over surrounding tribes and fiefs so that the parties concerned would remain loyal.”

Hence it follows that China’s view of the world is quite introspective. “If the people of far-off lands do not submit, the ruler must attract them by enhancing the prestige of his culture; and when they have been duly attracted, he contents them. And where there is contentment there will be no upheavals.” (*The Analects: Jishi*). The word “attract” here means to cause the alien party to come to terms with China’s ritual culture and the status of her emperors (Whether or not that it is true is quite another matter). Once the aliens are here, they will need to go through certain arrangements so that they may experience the cultural superiority, abundance of abundant resources and the “magnanimity and graciousness” of the emperor. This thought is also embodied in works of literature such as Luo Guanzhong’s depiction (in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) of Zhuge Liang’s winning over Meng Huo who had been captured seven times and released seven times, until he finally “submitted” without reservations.<sup>31</sup>

All that happened fall within the system of the *Tianxia* system.

### 8.3 Key Components of Tianxiaism

The mainstream ideology of Tianxiaism is Confucian, with no strong original influence from religion. Is Confucianism is the Confucian school of philosophy or a religion? Is there such a thing as Confucian religion at all? Such questions have always been controversial. When Max Weber wrote *Confucianism and Taoism*, he did not seem to have clarified what Confucianism is all about. As a matter of fact, Weber holds that “Confucianism (according to its intention) is a kind of rational ethics that

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<sup>30</sup> Zhilian Huang, *A Study of the Imperial Ritual System*, Volume A: Chinese Order in Asia—On Relations between China and Other Asian Countries, pp. 223–225.

<sup>31</sup> We see the role of similar thinking from China’s disposal of defeated Indian soldiers and weapons and the Chinese army’s retreat from the original borderline in the aftermath of the China-India Border War in 1962.



minimizes the tensions of the world, whether in terms of religious repudiation or actual rejection of it. To the Confucians, this world is the best of all possible worlds. Human nature and temperament are good from an ethical point of view. People and things may be different by different degrees, but they all share the same nature and can reach their infinite potential and practice moral principles to their full extent.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Weber also sees Confucianism as essentially ethical rather than divine. It is characterized by public social edification rather than deity-oriented religion.

In contrast, Western ideologies are deeply influenced by religion. Christianity is a one-God religion that regulates people's behavior through heaven and hell—the former being for the noble ones who do good and the latter for the vulgar ones who do evil. On the other hand, all solutions are also through a monotheist approach. In other words, all other religions are cults. Things differ in China in that their people and ideologies are always secular, disbelieving in any humane God or doctrines of secular prodigies, feats of strength, disorder, or spirits. All they care about are things of the world. As Gu Hongming who had lived in different parts of the world declared, Confucian doctrine yokes together the sacrificial rites of ancestor-worship with the Divine duty of loyalty. The ones who are alive give the dead a sense of eternal existence, in the same way that they give comfort to the dying. This is no different from the kind of comfort given to the religious in other countries. This is no different from the kind of comfort given to the religious in other countries. In other words, different spiritual pillars on different sides of the world are giving the same kind of comfort to people. Gu Hongming referred to this power as the “Religion of Good People:” “In China, this Religion of Good Citizenship is one that creates order without resorting to pastors, cops or soldiers.”<sup>33</sup> “The Chinese have actually been able to keep in peace and order a huge empire on the Asian Continent.”<sup>34</sup> Gu calls this “a signature success for China.” In contrast, Europeans resort to the instruments of religion and law to maintain civic order.

Chinese have no lack of reverence for “heaven, and Chinese rulers see that as the origin of their legitimacy or the “will of Heaven.” What is Heaven then? It's probably easier to understand than to explain. It partly comes from the ancient people's reverence for nature. *The Book of Poetry: Major Odes: Lord Wen* describes the “will of Heaven” as “short-lived.” In the long run, the will of Heaven will not always stay with a certain dynasty. Heaven's attitude toward the monarchs is built upon objective and “universal” behavior standards. The Shang Dynasty's loss of the will of Heaven is due to its failure en masse in rites and doctrines.<sup>35,36</sup> In replacing the

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<sup>32</sup> Weber [17].

<sup>33</sup> “Four-ocean life” means Gu Hongming was born in Southeast Asia, studied in the West, got married in Japan, and served as an official in China. Gu Hongming, *The Spirit of The Chinese People*, translated by Li Chenxi, Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2012, p. 32. Gu Hongming, *The Spirit of The Chinese People*, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Gu Hongming, *The Spirit of The Chinese People*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Gu Hongming, *The Spirit of The Chinese People*, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Schwartz, *Ancient China's World of Ideology*, p. 60.



Shang Dynasty, the Zhou Dynasty learned and absorbed many lessons and experiences from Shang's fall. Heaven deliberately shifted its support to the Zhou because it proved its power and capacity and virtue to rule over the "world" or *Tianxia*. For better or worse, Heaven is something that inspires awe and there is something holy and irreversible about it. One can only submit to it. Even a rise in rebellion could be an act of Heaven's will through which one can justify oneself.

All things of the world must be under proper principle and order, which start with blood relationship and "home" and extends from there to the state and further to the outer world. Chinese ideology is actually so accommodating that it can accept modified Buddhism which originally came from India. Thereafter, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism managed to coexist in peace. Chinese thought is inclusive, so China introduces Buddhism from India, and transforms and accepts it. In the West, there has always been an omnipotent and supreme deity, while China could only discover "universal principles through interpersonal coexisting relationships," which means human problems can only find solution in the human world and not in God or certain natural rights.<sup>37</sup> For this reason, by the end of the day, China's *Tianxia* is secular and earthly and determines the connotations and nature of cosmopolitanism.

After careful analysis, we can conclude that the view of Order of Tianxiaism includes four elements: concentric circular structure, name-based order, culture-based distance and peace of the world as one family.

### (I) Concentric circular structure

Chinese cosmopolitanism is an ethics-based concentric circular structure that starts off from blood relationship. This structure seems like family structure on the basis of blood relationship. As explained in Fei Xiaotong's *Rural China*, "*jia*" (home) can be flexibly used and understood in China. "*Jialide*" (the one at home) can refer to one's wife, "*jiamen*" (family clan) can refer to a group of people like uncles and nephews, and "*zijiaren*" (people on one's own side) can include anyone who would like to be part of a certain circle and show goodwill. The scope of "*zijiaren*" can vary by time and place and the count thereof can be innumerable, which means the world can be one family.<sup>38</sup> Like ripples produced by a rock cast into water that form rings after rings of concentric circles and stretch thin further and further away, they would form a kind of "differential pattern" referred to by Fei Xiaotong. Xu Daoyun also holds that the Confucian circle of social relations is a concentric circle that stretches off from the self to others, and from relatives to strangers. "This social relation circle, cast on China's relations to her neighbors, is the ideal "attraction of the near and the approach of the remote (*The Analects: Zilu*). There is no absolute "other party," but only relative "me and others."<sup>39</sup> And that is very important. In Chinese ideology, there is no absolute other party because the relationship between "me" and others are changeable. The way of change is willing rather than forced acceptance by the

<sup>37</sup> Zhao [14].

<sup>38</sup> Fei [18].

<sup>39</sup> Xu [19].

other party. This reflects a confidence of the Chinese culture. In actual practice, that confidence is translated into an accommodating attitude whenever allegiance, respect or submission is shown. In history, China has paid high prices for that.

Based on the study of the Sui and Tang dynasties, Gao Mingshi proposed a three-layered concentric circular structure including the *neichen*, *waichen*, and *zanbuchen* regions. The *neichen* region refers to China's native land, while the *waichen* region is divided into controlled prefectural region and admired region. The former includes conferral of titles and payment of tributes, while the latter includes payment of tributes. Because Chinese emperors do not directly govern their people, the people in the *waichen* region had no obligation to pay taxes and fees. In contrast, the *zanbuchen* region includes brotherhood regions, hostile regions and remote and deserted regions.<sup>40</sup> China's *Tianxia* order follows the same pattern of going from inside to outside, from near to far, and pushing forward from layer to layer. This applies both to five generations and the distribution of *neichen*, *waichen* and *buchen* regions. Takeshi Hamashita holds the same view in his book titled *International Opportunities of Modern China*, but does not explain the reason behind it.<sup>41</sup> This reason is none other than a family-state structure beginning with blood relationship. Put it more plainly, it is an ethical relationship and a corresponding structure formed therefrom, hence the differences between affinity and aloofness and between proximity and distance. That's how we would deal with layers and layers of relationships or world order, which are ethics-based.

Politically, this order is embodied as a sovereign-subject relationship. Confucius said, "Let the prince be a prince, the minister a minister, the father a father and the son a son." (*The Analects: Yanyuan*). The rulers who call themselves "sons of Heaven" try to regulate their relations with people living in their frontier areas and in remote regions through the doctrine of relationship between sovereigns and subjects. As long as the party regards the Chinese ruler as the sovereign and itself its obedient and respectful subject, the subject will then be safe and sound without being subjugated. That's how the Chinese idiom "*fu shou cheng chen*" (kowtowing to show allegiance) came about. "*Fu shou*" (kowtowing) means to salute, while "*cheng chen*" means to show allegiance as a subject. This is the extension and expansion of the sovereign-subject relationship in foreign relations. As a matter of fact, what China gets out of this relationship is honor, and what the other party gets are benefits.

In the eyes of the "son of Heaven" and the imperial court, the foreign party's sending of envoys and payment of tributes are a reflection of this relationship. "*Chao*" means to show respect, while "*gong*" means to submit and obey with respect. However, the key issue is that the parties diverge in their understanding of the same issue. The "son of Heaven" may see that as homage and tribute from the aliens, while the aliens may be able to obtain political or economic benefits or both by way of diplomatic exchanges. Thus, what is seen as homage and tribute will in reality undergo many discounts and become an unequal relationship on the surface and a relationship based on a materially equal interchange in which the alien party's actual

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<sup>40</sup> Gao [20].

<sup>41</sup> Hamashita [21].

benefits are the substance. In this sense, China at that time provided regional public goods mostly in a bilateral manner.<sup>42</sup> Thus, in times when China finds it hard to sustain provision of the benefits, China's imperial court will be forced to reduce the frequency and count of tribute-paying visits from the alien party, thus showing in reverse order the substance of this homage-tribute relationship.

Just because of that, some scholars point out that in the *Tianxia* order, relations between the countries are basically non-competitive and therefore non-slavery-related. Of course, this is not an equality-based contractual relationship either, but a role-based ethic relationship.<sup>43</sup> That is quite enlightening. In essence, this is an ethic relationship in which the key is to find the parties' proper roles in the relationship of variance. The "lun" in ethics (*lun li*) focusing on differences is an order of varying degrees, such as the difference between the monarch and his subjects, the father and son, between the noble and the humble, the old and the young, and the close and the distant. It comes from the secular world and reflects human circumstances. Just because it is ethical, it's also basically peaceful, and there exists a symbiotic relationship among different acting subjects.

## (II) Name-derived order

*Mingfen* is important for ethical relations, and for cosmopolitanism, too. *Ming* refers to "name," while "*fen*" refers to "status." The monarch and his subjects and the father and the son all have their respective status and proper positions. China's *Tianxia* order has proper names for proper things. "If names are incorrect, speech will not follow its natural sequence. If speech does not follow its natural sequence, nothing will be established." In the *Tianxia* order, the rulers of vassal states can only call themselves kings in official documents, but will call Chinese emperors. In rare circumstances, Chinese emperors also showed their allegiance to outside rulers. A major way for the "sovereign" to his virtues and kindness is the giving of gifts. The magnanimity and generosity of the emperor is revealed through valued giving rather than receiving. Names in *Tianxia* order are indispensable big deals because names are the foundation on which order is established. Order will be set once names are established. In the official documents delivered to a Chinese emperor, use of his reign title was use of his name. When rulers of tributary states call themselves emperors and use their own calendars, Chinese rulers would turn a blind eye to them, as in the case of Annam's relations with Champa Kingdom and Chenla Kingdom.

In cosmopolitanism, order would be upset when names are not properly used. In some circumstances, the righting of a name may even be cause for war. The killing

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<sup>42</sup> Numerous sources can prove it. For example, Japanese ruler Ashikaga Yoshimitsu during the Muromachi Era paid tribute to the Ming emperor so that the Ming Empire would recognize him as the king of Japan, thus consolidating his rule. Besides, currency as a symbol of sovereign power was proof of tributary status once accepted as a gift. Since the Ming Empire often paid the tributary state more than what the latter gave as tributes, the latter was actually getting good deals. And that's the nature of such tribute-trade. See also "The Formation and Development of International Relations in East Asia" collected in *Sino-Foreign Relations History Series in Translation (Part Two)*, Shanghai Translation Publishing House, Shanghai, 1985.

<sup>43</sup> Shang [22].

of rulers in tributary states is the destruction of name order. The sons or officials of previous empires or emperors may ask Chinese emperors to intervene, while China's rulers would try to find out what was truly happening before opting cautiously for intervention, but would most likely accept the status quo.

This is quite different from the relations principles of the West. Western order is in essence legal order that regulates relations and behaviors among different countries according to law. Thus, under this order, equality would naturally exist among the subjects because it's contract-based and all people are equal before the contract. On top of that, subsequent premarital contracts were later developed. The court will determine and judge by law whether clear and rigid contracts have been performed. Contract terms will be well-defined laws however tight interpersonal relations are. Lord George Macartney sent by the British king to China refused flatly to kneel before Emperor Qianlong on both knees on account of Britain's cultural principles. Macartney said that he would not kneel to the Chinese emperor unless Chinese officials knelt before the portrait of his King. As the science historian Joseph Needham said, "Europeans have spiritual superiority in law and legal principles. However, China has the tradition of opposing codification. In the trial of cases, China respects facts and emphasizes compromise and harmony."<sup>44</sup>

The name and status order and the contract order are obviously different. The former focuses clearly on "name," but does not look deeply into the essence of relationships, hence it's all blurred. The ambiguity here maintains a peace among various subjects. Under normal circumstances, the parties just mind their own business without bothering others. Compared with legal order, the name and status order emphasizes social relations more. And since that comes from *guanxi*, the tighter the *guanxi* is, the closer social relations there will be and the more elasticity there will be. This is a subtle yet profound difference between different cultures.<sup>45</sup> The thing that embodies the name and status order is rite, which is a ritual and ceremony system. Basic rituals in the *Tianxia* system embody a sovereign-subject relationship manifested as foreign "submission."

The letters of the parties also embody rituals. Rituals are also embodied in foreign envoys' homage to Chinese emperors, which has evolved into a set of rules over time. For the Chinese imperial court, rites are very important they represent relationship at the core and the foreigners' respect and admiration for Chinese rulers.

This relationship is the extension of domestic sovereign-subject relationship, whose principles of composition are all interconnected and shared. Specifically, ministers are supposed to respect and be loyal to the monarch; the monarch is supposed to show love and care for the ministers; frequent contacts with and abundant economic benefits for the tributary states so that they would stay grateful and mindful of the Chinese party's virtues and generosity and not even think about rebellion.

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<sup>44</sup> Needham [23].

<sup>45</sup> See Huang et al. [24]. This book makes a profound elaboration on the question of social relationship.

Thus, everything terminates here. If names and status are made right, everything else would seem to be easy. In general, the Chinese emperors seldom intervened in the tributary states' affairs, while such states would be enjoying independence and autonomy in addition to obtaining actual benefits. That's the reality of the name status order.

### (III) Culture-based order

The difference between *yi* and *xia* in Tianxiaism lies in the different levels of cultural development rather than anything else. For the well-dressed Chinese, the barbarians who live the life of a savage are not yet civilized or cultivated by "a more advanced culture," while *Zhuxia* was that advanced and developed culture that was taking the lead.

However, the mystery and wonder of *Tianxia* order are that such distinction is not absolute, but rather subject to change. Through education and edification, the barbarians can acquire rites that draw them closer to *Huaxia* or *Zhuxia* and establish proper relations with her. In *Tianxia* order, "attitude" has a lot to do. A "correct" attitude will translate into cultural equality in lieu of distinction. Even a true desire or yearning for *Zhuxia* culture would be commended, and "full-hearted veneration and aspiration for it would be even better. This change is voluntary too. Tianxiaism heralds the principle of attracting others through cultural prestige instead of imposing systems and concepts on others. It's a cultural "route" of voluntary acceptance.

In contrast, Western Christian culture emphasizes preaching aimed at having people believe in Christianity, which is otherwise called missionary work. Missionaries travel overseas far away from their home country for purposes of a clear mission, which is to turn all people in the world into Christians overnight. This can also be seen as Christianity's external expansion. The crusade in history is a typical case in this regard, and the US-launched contemporary Wars on Iraq are reminiscent of that.

By contrast, non-missionary Chinese cosmopolitanism is defensive rather than aggressive. If "people from afar do not come," they would not be held to account. Rather, the Chinese ruler would examine and cultivate himself to "attract" the aliens. Once they are here, they would be treated with pacification. Means of pacification used to "shock and awe" or impress the tributary states include the showing off of the empire's abundant resources, sound rituals and etiquette and the showering of economic benefits. Zhu Xi once said: "People from far-off lands will submit when internal governance is improved. If people of far-off lands do not submit, the ruler must attract them by enhancing the prestige of his culture instead of frequently waging war against the distant people."<sup>46</sup> Thus, Tianxiaism attaches great importance to "virtue," which is an individual and social concept. For the individual, "virtue" is an excellent quality; for the state, virtue can moralize people in the world. "To govern with virtue" is to apply good inner qualities to political practice. As a reflection of the human heart, "virtue" points to the human heart and has nothing to do with gods and ghosts.

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<sup>46</sup> Zhu [25].

#### (IV) All under heaven are of one family

The *tianxia* order includes everyone and the king excludes no one. As it says in *Biography of Gong Yang in Spring and Autumn Annals*: “The king who wants to unify the world should not distinguish the internal and external people, and only the woman attendant at court distinguish them.” For the ruler with virtues, authority and prestige, the world is the unity what’s inside and outside. Through education with ritual and music, people get together from afar and become one family. The so-called “world as one family” is in essence something cultural. Various components from places far and near all went through the nurturing of rites, music and edification. And the word “family” has been used as a metaphor referring to the comfort, ease and content each individual finds himself or herself in, which would pave the way for a joyful life in an ideal world. The concept of Tianxiaism is deeply rooted in Chinese ideology. It says in *The Analects: Yanyuan*, “If a gentleman attends to business and does not idle away his time, if he behaves with courtesy to others and observes the rules of ritual, then all within the Four Seas are his brothers.” Thus, since ancient days, Chinese people have broadened their love for their loved ones to all people around the world.

More importantly, the “world as one family” is realized through “harmony.” What is “harmony?” In the Spring and Autumn Period, Yanzi elaborated on the difference between “harmony” and “common ground.” “Common ground” refers to the accumulation of simple and identical things. “Harmony,” on the other hand, is like a soup made of different ingredients and seasonings. “Harmony” is the result of interaction complementarity and restriction between different factors and different things and the blending of conflicts and confrontation. “Common ground” is simple homogeneity that precludes all differences. Homogeneity alone will hinder the survival and development of things. Thus, differences are actually the origin of life. Things gather together in harmony because of differences and without differences things will not gather together in harmony. This is true both of natural things such as grass and trees and of society.<sup>47</sup> Things because of difference and close, there is no difference and the close. Vegetation and other natural things like this, so the society.

Thus, “Harmony” is not elimination of differences, but admission and even admiration of the existence of differences. As Du Weiming pointed out, “great unity” is preconditioned on the harmony of differences.

As expressed in classic Confucianism, “A gentleman seeks harmony but not uniformity.” (*The Analects: Zi Lu XIII*). In this sense, “unity” or rather “great unity” praises difference and strives to seek overlapping consensus and uses it as the starting point for reconciling the trend of differences. Harmony admits the existence of conflicts and contradictions, but it attempts to transform destructive pressure into constructive tension, so that stressful relations may be incited to grow in integration.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Lu [26].

<sup>48</sup> Du [27].

Although this may sound idealistic, it has merits of its own. Through creative transformation, it can become an ideological resource through which humanity ponders the future world. It is basically peaceful because it deals with relationships through cultural paths instead of conquering and eliminating differences. It is the seeking of a harmonious situation through the symbiosis of various cultures and subjects, and it's exactly what is needed to bring the future world into coherence.

#### 8.4 Significance of China's Cosmopolitanism for the Future

China's cosmopolitanism, rooted in the Zhou Dynasty, evolved throughout a long history from the Qin to the Qing Dynasty. It has rich connotations and a far-reaching influence. Elements constituting its kernel include illustration of external relations as concentric circles that can be infinitely stretched out, the idea of internally and externally isomorphic order, and a self-confident and an introspective cultural structure. Under this structure, the identity of the acting agent is variable. Under this structure, there is no absolute other party, but only the relative "me-others" who will eventually become part of a harmonious family. This doctrine, if divested of its hierarchical components and after going through transformative remaking, can become an extremely important ideological resource in the future world and a constructive ideological concept that Chinese culture can contribute to the world.

Over the past centuries, Western ideologies have dominated the world due to the overwhelming national strength of Western countries. However, as we all can see, while Western ideologies have their merits in dealing with problems of the world, they are limited in what they can do and have often undeniably run counter to the positive good they wish to do. The state of "one-sided" dominance of Western ideology and the marginalization of ideologies in other parts of the world is by no means a healthy one. It needs to be complemented and balanced and alternative solutions and paths need to be found or created. Critical voices are not lacking even within the inner circles of Western ideologies. The questioning of "Orientalism" and monism is an example of this nature. The problem with such criticism is that the critics themselves fail to provide an alternative plans or options and therefore less than constructive. By contrast, China's cosmopolitanism and the connotations thereof does provide options. It has the following five characteristics that bear extremely important and non-negligible and constructive significance for reducing dispute and increasing harmony.

**Firstly**, China's cosmopolitanism is inclusive rather than exclusive. Western cosmopolitanism in the Christian context consistently aims at converting the rest of the world to Christianity. By contrast, China's cosmopolitanism allows for differences and even considers differences as preconditions for the vital development of things. No faith or individual should become an object of exclusion, but is rather a remote

person or entity that can be approached and interacted with. China's cosmopolitanism does not repel variances, but considers it part of the natural order. Therefore, variances in the human world are proper arrangements based on the natural trend of things. The key to the peace of the world is that each actor finds its own proper role.

**Secondly**, as far as China's cosmopolitanism is concerned, relationships are convertible. There are no absolute "me" and "others," which means there are no clear-cut "foe" and "me." This principle of "non-antagonism" helps eradicate one fatal problem in Western thinking, which is the "enemy assumption" derived from the "pagan consciousness" rooted in religious irrationality.<sup>49</sup> Even where "foe" and "me" do exist, they are still convertible and transformable. This is very different from the dualism between good and bad and between light and darkness and is therefore a profound and brilliant type of cosmopolitanism that deserves the world's repeated deliberation, digestion and absorption and thus becomes an ideological track shift of transitional dimensions.

**Thirdly**, as far as China's cosmopolitanism is concerned, the path of the shift is cultural rather than military. China's cosmopolitanism highlights "virtue" and constantly demonstrates itself through the convincing power of virtue. Therefore, what it depends on attraction and appeal. Its emergence is far earlier than that of today's concept of "soft power" and has a far greater significance.

**Fourthly**, as far as China's cosmopolitanism is concerned, the method of change is voluntary rather than coercive. Western ideology argues that freedom is something that could be forced on someone." This is clearly a kind of hegemony rather than kingship. China does not follow this kind of thinking, but values acceptance by the other party. She is willing to wait and can wait. With such thinking, she is unlikely to launch a war on Iraq or something to that effect. As revealed in the ill consequences of the War on Iraq, the practice of meeting evil with evil will not bring about a world of good. There will have to be change and another way out.

**Fifthly**, the world can have peace and harmony as a family. This is the ultimate ideal of China's cosmopolitanism. Its path is not mechanical "unity," but the "you in me, and I in you" "harmony;" not the absolute good or bad, but equal integration and transformation. It is a path of mutual tolerance and humility among acting agents, mutual appreciation in the gaze of each other and the understanding that the other party may be right and oneself wrong and vice versa. The key is not to prove anything through the magnitude of power, but through some kind of interactive practice. It is on this basis that we realize peaceful coexistence and move on to harmonious symbiosis.

As Wang Gengwu has pointed out, "From China's perspective, the talk of 'peaceful rising' indicates that a richer and stronger China in the future may seek to provide an even more modern view of the world. The world referred to here will no longer be the unified world of China as an empire. Instead, China will be a huge multinational country under a modern global framework based on the principles of equality and

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<sup>49</sup> Zhao Tingyang, *Tianxia System-An Introduction to the Philosophy of World System*, p. 33.



sovereignty in today's international system.<sup>50</sup> As a matter of fact, today's China abides by this above-mentioned new outlook. The purpose of this thesis is to seek possible constructive thinking resources China's transformation of cosmopolitanism could contribute to the world. Hopefully it might enlighten further research agendas. In fact, China today is already such a country. What's important is what kind of constructive ideological resources Tianxiaism will provide the world with after going through creative transformation, which is exactly the main thrust of this article. It will probably also enlighten people as they go about future research agendas.

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# Chapter 9

## The Return of China's Peripheral Regional Perspective and Construction of a New Order



Yunling Zhang

**Abstract** China had constructed a stable structure and order to deal with the relations with its neighboring countries in history, which collapsed in modern times after its decline. The founding of the People's Republic of China ended the downward trajectory in the past one hundred years and marked the beginning of China's gradual re-establishment of the relationship and order with nearby countries. However, due to several restraining factors, the regional perspective that includes China and its surrounding countries at the core has not been established. After the reform and opening-up policy was implemented, in particular, following the end of the Cold War, China has taken new measures to gradually normalize its relations with neighboring countries and has formed increasingly close economic ties with these countries. By leveraging its growing power and influence, China has pushed the regional relations to develop in a positive direction, and has built, during the adjustment, a new regional order of development and security. For China, to build such an order is not for the purpose of building hegemony, nor of establishing a sphere of influence surrounding China, but a stable, peaceful, cooperative and development-oriented comprehensive geographical regional environment. On this foundation, China's regional perspective has returned and a community of common destiny has become an important carrier for China to construct a new relationship and order with neighboring countries. The change in the relationship between China and its neighboring countries as well as in the order in peripheral regions should be analyzed and examined from the perspective of the long process of historical evolution.

**Keywords** Periphery diplomacy · Regional order · Regional perspective · Community of common destiny

China is surrounded by a good number of countries that combine to create a wide peripheral region, comprised of continents and oceans. In the past, China and its neighboring countries established a special geographical relationship, jointly

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contributing to the emergence of a regional perspective, a unique regional coexistence relationship and a regional order that centered around the periphery region.

The fall of China from its peak in history exposed it to domestic troubles and foreign humiliations, and destroyed the relationship with its neighboring countries and the order that had once prevailed. The founding of the new China put an end to the domestic disorders, and sent China back onto the path of national unity and revival. However, complicating factors like the Cold War made the reconstruction of the periphery relations a difficult mission.

In general, with the change in domestic and external factors and in the environments, China's regional perspective centering around the peripheral regions is gradually returning. China has gradually gripped the upper hand in building the peripheral regional relationship and order. This article starts with an examination of the Chinese historical regional perspective, followed by an analysis of the return of the Chinese regional perspective centering around its peripheral regions, the process and characteristics of the establishment of the new regional relationship and order, and eventually proposes the strategy of building a peripheral strategic reliance and a community of common destiny.

## 9.1 The Peripheral Relationship and Order in History

China is a big and proud country with a history of civilization lasting several thousand years, in which unique and characteristic ideas, rules and ways of interaction took shape. Researches have shown that the Chinese "worldview" derived from the perception and order surrounding the Huaxia people in the Central Plains. Over the lengthy course of history, the developed ethnic Huaxia people lived by the neighboring ethnic groups and tribes and gradually developed the relations of interaction, at the core of which was China. The unification of China by the Qin dynasty led to the expansion of Huaxia territories and further solidified the Huaxia-centric culture and order.<sup>1</sup>

From the Han dynasty, China began to stretch its relationship to the east, by interacting with the Korean Peninsula, Liuqiu, and the islands of Japan; to the west, by crossing the Hexi Corridor to open up the ancient Silk Road, to connect with Central Asia and Mediterranean Sea; and to the south, by expanding interaction with the entire Southeast Asia and further developing commercial and trade relations with countries in South Asia or even in the Arab region and Africa via the Maritime Silk Road.<sup>2</sup> However, unlike modern Western countries, China continued its practice of

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<sup>1</sup> He [1].

<sup>2</sup> A ban on maritime trade was imposed for the majority of the Ming dynasty despite Zheng He's seven voyages to the West and tremendous efforts to open up foreign relations. Complicated reasons contributed to the imposition of the ban on maritime trade, one of which was security threat from the sea. According to Martin Jacques, one reason that caused the Ming dynasty to ban maritime trade was the perception of superiority by the Ming emperor who believed that the Ming culture was far more advanced than that of the barbarians. See Jacques [2].

focusing on nearby countries when it comes to develop external relations instead of seizing colonies around the globe to relentlessly expand its influence.

In its long history of interaction, China built complex and multi-formed relationships with its neighboring countries and regions. Some of these countries were included in the Huaxia system by accepting titles of nobility from imperial China and paying tributes to China. Although most of the neighboring countries did not join the Huaxia system, they managed to maintain a friendly relationship with China, thus creating a stable relationship around China.<sup>3</sup>

Believing that it was the most powerful country, it was natural for China to see the outside world and to deal with neighboring countries from the perspective of China being at the center of the world, thus forming a unique “China-barbarian order” between China and its neighboring countries. To build and maintain such an order, China made every effort to safeguard its paramount status and dignity. On the other hand, out of the principle of “harmony in diversity,” China chose not to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries, and was flexible on the tributes paid by the vassal states, as it emphasized more on rituals, respect and order than the tributes themselves. As one emperor from the Ming dynasty once said, “the sovereign descends the world to govern both the Chinese and the barbarians, and treats them equally without discrimination.”<sup>4</sup> Over the long history, although China managed its relations with neighboring countries by “a combination of grace and deterrence,” generally speaking, it adopted an “appeasement” policy.<sup>5</sup>

China is in a complex environment where it is surrounded by quite a number of neighboring countries. Through years of interaction with them, a complete set of rules was gradually developed to govern the relationship between China and these countries,<sup>6</sup> which was guided by the Confucian philosophy of hierarchical order to form a “center-periphery” type of stable framework.<sup>7</sup> Such a framework was made available on the foundation of two fundamental safeguards: China's overwhelming economic might and its ability to offer security protection for the region.<sup>8</sup> The establishment of a regional order centered around China corresponded in width and depth with the level of development in China itself.

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<sup>3</sup> Researches indicate that even at its zenith, the Qing dynasty only had a little over ten dependent or tributary states. See Cui [3], 28. Citations from Xiaoming [4].

<sup>4</sup> *The History of the Ming Dynasty. Foreign Countries (Guli)* Vol. 6, 326. *Collected Biographies*, 214. He [5].

<sup>5</sup> There are other scholars who believe that the so-called Hua-Yi order is in fact a ritual order framework primarily on the foundation of economic relations, under which countries and regions within this region carried out mutually beneficial trade. China used soft power instead of hard power. See Han Dongyu, “The East Asian Framework of Hua-Yi Order and How it Collapsed,” p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Some scholars named it “the Celestial Empire's Ritual System.” See Huang [6].

<sup>7</sup> There are other scholars who believe that the so-called Hua-Yi order is in fact a ritual order framework primarily on the foundation of economic relations, under which countries and regions within this region carried out mutually beneficial trade. China used soft power instead of hard power. See Han Dongyu, “The East Asian Framework of Hua-Yi Order and How it Collapsed,” p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> Takeshi Hamashita, a Japanese scholar holds such a viewpoint. Citations from Han Dongyu, “The East Asian Framework of Hua-Yi Order and How it Collapsed,” p. 46.

Without a doubt, the development of history was not a straight line. China's pivotal status was susceptible to external challenges and repercussions. Clashes or even wars broke out from time to time between China and its neighbors. Regardless, China in general remained a regional superpower for an extended period in history. Its dominating position was never fundamentally shaken. In other words, the order of a China-centric regional relationship was not interfered in by external forces. As a result, over the course of history, the relationship between China and neighboring countries was primarily a reflection of the interactive relationship within the region.<sup>9</sup>

Such an interactive relationship accumulated and developed over the long time in history was extremely significant in the emergence of the Chinese regional perspective, which can be summarized at least in the following three aspects: First, China's geographic vision of the region that always viewed the surrounding region as foundation; Second, China viewed surrounding region as its concern of interests; Third, China created a set of rules and codes of conduct in dealing with neighboring countries and regions. The core value in the so-called "the sovereign descends the world" was China's responsibility in the closely-related neighboring countries.<sup>10</sup>

In the midnineteenth century, however, the foundation of such an order between China and its neighbors was destroyed, partly due to China's gradual decline and partly because of Western powers' relentless expansion into the East that encroached China and its neighboring countries. China's efforts in pushing back the expansion and invasion by the Western powers failed. As a result, it was forced into entering a series of treaties that humiliated the country and surrendered its sovereignty, paying reparations and giving up territories. Most of the surrounding countries were thus occupied and turned into colonies of the Western powers. The seizure of Beijing by the Eight-Power Allied Forces smashed China's mighty image while the colonization of neighboring countries severed China's direct connection with them. The China-centric regional order eventually came apart.

Particularly in the late nineteenth century, a rising Japan directly provoked, invaded and defeated China, annexed Liuqiu, and occupied Korea, stripping away the last remaining "dignity of a big country." In the one-hundred years from the Opium War that broke out in 1840 to the defeat of Japan in 1945, China and its surrounding region underwent tremendous changes. China not only lost the ability to protect itself but also lost the normal relationship and environment in the region. Under such circumstances, China's traditional regional perspective was destroyed, turning China's neighboring region to the source that endangered its existence and interests.

The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 ended the civil war and the downward spiral of China, but the relationship between China and its neighboring countries went through a difficult adjustment. Due to complex situations, China was

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<sup>9</sup> Xiaoming Zhang, "A Historical Evolution of the Relationship between China and Surrounding Countries: Models and Processes," p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> In fact, the rules and codes of conduct were not written on paper or in treaties, but were rather a recognition and tacit agreement. By Joseph Nye's definition, soft power is an ability to influence others, and more of the power to attract others. To a large extent, China was making such an influence. For more on soft power, see Nye [7].

forced into a passive position in its relationship with neighboring countries for a long time in the past. In many cases, external factors determined the characteristics and nature of the relationship, to which China could do no more than being reactive. The new China made attempts to turn the situation around and develop new relationship. For instance, in the 1950s, China, along with Burma and India, proposed the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” What lies at the core of this principle is no interference in domestic affairs and friendly coexistence. Fundamentally, these principles were announced to create a stable and peaceful environment for the coexistence and development of countries. It is worth noting that China added fresh meanings to these principles. China abandoned the perception of “being the big boss,” changed its traditional view on order, and began to advocate equality among countries and peaceful coexistence on its basis. However, the Cold War, split of China and USSR and other factors made the relationship between China and its neighboring countries even more complicated. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, therefore, did not follow through.

The major shift in China's relationship with neighboring countries occurred after China adopted the reform and opening-up policy, which required stable and peaceful external political environment and open and cooperative economic environment. Subsequently, China began to take initiatives to push forward the improvement of its relationship with neighboring countries and drive the development in cross-country economic relations.

Significant changes happened to the surroundings in China's neighboring regions after the Cold War. On the one hand, it provided the political atmosphere and environment to further improve China's relations with its neighbors. On the other hand, the open and development policies adopted by each country provided conditions for developing wider economic relations between China and neighboring countries. As a result, changes that had never been seen earlier happened to the relationship between China and neighboring countries: First, China normalized its relations with all its neighbors. Second, China and its neighboring countries established close economic and trade relations and became their important trade partners, which had historical significance and was followed by the gradual return of how Chinese viewed its peripheral region. Of course, it was not and could not be returned to the ancient model of “China-Barbarian Order” but rather a new perception, positioning and structure rising from the new environment.

## **9.2 Construct a New Peripheral Relationship and Order**

Nowadays, China starts to develop the relationship with neighboring countries, and build a peripheral relationship and order in completely new circumstances and under a new relationship framework. While advancing toward the national revival, China is hardly the strongest country despite the fact that it has grown to be the largest

economy in Asia. China's sharply rising comprehensive strength has not fundamentally shaken the hegemonic status of the United States. It has not created an "overwhelmingly dominant economic power," let alone to offer security protection to its neighbors. The situations are extremely complicated in China's surrounding region, over which various powers battle to win influence. Therefore, China's perception of its neighboring region is taking shape that requires time to gradually streamline and clarify. The efforts to build the peripheral relationship and order by China also need to gradually become effective and improve influence with more involvement in the regional affairs.

### **(I) ASEAN as the "test site" for building the new relationship**

China is adjacent to Southeast Asian countries over land or by sea. Following the WWII, these countries won independence from former colonial rule successively, but their relations with China underwent complex changes. China followed a "two-track path" in building new relations with Southeast Asian nations: on the foundation of developing bilateral relations with Southeast Asian countries, make full use of the ASEAN platform to build a new comprehensive relationship with these countries. Of the two tracks, the latter represents the important attempts by China to construct the peripheral relationship and order.

China had maintained good relations with Southeast Asian countries in history. They vanished with the change in the nature of these relations as a result of the breakdown of this region by colonists in modern times. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, it began to re-build the bilateral relations with ASEAN countries but the process was circuitous due to impacts from complicated factors. In the 1950s and 1960s, China first established diplomatic relations with Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia and Laos. In the 1960s, China suspended its diplomatic relationship with Indonesia following the latter's political turmoil and the ensuing anti-Chinese sentiment. In the 1970s, the adoption of an expansionist policy by Vietnam caused China and Vietnam to sever bilateral diplomatic ties and went into war against each other. At the same time, the relations between China and Laos deteriorated. Changes in political situations in Cambodia set back its relations with China in the 1970s and 1980s. Countries like Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand were part of the second wave of establishing diplomatic relations with China (1970s) without major twists and turns later. Among the third group of countries that established diplomatic relations with China were Singapore<sup>11</sup> and Brunei in the early 1990s when China normalized its relationship with Vietnam, Indonesia and Laos. Practically, China and ASEAN countries did not achieve true diplomatic relationship normalization until the early 1990s. The relationships are unlikely to experience major degradation in the future, despite some setbacks, such as disputes over South China Sea in recent years that have strained relations between China and Vietnam and the Philippines.

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<sup>11</sup> China and Singapore had a unique relationship. Although the two countries had not established diplomatic relationship until the early 1990s, they began formal contacts and interaction with each other as early as the mid-1970s.



The establishment of ASEAN provides a new platform for China to develop relations with ASEAN countries. ASEAN has gradually emerged to be the representative of the overall interests in the development of the Southeast Asian region, and China has built a dialogue and cooperation relationship centering around ASEAN. It never happened in the history of the Southeast Asia region.<sup>12</sup>

The ASEAN in its infancy was strongly anti-communist, when China had connections with and was the supporter of the communist parties in some Southeast Asian countries. With the changes in the environment, China and the ASEAN countries found new points where their respective interests overlapped. China pulled back from the policy of supporting the domestic communist revolution within the Southeast Asian countries and began to adopt the policy of promoting stability, development, cooperation and peace in this region. ASEAN, for its part, put securing peace in Southeast Asia at its top priority, tried to solve clashes and conflicts through regional cooperation, and counter-acted the expansionist policy by Vietnam. For this reason, China and ASEAN countries, of which Vietnam was not a member, found where they could cooperate for joint interests.<sup>13</sup>

After the expansion of ASEAN to include Vietnam, China has begun to treat ASEAN as a regional organization to build a new relationship with. The prior foundation of cooperation combined with the recent development has pushed China to take more proactive actions to build a dialogue partnership with ASEAN,<sup>14</sup> including active participation in the “10 + 1” and “10 + 3” dialogues advocated by ASEAN, being one of the first countries to sign the Treaty of Peaceful Cooperation in Southeast Asia, proposing to establish the free trade zone and the strategic partnership with ASEAN, and jointly making the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, etc. It is apparent that China attempts to make use of ASEAN as a regional cooperation mechanism to build a new geographical regional relationship with the Southeast Asian countries. Amid the mounting disputes over the South China Sea, China has proposed to resolve the issue following a “dual-track methodology,” namely, to solve sovereign disputes by negotiation between disputing countries, and to protect stability in the South China Sea and the entire region by relying on cooperation with ASEAN. This implies that China has attached great importance to the positive role played by ASEAN as a regional cooperation organization, especially in the construction of China's peripheral relationship and order.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> One symbol is that the legal status of ASEAN has been acknowledged by other countries, and an increasing number of countries have sent ambassadors to ASEAN and begun developing a holistic relationship with ASEAN.

<sup>13</sup> ASEAN Declaration, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASEAN\\_Declaration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASEAN_Declaration), time of browse: Nov. 10, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> This period had a huge impact on the change of China's attitude toward ASEAN. Even after Vietnam joined ASEAN, China has remained supportive to ASEAN, continued driving to improve and strengthen ties with ASEAN and supporting a united ASEAN. Generally speaking, decision makers in China believe that a united Southeast Asia does not pose a threat to China. For further analyses, see Cao [8].

<sup>15</sup> The writer of this article believes that the “dual-track methodology” employed in dealing with disputes over the South China Sea is an extension of the “big dual-track strategy” that China

Although significant progress has been made to the overall relationship between China and ASEAN, and China has realized how important the “regional construction” is from its interaction with ASEAN, it has not been a smooth process in China’s building of its relationship with ASEAN, in particular, the regional order. First of all, ASEAN practices a diplomacy that tries to balance among big powers and keeps a distance from China. Balancing among big powers by ASEAN is, to a greater extent, aimed at counter-balancing China by other big powers. Secondly, China and several ASEAN members have disputes over the South China Sea, which usually distances its relationship with China. Despite the conclusion of negotiations between China and ASEAN on the establishment of free trade area, ASEAN does not intend to create a regional cooperation organization with China. To maintain ASEAN’s independence and ability to take initiatives is the bottom line in ASEAN’s efforts to develop relations with China. China—ASEAN free trade area serves as a construction of functional mechanism, namely for the purpose of driving two-way market opening-up and intensifying economic cooperation. As a matter of fact, from the perspective of the Southeast Asian countries, ASEAN as a whole carries another meaning, i.e., to deal with a big China by the collective power of ASEAN, hopefully to “balance” against the strength of China. From the perspective of China, it will respect ASEAN’s pivotal status and its leading role in the regional cooperation as long as ASEAN does not turn itself into the “base to counter China” but remains as a force to “stabilize and bring prosperity to the borders.” Despite the issues lingering between China and ASEAN countries, especially the territorial disputes with some countries, the Chinese government has put the development of its relationship with ASEAN in a “primary and prioritized direction,” and is confident in building such a relationship.<sup>16</sup>

For China, ASEAN has provided a new and bigger platform for developing the relationship with Southeast Asian countries. To this end, China has put emphasis on ASEAN’s holistic position and role and actively sought to develop the relationship with it, which aims at transforming it into the foundation for developing a friendly and cooperative relationship as well as an important strategic reliance to expand comprehensive interests and protect security. From the perspective of building the regional relationship and order, there is no such organization as ASEAN in the surrounding area that is capable of building an economic, security, social and cultural community. Therefore, ASEAN’s status and role are understandably important to China. No matter how many bumps on the road, China must make every effort to ensure that the foundation for friendship and cooperation be irreversible. For instance, in 2013 when the disputes over the South China Sea were heating up, China proactively proposed to build an upgraded free trade area, construct a community with a shared destiny, continue negotiating on making rules of conducts in the South China Sea and sign friendship treaty with ASEAN countries. These measures make

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adopts in developing its relationship with Southeast Asia. See Wang Yi, “Follow the ‘Dual-Track Methodology’ to Deal with the South China Sea Disputes,” [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/2yxw\\_602251/181457.Shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/2yxw_602251/181457.Shtml), time of browse: Nov. 10, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> “Wang Yi Talks about the South China Sea Issues: Some Countries Must not Misjudge the Situation and Make Repeated Mistakes,” <http://www.chinanews.001111/2013/08-02/5118348.3>, time of browse: Nov. 10, 2014.

it obvious that ASEAN's long-term development is in sync with China's strategic interests.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, ASEAN is a "test site" for China to build a new peripheral relationship and order.

## (II) Priorities in and adjustment to cooperation in East Asia

In its peripheral perception, China has been specially attached to the East Asian region geographically, and has a clearly defined understanding of the "10 + 3" mechanism in regional perception.<sup>18</sup> China's initial response to the invitation of dialogue sent by ASEAN to China, Japan and Korea in 1997 was very positive. This was partly due to China's focus on ASEAN, and partly out of the perception of the "subjectivity of the East Asian region." Geographically speaking, East Asia, by the Chinese definition, includes Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, which is a connected area where all the countries co-exist. Therefore, China's attitude toward pushing through cooperation in East Asia was both serious and pragmatic. For instance, in the "10 + 3" meeting of leaders' dialogue in 1998, China proposed to create a cooperation mechanism among officials from central banks and ministries of finance. Later, it enthusiastically drove to issue the *Joint Declaration on East Asia Cooperation*, sponsored research by the "East Asia Vision Group," proposed to lead the efforts of feasibility study of establishing East Asia Free Trade Area, supported the "Chiang Mai Initiative" focusing on financial and monetary cooperation, drove the expansion of currency exchange mechanism from bilateralization to multilateralization under the framework of "Chiang Mai Initiative," and established the East Asia foreign exchange reserve and the East Asia macro-economic affairs office, of which China assumed the position of the first director.

Apparently, the Chinese geographical regional interests and strategic thinking has put East Asia in an extremely important position and given it a special significance.<sup>19</sup> Following the reform and opening-up, China's coastal regions are prioritized in economic development and thus have grown to be its economic center. Hence, the geographical East Asia that stretches from Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia is of extreme importance to the development and overall interests of China. Although

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<sup>17</sup> According to some scholars, China also needs to build the countries that exist as China's strategic pivots. In ASEAN, Indonesia is a country of such significance and conditions. It is the opinion of the writer of this article that to build countries that exist as China's strategic pivots is not to form new alliances, but rather create cooperation and mutual support based on strategic interests and mutual trust. See Zhou[10].

<sup>18</sup> In fact, China perceives that East Asia geographically includes the ten ASEAN countries, the North and South Korea in the Korean Peninsula, Japan and Mongolia.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Jacques defines East Asia as "China's backyard," and states that one must start with the understanding of East Asia if he/she wants to understand the meaning of the rise of China to the rest of the world. How China manages its rise and wields its growing power in East Asia is a critical indicator of how China will behave after it becomes a global big country. Apparently, to equalize East Asia with China's "backyard" by the author may lead to strategic misunderstanding and misjudgment. China is neither capable of nor intended to be the ruler of East Asia. Meanwhile, East Asia is far less than what constitutes China's entire geographical relations. East Asia, if viewed as China's backyard, may likely sink China into a "regional trap of rise." See Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World*, 273.

economy is at the center of the East Asian cooperation that China participates in and promotes, East Asia carries high political and strategic stakes to China. It is the hope of China to gradually move forward the overall framework and development of organizational structure in the cooperation in East Asia.<sup>20</sup>

Since the modern times, the change in regional relations and relevant power in East Asia has served as a mirror that reflects the decline of China. This is the place where China was deprived of its interests and invaded, and where wars were fought. After adopting the reform and opening-up policy, it is in the same place that China has opened it up to the outside world and established the market platform for economic development (trade, investment, service). However, to build a cooperative East Asia faces three barriers: First, the rise and fall of and competition between regional powers, primarily displayed by “a Japan that tries to hold on to its old glory” and a “rising China.” Fearful of China gaining dominant influence, Japan has made every effort to thwart China’s attempt to promote the agenda of regional cooperation. Meanwhile, Japan has tried to bring more countries in the East Asia cooperation process, aimed at counter-balancing China and resolving its “East Asia geographical regional dilemma.”<sup>21</sup> Second, ASEAN insists on its pivotal position. Although ASEAN hopes to expand its own interests by virtue of a bigger regional cooperation framework, it does not want to see itself melting in such a bigger regional mechanism. As a result, ASEAN insists on an “axle-spoke” type of dialogue cooperation mechanism by the “ASEAN + ” framework, and is reluctant to fuel the institutional construction in East Asia. Third, intervention by the U.S. Out of worries that an East Asia cooperation mechanism may exclude itself and thus dampen its dominant position, the U.S. plans to create a regional mechanism in its own right (e.g. Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, or TPP), drive the development of an enlarged East Asia dialogue mechanism, and directly participate in regional affairs (e.g., East Asia Summit), in an attempt to boost its influence on the direction of East Asia cooperation.

As a result of impacts from different power sources, the East Asian cooperation process with “10 + 3” as the primary channel has experienced complications. As a matter of fact, multi-layered mechanisms are playing respective roles simultaneously. This diverges from China’s initial regional positioning and strategic design for East Asia,<sup>22</sup> and is forcing China to re-think about and re-position its policy for the regional cooperation in East Asia. Given the need to protect its overall geographical interests,

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<sup>20</sup> See Zhang [11].

<sup>21</sup> Japan, economically, is a big country that tries to hold on to its leadership status in East Asia. With its advantageous positions in economic power, technological capability, trade and investment, Japan fears that China may replace its leadership role and it has become Japan’s “strategic fear.” As a matter of fact, Japan has long had the perception of “great East Asia.” As an island country, Japan’s definition of the region is quite different from that of China.

<sup>22</sup> As the writer of this article once pointed out, an ideal structure of regional cooperation is a framework constructed between a united East Asia and the United States of America to give rise to a new East Asia-North America relationship framework, the so-called “Pacific relationship.” It is similar to the “Atlantic relationship” existing between a united Europe and the U.S. Real experiences have indicated that “it is unrealistic to have an East Asian cooperation mechanism without the involvement of the U.S.” See Zhang Yunling, “A Probe into Regionalism in East Asia,” 6–7; Zhang [12].

China definitely won't give up on efforts to drive the regional cooperation in East Asia, but will make necessary adjustments to priorities and means, including shifting its focus from institutional construction to the construction of pragmatic functions.

With its increasing emphasis on the construction of an overall big peripheral region and order, China's perception and strategic positioning of the East Asian region changes, namely, to treat East Asia as an integral part of a bigger geographical region in its periphery. From the perspective of a bigger peripheral region, "the West is bright when the East is not." We may push what is not successful in East Asia in other places and may see some success. From this moment on, China begins to think beyond the "East-Asia-centric" framework and plans to build the regional relations and order from the perspective of a big new peripheral region and strategy.

### **(III) Build a compatible region in Asia Pacific**

Asia Pacific is a new concept in the Chinese regional perceptive. It becomes a region for the connections in both economy and security. Economically, Asia Pacific provides enormous room for China to open itself and is the primary foreign trade market as well as the major source of external investment for China. Asia Pacific also connects with China in security as it is the region where China has primary security and strategic concerns. In particular, it needs to properly handle the new major-country relationship between a rising China and a hegemonic United States of America. Therefore, Asia Pacific as a region will need to provide platforms for China to engage with other countries economically, and also provide room for China to deal with political and security relations.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is the primary platform for China's economic engagement. China showed an obvious willingness to join APEC for two main reasons. First, the road to WTO for China was a bumpy one and China hoped to gain more opportunities of participation through APEC. Second, China hoped to demonstrate its determination on opening-up to the outside world by joining APEC, and disrupt the sanctions imposed by the Western countries following the domestic political disturbances in 1989 in China. As a result, China did not have a strong regional awareness or positioning on APEC. Instead, it sought to join APEC mainly out of economic concerns, viewing it as a place to rehearse for the accession to WTO.<sup>23</sup> The "APEC way" of being autonomous, voluntary, and acting on consensus through negotiation suits China perfectly. Over a long time in the past, China was against forcing open other countries' market, and was more acceptable of the step-by-step approach. For instance, China expressed its reservation when Canada proposed FTAAP in 2004 and when the U.S. officially pressed for the establishment of FTAAP in 2006.<sup>24</sup> However, China changed its stand by agreeing to advance FTAAP forward after the U.S. excluded it from the IPP negotiations. In the series of APEC meetings

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<sup>23</sup> For instance, some scholars think that APEC has provided a platform for China to warm up and rehearse for accession to WTO. See Cai [13].

<sup>24</sup> In the background of East Asia's move to establish EAFTA, Canada and the U.S. pushed for the FTAAP for fear that they might be excluded from the EAFTA and suffer loss. In addition, the original plan by the U.S. to press for FTAA in 2005 aborted, causing the U.S. to instead push for the construction of FTAAP. After its proposal was shelved, the U.S. decided to push for TPP in 2009.

it hosted in 2014, China successfully pushed the participating countries into agreeing to kick off the FTAAP process.<sup>25</sup> It needs to be pointed out that to include FTAAP in the APEC agenda symbolizes the change in China's perception of the Asia Pacific region.

Although APEC is an economic organization primarily tasked to propel market opening and economic and technological cooperation in the Asia Pacific region, it has an apparent political agenda. It provides a regional dialogue and cooperation framework that is also a place for carrying out diplomatic activities. For instance, in the 1990s when China-US relations experienced some disturbances to the point where bilateral relations were extremely tense, it was the APEC Leaders Meeting and APEC Ministerial Meeting that helped break the impasse. As the United States of America is the most influential power in the Asia Pacific region, especially in the area of security, and China is not a component of the U.S.- led system, therefore, China does not have much say in the overall construction of the regional relations and order in the Asia Pacific region. To achieve national resurrection, China needs a stable and peaceful external environment. It is extremely critical for China to properly handle its relationship with the U.S. Therefore, China's main strategy is on how to expand its security and strategic space so that the Pacific Ocean can "accommodate both China and the U.S."<sup>26</sup> In this sense, APEC is also an important platform for China to manage its complex relations with other major countries.<sup>27</sup>

Disagreements exist, however, in academia about how to perceive Asia Pacific. According to some scholars, China's strategy in the Asia Pacific region should focus on building a strategic balance among big powers, which is relied upon to stabilize China's external environment.<sup>28</sup> Other scholars think that since China is located in Asia Pacific and thus has critical stake in it, it should play an exemplary role in the regional affairs, and introduce guiding ideas and appealing models. It is therefore China's strategy in Asia Pacific to strive to play an important role at all levels.<sup>29</sup> Some scholars even go further to assert that China is geographically right in the center of the continuously expanding Asia Pacific region and has become the center of the attraction as well as the "geographically central state."<sup>30</sup> However, in China's perception of geographical region, it is hard to shape Asia Pacific into a China-centric region. Although Asia Pacific is a meeting point in the Chinese geographical interests and a focal point in the management of its major-country relationship, China's goal cannot be achieved through the construction of a regional order. Regardless, China

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<sup>25</sup> Of course, China was not the only one to do so. In the APEC informal leaders' meeting held in Japan in 2010, the topic of KTAAP was brought up again. At the time, Japan did not decide to join TPP.

<sup>26</sup> "Top Leaders from both China and the U.S. agreed to jointly build a new type of major-country relationship: no conflict and no confrontation," [http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/Tjpmzxx/content-3/detail\\_2013\\_06/09/26267547\\_0.shtml](http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/Tjpmzxx/content-3/detail_2013_06/09/26267547_0.shtml), time of browse: Sept. 25, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> China has long emphasized on making use of regional platforms as opportunities for bilateral meetings, and during APEC meeting, arranged bilateral meetings as much as possible.

<sup>28</sup> Jiao [14].

<sup>29</sup> Wu [15].

<sup>30</sup> Zhu [16].

still attempts to make better use of this regional platform to maximize its economic and strategic interests, and to expand its space in strategy and interests by the regional mechanism.

#### **(IV) Shanghai Cooperation Organization: a new leap forward**

Prior to the end of the Cold War, China's relationship with Central Asia was merely a bilateral relationship between China and the USSR. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became a relationship with multiple countries from one region. The relations in this region turned more complicated in that they concerned bilateral and regional relations. The establishment of strategic partnership between China and Russia brought the bilateral relationship back to normal. Following the declaration of independence by the five countries in Central Asia, China moved fast to establish diplomatic ties and delimited borders with them. China-Russia-Central Asia relations are characterized by a combination of bilateral, trilateral and regional relationship, which intertwine with each other and will not be easy to deal with without a regional cooperation mechanism that tries to solve the issues that concern all parties under one regional framework. In the era of the Soviet Union, Central Asia was simply a sub-region within one country. Now it has emerged to be a region with a specific meaning on the international arena, a region that is extremely important but with many uncertainties.<sup>31</sup> Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is the first organization of such kind that has been pushed to be established by China,<sup>32</sup> on the foundation of the negotiation mechanism that was put in place to deal with diplomatic relations between China, Russia and its break-away countries in Central Asia after the Soviet Union fell apart. Through such a mechanism, China created a new relationship with the new Russia and the countries in Central Asia, and built mutual trust through cooperation. It is safe to say that a paradigm shift took place in China's peripheral perception after the founding of the People's Republic of China when China propped up the development of its relationship with multiple countries by virtue of establishing the regional cooperation mechanism, and attempted to build the comprehensive development and security environment for this region by enabling the regional cooperation organization to play its role.

SCO is able to move forward on the matters that all parties agree and shelve those they diverge on, because China, Russia and Central Asian countries have found the greatest-common-divisor intersection point for cooperation—common security.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The stability of the northwest region is vital to China. With regards to China's concerns, some people think that the collapse of the Soviet Union turned Central Asia into a space for strategic activities, attracting intervention of all kinds of powers and influences. See Wang [17].

<sup>32</sup> As a matter of fact, it is a clear indication that China exceeded the "East Asia-Centric" geographical regional perspective by pushing for the establishment of SCO. In 1996, China, Russia and the three countries from Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) signed the Treaty on Intensifying Trust in Military Areas in the Border Regions. In 2001, with the addition of Uzbekistan, the six countries decided to formally establish the regional organization—Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

<sup>33</sup> Every country is threatened by the three forces (terrorism, separatism, and extremism), whose activities tend to penetrate into several countries.



Although SCO is a cooperation organization focusing on security, it is different from the security mechanism created by the U.S., Europe or among U.S. and European countries. Instead of forming military alliance or seeking military expansion, SCO aims at carrying out security cooperation to create a commonly desired environment for stability and peaceful development on the foundation of equal participation and consultation. Such a mode of cooperation is considered “another moderate choice outside the contemporary world order.” Its main function is to solve the security issues that all member states are concerned, and in the meantime, it becomes a stabilizer in maintaining security in the Eurasian region.<sup>34</sup> As the first treaty signed between China and member nations of a regional organization, the *Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation* marked a great achievement for China.

Central Asia is important to China not only in security, but also in the development of comprehensive relations especially in the promotion of economic development and cooperation. China has made a good number of proposals including building a free trade zone, establishing the SCO development bank, setting up energy club, creating a cooperation mechanism on food security, and building infrastructural network etc. Central Asian countries and Russia have not responded enthusiastically to some of the proposals made by China, out of concerns over China’s intention. For instance, countries in Central Asia fear that a free trade area will open up their markets to China and may lead to the Chinese monopoly on their markets. They also fear that the SCO development bank may be dominated by China and may provide financing to fund the economic activities conducted by China. What worries Russia most is a possible dominance of Central Asia by China, which may encroach Russian traditional interests.<sup>35</sup> Despite all these challenges and difficulties, SCO has made impressive progress in the area of economic cooperation. Given the importance of Central Asia, China will continue pressing for regional cooperation. In 2013, it proposed building the Silk Road Economic Belt that aims at driving a comprehensive economic cooperation and building the stretched and expanded economic development area in the Central Asia region.<sup>36</sup>

The development of SCO is a miracle<sup>37</sup> for the following reasons. First, China has a clearly-defined and envisioned regional positioning and strategy. Second, China, Russia and Central Asian countries have reached consensus. China and Russia, in

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<sup>34</sup> see Feng [18].

<sup>35</sup> To establish the SCO Development Bank was a proposal made by China in 2010. Current development is that the declaration issued by the SCO leaders meeting held in September 2014 included the establishment of the SCO Development Fund and the SCO Development Bank in its agenda of cooperation. <http://news.163.com/14/0913/03/A60B010400014SEH.html>, time of browse: October 15, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> In 2013, for instance, China further proposed to sign *SCO Member Countries Inter-governmental Treaty on International Road Transportation Facilitation*, aimed at opening up transportation corridors from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, and from Central Asia to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. See “Speech made by Xi Jinping in SCO summit meetings, Sept. 4, 2013, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/nmlx/2013-09/14/c132719882.html>, time of browse: Oct. 15, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Certainly, criticism on SCO is often heard, especially in the Western media that depict it as “controlled by China,” “controlled by China and Russia,” and “leaving behind the Central Asian countries.” See Roney [19] time of browse: October 20, 2014.



particular, have made strategic agreements. Third, there is no direct intervention from major countries outside the region. While people did not anticipate much out of SCO, its development, in reality, has far exceeded their expectations. Now with its attractiveness increasing and its functions expanding, SCO is preparing for taking in more members.

It is evident that China has done a lot to institutionalize SCO for the purpose of making it a new regional cooperation organization, and on its foundation, to create an environment to its west for peace, cooperation and development. The enlargement in size and expansion in function of SCO will bring greater influence and help enhance China's influence in the vast area to its west, which connected with the external world in history mainly through the ancient Silk Road that expanded from Central Asia to West Asia and further to Europe. Now, SCO and the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt have provided China with bigger room for expansion, enabling it to maximize its comprehensive interests in economy, politics, and security. The west of China has been the most unstable region, and is now posing new security threats to China (from extremists and separatists). Amid these challenges, China has made attempts to build a long-term mechanism to stabilize, develop and control the overall situation in the West through such a holistic strategy.

#### **(V) To break the “Northeast Asia Impasse”**

Among the geographical regions in China's periphery, East Asia is exceedingly important to China by any standard. After the WWII, China only had diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (partially in Northeast Asia), Mongolia and DPRK. Later, its relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated, so did it with Mongolia. The China-Japan relationship was normalized in the 1970s. Following the end of the Cold War, China established the diplomatic tie with Republic of Korea, and normalized its relationship with Russia and Mongolia, bringing the bilateral relations with all its neighboring countries in Northeast Asia back to normality. However, Northeast Asia as a region remains divisive. Wounds from history and the structure of divided ethnic countries resulting from the WWII continue hurting. The China-Japan relationship has plunged into a “strategic contention,” and the China-DPRK relationship is in a new phase of adjustment in addition to being impacted by the North-South relations in the Korean Peninsula and the DPRK-U.S. relations. Rarely are there regions in other parts of the world that resemble Northeast Asia.

China made attempts to solve North Korea nuclear issue and maintain the holistic relations and long-lasting peace in Northeast Asia by structuring a six-party talk mechanism. However, such a mechanism failed to operate and came to a stop due to complex relations. This was the first time that China tried to build a new Northeast Asia regional relationship and cooperation framework from the perspective of region-building.<sup>38</sup> As it turns out, however, China is not strong enough to play a leadership role, nor does it have true and strategically like-minded partners to help push it

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<sup>38</sup> According to some scholars, China's strategic goal in Northeast Asia is to maintain regional stability, therefore, it needs to build a new cooperation system, restructure politics in Northeast Asia, and, most importantly, play a role in solving the Korean Peninsula issue. See Jin [20].

through. The United States of America, Japan and Republic of Korea are allies and have established a three-party coordination mechanism under the six-party talk to protect their unity and interests. DPRK and China, despite their historical relations, are divergent in strategic goals. Russia, on the other hand, acts like an outsider and looks indifferent about participation at a deeper level. As a result, China, as the “middleman,” is destined to fail to play an important or leadership role.

The possession of nuclear weapons by North Korea has changed the structure and nature of the relations in Northeast Asia, and destroyed the foundation for developing the cooperation mechanism within the Northeast Asia region. At the crux of the North Korea nuclear issue are the U.S.-DPRK relations and the U.S.’ interests and strategic intent in the Korean Peninsula. Without major concessions from North Korea, it is hard for the U.S. to accept or change its policy toward North Korea. Fundamentally, North Korea does not have faith in the six-party talk because the primary goal of the talk is to solve the nuclear issue rather than the survival and development of North Korea. On the top of the North Korea’s priority list is to repair the relationship with the U.S. so as to make the U.S. change its policy toward North Korea. All these issues are apparently difficult to solve merely through a regional cooperation mechanism. Now, although North Korea is not showing any willingness to budge on returning to the six-party talk mechanism, other parties have expressed the intent to keep the agreements reached under the six-party-talk framework effective. However, to solve the North Korea nuclear issue and make long-lasting peace in the Korean Peninsula once and for all through the regional framework still requires the improvement of the bilateral relations, in particular, the adjustment of the U.S. policies. For the same reason, the Chinese strategy to build new relations and orders in the Northeast Asian region also demands fresh thinking.

The China-Japan-Korea cooperation mechanism is based on the economically related interests. It was China’s initial intent to break the “regional impasse” in Northeast Asia by making this cooperation mechanism a major channel. Given the sensitivity of the China-Japan-Korea relations and the existence of the “10 + 3” framework in ASEAN, China initially responded with caution to the meeting of the leaders from the three countries within the “10 + 3” dialogue framework (breakfast meeting) in 1999. In the Chinese official statement, its political implication was intentionally downgraded. Later, China gradually extended its support to this form of meeting, including turning the meeting among the three countries under the “10 + 3” framework a regular mechanism, setting up a three-nation-summit mechanism independent from the “10 + 3” framework and a secretariat, and pushing ahead the construction of free trade areas across three countries etc. Such an ambitious stance by China reflects its perception of the importance of the Northeast Asian region.<sup>39</sup> For instance, due to differences in the level of development, China was supposed to

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<sup>39</sup> Before the second China-Japan-South Korea Summit Meeting, a survey showed that, among all the Chinese surveyed, 91.8% hoped that China could play a bigger role. See “90% people surveyed on the internet before the China-Japan-South Korea Summit Meeting hoped that China could play a bigger role,” , time of browse: November 2, 2014. <http://news.qq.com/a/20091010/000408.htm>.

be the one that faced the most difficulties in the negotiations of building the China-Japan-Korea free trade area, but it turned out to be more enthusiastic than the other two. In the background that the TPP driven vigorously by the U.S. and the East Asia free trade area construction under the “10 + 3” framework came to a halt, China viewed it an ambitious reactive strategy to drive the China-Japan-Korea free trade area, in the hope to advance the process of East Asia free trade area forward to meet the challenge posed by the TPP. Unfortunately, the fatal weakness threatening the three-country cooperation was the unstable political relations. When the cooperation showed promising signs,<sup>40</sup> it quickly slid into an impasse because of reverses in China-Japan or Korea-Japan relations, which suspended summit meetings, reduced visits by senior government officials, and slowed down the progress made in the cooperation projects. Although negotiations on the free trade area are still ongoing, it is hard to tell that they won't be affected by cold politics.<sup>41</sup>

What obstructs China's efforts to construct the Northeast Asian region are issues of political nature, indicating a lack of consensus among countries within the region on building a regional cooperation mechanism. Many experts have visualized various plans on the regional cooperation in Northeast Asia, among which the most ideal one is to establish the Northeast Asian Community. However, it will meet an array of obstacles.<sup>42</sup> So far, although China's efforts to construct a regional mechanism are limited to functional construction, they are threatened by major hurdles. It is apparent that a divisive Northeast Asia needs much longer time to unite, and at the same time, China needs to adopt a strategy of pushing along multiple fronts simultaneously in order to build the regional relationship and order.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> A China-Japan-South Korea partnership was established in 2008 (signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Three-Country Partnership*). The general direction of the three-country cooperation was decided in 2009 (issuing the *Joint Declaration on the Ten-Year Anniversary of China-Japan-South Korea Cooperation*). A consensus on the future three-country cooperation was reached in 2010 (ratifying the *Outlook of China-Japan-South Korean Cooperation up to 2020*).

<sup>41</sup> Some scholars think that the China-Japan-South Korea cooperation will not be successful without political support, and the utilitarian free trade area will inevitably be impacted by politics. Therefore, it will not be practical to merely push through the establishment of free trade area. See Yu [21], p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> Some South Korean scholars envisioned to establish a Northeast Asia Community while others think that a community may be a goal and it is now too early to talk about it now. See Ren Shengzhun Talks about: Northeast Asia Regional Community, <http://they.people.com.cn/GB/9733517.html>, time of browse: November 10, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> As a new development, in September 11, 2014, leaders from China, Mongolia and Russia had a historical meeting and decided to create a regular dialogue and cooperation mechanism. During the meeting, Chinese president Xi Jinping proposed to build the China-Mongolia-Russia economic corridor, which was supported by the other two countries. Interestingly, this meeting was called for by Mongolia, which had implemented a “third country” strategy. It indicated that cooperation in Northeast Asia would not be dependent only on the progress of the China-Japan-South Korea cooperation, which gained an upper hand for China in the construction of the new order in Northeast Asia. Details please see “Xi Jinping Called for the Construction of China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor,” [http://news.ifeng.com/a/M140912/41951795\\_0.shtml](http://news.ifeng.com/a/M140912/41951795_0.shtml), Time of browse: November 10, 2014.

## **(VI) Seek commonalities with South Asia in regional interests**

In the Chinese perception of peripheral regions, the importance of South Asia is evident. First, India is a large developing country on the rise, with which China needs to build a new type of relationship between two large developing countries. Second, the increasing importance of the Indian Ocean demands the establishment of sea routes that are open and facilitate cooperation. A stable, open, developed and friendly South Asia is in China's interests. In terms of bilateral relations, although China established normal diplomatic relations with all South Asian countries earlier, the structures of these relations differ largely. The China-India relationship has undergone complexities and changes due to territorial disputes. China and Pakistan are all-time strategic partners. The relations between China, and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal have also witnessed significant progress. India has felt unease about China's efforts to strengthen relations with other countries in South Asia. China-India relations are troubled by territorial disputes, and are also affected by the competitions between two developing but emerging powers. Meanwhile, it is not to India's satisfaction to see the special relationship existing between China and Pakistan for reasons of strategic concerns. In particular, China's fast growth and rapid rise in its overall power has caused India to raise its level of strategic alert on China. Therefore, how to crack the dilemma in the China-India relationship, and make progress in expanding China's relations with the South Asian region have become a challenge to China's efforts to build a peripheral regional relationship and order.

Ideally, China should develop a framework of cooperation mechanism with South Asia as an integrated body.<sup>44</sup> A regional organization, SAARC, and a free trade area have been established within the region of South Asia. China's attempt to develop a cooperation relationship with SAARC was welcomed by its member countries such as Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but was initially opposed by India. With all-out supports from other SAARC member states, China and Japan (India insisted on including Japan simultaneously) were accepted as observers of SAARC in 2006. It looks nearly impossible for China to be accepted into SAARC as a formal member, nor does China want to become one. The most ideal form is to develop a "1 + 8" (sponsored by China) or a "8 + 1" (sponsored by SAARC) dialogue cooperation mechanism.<sup>45</sup>

There is a vast room for the development of the relationship between China and other countries in South Asia. From the perspective of development, every country needs to grow its economy by riding with China, namely, strengthening its economic cooperation with China. In fact, the rapid development in bilateral relations and cooperation in an array of fields between China and other countries in South Asia has prompted India to move fast to respond. While further bringing other countries closer, India has shown enthusiasm to develop its relationship with China. In his visit to India in September 2014, Chinese president Xi Jinping and the newly elected Indian prime minister Narendra Modi reached consensus on many important issues,

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<sup>44</sup> According to some experts, the bilateral model does not depict the overall China-South Asia relationship and more multilateral mechanisms must be established. See Long [22].

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 3.

e.g., “to look at the China-India relationship from a strategic and holistic perspective,” to put deepening a partnership in development at the core,” and “to further solidify the relationship of strategic cooperation for the purpose of peace and prosperity.” The fact that China and India are moving closer to each other has provided a new environment for China to push ahead the construction of a cooperation mechanism with the South Asian region.<sup>46</sup> Given the growing commonalities between China and South Asia, it is hopeful that the mechanism for building a new relationship and new regional order between China and South Asia will materialize gradually as long as targeted and specific actions are taken.

In a nutshell, we can tell from China's regional participation and construction that its regional perception has subjected to some adjustments with the practical development in the region and within China itself. One obvious trend is that China has shifted from focusing more on East Asia to a holistic planning and construction on the foundation of its surrounding regions as a whole. In other words, it is getting increasingly clear that China has returned to its original perception of geographical regions: China-periphery relations. Although the regions surrounding China are separated into several sub-regions with distinct natures and relational structures, they are all China's neighbors connected by rivers and mountains, laying foundations for co-existence and sharing a long history that cannot be erased off. All these countries and areas in China's periphery interact with each other by a variety of economic, political, security, and social cultural links, making it an integrated and a holistic geographical region. This reflects the return to China's original regional perception in the background of a rising China since modern times.

### 9.3 To Develop a Community of Common Destiny Over the Long Course of History

As Chinese president Xi Jinping stated in a meeting in 2013 on the peripheral diplomatic work, “Strategically, the peripheral regions are critically important for China from the perspective of geographical location, natural environment and interrelation. The issues about peripheral regions must be considered and the diplomacy on affairs of surrounding regions must be carried out from the perspectives that are three-dimensional, multi-facet and beyond the constraint of time and space.” China must “conduct cooperation by sticking to the principle of reciprocity and mutual benefit to weave a network of closer common interests and bring the integration of mutual interests to a higher level so as to benefit the surrounding countries from the development of China, enable China to take advantage of and be fueled from the development of surrounding countries,” and “let the awareness of community of

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<sup>46</sup> *The Joint Statement between People's Republic of China and Republic of India on Building Closer Partnership in Development*, [http://news.xinhua-net.com/world/2014-09/19/c\\_12555977.html](http://news.xinhua-net.com/world/2014-09/19/c_12555977.html), time of browse: November 10, 2014.

common destiny take root in these countries.”<sup>47</sup> The fact that the top Chinese leader made such a statement on peripheral diplomacy is a clear indication that China has begun to think of, position and build its peripheral regions holistically.<sup>48</sup> Given that China is surrounded by a good number of neighboring countries, which gives rise to unique peripheral relations and geographical landscape, the peripheral regions are the focal point for China to protect its national interests, the first choice for China to play the role of a great power, as well as the major stronghold and strategic reliance for China to boost its international prestige. It is thus a completely new perception for China to strategically ground its efforts to emerge as a big and great nation and build a community of common destiny on the principle of common development and security. This means that these surrounding regions of China will not be viewed as sources of security threat to China, or burdens that constantly trouble China. Instead, they will be turned into a belt region that China relies on for its development and security, and forms a community of common destiny to share prosperity and withstand mishaps.<sup>49</sup>

To build the surrounding regions into the strategic reliance belt for the rise of China, we must first develop a good bilateral relationship, stabilize the overall relationship and expand the composition of good neighbors. Second, build the foundation of comprehensive interests by the regional cooperation mechanism as a platform. It requires to further deepen close economic ties and mutual dependence between China and its neighbors, including China to become their largest trade partner, and increase China’s investment in these countries so as to create a solid foundation for sharing interests between China and its neighboring countries. In terms of political security, China should, by taking advantage of different forms of regional cooperation mechanism, start dialogues and negotiations on cooperation in development and to establish a new type of security mechanism to safeguard common security with its neighbors.

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, China, along with some of its neighbors, put forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Following the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, China announced to make “treating the surrounding countries with good-will and as partners” a guideline in dealing with peripheral diplomatic affairs, adhering to the principles of pacifying, befriending and enriching neighbors. Under the new circumstances, China came up with the new diplomatic philosophy characterized as “harmony, honesty, benefit and tolerance” to cherish the idea of building the community of common interest and destiny with neighboring countries. The community of common destiny is how China positions its construction of a new peripheral region. Such a positioning and

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<sup>47</sup> “Xi Jinping: Let the Awareness of Community of Common Destiny Take Root in China’s Surrounding Countries,” [http://news.xinhuanet.com/2013-10/25/c\\_U7878944.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/2013-10/25/c_U7878944.htm), time of browse: November 10, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Some scholars believe that to advocate the construction of the community of common destiny suggests the direction of China’s peripheral diplomacy. See Liu [23].

<sup>49</sup> According to some scholars, China has advantages in building a peripheral strategy: Many neighboring countries and an open Asia Pacific. See Li [24].

effort is based on the rebuilding of its peripheral relations and order over the one-hundred-year-long history under the overall situation of China's great revival.<sup>50</sup>

Generally speaking, China is now in a peripheral environment that is the least threatening since the founding of the People's Republic of China. No countries are capable of invading China, waging wars against China, or brazenly hurting China's interests. Most of its neighboring countries hope to develop cooperation relations with China so as to jointly preserve overall peace and stability.

Of course, the increasing power of China will inevitably result in major and profound adjustments to the regional relationship. First, the increasing power will amplify China's claim of its own interests. It will inevitably seek to protect and expand its own space of interests. Second, the United States of America that is now in a dominating position attempts to mobilize all kinds of resources to vigilance toward and contain the rise of China to a greater extent. Apparently, of the two policies, "vigilance toward China" is carrying increasing weight than engaging China. By implementing the strategy of "return to Asia Pacific" and "pivot to Asia," the United States has intensified its military and economic buildup around China to reduce China's room for strategic expansion. Lastly, China's neighbors adopt a hedging policy to alleviate the challenge resulting from the rapid rise of China. Although the counter-measures vary slightly in contents, they often resort to "two approaches:" to develop the relationship with and to vigilance toward China. In particular, Japan, as a big power, is in "strategic competition" against China.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, it has territorial disputes with China over land and sea, and is feeling tremendous pressure from the rise of China. Therefore, Japan has made it a strategic focus to walk the fine line on how to deal with an increasingly stronger China and to prevent China from looming larger to "eat in" its own interests.

In this situation, some new tensions have risen around China. Conflicts in the East and South China Seas seem to have escalated, running a risk of military confrontation. Despite some heightened tensions that have negative impacts on China's surroundings, the general situation is in its control. It is safe to say that China is now in a period that it has the best control of the surrounding situations since modern times. With an increasing national power, China is able to steer the development of situations, keep them from deteriorating by its own efforts, and, by taking advantage of its constantly increasing power and influence, guide the regional relations to move in a positive direction while building a new order for regional development and security through adjustments. To build a new order is not for China to seek hegemony, or establish

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<sup>50</sup> In my understanding, China experienced a period of decline in modern times that lasted one hundred years, from 1840–1948. The founding of the People's Republic of China ended the decline and marked the beginning of a one-hundred-year period of national revival, from 1949–2049. Following the strategic concept of "two-step" process, China will become a developed country by 2050.

<sup>51</sup> The strategic competition between Japan and China is different from that between the U.S. and China. The U.S. competes for strategic dominance and interests while Japan competes for influence and interests. The U.S. needs Japan as a strategic helper to help it contain China. Japan, on the other hand, needs the mighty power from the U.S. that helps it expand influence and interests. In this respect, the U.S. and Japan have overlaps in interests as well as differences in targets.



a China-centric sphere of influence, but rather create a stable, peaceful, cooperative and comprehensive regional environment for development that is in favor of China's attainment of its goal of national revival.

A big country like China that is surrounded by quite a number of neighbors needs a platform where it can play a leadership role or exerts heavy influence beyond a bilateral relationship. To build a regional mechanism for peripheral and geographical cooperation is a new development in China's neighborly relationship. So far, China has established dialogue and cooperation mechanisms with related countries from all directions in its periphery. China-ASEAN cooperation mechanism includes a free trade area and political and security dialogue under the framework of a strategic partnership. SCO, as a regional cooperation mechanism jointly created by China, Russia and Central Asian countries, centers around security cooperation and extends into areas such as trade, economy, energy and infrastructure construction. More importantly, the influence and appeal of SCO are on the rise, making it an important platform for building a new security relationship and order for the region. Complexities in Northeast Asia leave the regional mechanism more vulnerable. Now, both the six-party talk aimed at solving the North Korea nuclear issue and the China-Japan-South Korea cooperation mechanism have come to a semi-dormant state. However, to restart the six-party talk is not completely out of the question in the future, and it is only a matter of time to resume the China-Japan-Korea summit mechanism. In South Asia, China is only an observer and has not established a dialogue cooperation framework with SAARC. It is also likely in the future to build a China-SAARC dialogue cooperation mechanism including a free trade area. The emergence of the dialogue cooperation framework between China and sub-regions in its periphery has changed the prior relationship structure that had only included bilateral relations. Instead, regional comprehensive interests-balancing and interests-expanding mechanisms are added to the framework, which help build the new relationship and order in the regions that surround China.

A community of common destiny based on interests-sharing is the backbone of China's peripheral strategy and is built on two cooperation frameworks: First, cooperative development: develop an open and cooperative mechanism for the development of China and its surrounding countries, establish an open and cooperative big market, and build an inter-connectivity big network to enable these neighboring countries to be the first ones to benefit from China's increasing economic strength, and magnify their inputs in and reliance on the Chinese markets. Second, security in cooperation: establish security dialogue, consultation and cooperation mechanisms with neighboring countries, develop a new security cooperation mechanism on the foundation of common security and shared responsibilities, handle disputes in the spirit of cooperation and the principle of common security to minimize risks of possible confrontations.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Zhenmin Liu summarized the community of common destiny as: to develop jointly as essential meaning, to preserve security environments by mutual trust and cooperation, to drive the mechanism construction with openness and tolerance, to reach consensus by cultural exchanges and reference, and to tighten emotional ties by working together. The construction of the community of common



Geographical connections have endowed China with a unique status and role in the development of a big inter-connectivity network, which functions as an artery to circulate blood, namely the shared interests and community of common destiny, to keep them alive and energetic. Therefore, inter-connectivity construction is at the kernel of the efforts to deepen the market opening and cooperation in the development between China and its surrounding countries. In 2013, China advocated to build the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road.” The former aims at driving the opening-up and development of the inland provinces in western China, expanding into the massive space in the West, and building a vast open economic cooperation area from Central Asia to Europe. The latter is aimed at propping up the construction of open and cooperative major sea routes and producing new engines for the economic cooperation and development among countries along the coast of the sea routes. The “One Belt and One Road” strategy promotes a new outlook of development, security and civilization in an effort to drive the development on land and establish a new maritime order in the spirit of mutual benefit and win-win reflected by the ancient Silk Road as well as the “Maritime Civilization” created by Zheng He’s great voyages to the West. Therefore, the “One Belt One Road” is, in essence, an open strategy but not one that is restrained to certain regions, forms and countries. In this sense, it is a big strategy that begins with specific regions and eyes on the entire world.

The execution of the peripheral strategy depends on soft power. The soft power of China first comes from its influence brought by the success of its development, and derives further from its conventional philosophy and cultural values that are reflected in harmony in diversity and tolerance. While the West emphasizes on the superiority and dominance of its values and cultures as the soft power, China promotes diversity in value and culture, and focuses on mutual respect and two-way learning. By keeping a foothold on modernity but never ceasing to learn from its history and civilization, China will gain the advantage of cultural superiority in the future development. Europe builds a community by institutions. By comparison, China and its neighboring countries build a community of common destiny to reflect the philosophy of con-existence and mutual benefit. As a multi-level and diversified open framework for cooperation,<sup>53</sup> such a community emerges out of intertwined and complex relations, and is built on the foundation of cooperative co-existence made possible by common interests. As a result, such a community of common destiny reflects the situation above reality and also exists in the process.<sup>54</sup> What

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destiny is a comprehensive and systematic project that concerns political, economic, security, social, and cultural fields. See Liu [25].

<sup>53</sup> It is the perception of some scholars that to promote the construction of an open regional community is perhaps the best choice for China in building a new peripheral relationship and order. Zhang Xiaoming, “A Historical Evolution of the Relationship between China and Surrounding Countries: Models and Processes,” p. 71.

<sup>54</sup> By the Western definition, an international order relies on the combination of three forces: distribution of power, construction of systems and the acceptance of the standard of behaviors. Regionalism, on the other hand, promotes the collective identify and organizational identity that are beyond the boundary of countries. The proposal of building a community of common destiny by China is

distinguishes the community of common destiny from other communities is that it is created to share the fruits of development, achieve the goal of security in cooperation and harmonious coexistence among people of different countries, and establish links between the “Chinese dream” of national revival and the dreams of other countries to build strong nations.<sup>55</sup> All these are related to the harmonious world and harmonious periphery that China has endeavored to promote.<sup>56</sup>

Without a doubt, the return of the Chinese geographical regional perception and the construction of regional order will be a long process, which requires the surrounding countries to understand, recognize and support. In today’s complex and constantly changing world, it will not be easy to achieve such a “harmony” and “unity.” It is subject to the test of time and process. Currently, China’s neighbors hold divergent views, many with evident suspicions, on the level of acceptance of China’s great revival, especially of China’s image and behavior.<sup>57</sup> In fact, this is not hard to understand as all these have happened in a short period of time and in an “unusual” manner. It will require more time and more interaction for the countries in

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without a doubt a new model. Citations about the definition of order and definition come from Cox [24].

According to Men Honghua, the construction of a regional order is based on the pursuit of common interests, sharing of responsibilities, an open regionalism, cooperation security and construction of regional mechanism. See Men [27].

<sup>55</sup> In his visits, Xi Jinping tried to link the “Chinese Dream,” “American Dream,” “Korean Dream,” and “Asia Pacific Dream” together, to show his openness and willingness to cooperate. For instance, “The Chinese Dream and American Dreams are Connected,” [http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-06/09/c\\_124836150.htm](http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-06/09/c_124836150.htm), time of browse: November 10, 2014; “The Chinese Dream and Korean Dream Move Along Together,” [http://paper.people.com.cn/imrb/html/2014-07/03/nw.01100001\\_20140703\\_2-03.1](http://paper.people.com.cn/imrb/html/2014-07/03/nw.01100001_20140703_2-03.1), time of browse: November 10, 2014; “Let the Chinese Dreams and the Asia-Pacific Dream Echo Each Other,” [http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2014-11/14/c\\_113241826.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2014-11/14/c_113241826.htm), time of browse: November 10, 2014; “Let the Chinese Dreams and the Asia-Pacific Dream Echo Each Other,” [http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2014-11/14/c\\_1113241826.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2014-11/14/c_1113241826.htm), time of browse: November 10, 2014.

In the report issued following the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the concept of “the community of common destiny of human beings” was brought up, stating that human beings only has one earth and all the countries share the same world, and thus should enhance the awareness of the community of common destiny for human beings. See Hu Jintao, “Stand Firm on the Socialist Road with Chinese Characteristics to Fight for the Construction of A Moderately Prosperous Society-Speech delivered at the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” [http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2012-11/19/c\\_IB722546\\_11.htm](http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2012-11/19/c_IB722546_11.htm), time of browse: November 10, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> In the report issued following the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the concept of “the community of common destiny of human beings” was brought up, stating that human beings only has one earth and all the countries share the same world, and thus should enhance the awareness of the community of common destiny for human beings. See Hu Jintao, “Stand Firm on the Socialist Road with Chinese Characteristics to Fight for the Construction of A Moderately Prosperous Society-Speech delivered at the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” [http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2012-11/19/c\\_IB722546\\_11.htm](http://www.xj.xinhuanet.com/2012-11/19/c_IB722546_11.htm), time of browse: November 10, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> According to an international survey conducted by the Global Times in 2013, the understanding of and expectation for China by China’s surrounding countries are more negative than by countries not in China’s neighborhood. Citations from Chen and Shen [28].

the region and around the world to observe and examine how to perceive and position these new actions by China.

## 9.4 Conclusion

Since the reform and opening-up policy was implemented, especially after the twenty-first century, the relationship between China and the countries around it has undergone three major changes.

First, China has experienced the important change from asking other countries to accept a “China that is reforming and opening it up” to feeling how other countries cope with a “China with a rapidly increasing comprehensive national power.” For instance, in the earlier phase, the issues which were important to foreign countries included domestic reforms and political and social development in China as they hoped to be informed of policy changes in China and understand what was happening in the country. Later, people discussed more on China’s foreign policies, how China would use its boosted national power and what road of development China would take in the future, etc.

Secondly, China has experienced the change from having to passively respond to external pressures or impacts to proactively creating an environment and building a mechanism and order. For instance, in the earlier phase, China made more diplomatic efforts in participation and dealing with pressures from external sources. Later, it shifted its focus to proactively putting together plans or proposals, and providing real financial supports for the execution of these plans and proposals.

Thirdly, the initially simple relationship between China and its surrounding countries has become more complex, mainly in three areas: Firstly, China’s influence is of more comprehensive in nature that concerns economic, political, security, cultural and other areas. Secondly, the consideration by neighboring countries of their relations with China tends to involve more elements, concerning not only interests but also comprehensive influence. Lastly, surrounding countries and other external forces have responded to the rise of China by rebuilding themselves in multiple levels and layers, which extends the relationship between China and the countries around it beyond a mere bilateral structure into a combination of bilateral and multilateral structures.<sup>58</sup> Under such a circumstance, the return of China’s regional perspective and reconstruction of peripheral relationship and order must take the following three challenges into consideration.

First, how to streamline peripheral relations. Although the relationship structure formed between China and its neighboring countries in earlier period underwent a fundamental change in modern times, many historical mutual connections and inheritances exist between China and these countries. These overlaps in history and

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<sup>58</sup> Some issues are historical, such as the Korean Peninsula issue, and need time to solve gradually. Others are new, such as contentions among various forces on the sea and rising tensions of maritime disputes, whose impacts are rapidly increasing.

changes in modern times often cause conflicts today between China and these countries. For this reason, China must try to reach a consensus with neighboring countries on “shared history.”<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, disputes on modern history, especially the pain left from the Japanese invasion. The repeated denial of history by some political figures in today’s Japan obstructs the development of bilateral relations. In particular, reconciliation on historical issues and the ensuing normalization of bilateral relationship have been made more difficult by the change in the power of China relative to that of Japan. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, to cope with complex external and internal challenges, China has made constant changes to its diplomatic policies, leaving behind many “after-effects” that require China and its neighbors to remedy with a forward-looking attitude and tolerance. As a result, it takes more time and continuous efforts for China’s proposed principle of harmony, honesty, benefit and tolerance to take effect and for the establishment of a new image of China.

Second, create an inclusive relationship and order acceptable to all parties. The return of peripheral regional perspective is an inevitable change in the guiding principle of China’s notion of geographical region, and an inevitable result of the revival of China. However, to build a new relationship and order from the perspective of “me and my periphery,” China must give a thorough consideration of current situation and complex relational structure. A revived China is no longer the same one in its early history, nor is its periphery the same as it once was. The regional perspective that China returns to has a “geographical frame” as well as an “open structure.” Within such a frame and structure, China should seek to maximize its role to control the overall situation. On the other hand, China’s behaviors should be acceptable to the neighboring countries. Such a construction of relationship and order is a process, in which China exerts its influence and a “strong China” is gradually accepted.

Third, the positioning on the behaviors of China. China used to be a powerful country, declined in modern times, and is now on the track to a national revival. How to properly handle the “lost” and the “returned” requires both power and wisdom. Power is the foundation for revival but relying on power only may result in repeating mistakes that were made by emerging powers in history, namely, the imprudent use of force, seizure of new lands by force, or seeking hegemony. It requires wisdom because we are facing complex relations and numerous conflicts, and sometimes risks. A proper use of wisdom helps avoid confrontations and make every party a winner. China has made a series of commitments, such as continuing following a path of peaceful development instead of the road that was taken by emerging powers in history, not seeking a hegemonic status, and solving disputes by peaceful means, etc. No other emerging countries in history made such commitments. China has made these commitments and has the confidence and determination to make good on them.

China’s painful decline lasted for one hundred years in modern times, and it is now in another one-hundred-year period of national revival. In retrospect of the tremendous changes that happened in the one-hundred-year declining era, we should, in

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<sup>59</sup> Typical examples include Koguryo disputes between China and South Korea, disagreements on historical perception between China and Mongolia, and so forth.

addition to remembering the pains and humiliations, learn the lessons from the past of our own and from other countries. China's commitments are made from these lessons. As president Xi Jinping stressed in the meeting on peripheral diplomatic work, "when practicing peripheral diplomacy, we must stick to the following fundamental principles: be a good neighbor and a good partner; befriend, stabilize and enrich our neighborhood; adhering to the philosophy of harmony, honesty, benefit and tolerance," "treat our neighboring countries sincerely and honestly to win over more friends and partners," "enable neighboring countries to benefit from the development of China, and likewise, enable China to benefit from the development of these neighboring countries," and "promote the idea of tolerance to drive the regional development with a more open mentality and more proactive attitude."<sup>60</sup> To make them happen is no easy task given the current complex relations and changing situations, but we are hopeful to get better results than expected if we never quit doing them.

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# Chapter 10

## The Rightist Turn in Japanese Politics and Its Implications for China-Japan Relations



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**Abstract** The re-taking of power by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Japan has expedited the pace in the right turn in Japanese politics. The actions from making amendments to its Constitution, bringing up the concept of values diplomacy again, lifting the ban on the right of collective self-defense, and the provocative words and actions over Diaoyu Island and historical issues, in particular, have intensified the tension in the region and deepened the rift in the China-Japan relations. Between China and Japan, conflict and cooperation will co-exist in the years to come. There is a likelihood that the holistic China-Japan relations will develop to a normal state. Abe's visit to Yasukuni Shrine has challenged the world justice, and has therefore been criticized widely by the international community. It has also presented China a critical strategic opportunity to gain a diplomatic upper hand. Therefore, we need to, by taking into consideration the new development, significantly intensify our diplomatic efforts while continue our battle in the fields of Diaoyu Island and East China Sea.

**Keywords** Right-turning tendency in Japanese politics · China-US relations · Way of thinking · Issue of Diaoyu Island · Yusukuni Shrine

In 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi repeatedly visited and paid homage to Yasukuni Shrine that enshrined class-A war criminals in the WWII, sinking the China-Japan relationship into a severe crisis that had not been seen in many years. Later, after the two intense confrontations over Diaoyu Island that broke out in September 2010 and September 2012, until the new Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe brazenly paid a visit to Yasukuni Shrine after he had taken office one year earlier, the relationship with Japan has always (or at least often) remained to be the most difficult and troubled issue that has lasted the longest.

Now, with a growing rightist influence in Japan, and the right-turning tendency in the Japanese national sentiment and public opinions turning right, Abe has obstinately

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tried to press for policies to reverse the legal verdicts in history, make radical amendments to the Japanese Constitution and take a military confrontational approach toward China. It is therefore predictable that the gloomy China-Japan relationship will continue, or even worsen for a fairly long duration. The future does not look promising.

To observe from the three holistic perspectives in the Chinese foreign policies that “give consideration to both the internal and external factors,” i.e., a multi-faceted diplomacy, peripheral diplomacy and major-country diplomacy, and to evaluate from the vision of growing China into a world power with a bigger strategic space and a higher international prestige, the above difficulties and problems determine, to a large extent, the agenda of the Chinese foreign relations. Although confrontations may be inevitable and we have had experiences of benefiting tremendously from such confrontations, the drawbacks are obvious, including the existing and possible diplomatic passivity and related strategic and political risks. To alleviate or at last largely remove these drawbacks requires us to examine, reflect and appropriately adjust certain ways of thinking about the present issues regarding Japan and the China-Japan relations, so as to reflect on, plan and carry out some adjustments to our Japan strategies, policies and tactics. In particular, some of them directly or indirectly concern the fundamental interests of China and create impactful, related and holistic situations that are so novel, dynamic and complex, making such adjustment and fine-tuning more necessary and meaningful.

## **10.1 Rightist Turn in Japanese Politics and How in Changes Japan’s China Strategy**

Shinzo Abe was re-elected the Japanese prime minister in December 2012, enabling the National Party to gain the ruling-party status after three years. Since he took office, Abe announced his intent to make amendments to the pacifist constitution and lift the ban on the right of collective self-defense, made the statement of “arguability of war of aggression,” and paid visit to Yasukuni Shrine ... swiftly right-turning the Japanese political direction and causing concerns in the international community. Such a rightist move in the Japanese politics affects Japan’s international reputation and the stability of Abe’s rule. Meanwhile, changes in the international situation and Japan’s domestic political landscape also affect Japan’s adjustments to its China strategy.

### **(I) The change in the international political landscape and the right-turn in Japanese politics**

Without a question, Japan is moving toward a more nationalist and right-winged country. However, the issue of Japanese political rightist tendency must be studied thoroughly: Firstly, how bad is it getting now? Secondly, what are the reasons, and whether the reasons are irrelevant or relevant to China? Thirdly, what are the



attributes? Fourthly, what counter-measures should we take for now, in the mid or long-term?

Put in the context of the general trend of the world, undoubtedly, Japan is “increasingly normalizing its statehood” in the international political and economic background. Despite the actual results of Abenomics, Japan is becoming more “normalized” as a country in the past 20-some years. Meanwhile, Japan worked hard in the past to try to boost its trade and subsequently its international economic status with an overall target of an internationalist economy. However, since the 1990s, the Japanese economy has suffered from a lasting recession that has continuously weakened its influence on the international economy including its mode of development, and exposed the influence of its soft power on the global sphere to suspicion. Japan’s strategy of boosting its national prestige by the important element of economy has encountered difficulties. In particular, after China’s GDP surpassed that of Japan, it began to feel that the economic gap between the two countries could be further widened. In fact, over a long period after the WWII, Japan gradually elevated its big-power status through increasing economic, trade and technological influence, and achieved, to a large extent, its goal. In the early 1980s, Japan reached a peak in overall international status. However, with the burst of economic bubble, its relevant international influence and economic status declined rapidly in the mid-1980s especially after the 1990s.

In the process, Japan’s pursuit of a big-power status changed in two aspects: First, Japan did not slow its pace in the pursuit. On the other hand, it felt a growing sense of urgency after its rise to an economic super power was frustrated. In addition, the negative impacts brought by domestic and international situations as well as the post-Cold War international order, the accelerated aging of the Japanese population, the gradual revelation of the negative effects of political and economic mechanisms, and the structural rigidity made it more difficult for Japan to gain a big-power status simply by relying on its economy. As a result, Japan gradually sought to boost its status by political, security or even military means.

From the perspective of Japan’s development trend, it will, generally speaking, turn right in politics in the next five to ten years. Domestically, in the past ten-some years, the sluggish economy stirred anxiety, impatience and hesitation among the ordinary Japanese and damaged their self-esteem. Secondly, the higher China rises, the more difficult it is for Japan to accept it. Unsurprisingly, Japan needs a longer time to accept the reality. Given these changes, from a broader perspective, it is more likely that Japan will view China as an opponent or even an imaginary enemy.

Japan alleges that China’s rise poses great threat to Japan, and while Japan has practiced pacifism, it can no longer rely on light-armed forces to protect itself and thus must seek to build up its military strength. Japan has relied on the U.S., but the militarization of Japan is constrained by its Constitution. Japan is a country that has lacked a big national strategy. Generally speaking, the implementation of a strategy requires a dialogue relationship that gives rise to detente. This is a must in diplomacy. In the current difficult situation, the Japanese leaders in charge of foreign policies in Japan are seeking to direct a shift in the diplomatic strategy. The failure of the Democratic Party was followed by the emergence of a more right-winged

Japan Restoration Association, indicating that the politics in Japan is leaning further right and the ideologies in the Japanese society tend to be more conservative. The shift in the Japanese diplomatic strategy is first reflected in its reversal to the values diplomacy. The pacifism that Japan has advocated since the end of the WWII is not a values diplomacy and it is now shifting from a waning pacifism to growing emphasis on the environment and ecology. The Japanese believe that the pacifism or liberalism has not brought any benefit to Japan but instead has made Japan weaker.

The development in the international landscape, power structure and influence has made it an unquestionably prominent issue. First, globally, China's powerful rise that has lasted more than 20 years is in sharp contrast to the relative decline of the United States of America. Amid the political and security confrontation between China and Japan, the security commitment made by the U.S. to Japan has inevitably attracted more profound attention.

The U.S. is making adjustments to its strategic existence at the front of the West Pacific Ocean by relocating its military bases to places like Guam. As a bold assumption, China's growing ability to launch strategic military strikes may force the U.S. to exit the West Pacific region, leaving Tokyo to question if the U.S. is willing to risk itself to protect Japan. This is an issue of structural nature. Issues of ad hoc nature, such as external situations especially the diplomatic activities by related countries, are subject to slightly more changes, with China being one of the important factors. Incidents such as the collision of ships around Diaoyu Island in September of 2010 and the attempt to "purchase" the island in September of 2012 turned the behavior of the Chinese government into a mass participation in the activities that aimed at protecting Diaoyu Island. Feeling extremely threatened, Japan amplified, in an increasing volume, its claim of "a China threat" with intent to expand the alleged threat of China over the Korean Peninsula. Japan had hoped to improve its relationship with Republic of Korea, only to find it dramatically deteriorated due to territorial disputes and historical issues after Park Geun-hye took the office of presidency. The North Korea nuclear issue is another one. Although Japan is a follower of the U.S. and the latter treats Japan as its most important military ally in the world, China means more to the U.S. in many aspects. Apparently, China's importance may have outgrown that of Japan. Therefore, Japan's fear increases when the U.S. makes more empty promises.

The U.S.' "re-balance to Asia-Pacific" strategy still inspires and appeals to Japan. Of course, we should not forget Southeast Asia where some countries battle with China over the South China Sea while Japan contends with China over the East China Sea. Understandably, the ties between Japan and these Southeast Asian countries are strengthened. Besides, despite some cooperation, deep conflicts exist between India and China.

Secondly, the fundamental economic, political and social development in Japan is showing a general trend of decline, which is the longest since Meiji Restoration and a lasting one since the 1990s. Consequently, Japan has experienced political instability and ineffective foreign policies in increasing difficulties. A mental state characterized by depression, lack of self-confidence and hopelessness prevails in the Japanese society.

## **(II) Japan's adjustments to its China policy**

Under the circumstances of a changing international landscape and the right-leaning domestic politics, Japan has arrived at the crossroad of having to adjust its China strategy in the following major areas:

First, provoke confrontations in politics and security while continue benefiting from economy. Japan has always viewed the China-Japan relationship one of its most vital bilateral relations, but in different layers. Japan and China have established a strategic reciprocal relationship, which primarily focuses on economic reciprocity. Therefore, it is extremely critical for Japan to make the most out of economic benefits. As a result, the China-Japan relationship has entered a phase of being confrontational in politics and security issues but being reciprocal and cooperative in economy-related matters. Now, Japan insists on the principle of “separating political issues from economic ones,” seeking to gain maximum benefits from China. This determines that it is not in Japan's well-being to engage in an all-out confrontation with China, which will undoubtedly affects the China-Japan relations and is thus unacceptable to Japan.

Abe has also adjusted the order of priority in Japan's China policies. Previously, a stabilized relationship with both the U.S. and China was on the top of Japan's priority list. Now, with the deteriorating China-Japan relations, Japan has shifted its priority to its other neighboring countries in addition to the U.S., mainly in Southeast Asia and ASEAN countries but also including India and Australia. Fundamentally, Japan is trying to improve its relationship with the U.S. and its neighbors, and hopes to capitalize the political assets to improve its China relationship afterwards. As a result, Japan is now enthusiastic about strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance in an effort to restrain and contain China, and in the meantime, to “go out to sea on a borrowed boat.”

Secondly, build a “net that encircles China.” By building a net that encircles and contains China, Japan tries to take the opportunity arising from the concerns of the countries surrounding China over the rapid development of China in recent years, to its own benefit.

Thirdly, fuel the allegation of the “China threat” to break the domestic impasse. Japan intentionally challenges China over Diaoyu Island and historical issues to give rise to a certain atmosphere within Japan, in which it first depicts China as a contender or even imagined enemy and then creates an external pressure by fueling the “China threat.” Historically, Japan was an expert in doing such things. Japanese leaders believe that the challenges facing the China-Japan relations are good opportunities for Japan to break free, namely, to reinforce the alliance between Japan and the U.S. and domestically break the constraints imposed by the Japanese Constitution. Meanwhile, Japan may take this opportunity to play a bigger role and enhance its own sense of existence in the international community. Japan is also enthusiastic about the construction of a regional mechanism, and starts to reach to farther regions, such as the Middle East and Africa.

## 10.2 The Issue of Diaoyu Island and China's Strategy Toward Japan

However, China should not over-estimate the strategic nature of Japan's foreign policy. First, the strategic level of the foreign policies of a country, if lacking independence, is quite limited. China, in comparison, has highly strategic foreign policies even though they may not be problem-free. Secondly, China's foreign policies are more strategy-oriented than those of Japan. Furthermore, China needs to deal with a wide variety of fundamental problems from foreign countries, and thus needs to take into account the holistic situation, balance between pros and cons, and at the same time is constrained by its diplomatic decisions. Japan is different in that its sole target is to stand against China. Although the strategic level of Japan's post-war foreign policies was not high in terms of ideology, system and implementation of the policies, they are given an undivided mission, i.e., to handle China externally, making it easier to introduce strategic policies.

China's strategy with regards to Diaoyu Island is correct. It is fundamentally impossible to solve the dispute over Diaoyu Island between China and Japan in the short run. In the long run, China should think strategically about its policy toward Japan on the issues including Diaoyu Island.

The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party showed a steadfast determination in its work meeting on peripheral diplomatic affairs.<sup>1</sup> It will be a costly mistake if we do not take the peripheral relationship seriously, or do not treat the relationship with our neighboring countries the same as we treat our relationship with the U.S. Without a good peripheral relationship, the China-U.S. relationship will forever be in peril. The China-U.S. relationship was at the lowest level in 2001 and 2012, which was attributable, for half of the reasons, to China's peripheral issues such as the East China Sea, South China Sea and Korean Peninsula. Chinese leaders paid frequent visits to neighboring countries and regions in an effort to develop and improve China's peripheral relations. The fundamental goal for China to emphasize on peripheral diplomacy is, in addition to boosting China's economic development, to force the U.S. to allow the strategic environment that China deserves. Another purpose is to isolate Japan and Philippines, but it is only a tactic issue rather than a final goal. The final goal is, of course, to win over favorable external conditions for the reform and development of China, and protect China's sovereignty, security, and interests of development, as well as safeguard world peace and stability to drive joint development.<sup>2</sup>

The issue over Diaoyu Island, if using war as a metaphor, was like different phases in a military campaign in both objective and subjective operation—the first,

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<sup>1</sup> The Central-level Work Meeting on Peripheral Diplomatic Affairs was held in October 24–25, 2013 in Beijing. It was an important meeting by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to improve the peripheral diplomatic work under the new circumstances. Xi Jinping made an important speech in the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> “To Build a Favorable Surrounding Environment for the Development of China and to Ensure China's Development to Benefit the Surrounding Countries,” *People's Daily* (October 25, 2013).

second and third campaign ... The struggle over Diaoyu Island went beyond the level of ordinary battles and fell into the category of a campaign. This campaign was inevitable. However, we were inadequately prepared when the campaign was started in September 10, 2012, Ishiwara's deception of the world and Noda's sudden claim to "purchase the island." Unlike the Huaihai Campaign, such a campaign was abrupt and assaulting, which, although in line with our historical general direction in its goal, battle and process, was affected by chance and other factors out of our strategic planning. One year has passed after the "purchase of the island" by Japan, and it remains as a problem. This campaign is both compatible and incompatible with our peripheral strategy. How should we deal with the incompatibility? In other words, what are the benefits of the campaign and what disadvantages it has brought us so far, given its abruptness?

The Central-level Work Meeting on Peripheral Diplomatic Affairs stressed to focus on the big picture, manage and control risks, and promote the peripheral development. The general peripheral strategy from the Deng Xiaoping era to the 16th CPC National Congress was a coherent one. But now this strategy starts to show some incoherence. Despite the necessity and great success in our struggle over Diaoyu Island, both China and Japan were "locked" to a certain extent. Therefore, we need to rectify the incoherence between this campaign and the goal of our war, make an overall peripheral strategy to achieve internal coherence.

China will make an announcement sooner or later to Japan or even to the entire world about its rudimentary stance on what kind of Japan it can tolerate over a long run and an expanse of territory. This is very important and it must not be made too early or too late. Foreign countries feel unsettled about China because of its alleged "non-transparency," to put it in their words. For this reason, China should make it clear to Japan under what circumstances Japan may become a "normal country" acceptable by China. On the other hand, we must understand what the Japanese nation expects to see from a strong and powerful China. We should also make Japan believe that it cannot fully rely on the U.S. forever.

The interaction between China and Japan dates back to a long time ago, and is thus intertwined by complexities. In the past, China was willing to accumulate small achievements to make big ones when it came to coping with Japan. Amid the current confrontational situation between China and Japan, some Chinese local governments have basically suspended nearly all exchange activities with Japan. In the past, although Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai had fought wars with Japan for many years, they were never hesitant to work earnestly with Japan. China would never have made any progress with Japan if we had stopped trying in difficult situations. This is not only limited to Japan but is more of a work style that should be used when working with other countries including Burma, Mongolia (U.S. presidents in the past visited Mongolia once and the U.S. Vice-presidents visited it twice in the past ten years). The Chinese sometimes are successful in making things happen but sometime are not. This is to a large extent determined by the level of how earnestly people work. With a 1.3 billion population in China, we cannot fully rely on the government for everything.

We need to inherit the good style of work from the great diplomats and patriots like Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. There has been no exception since the ancient times that good strategists and diplomats all have strategies, visions and know how to gather people around them. It has proofed that the field-to-field, region-to-region, business-to-business, and people-to-people interaction between China and Japan is useful as long as we are persistent. Of the seeds that China sowed in the 1980s, some grew well and some did not but rotted in the fields in the 1990s. When the rightist leaders took control in Japan, these seeds were almost perished. Despite all these, the must not stop the work of sowing and cultivating. Dripping drops of water will eventually penetrate stones.

### **10.3 China-Japan Confrontation: Basic Approach, Strategies and Tactics**

The China-Japan confrontation as a result of the dispute over Diaoyu Island occurred against the backdrop of two basic facts. First, the continuing growth of China's military power, an estimation that is also held by the U.S.; Second, the pacifism and liberal internationalism that Japan has embraced since the end of the WWII. Japan is unlikely to totally abandon pacifism as it has long been influenced by pacifism. However, the Japanese feel that other than improving the livelihood of the ordinary Japanese, the road they walked in the post-war era did not rest-assure or offer security to them, nor did it enable Japan to continue standing out in Asia at least in economy and diplomacy. In fact, the Japanese have been suspicious of the security commitments made by the U.S. To some Japanese, China is the only country that looms in their horizon and threatens Japan's security. This is a big change from the past.

In retrospect, before China and Japan went into confrontation on Diaoyu Island, China's strategy was correct, but the mainstream thinking needs to be revisited.

First, China should pay heed to the regulating role of the fundamental external environment: The first is certainly the U.S., but how a rising and giant China should do also has extremely important regulating impact on its peripheral regions. Secondly, Japan is a low efficient country. It is not easy to resolve differences and reach consensus in Japan. This has not been fully realized by the Chinese. Thirdly, wars are an interactive process where behaviors from one side impact the way the other reacts. Interactions between China and Japan also demand our attention. Fourthly, with regards to domestic political impetus and constraints, China has not made thorough analyses on related scenarios. Given complex domestic situations within China, strategic needs face domestic constraints. We need to work hard to properly handle these conflicts. Fifthly, China has over-emphasized on power, especially hard power, but seldom talked about soft power, especially in diplomatic matters. Although China has surpassed Japan in GDP, it has not scored much from soft power competition against Japan in diplomacy. In addition, China's geographical advantage is not enough. Despite a more promising outlook in development, China is fettered

by its gigantic size that tends to disperse its focus on strategic development, thus making it more difficult for China to make strategic arrangements than Japan.

Many people often lack the necessary “literary perspective”<sup>3</sup> on the issue of Japan, especially on the mental state of the Japanese nation, which relies, in particular, on observation, research, understanding and proper imagination one can only gain by immersing oneself in the targeted society. People who have such a thinking logic without the “literary perspective” by a broader definition often ignore one thing, i.e., the regulating impact on the mental state of a nation by the epochal and historical fundamental environments. Generally speaking, these fundamental environments refer to: Firstly, the national direction, domestic state and external posture of Japan amid the world politics and economy for the period from the end of the WWII till recent years; Secondly, the dramatic changes in the world politics and economics, and Japan’s extremely awkward state and status in such changes. The Japanese national mental state resulted from these fundamental environments and their changes come down to the two questions that almost every Japanese would ask himself: What have the above national direction, domestic state and external posture brought us? Is it possible for them to continue adapting to the national state they think the nation needs?

As more and more Japanese have perceived, for over 60 years from the end of the WWII, namely in the era strongly influenced by the Western Liberal Internationalism economic system and an overwhelming United States of America, Japan has been moved in the national direction of commercial welfare seeking to “build the nation by relying on foreign trade”<sup>4</sup> and a pacifist country while externally promoting ecological protection, offering aids for the development of other countries, spreading the Japanese culture, and seeking to boost its soft power in the international community. What have all these actions brought to the Japanese? The trend that ordinary Japanese are experiencing exhibits or at least includes the following facts: over 20 years of prolonged economic recession, a largely shrunken world commercial market, rapid rise of economic and military power and international influence of a giant China, a pronounced relative decline of the dominant U.S., a potentially shaky credibility in the U.S.’ protection over Japan, a severely threatened and worsening military and security environment of Japan (what adds to the Japanese stubbornness and suspicion was the dependent status of Japan as a result of the WWII), and the obviously rapid decline of Japan’s international status, image and prestige. To make things worse,

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<sup>3</sup> “Among the basic theories and research methodologies in the international studies, the “literary perspective” method in its broader definition must be employed because, first of all, what happen in human societies is always pertinent to people as leading roles, who have extremely complex social attributes and more complex psychological attributes. It is even more so to the matters related to nationalities and national states, which consist of millions of people with such attributes and the perplex, dynamic and ever-changing interactions between them, and all the others that are not far from fully controlled by “rules:” all human behaviors and human relations that are highly subtle, changeable and hard to predict. Without the usage of the literary perspective in a broader definition, who can say that he/she is close to the understanding of their truth and profound mystery?” See Shi [1].

<sup>4</sup> Rosecrance [2].

all these fundamental conditions and trends that they see happening can be long-term and structural instead of temporary and ad hoc. Under such circumstances, the Japanese are more prone to persuasion and provocation by the rightists and are more willing to accept the change in national direction as proposed and devised by the rightists.

Correspondingly, in the Chinese thinking logic, there are two additional points that need to be addressed: First, it is indeed a hard-won consensus on the danger that Japan domestically is increasingly moving in the direction of right, nationalization, and militarization like a “normal country” (in fact the right of a major country). It’s “hard-won” because it needs strong stimulus in the security area for the majority of the Japanese people, after enjoying the lifestyle characterized roughly by the liberalism, pacifism, and individualism for over 60 years, to switch to accepting the new national direction advocated by the rightists especially in the era of China’s powerful emergence, America’s declining strength and a shaky credibility in American protection over Japan. Such a stimulus first comes from air and navy forces and the so-called “territorial waters.”

The second is even more against the common sense. When talking about the issue of Japan and the present China-Japan relations, many people seem to have forgotten the generally inherent interactive nature and mechanism in international politics, which was repeatedly stressed by Clausewitz when he made an attempt to probe into the nature of wars in his book. We need to point out that most countries, other than China and Japan, think that the China-Japan confrontation that had lasted a few years, especially the one in September 2012, was provoked by the Japanese government and the rightist force in Japan, or in other words, was a result of the provocative behaviors on the part of Japan that aimed at changing the status quo. However, the intensification, escalation and protraction of this confrontation was caused by interactions between China and Japan. We need to keep this in mind when we think, judge, and make strategic policies so that we can do our utmost to persuade or influence the majority of the countries in the world to protect our due interests by adhering to our principle of right and wrong.

In addition, two more points in our thinking logic need to be revisited. First, many people tend to have a one-sided view or talk, lopsidedly, about the domestic dynamics in Japan that triggered China-Japan confrontation. They only see or talk about Japan but overlook or do not discuss the domestic development in China. Now, what characterizes current China is, for one thing, the surging mass nationalism that endows the current and future China with tremendous power and presents it with some troubles. What is closely related and adds fuel to it is the accelerated development and increasing diversity of mass media. Moreover, although little related, the increasing diversification of government departments and organizations makes unified command and overall plan and coordination more difficult. This is extremely obvious in the Japan issue in China’s foreign policies. We must give enough consideration and evaluation of this difficulty, or else we, at least, will not be able to accurately evaluate how powerful the source of energy is that causes the China-Japan confrontation, or will not be able to accurately foretell how many efforts we need to put in overcoming domestic difficulties within China to deal with the China-Japan



relationship. Secondly, if we extend it beyond the China-Japan relationship to relate it to China's overall foreign relationship system, many people only care about the power of a nation but fail to realize that a country cannot accomplish greatly in the world if it does not have any of the factors on its side: power, friends and talents. Despite the fact that many people keep mentioning "soft power," they do not give soft power the due attention. This is especially true when it comes to dealing with the China-Japan relations. Following the illegitimate announcement of "nationalization" of Diaoyu Island by the Japanese government in September of 2012, a new round of confrontation broke out between China and Japan. It is the right time to test if China can continue working earnestly to influence the Japanese people with the same level of determination and will. Moreover, failure to do so will lead to another problem in our thinking logic. We have, more or less, overlooked the level of complexity in the formation of public opinions and public policies in a free and democratic country like Japan.

The Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, which was made disregard of external protests, posed challenges to world justice and intensified the confrontations between China and Japan and disagreement between South Korea and Japan, therefore sparking wide accusation from the governments of all major countries in the world such as the U.S. as well as criticism from world public opinion. This provided China with a strategic (at least tactic) opportunity. After a new round of confrontation broke out between China and Japan in September 2012, both China and Japan were roughly even in terms of the edges in military, paramilitary and diplomatic aspects. Now, Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine has changed the situation and China has gained an upper hand. Therefore, we need to make necessary adjustments to our actions in proper ways, degree and time, and at the same time pay more attention to the gestures and languages used in related diplomatic efforts that are already significantly intensified, while continue our fight physically in Diaoyu Island and in the East China Sea. On the other hand, by sticking to Deng Xiaoping's way of thinking and practice, we should take into consideration the specific circumstances, effects and outcomes, pay high heed to and put tremendous efforts in the recognition and acceptance of the languages and gestures in our diplomatic efforts by the international society and international opinions. In this aspect, we must try to avoid handling things in a reckless and simple way without looking at the actual results.

Under the new circumstances, China must make necessary adjustments to its strategic tactics to guide its struggle over Diaoyu Island. To this end, we must first clarify one fundamental issue: what fueled the mobilization of Japan in its rewriting history, amending constitution and confronting China? In near term, these are driven primarily by Abe's vigorous push and China's "external pressure." The "external pressure" exerted by China is its struggle against Japan, which needs to shift its focus, as has already started, on frustrating Abe's efforts and uproar domestically and externally alike within a short period in the future, trying to isolate Abe to the greatest extent possible just as China successfully isolated Junichiro Koizumi who repeatedly paid homage to the Yasukuni Shrine. These are the requirements and conveniences as a result of the current situations to alleviate the above "China factors" in a proper way and by a proper degree.

For this purpose, it is advisable for China to: firstly, insist on normalizing ocean cruise in the Diaoyu Island sea as a way to claim sovereignty with proper adjustments to avoid military confrontation between China and Japan in the air over the East China Sea; secondly be flexible in practice by temporarily withholding the enforcement of the “biggest version” of air defense identification area in the East China Sea, mainly the stipulations regarding foreign civil airplanes; thirdly, under the condition of not holding senior level meetings with Abe, resume the senior-level diplomatic engagement with Japan that has been suspended since the summer of 2013 to help control conflicts and keep them from escalating to military confrontations.<sup>5</sup> Fourthly, report in a proper way China’s military buildup. This not only relates to China’s relationship with Japan but also concerns China’s relationship with the U.S. and with the holistic situation, i.e., how to prevent the allegation of “China’s military threat” from worsening to the greatest extent and from turning into real military and strategic race against China? In other words, how to balance the strong wish to strengthen China’s military power and the sphere of strategic military activities with China’s complex strategic diplomatic needs?<sup>6</sup> Fifthly, as closely related to all the above points, we may take advantage of America’s strategic concerns over Abe’s behaviors and try to persuade the U.S. into swinging back to the position of being neutral and not partial for Japan with regards to the China-Japan confrontation (i.e., back to the position prior to the statement made by the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in January 18, 2013,<sup>7</sup>) so as to effectively block or even stop Japan from moving backward on historical issues and making radical amendments to the Constitution.

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<sup>5</sup> “It is extremely important to control confrontations, and prevent them from escalating to military clashes. Three weeks before Abe’s brazen visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, the author of this article wrote in an email to a Western scholar: The dispute is unlikely to be resolved in a long time in the future. Therefore, to control the China-Japan confrontations and prevent them from escalating to military clashes is the only feasible thing to do for Beijing, Tokyo and Washington. However, this mission is difficult to accomplish given the domestic and international dynamics, the intensity of confrontations between Japan and China, and the rising likelihood of incidental clashes. On the other hand, these may cause, reversely, the will to control by the three countries to heighten. Unfortunately, due to nearly complete lack of diplomatic and defense communication, and the sufficient supply of fueling domestic public opinions, the efforts to control confrontation will be out of synchronization.” “The near-term future is uncertain, but to Japan, China and the U.S., it matters greatly to prevent military clashes. What matters? The minimum level of peace between two big countries in East Asia, or even the minimum level of peace between China and the U.S., and in addition, the domestic priorities of economic and social nature in the Chinese and Japanese government. Therefore, it is likely to attain a cold peace or cold war between China and Japan in the foreseeable future (near future).”

<sup>6</sup> Shi [3].

<sup>7</sup> Hillary Clinton stated:” I repeat the long-standing U.S. policies on the Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu Island) and our treaty responsibilities. As I have stated many times before that although the U.S. does not take a position in the ultimate sovereignty of the island (Diaoyu Island), we acknowledge that it is now under the administrative control of Japan. We object to any unilateral actions that seek to damage the Japanese administrative control.” Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida after Titer Meeting”, Secretary of State, Washington D. C., January 18 2013, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2013/01/203050.htm>.

We need to further point out that the international dilemma Abe is in now as a result of his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine is relevant, or possibly temporary, as he knows how to adjust his behaviors. Although Abe relies on the rightists, he and the entire right-wing group in Japan strategically rely on the U.S. to an unprecedented extent. The biggest diplomatic difficulty that faces Abe now is the predictable reaction of the international society to the proposed radical amendments to the Japanese Constitution, which Abe has dreamed about. In the meantime, the difficulties China will face following the struggle and confrontation over the East China Sea will be protracted because in the background of China's strengthened mid-to-long range military capacity and surging nationalism, it will, sooner or later, do what will closely relate to the U.S. and its strategic partners, and will make a historical event, i.e., China will justifiably and unquestionably expand with restriction its strategic space that is outside its narrow coastal offshore water. Therefore, we must not over-estimate the diplomatic edge that China suddenly has, which was attributable to Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine.

## 10.4 Outlook of the China-Japan Relationship

Japan is critically important in China's overall diplomatic structure. It has two roles to play: to maintain a major-country relationship as one of China's neighboring countries. Consequently, while facing a standoff in bilateral relationship, China should keep in mind that the China-Japan relationship is of both competition and cooperation despite rising tensions between the two countries. Under such circumstances, China needs to emphasize on the overall domestic and international situations. China has markets but also needs to learn from Japan. The space is very huge for China to explore. In the next decade or longer time, China should stabilize the China-Japan relationship, or even take advantage of it for the purpose of achieving the goal of "two two-hundreds."<sup>8</sup> In addition, as Japan is an important peripheral country of China, to stabilize the relationship with Japan will be of great significance in China's efforts to build a peripheral region.

With the above understanding, China may start developing its tactics on the China-Japan relationship in the future in the following aspects.

First, we must focus on the holistic situation, keep patient, make every effort to create opportunities for solving territorial disputes through negotiations and protect the period of our strategic opportunity. In the battles against Japan, it is extremely important for China to have a clear holistic point of view, properly manage the

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<sup>8</sup> The goal of "two two-hundreds" was first brought up in the report of the 15th National Congress of CPC, and reiterated in the report of the 18th National Congress of CPC: First, to double the GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents by 2020, or at the time of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, from that of 2010, and to build a moderately prosperous society that benefits the population of over 1 billion people; Second, build a prosperous, democratic, civilized and harmonious modern socialist country by the mid-21 century, or at the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

relationship between the interests of national development and those of national sovereignty. We must stay focused on the interests of national development, which are the main primary interests for China at current stage. However, the high rigidity of sovereign issue determines that the dispute over the sovereignty of Diaoyu Island between China and Japan will not be solved within a short period of time. Therefore, we must set a long-term goal and try our utmost to create chances of negotiations, and prolong this process as much as possible in an effort to exchange time for space.

Now, it seems obvious that Japan tries to disrupt the process of China's development by leveraging the sovereign issue. China should thus face the situation calmly with rational and justifiable struggle against Japan. Japan's provocative languages and behaviors must be distinguished in nature. We should keep alert on and accurately screen those that concern sovereign principles. On the deliberate verbal provocations constantly made by some Japanese political figures, sometimes it may be better to cool them off. On the issue of Diaoyu Island, China is now in an upside position. As long as we stick to the basic principle of "not being provocative but also not being fearful," maintain our strategic patience, protect the achievements we have made so far, insist on regular operations to protect our sovereignty and law enforcement, and by taking diplomatic initiatives, China is able to stabilize the current situation. The current stalemate between China and Japan is only a matter of time, and the purpose of carrying out negotiations with Japan is also for buying more time, which will be on our side if we focus on big targets and prevent incidents and surprises from occurring.

Secondly, China should strive to make a difference in the peripheral diplomacy. In fact, the China-Japan relationship is indeed the relationship between China and the U.S. It is the U.S. that devised all this, and for this reason, China should not have any expectation for the U.S. We should see through the U.S. strategic design. It is the U.S. government's intention to keep China and Japan in prolonged confrontation as long as it is not that severe to destroy the balance. The confrontation serves to exhaust both China and Japan and helps the U.S. achieve its dual-targets of containing China while keeping Japan in control. Therefore, although it is likely that the U.S. may side with Japan in the matter of territorial disputes between China and Japan, it cannot totally ignore China's feeling. Despite growing structural conflicts between China and the U.S., the basic conditions remain unchanged for the construction of a major-country relationship as it is unmistakably clear that the U.S. has followed a strategy of containing China while keeping it from escalating into a comprehensive military confrontation. For this purpose, China should strengthen the cooperative relationship with the U.S. and keep in mind that Japan would not be able to cause big troubles as long as the China-U.S. relations are in check. In addition, South Korea also has territorial disputes with Japan that has lasted for a long time. China may consider working with South Korea to apply pressure on Japan.

Thirdly, from the military perspective, although neither China nor Japan is able to wage a comprehensive military attack against the other, China should prepare for military battles against Japan as it is a channel of resolving territorial disputes. For instance, China should intensify the military buildup in the East China Sea as the military might between China and Japan cannot be measured simply by comparing

the two countries, but is also affected by the U.S. factor. Besides, even by simple comparison, China lags behind Japan in some areas such as navy force or long-range strategic surveillance etc. However, China has its own strengths such as superior strategic strike capacity. In short, China should make solid military preparations.

If current trend continues, the China-Japan relationship cannot go back to the 1970s and we don't expect it to focus on the economic cooperation as was in the 1980s. It is inevitable that cooperation and friction would coexist in the China-Japan relationship with friction dominating the relationship and constantly changing. There is of course ample room for cooperation including regional cooperation. The bilateral trade showed a sign of improvement in 2013. It is apparent that Japan depends on China for economic cooperation, but China should not expect it to go back to the previous level. China needs to change its mentality and not to deal with current issues in the conventional way of thinking. While keeping this trend in mind, we should search for a new way of thinking, switching from emphasizing on friendship to interests. To make this happen, China should start thinking from the perspective of its interests and development, followed by moderate consideration of "separating politics from economy."

A few trends characterize the outlook of the China-Japan relations: Firstly the relationship between China and Japan will long be symbolized with the coexistence of confrontation and cooperation, with confrontation dominating the relationship. Secondly, the tensions in the China-Japan relationship will tend to alleviate if a proper opportunity is presented and some basic premises are met. The "dispute over Diaoyu Island" is not the whole of the China-Japan relationship. From the perspective of the overall China-Japan relations, it is likely that it will develop and be normalized in the future. In the long run, this issue is unlikely to affect the holistic relationship between China and Japan with the diplomatic efforts and other work by both countries. Besides, conflicts or even military confrontations between China and Japan are unlikely.

It is worth noticing that a few events in the past few years were sensitive and history-reflecting: 2014 marked the 120th anniversary of the breakout of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895; 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the triumph in the War against Japanese Aggression and the subsequent Japanese surrender; The election of cabinet members will be held in 2016 in Japan. In the following three consecutive years, Japan is likely to take these chances to continue acting to disturb the development of China. The right-moving trend in the Japanese politics won't change, and its attempt to amend the Constitution won't stop. The issue over Yasukuni Shrine is beyond the simple nature of history but more importantly, is a card played by Japan as a way of disrupting China.

Similarly, Japan's target of trying to overturning the post-WWII international order and becoming a "normal country" won't change. It won't stop attempts to disrupt the peaceful development of China, or rely on the U.S. to dominate Asia, or even become a political and military big power in the world. Nor will it stop trying to build a "net encircling China," which heavily lean on Southeast Asia, India and Australia.

Militarily, the fundamental goal of Japan is to build a military capacity that matches its economic clout, and that would allow it to protect its interests in the world and counter-balance China's influence. To achieve this, Japan and the U.S. will modify the *Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation* to reinforce the Japan-U.S. military alliance, have the ban on the Japan's right of collective self-defense lifted and build the "national defense army" into the force of national defense. In the meantime, in terms of the military buildup, Japan has intensified its efforts in information construction and development of long-range and large-scale weapons and equipment. Although Japan may continue facing difficulties and obstacles in its attempt to acquire strategically offensive weapons, it will intensify its efforts in the conventional military buildup that aims at advancing its military capacity to keep up with the time. In the field of joint military operation, in particular, Japan has pushed for many important measures in recent years, including some specific preparations that are moving ahead solidly. China should stay highly alert to all such moves on the side of Japan.

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# Chapter 11

## China-SAARC Regionalism: Construction and Challenges



Siling Yang

**Abstract** With the weight of South Asia region increasing in the execution of China's regionalism strategy, it becomes more important for China to devise how to construct its relationship with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and how to build China's identification in its cooperation with SAARC. The significance of constructing the China-SAARC regionalism is obvious for the reason that most South Asian countries must develop its comprehensive relationship of cooperation with China on the SAARC platform: Out of the need for security and economic development, China is also willing to enthusiastically construct the China-SAARC regionalism with the organization. However, to build such a regionalism is not easy and faces many challenges due to the internal problems within SAARC and the impact by the inherent geopolitical perception. Therefore, how to choose the path for the construction becomes an issue that requires our prompt and thorough consideration.

**Keywords** China · India · SAARC · China-SAARC Regionalism

To cope with the rising regionalism in its periphery, China has gradually expanded the scope and increased the intensity in the involvement in regional security and economic cooperation since the 1990s, and has developed relatively complete regionalism policies.<sup>1</sup> From the Constructivism perspective, China has, by mainly relying on economic cooperation, constructed an image of peaceful development and has successfully constructed the relationship with neighboring countries and regional organizations, winning opportunities for China's economic development. It is reasonable to say that China has become a proactive participant and "agent" in the regionalism in international relations. Comparatively, although the South Asia region greatly concerns China's politics, economy, security and many other interests, it

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<sup>1</sup> Xuefeng [1].

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remains a vulnerable spot in the execution of China's regionalism strategy. In particular, there is no effective organization and model in place between China and SAARC, which restrains, to a great extent, the space and scope of cooperation between China and the South Asia region. Given that the South Asia region is closely related to China's stability and development, how to successfully construct the China-SAARC regionalism on the platform of SAARC is thus a problem that must be solved immediately.

## **11.1 The Significance of Constructing the China-SAARC Regionalism**

Theoretically, the significance construction in the international relations is selfish mainly because actors in the international arena often tend to build self-centered relations with other parties. However, the constant change in the international situations, especially with the rise of less-developed countries and the relationship between the South and the North getting increasingly closer, the "joint ownership" in the significance construction in international relations is attracting more attention. In this regard, the significance construction of the China-SAARC regionalism must take into account China's interests, as well as the concerns of SAARC member states.

For China, constructing the China-SAARC regionalism is significant in the following aspects:

First, security issues are present between China and SAARC along the line from Wakhan Corridor through Kunlun Mountains to the Himalayas. Without a doubt, South Asia is the region surrounding China that has the most complex security circumstances and issues, including border issues, drug problems, disputes over water resources, religious and national separatists and nuclear safety issues etc. Therefore, how to manage and solve these political and security issues has evolved to be the important strategic factors that China must consider in the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism. From a bilateral perspective, China and SAARC member states have made significant progress on these issues: Although the multiple rounds of negotiation on the Bhutanese border with both China and India have not borne fruits in an essential way, a consensus and principles to solve the issue peacefully are reached. China and India, in particular, have established a series of cooperation mechanism that govern the border disputes and preservation of peace and stability in the border territories. With regards to the drug problem, China has been joined by Pakistan and Afghanistan in joint crack-down efforts and a three-party dialogue mechanism has emerged. The three countries have also carried out cooperation in dealing with the three influences under a three-party framework. With regards to the disputes over water resources, China and India have concluded a cooperation agreement where China agrees to provide India with the hydraulic information on the Yaruzampbo River. Certainly, further cooperation and construction are needed on other security issues such as the nuclear security issue in South Asia. India and Pakistan are



nuclear powers but both are not subject to the international mechanism of nuclear non-proliferation. Besides, India has kept a running nuclear weapon research and development system that targets China and that has bad impacts on regional security. In this aspect, how to manage and contain the disagreement on security between China and SAARC, and seek a better solution under the regionalism framework has important practical ramifications to both sides.

Secondly, SAARC has an irreplaceable status and role in China's construction of the "Maritime Silk Road." The importance of the Indian Ocean that lies in the route of the "Maritime Silk Road" has been studied by many scholars, and it plays a vital role to China's security and development especially in trade, energy and security of maritime passage. Along the seashore of the Indian Ocean from Strait of Malacca to the Red Sea lie countries of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Pakistan, all occupying an important spot along the way. How to manage the relationship and cooperation with these countries has extremely important significance for China to protect its political and security interests on the Indian Ocean and drive the smooth construction of the Maritime Silk Road. Therefore, the construction and development of the China-SAARC regionalism plays a vital role and is extremely significant for the preservation of security in China's seaway.

Thirdly, the economic growth potential and huge markets in the South Asian countries are, by any means, "new engines" for China's economic growth. Despite the constantly criticized development in SAARC and its free trade area, theoretically speaking, South Asia is a region with extremely astonishing potential for economic growth. The total population in the 8 countries in South Asia combined is over 1.6 billion and the rapid economic growth represented by India stuns the world, which marvels at a rapidly emerging India. In the meantime, the production and consumption capacity in South Asia has strengthened. Although the economic growth in South Asia has slowed, the conditions to spur another high economic growth rate in South Asia remain, including abundant resources and a vast market that churns out cheap labors. By comparison, the potential for the cooperation between China and South Asian countries is yet to be tapped. The bilateral trade between China and South Asian countries is shy of USUSD100 billion, while that between China and ASEAN countries has shattered the record of USUSD400 billion. Thus, to realize the potential in the economic cooperation between China and South Asian countries will be the direction in China's future foreign economic cooperation, for which the China-SAARC regionalism will surely be a platform.

Fourthly, as a springboard in China's expansion into West Asia, Africa and Central Asia, the South Asia region is a critical component of the "new Silk Road Economic Belt." South Asia, historically a key passageway connecting trading activities of the East and the West, is located in the north shore of the Indian Ocean, connects ASEAN and China in the East, Central Asia in the north, separated from Africa by the ocean and links West Asia, the world's heart of energy, in the northwest. In other words, South Asia has prominent geographical advantages. One thing we have noticed is that the ancient Southern Silk Road meandered out of the country, crossed Burma and Assam or Manipur in India, run alongside the Indus, and arrived eventually at Afghanistan (Da Xia). It then merged into the Northern Silk Road

that was built at a later time, from which one could travel eastward to return to Xi'an (Chang'an). In a nutshell, by working with South Asian countries, China will undoubtedly expand its cooperation in the above-mentioned regions through construction of the China-SAARC regionalism, turning it to serve the need to build the "new Silk Road Economic Belt" by China.

Constructing the China-SAARC regionalism also has a significant meaning to the member states of SAARC. What attracts our attention is that in recent years, a number of SAARC member states have attached great importance to building China's status in South Asia. It is through joint efforts of China and these countries that China is granted the status of an observer member state in SAARC. However, an observer is not nearly enough to satisfy the need by the SAARC member countries to cooperate and develop along with China. Under such a circumstance, some member states have expressed their hope to make China a full member of SAARC and have held discussions about this.<sup>2</sup> The fact that some member states of SAARC are enthusiastic in building a relation between SAARC and China as well as in constructing an identity of China apparently shows that they have realized how significant it is for them to press for the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism.

First, the successful construction of the China-SAARC regionalism benefits the SAARC in its efforts to achieve breakthrough and development. Due to its disappointing political and economic performance, SAARC has been widely criticized<sup>3</sup> and its role in the region has been overlooked. As clear evidence, in today's world where "new regionalism" is rapidly developing, no major countries or organizations have established any form of free trade area with SAARC. In fact, SAARC is invisible and possible to ignore to many major countries or regional organizations. In this sense, the effort by China to construct the China-SAARC regionalism has a positive impact on improving the status of SAARC. Dr. Khan from the National University of Science and Technology in Pakistan thinks that China's entry into SAARC, if realized, will help this organization gain more respect and attention from other important regional organizations.<sup>4</sup> According to Dr. Chintamani Mahapatra from Jawaharlal Nehru University in India, if China is invited to join SAARC, and China willingly accepts the invitation, the political and economic appearance of SAARC in the international community will undergo transformation. It will gain world respect simply for the reason that it has included two economies with the most rapid economic growth in the world (China and India). By then, SAARC will have become the largest market in the world and the three nuclear powers within the organization will make it a mighty and powerful entity that will play an increasingly important role in the global decisions. Dr. Chintamani Mahapatra further points out that China should not be treated as a big power outside the region as it shares borders with five member states of SAARC. He argues that by supporting China to become a member state

<sup>2</sup> Abiderda Md. Abdujjahes "China as a SAARC Member: A Debate", <http://www.academia.edu/1855572/china-as-a-SAARC-Member-A-Debate>.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed and Bhatnagais [2].

<sup>4</sup> Dr Ashfaq H Khan "China and SAARC", Dec. 20, 2011, <http://mw.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrinDetail.aspx?ID=83089&Cat=9>.

in SAARC, India will help reduce distrust between the two countries. Furthermore, the strategy adopted by its neighbor to deal with India by playing the China card will not be effective anymore after China is included in SAARC.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, if China and SAARC successfully construct the regionalism, there is no doubt that SAARC will benefit from the development experience in China. Also, if India is willing to accept China into the SAARC framework, it is likely that SAARC will rid the embarrassment as an “example of loser,” grow to be a pole in the regional power and win respect and recognition from the outside world.

Secondly, the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism brings huge economic benefits to SAARC’s member states. Economically, SAARC’s development in nearly 30 years in the past was disappointing. Despite a 22% of world’s population and 3.6% of territories of all the countries combined, SAARC contributes to merely 2.5% of the world’s total GDP and less than USUSD1,000 per capita income, and still remains at a low-income level. Four fifth of the SAARC’s total GDP comes from India, followed by Pakistan at 10%, Bangladesh at 7% and the remaining countries at 3%. Political security issues, lack of mutual trust, more focus by its members states on strengthening trade and investment relations with countries outside the region, and mounting internal tariff and non-tariff barriers combined to have resulted in the slow pace of development in the more than 20 years in the past for SAARC. For many years, export trade to other South Asian countries, by amount, only accounts for about 5% of India’s total foreign trade amount. If the China-SAARC regionalism is successful, it will bring SAARC’s total population up to nearly 3 billion, accounting for 40% of total world’s population. China is not only the second largest economy in the world, but also the world’s largest consumption market that has a total population exceeding 1.3 billion and subsequently a steadily rising power of consumption. On this basis, some Pakistani scholars believe that the inclusion of China in SAARC will without a doubt greatly boost SAARC’s economic position in the international community. If China was able to have a huge impact on Asia Pacific region in 2008 when the world was plagued by a global economic recession, it will bring benefits to the poverty-stricken South Asia region. Hanif, a researcher from Islamabad Policy Institute in Pakistan also noticed what China’s economic development could do to SAARC. According to him, in the period from 1979 to 2011, China posted an average annual growth rate of 10% in GDP and its economy increased 13 folds, which lifted millions of people out of poverty. Today, China has emerged to be the largest commodity exporter, second largest importer, the second largest FDI receiving country, and the country with the largest foreign exchange reserve in the world. SAARC will benefit tremendously both politically and economically if it can take the historical opportunity to support China’s SAARC membership.<sup>6</sup> Hanif also pointed out that China’s vast fiscal resources and the large number of technical experts may be input completely in the resources-scarce but dynamic economies in South Asia. Although China has established trade relations with many South Asian

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<sup>5</sup> Mahapatra [3].

<sup>6</sup> Col M Hanif (R), “China should be in SAARC”, May 12, 2012, <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=154901>.

countries, it requires a full SAARC membership for the decision-making process within SAARC to be on the right track. China's status of SAARC member state will also have tremendous impacts on and play a big role in driving the development in economy and integration within SAARC. After joining SAARC, China will become a part of the free trade area in South Asia, which will boost the trade between China and countries in South Asia exponentially. Meanwhile, these countries will be able to attract a large amount of investment from China especially in infrastructure, agriculture, industry, real estate development, machinery manufacturing and financial industries. A steady increase of Chinese investment in South Asia will relieve the region from a capital shortage as well as provide jobs, reduce poverty and raise the standard of living in the region.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism helps with the restructuring of the regional order in South Asia. Most SAARC member countries hope to construct the China-SAARC regionalism by absorbing China into the organization, since it benefits the restructuring of the regional order in South Asia. Hanif, whose points are the most representative, pointed out that China's membership will have a critical impact on the regional order and environment. China's strategy of development through peaceful rise is an example for South Asian countries to learn how to solve multilateral disputes through dialogue, and at the same time to develop friendly political and economic relations. With China and India both accepted into SAARC as member states, the political atmosphere will become hospitable, in which China will definitely be supportive toward solving multilateral issues such as the Kashmir problem that have plagued South Asia. With China's participation, the SAARC forum will be a better place for the improvement of the China-India and India-Pakistan relations, as well as for the mitigation of worries and concerns shared by small countries in South Asia over India's attempt to dominate this region. This has some positive significance to India as well since frequent communication that is made possible by an SAARC forum that includes China will intensify mutual understanding and deepen economic integration, thus paving the way for the resolution of the China-India border issues, and the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan. An SAARC with China as a member state will see its status boosted in the international society. China will be positive in assisting South Asian countries in acquiring financial support from international financial institutions. It also benefits the development of political and economic relations in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in that China's investment ability will enable the dreams that South Asian countries once had, such as building highways, electrical power network and shipping oil and gas through pipelines between Central Asia and South Asia, to come true. It also means that China will become an integral part in the new Silk Road of the United States of America.

In a nutshell, the significance of constructing the China-SAARC regionalism for China and India does not conflict against each other. In terms of political and security issues, China and SAARC needs a regional platform with complete mechanisms to manage and handle these issues, control disputes and prevent frictions. From the

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<sup>7</sup> Col M Hanif (R) "China should be in SAARC", May 12, 2012.

perspective of economic interest, China's institutional involvement may catalyze the vigor in the economic growth in the South Asia region, and China's strengths in investment, technology and market open a window of hope to the member states of SAARC. In short, the characteristics of "joint ownership" between China and SAARC over these matters of interest have prepared for and also made it possible for the success of the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism.

## 11.2 China's Efforts in Constructing the China-SAARC Regionalism

According to Alexander Wendt's theory of Constructivism, the identity and interest of a state is not a pre-given factor but is constructed while interacting with other states.<sup>8</sup> He argues that states are actors with intentions and have self-consciousness, i.e., "states are human," and this affects the essence of the international system.<sup>9</sup> It provides a key premise for states to construct regional orders. Windt also emphasized on the Holism/Conceptualism of the Constructivism. In methodology, it emphasized the effect of holistic structure on individual entity, which is reflected in the international relations as the effect of the structure of an international system on individual states.<sup>10</sup> This theory leads us to consider the significance of SAARC on China and to construct the China-SAARC regionalism based on interest positioning. Certainly, with the constant change in the international institution and practice, Wendt's Constructivism is not enough to fully explain some new phenomena in regionalism. According to Wendt's Constructivist Ontology, material power is indeed important, and humans naturally are actors with intentions, but the contents of material powers and the intention of humans are, to a large extent, determined by the common conception that includes such a significance and content. Therefore, culture is a possible condition for the theory of power and interests.<sup>11</sup> After putting SAARC to the test of Wendt's Constructivism, we find that it is hard to explain the development of SAARC. Cultural conditions are in place for SAARC,<sup>12</sup> but they have not bridged the massive gap in power and interests, resulting in the failure for SAARC to get the expected results. From this perspective, culture may help drive the development of regionalism, but (the gap in) culture should not be viewed as barriers to the regionalism construction. To describe it in the language of sociology, despite polarized cultural backgrounds, we are able to build friendly relationship with

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<sup>8</sup> Windt [4].

<sup>9</sup> Windt, p. 194.

<sup>10</sup> Windt, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Windt, p. 193.

<sup>12</sup> Disputes may arise here. According to some scholars, the Hinduism and Muslim are two completely different cultures. They even argue that Muslims in India are outsiders. However, research conducted by other scholars suggests that most Muslims in India were actually converted aborigines who lead a Hindu lifestyle despite their religious belief in Islam. See Yonghui [5].

foreigners. The regionalism practices since the onset of the new century have made us aware that common interests and common perception, rather than cultural or political systems, have become the important foundations for constructing regionalism and the order. However, in the process of the China-SAARC regionalism construction, some scholars from the member states of SAARC (primarily from India) have always tried to downplay China's efforts and roles by using cultural and political systems as excuses.

Here, it is not our intention to debate which is more important in the ontology of Wendt's Constructivism, but rather to provide an analysis framework in China's construction of the China-SAARC regionalism. Comprehensively, at least in the following areas China has made efforts in the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism development:

First, construction of historical and cultural connection between China and South Asia. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, Chinese scholars represented by Ji Xianlin have carried the mission of recording the history of China-India cultural exchanges in books. These books undoubtedly have the effect of restoring the China-India cultural connection in history, which is a construction of connection in "objective knowledge" between China and the Indian subcontinent according to Wendt's theory. The results of such construction show that although China and the South Asia region fall into different cultural systems, they have engaged in a very close interactive and influencing relationship since the Qin and Han dynasties. The significance in pushing forward the China-SAARC regionalism is obvious in that it has laid a foundation for the emergence of a positive atmosphere and cultural push to the China-SAARC regionalism construction. It is on this foundation of cultural connection that Indian scholars invented the regionalism concept of great harmony between China and India (Chindia), which is close to the China-SAARC regionalism that we propose if the geographical concept of "India" prior to its independence is inherited.

Secondly, the construction of interests of "joint ownership." We avoid using the concept of "common" interests and replace it with the concept of interests of "joint ownership," which may be more appropriate to represent the similar parts in the interests of each party in the construction of regionalism because, with the subjects of interests being different, the logical derivation under common interests may lead to exclusion of some contents over which a compromise or cooperation could have been reached. In the aspect of construction of interests of "joint ownership," China's efforts are mainly spent in constructing the political, security and economic cooperation with South Asian countries. The construction of political and security interests has produced apparent results. It not only solved the border issues with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, etc., solved in an earlier time, but also constructed a series of bilateral cooperation mechanism and established the principle of peaceful resolution on the pending border issues with India and Bhutan. In other security issues such as drugs and terrorism, a mechanism of joint crackdown has been constructed. In terms of economic cooperation, China has successfully constructed bilateral economic relations with SAARC member states and has become the largest trade partner with most of them. As a result, these trade relations have flourished. In particular, China's

efforts in constructing the regional economic cooperation mechanism with South Asian countries are apparently fruitful, which is demonstrated, on the one hand, in the progress in the China-India free trade area, and on the other hand, in the establishment of a free trade area with Pakistan. This construction has not only laid the foundation but also provided experiences for the development of the China-SAARC regionalism.

Thirdly, the construction of international norms and principles under the concept of interests of joint ownership. In this aspect, China and SAARC member countries have made impressive progress in construction efforts. Firstly, they have constructed the concept of interests of joint ownership on regional and global issues. For instance, the issues of preserving regional and global peace, shaping new orders in international politics and economy, the UN reform and disarmament have been constructed and ascertained in the form such as the issuance of joint declarations. Secondly, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that was constructed by China along with the South Asian country India and the Southeast Asian country Burma has been widely accepted by the international community, which has not only enriched and developed fundamental principles of international laws but also laid the foundation in guiding principles for the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism, i.e., regionalism may be developed by sticking to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

It is clear from the above that since the founding of the People's Republic of China, it has proactively engaged in the construction of the relationship with South Asian countries. However, from an objective perspective, the above construction activities are mainly conducted between China and individual countries in South Asia. Also, before the 1990s, these activities were mostly done on a bilateral basis. Although they greatly drove the development of bilateral relationship between China and these countries, they did not amount to the construction of regionalism—China-SAARC regionalism that is needed by China and South Asia. Now at the time when the cooperation between China and SAARC is making constant progress, how to construct the relationship between China and SAARC and define China's identity in its relationship with SAARC becomes an issue that must be solved in the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism.

After the onset of the new century, China has intensified its efforts under the SAARC framework. In 2007, China was accepted, with aids from Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, in SAARC's 14th summit meeting to be an observer country. India that originally expressed its opposition eventually compromised as it intended to take in Afghanistan as a full member. Meanwhile, as a counter measure, it immediately proposed to accept the U.S., Australia and Japan as observer countries of SAARC.<sup>13</sup> This was on the priority list of the Chinese government at the time, which sent a delegation headed by the Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing to take part in the summit. Li, while in Pakistan en route to the summit, stated that SAARC was the best cooperation mechanism, and proposed during the summit to carry out cooperation activities under the SAARC framework. However, this goal has not been achieved so far. In the 16<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ann Online "China for 'SAARC Plus One\*' summit" Nov. 12, 2011, <http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=209813>.

SAARC summit meeting in 2010, Nepal that maintained a good political relationship with China proposed to turn China into a full member of SAARC.<sup>14</sup> Nepal's motion received support from the majority of SAARC member states but triggered heated debate among scholars in SAARC countries.<sup>15</sup> Although several member states in SAARC supported the idea of the Chinese membership, India vetoed the proposal by resorting to the principle of "unanimous agreement through consultation."

In SAARC's 17th summit in 2011, China suggested to construct the "8 + 1" cooperation mechanism with SAARC by following the China-ASEAN model. It proposed to become a dialogue partner with SAARC when conditions were not ripe for a full membership. The proposal did not pass due to opposition from India. However, other member states from SAARC think that China should target at a member state in SAARC instead of merely becoming a dialogue partner that does not have voting right.<sup>16</sup> The issue of making China a full SAARC member was brought up again in 2013 when Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) called for SAARC to grant the membership status to China in the meeting in Dhaka under the theme of "SAARC's Opportunities and Challenges in the 21st Century." In the 18th summit meeting in 2013, China's qualification was discussed again but vetoed again by India. It is apparent that with regards to the China-SAARC regionalism construction, the enthusiasm from other member states in SAARC has been in sharp contrast to India that has repeatedly been putting South Asia under its own influence. Frankly, China has been proactive and has tried different methods in the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism. Documents suggest that China has signaled to India to offer India the membership status of SCO in exchange for China's membership in SAARC, to which India has not responded positively. The fundamental reason is that India still deems South Asia as its own territory of influence and is reluctant to bring other powers within this territory. This is true not only for China but also for other countries such as the U.S. and Japan. It is extremely difficult even for these countries to upgrade from an observer to a full member. It becomes clear from the above analysis that India has made every effort to avoid formal engagement with China on the SAARC platform, which is without any doubt a severe challenge to China in its attempt to construct the China-SAARC regionalism. However, as explained later in the article, difficulties facing the construction of the China-SAARC are more than just the "Indian factors."

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<sup>14</sup> Col M Hanif (R), China should be in Saarc, May 12, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Abiderda Md. Abdujjahes Md. Andikkajes "China as a SAARC Member: A Debate", <http://www.academia.edu/1855572/china-as-a-SAARC-Member-A-Debate>

<sup>16</sup> Yuba Nalh Lamsal "China's entry would beriefil SAARC", <http://weeklyinirmr.com.np/index.php?action=news&id=1614>.



### 11.3 Challenges Facing the Construction of the China-SAARC Regionalism

Theoretically, SAARC is a regional cooperation organization just like ASEAN, but they are in fact very different from each other. According to some scholars who have conducted comparative studies on SAARC and ASEAN, the two are different in their *raison d'être*, geographical structure, the role played by major countries, organizational mechanism and the understanding and perceptions on the regional security issues,<sup>17</sup> which determines that SAARC has not been viewed favorably by the international society, and the outside world has been suspicious about to what extent it can play its role. In a nutshell, the barriers that the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism will encounter are not restricted to the flaws in SAARC itself, but may include differences in culture and political system, India's regional hegemony and its vigilance toward China, and the lack of a clear mechanism in the relationship between China and SAARC. Certainly, from the perspective of the development in geopolitics in the Asia Pacific region, China will face rivalry from other major countries out of the region on its way toward the China-SAARC regionalism construction.

First, the gap in the culture and political system will impact the China-SAARC regionalism construction. On the basis of the regionalism framework, culture and political systems are important factors in the development of regionalism. Culturally, China and SAARC countries belong to different systems of the East culture. Take the Chinese and Indian cultures as an example; Chinese scholars who are amazed by the complexity, contradiction and pluralism that the Indian "eternal law" embodies cannot quite understand why Indian scholars can find theoretical origins of the thoughts such as violence and non-violence and abstinence and indulgence, all at the same time from Bhagavadgita. Many Indian scholars, on the other hand, find it extremely difficult to understand what the Confucian culture believes in and why the Chinese claim they have no faith in anything. From the perspective of the political system, the post-independence India has always boasted itself as the "largest democracy in the world" and China is constantly deemed as the "largest authoritarian country in the world." In fact, the differences in the culture and political system between China and SAARC are one of the reasons used by some scholars in the SAARC countries in their opposition to granting the SAARC membership to China. Moonis Ahmar, a professor of international relations from University of Karachi in Pakistan, argues that the relevancy between the Chinese culture and the South Asian culture is low and therefore China should not demand to be a SAARC member. Sujit Dutia, a professor from IDSA, asserts that "since China is the largest authoritarian country in the world, the acceptance of China into SAARC will expose the South Asia regionalism to danger." Apparently, the differences between China and SAARC in the culture and political system have emerged to be the critical barrier in the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism.

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<sup>17</sup> Ma [6].

Secondly, because of the fatal flaw in the design of the SAARC system, there is insufficient motivation to construct the China-SAARC regionalism. Restricted by the political conflicts and other issues in the South Asia region, SAARC had some syndromes of deficiency at birth, which was fully displayed in the principles it made. The Charter of SAARC is a clear reflection of the Indian strategic intention. In Article One, the principle of “unanimous agreement through consultation” stipulates that any resolution in SAARC must be unanimously agreed to by all individual members in SAARC, which makes it hard for any decision to pass unless unanimity is reached. Other principles function as an incantation that is set on SAARC that significantly weakens the status and function of this organization. Article Two, for example, dictates “not to decide on bilateral and disputed issues,” indicating that SAARC is powerless on conflicts and security issues arising from within the region. This is where SAARC is dissimilar to ASEAN and why it is difficult for the former to become a regional cooperation organization that is powerful and influential on the international arena (the way ASEAN is). As pointed out by some scholars from South Asian countries, “this has caused the integration process fruitless and SAARC, a platform on which member states could have discussed bilateral issues candidly in an unofficial environment, hard to play its role.”<sup>18</sup> Article Four and Article Five further weaken the status of SAARC. Article Four states that regional cooperation in South Asia is only a supplement to bilateral and multilateral cooperation, but Article Five dictates that cooperation in SAARC must not conflict with bilateral and multilateral obligations. Such stipulations undoubtedly serve India’s intent of strategic deployment in South Asia. As we all know, the post-independence India has been trying to control small countries in South Asia and have hitherto exerting control and impacts on countries like Nepal and Bhutan. These principles satisfy India’s strategic need to dominate at its will its relationship with South Asian countries. Certainly, the fact that these principles are incorporated in the Charter also shows that other South Asian countries have similar needs of, for instance, not wanting to be restrained too much by the SAARC framework. However, such an action may backfire. Countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh may get their wish satisfied, but the hope of countries such as Nepal and Bhutan to attempt to loosen the grip of India on them by regional cooperation with SAARC may not come true. Some small countries in South Asia even expressed discontent with the principle of unanimous agreement through consultation as it hinders the cooperation in economy and other areas within SAARC.<sup>19</sup> The above-mentioned fatal flaws have been fully verified in the development of the free trade area. Despite the label, the level of tariff reduction among member states of SAARC is less than 50%, far below the 90% level dictated by WTO on free trade area (FTA).<sup>20</sup> As a result, these flaws and inefficiencies in SAARC have objectively diminished to a large extent the development of SAARC

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<sup>18</sup> Pandi [7].

<sup>19</sup> Pandi, p. 83.

<sup>20</sup> According to the Agreement on the Free Trade Area in SAARC, every country is allowed to keep a sensitive list (negative list). The importation of commodities on the list is not subject to the tariff-reduction arrangement by SAFTA. This causes a problem where every South Asian country puts its main industry in the list of protection and the scope is wide. 65% of commodities in Bangladesh,

and the role it can play, and may likely hinder the process of the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism.

Thirdly, India's regional hegemony and its vigilance toward China are critical barriers in the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism. As the "superpower" in the South Asia region, India perceives a South Asia under its leadership and is extremely cautious about any possible influence from external forces. From the time when India gained national independence till the early 1990s, it pushed forward its regional hegemonic policy mainly through military means. From 1970s to the late 1980s in particular, India launched a series of activities aimed at seeking a hegemonic position in South Asia: breaking up Pakistan, annexing Sikkim, carrying out military exercises and sending troops into Sri Lanka and Maldives etc. Although India has begun shifting its way of seeking regional hegemony to more relying on economic cooperation since the second half of the 1990s, there has been no fundamental change to its hegemonic thinking in South Asia. Under such a circumstance, India deems the alliance between China and Pakistan the most lasting and decisive factor that contains India, and thinks that more South Asian countries are taken in the alliance against India, formerly Bangladesh and now Nepal and Sri Lanka, the most recently Bhutan. In 2013, India reversed the result of the national election in Bhutan by way of economic means, which was a clear indication of India's insistence of trying to keep a hegemonic position in South Asia and continued vigilance toward China. The former ruling party in Bhutan had close engagements with China and a historical meeting between the prime ministers from both countries was made possible, causing wide speculation by the outside world on the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bhutan. However, in the national election held in 2013, India stirred up a chaotic situation in Bhutan by threatening to suspend energy subsidies to Bhutan, which eventually brought the opposition party that advocated to "enthusiastically develop a relationship with India" to power. Such a thinking and behavioral pattern will inevitably limit China from playing a bigger role in South Asia. A look back at the history of how China became an observer member state in SAARC in 2007 makes India's intention more clear. On the eve of the 13th summer meeting of SAARC, India was firmly opposed to the proposal of turning China into a dialogue partner and observer state of SAARC, but hoped to add Afghanistan to the organization. Nepal proposed that the acceptance of Afghanistan must be on the condition of granting China an observer state status. A compromise was eventually reached among SAARC members that accepted Afghanistan into the organization while granting the status of observer state to China and Iran. In this aspect, India is on vigilance toward the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism.

Fourthly, the lack of clearly defined cooperation mechanism between China and SAARC has directly restricted the China-SAARC regionalism construction. Although China was accepted into SAARC as an observer country in 2007, a designated cooperation agency has not been established to further drive the cooperation between the two. Currently, the cooperation is carried out mainly on bilateral

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38.4% in India, 74.5% in Maldives, 64% in Nepal, 17.2% in Pakistan, and 51.7% in Sri Lanka are in the list. The average level of protection is 52.9%.

basis. By comparison, some major countries or organizations outside the region are leading ahead of China. ASEAN has established the foreign minister-level dialogue mechanism with SAARC since late 1990s; The “Japan- SAARC Special Foundation” has been in place between Japan and SAARC. In 2007, Li Zhaoxing, the Chinese Foreign Minister, represented China to take part in SAARC’s 14th summit meeting as an observer member for the first time. Li Zhaoxing stated that China was willing to develop relations with South Asian countries and SAARC was the best mechanism to build such relations. Under such a mechanism, Li Zhaoxing proposed for cooperation in the areas including poverty relief, efforts in disaster relief and reduction, human resources, and energy. Regardless, after many years, a clearly defined cooperation mechanism is not in place between China and SAARC. Consequently, cooperation is still carried out on bilateral basis between China and SAARC member states. The reasons can be traced back, as discussed earlier, mainly to India’s consideration of its strategic interests in the South Asia region and its worry over China’s threat to and impact on such interests. Such a worry has lasted till now. In the SAARC foreign minister meeting held in Maldives in February 2014, China expressed its hope to become a full member but was strongly opposed by India. As India’s foreign minister Salman Khurshid said, SAARC need to clarify SAARC’s nature and the direction in its relations with observer states.<sup>21</sup> It implied that SAARC would distinguish and classify the observer countries. Apparently, China belongs to the type that is likely to be excluded from SAARC. There is no doubt that a clearly defined cooperation mechanism and contact are preconditions for pushing forward the development of the China-SAARC regionalism, without which the construction of the China-SAARC regionalism will have no path.

Fifth, the rivalry from other major countries outside the region will impact the China-SAARC regionalism construction. Theoretically, SAARC means a lot to the major countries outside the region. Take the U.S. as an example, the region in the expanse of SAARC is an integral part of the U.S. For the achievement of the regional and global strategic goals of the U.S, which is made clear by the U.S.’ attempt to integrate Central Asia and South Asia and its proposal of the “New Silk Road” strategic plan, it holds the key to the control of the Indian Ocean and is extremely important for pressuring to reduce the strategic space of China and Russia, and preserving the U.S.’ global interests. As far as Russia is concerned, South Asia has been a painful memory. To realize its dream of thrusting to the India Ocean and becoming a real world super power, Russia must rely on SAARC, or some important countries in SAARC such as Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, etc. For Japan, the South Asian region offers the possibility of changing its current situation of over-reliance on China and enables Japan to move its trade with and investment in China to India in SAARC. In geographic strategy, Japan can ally with India to contain China. With regards to ASEAN that is an active player in regional politics, SAARC, despite many issues it has, provides a huge platform in theory for expanding cooperation with countries outside ASEAN. Therefore, it is on the foundation of pursuing strategic interests of their own, these major countries and organizations are exerting influence on the

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<sup>21</sup> “India Opposed China’s Full Membership in SAARC” *Global Times*, Feb. 25, 2014.

member states of SAARC in their own way. By taking the War in Afghanistan as an opportunity, the U.S. Integrated Central Asia and South Asia into “Middle-South Asia,” and openly flashed green light to SAARC countries on nuclear weaponry. In particular, it promised to help India become a global big power, attracting the world’s attention to the development of the India-U.S. relationship since the onset of the new century. In terms of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the U.S. has deepened their strategic influence on these two countries through the anti-terrorism war. Japan, on the other hand, has resorted to economic means to provide a large amount of aid to SAARC member states, especially the official development aid, making South Asia the region that has received the most official development aid from Japan. Russia, while strengthening the traditional friendship with India, has been taking the chance of arms trade in an attempt to cement and develop its relationship with the largest country in SAARC. Frankly, China has endeavored to develop relationship with SAARC for its own consideration of interests. As mentioned above, these interests include rationally control and manage conflicts and disagreements with member states of SAARC, develop economic cooperation with SAARC, and protect the security of the passageway on the ocean, etc. However, due to the impacts from geopolitical points of view typically found in the Cold War era, major countries from outside the region are highly cautious about China’s growing presence in the Indian Ocean and its attempt to carry out cooperation (such as harbor construction), which, added by India’s guarding against China, makes things even more complicated. In other words, the increasing level in the opening of SAARC to outside world makes it easier for major countries or organizations outside the region to conduct cooperation with SAARC, and these countries and organizations have made use of the precaution against China by SAARC members states like India to proactively work with these countries to exclude China from the cooperation with SAARC. One fact is that the cooperation between major countries such as the U.S., Japan and ASSRC member states has never been reported as threat by the media, but that between China and SAARC countries has been publicized by the media as China’s attempt to encircle and contain the largest SAARC member India. In such an atmosphere, it is very hard for SAARC to have the will, as a whole, to construct regionalism with China. Infiltration by major countries and organizations outside the region on project cooperation has weakened the wish and needs of SAARC to cooperate with China.

#### **11.4 The Paths for Building China-SAARC Regionalism**

Objectively speaking, as analyzed above, SAARC is extremely important to China in political security and economy. An effectively constructed China-SAARC regionalism will play a vital role for China to realize these interests. However, the China-SAARC regionalism construction faces real and objective difficulties. Thus, how to select an effective path for the construction becomes a topic that needs an immediate solution. Based on the actual situation, there are five paths of construction for us to choose from.

First, to construct the concept of “joint ownership” in the culture and political system in China and SAARC. Although there is a huge gap between the two in the culture and political system, which is used by scholars from some SAARC member states as a reason against the China-SAARC regionalism construction, such is not a sufficient reason in reality. From a cultural perspective, although scholars from outside the region all think that the Hindu culture and Muslim culture in South Asia have inextricable links, India and Pakistan became separated on the basis of the nature of Hinduism and Muslim culture, and the difference in form was not barriers in the establishment of SAARC. In terms of political system, as an IDSA official stated, democracy was not a criterion for SAARC membership. In the early phase of SAARC, both Nepal and Bhutan were an autarchy, Pakistan and Bangladesh were both dictatorship and Maldives was an authoritarian country, therefore, there is not much correlation between granting China an SAARC membership and whether it is an authoritarian state or democracy.<sup>22</sup> In this regard, whether China can successfully join SAARC does not depend on China’s culture or political system, but more on the influence by the geopolitics thinking of some countries in South Asia. Regardless, to reduce the resistance in the China-SAARC regionalism construction, China should address the differences it has with SAARC countries, construct the concept of “joint ownership” in the culture and political system, and create a favorable atmosphere for the China-SAARC regionalism construction. As a matter of fact, some scholars have begun making such attempts. The “great harmony of China and India” advocated by Jairam Ramesh from India and the “geographical civilization” invented by an Indian Chinese scholar Tan Zhong are representatives of the regionalism concepts that are put forward in an attempt to find the characteristics of “joint ownership” in the Chinese and Indian cultures as well as their development. What are the characteristics of “joint ownership” in the culture of China and that of SAARC member states? Vivekananda of India may offer some insights in his reply to the question about religion: Religion is about doing good things and becoming a good person. Other things such as doctrines, rituals, books and temples are less important.<sup>23</sup> Vivekananda revealed the fundamental spirit of religion in a concise and comprehensive language, and the same spirit is also reflected in other religions. What he said is also applicable to different cultures. Although cultural systems from different countries are different in many ways, their fundamental spirit, especially the positive nature, is without any doubt the characteristic of “joint ownership” in all cultures. At the core, the notion of “the whole world as one community” that is advocated by the Chinese culture and “all under heaven are of one family” that is an Indian cultural concept, in essence, lead to the same destination via different paths. Meanwhile, the political systems arising out of different cultural systems are not necessarily antagonistic. The “political democratic system” in India and “the system of people’s congress” in China are, at the core and in the fundamentals, to achieve the goal of establishing a good government and administration system and benefiting its people. A persistent

<sup>22</sup> Abiderda Md. Abdujjahe B “China as a SAARC Member: A Debate”, <http://www.academia.edu/1855572/china-as-a-SAARC-Member-A-Debate>

<sup>23</sup> Yonghui Qiu, p. 215.

focus on the seeming differences between the two political systems will result in us overlooking the characteristics of “joint ownership” between the two and thus causing opposing perceptions and misunderstanding. From this perspective, as the proactive initiator of regionalism, China should spend more time in constructing the “joint ownership” in culture and political system. It has come to our attention that some SAARC member states have the same understanding, making this path for construction both necessary and possible.

Secondly, to construct the identity of China as a full SAARC member state. This path, if successful, is undoubtedly the ideal state for the eventual realization of the China-SAARC regionalism. Supports from other SAARC members provide favorable conditions for the success of the path. Most SAARC member states have seen the achievement of China’s economic development and the opportunities it means to SAARC, but there are opposing voices mainly coming from India. There are several reasons for India’s opposition. First, there is a lack of cultural and historical connections between China and South Asia. Sharing the same border with South Asian countries does not make China a South Asian country. If China qualifies for full SAARC membership, other countries such as Burma, Iran and Central Asian countries should also be allowed to be eligible. Secondly, China’s political and economic system does not fit in SAARC. India believes that China is the largest authoritarian country in the world and provides aid to other authoritarian countries (in South Asia), so China’s entry into SAARC will jeopardize the democratization process in the region. Economically, China is not, from the Indian perspective, a country of market economy and the weak economy in South Asian countries cannot compete with it fairly. Thirdly, on security issues, China is in disputes with India and Bhutan on borders, and it is a complicated challenge to the security of India and the region as a whole. Furthermore, China, if granted the member status, will form a triangle with Pakistan and Nepal against India. Fourth, China’s entry will further complicate the pre-existing political issues between India and Pakistan, and China may use the principle of unanimous agreement through consultation against the development plan in SAARC and damage its development. From the political perspective, China’s entry is very likely to turn SAARC into a potential battle ground of political power.<sup>24</sup> Objectively speaking, these reasons are far-fetched. Take a look at ASEAN that is relatively more successful and can be used as a model of regional organization, political system pluralism, security issues, and polarization in economic systems are not barriers in the regionalism development. The real reason for India to oppose China’s membership is out of its regional and global strategic positioning: to dominate the South Asia region and treat China as a security threat and rival in Asia Pacific and in the world. Since 2010, the issue of China’s member status in SAARC has been repeatedly discussed but all ended up in failure as a result of unconditional opposition by India. The success of China’s plan to construct the China-SAARC regionalism via this path is dependent on India’s abandonment of its eccentric perception of viewing South Asia as its territories of influence and treating China as a threat, or changes

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<sup>24</sup> Abiderda Md. Abdujahes “China as a SAARC Member: A Debate”, <http://www.academia.edu/1855572/china-as-a-SAARC-Member-A-Debate>.

made to the mechanism in SAARC or to the principle of “unanimous agreement through consultation.” However, it is impossible for India to make such changes or agree to reforms in SAARC mechanism in recent years. Therefore, it looks unrealistic at least for now for China to construct regionalism via this path.

Thirdly, to construct SAARC’s “8 + 1” mechanism. Such a mechanism, primarily influenced by the China-ASEAN model, was first proposed by China in the 17th ASSRC summit in 2011 but was also vetoed by India. The advantage of this mechanism lies in the fact that India may not oppose to such a proposal as strongly as it does to China’s full membership. The purpose of the mechanism is for China to construct the dialogue partnership with SAARC. Although India will also try to prevent China from increasing its influence under the SAARC framework, China as a dialogue partner has different privileges and rights from a full member state. For instance, a partner does not have the voting right to make decisions on behalf of SAARC. However, if China becomes a dialogue partner, it will be able to take part in all the discussions and dialogues in SAARC and voice its proposition. This model is also operable. As India itself also has the need to construct a big country identity, China may choose to make some compromises in some regional organizations by clearly supporting some of its demands (e.g., a dialogue partner of SCO) in exchange for India’s acceptance of China as an SAARC dialogue partner.

Fourth, to construct the China-SAARC free trade area. In comparison, this path will have less barriers as it circumvents sensitive and security issues. Furthermore, despite India’s persistent vigilance toward China, it does not want to miss the opportunities to cooperate economically with China, which is made obvious by India’s willingness to push through the construction of free trade area and its agreement to join hands with China in the establishment of the Bangladesh-China-India-Burma economic corridor. India will not agree if the FTA progresses on the SAARC platform, but certainly in a lesser degree than it does to the previous two paths because over-reactions by India on this matter will further spur discontent from other SAARC countries. It is unlikely that India would ignore the possible impacts of such discontent on its own interests and therefore may be willing to cooperate in the establishment of the China-SAARC FTA as long as it does not pose sensitive political or security risks. Theoretically, economic cooperation will not only reduce risks of confrontation but also create favorable atmosphere and conditions for the resolution of political and security issues. A China-SAARC FTA enables the discussion of bilateral issues to be carried out under the China-SAARC framework, achieve breakthroughs in the prevailing bilateral model, and create a mechanism that restrains all parties in conflict. It will also provide a path and model for seeking solutions to political and security issues and eventually prepare for the elevation of strategic mutual trust between China and SAARC on the foundation of a free trade area.

Fifth, to seek opportunities to construct the China-SAARC regionalism from the multilateral mechanisms that both China and India take part in. As we have noticed, India has showed increasing interest in the bilateral mechanisms that both countries have jointly pushed forward in recent years despite its persistent guard and caution against China, such as the BRICS mechanism. Before 2014, the BRICS mechanism mainly served the purpose of coordinating to reach a shared position. The



sixth BRICS summit meeting held in 2014 marked a substantial development in this mechanism. In particular, the establishment of the BRICS Development Bank and the realization of the contingency reserve arrangement make it possible for BRICS to reshape international political and economic order in the future. India has been unprecedentedly enthusiastic about the BRICS mechanism. In his speech made in the BRICS summit meeting, Indian Prime Minister Modi stated that BRICS countries should intensify cooperation to meet the global challenges such as terrorism, cyber security, and climate change, etc. He even said that BRICS countries must address the world with one voice on the issues of building a peaceful, balanced and stable world.<sup>25</sup> The reason for Modi to emphasize on BRICS is that these multilateral mechanisms help India achieve the goal of becoming a world power, and in the meantime, the participation of multiple countries reduces India's anxiety and concerns over China. Another multilateral mechanism that plays a similar role is the Bangladesh-China-India-Burma economic corridor, in which India has showed a keen interest. Without a doubt, these multilateral mechanisms have provided a new path for China to construct the China-SAARC regionalism, i.e., under the multilateral mechanism, China may work with India to intensify the construction of the China-India interest community, and through proactive endeavors under the multilateral mechanism, China may make India fully understand that China is a "friendly, equal and prosperous" development partner with South Asian countries including India, thus brewing a favorable atmosphere and conditions for India's acceptance of China under the SAARC framework.

## 11.5 Conclusion

This article analyzes the significance of the "joint ownership" in the proactive efforts by China and SAARC in constructing the China-SAARC regionalism from the perspective of Constructivism. It also conducts a systematic analysis on what China has done in the regionalism construction as well as the actual difficulties it faces in the process. According to China's experiences in constructing regionalism, we think it feasible and possible for China to construct the China-SAARC regionalism if we choose the reasonable path to pursue this goal. However, the difficulties and challenges are obvious. In particular, the prospect of whether SAARC can turn itself into a highly efficient body of execution remains unclear and it is a very practical issue whether India would abandon its bias against China. For the former, even scholars from some South Asian countries think that SAARC is not a capable entity or an effective regional organization.<sup>26</sup> It is their hope that observer countries may play a

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<sup>25</sup> Narendra Modi. "Inclusive Growth: Sustainable Solutions". July 15, 2014", Prime Minister's statement at the Plenary Session of the 6th BRICS Summit, <http://www.mea.gov.in/>.

<sup>26</sup> Pandi, p. 96.

proactive and positive role to unite and strengthen this organization.<sup>27</sup> However, they may feel disappointed at the actual role an observer country can play because the history in the development of the South Asia region fully demonstrates that no one other than the SAARC member states themselves are able to shake up the political conflicts among SAARC member countries. For the latter, India's attitude toward China has undergone some changes. Over the issue of border control and management in particular, the willingness from both sides for a peaceful development was reflected in the incident of "tent standoff." However, these changes have not affected India's long-standing perception of China: China is the rival of and source of strategic threat to India. In such a background, India would do anything it can to stop China from expanding its influence in South Asia, especially through organizations like SAARC. As a result, in terms of path selection, we suggest to keep away from the sensitive bilateral political and security model, but instead choose the path of starting with constructing the concept of "joint ownership" in culture and political system, free trade area, and other multilateral mechanisms, gradually followed by a comprehensive development of the China-SAARC regionalism. Of course, as a near-term development goal and given the characteristics of China's strategy of regionalism, we suggest to focus on the strategy of building the free trade area by proactively pushing forward the feasibility and possibility of constructing FTA with SAARC, while the construction of cultural and political mechanism, and the multilateral mechanism may be set as longer-term goal, to eventually realize the overall construction of the China-SAARC regionalism in the areas of politics, security, and mutual trust.

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<sup>27</sup> Roman, "The Role Observer Countries Play in Strengthening Regional Cooperation in SAARC," Li and Rong [8].

# Chapter 12

## Analysis of China's Interests and Influence in the Middle East



Xinchun Niu

**Abstract** Although China's core interests in the Middle East are economic ones, other interests, such as political, strategic, security and overseas interests crisscross and come along with economic ones in a complementary and conflicting way. While China lacks the wherewithal, especially military wherewithal to protect her interests in the Middle East, she has a pool of assorted resources that are showing a trend of rapid growth, and the resources with the greatest potential are economic ones. In view of the gap between interests and influence, China should choose a new path of Middle East strategy different from that taken by any other major power in history.

**Keywords** China's foreign policy · Middle east · National interests · Energy

Ever since China became a net oil importer in 1993, the Middle East has become increasingly important to China and the Middle East issue has surged into preeminence.<sup>1</sup> To plan for a comprehensive, sustainable, clear, balanced and long-term strategic framework for the Middle East, China needs to clarify her basic interests and policy objectives in that area and make feasible policy choices based on her foreign policy traditions, national strength and political ideology.

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<sup>1</sup> "Middle East" in this article includes 22 countries in West Asia and North Africa, such as Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Sultanate of Oman, Palestinian, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Sudan, Mauritania etc. It's important to note that due to lack of data from the Chinese government, most of the data referenced in this article comes from Western media and databases, which might not show the whole picture.

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## 12.1 Interest Analysis

China's strategic objectives for the Middle East have changed numerous times in the past. The PRC in its early years was mainly committed to combating Western imperialism and promoting national liberation movements in Arab countries. After the 1960s, confrontation with American and Soviet influence and getting support from the third world became China's top priority. After the start of reform and opening in the late 1970s, the focus shifted to the economic realm. In 2009, at the 11th Ambassadorial Conference, Hu Jintao pointed out that efforts should be made to give China more influential power in politics, more competitiveness in the economic field, promote more affinity in its image, and more appealing force in morality. This "four strengths" would create a better international environment and external conditions for comprehensively establishing well-off society and speeding up socialist modernization.<sup>2</sup> This was the authoritative statement from the Central Committee regarding current diplomatic goals, which means during the new period, China's interests and strategy objectives should fall in line with them.

Sustained, steady and healthy economic growth is vital to China's overall interests. Given the high degree of external dependence (e.g. the ratio of total export–import volume to GDP is more than 50%), the stability of the global economic environment, especially that of principal trade partners is critical to the Chinese economy. As China's share in the world's trade with the Middle East keeps rising, the importance of this region is looming large and is sure to keep growing. In 1999, China's exports to the Middle East totaled USD6.47 billion and its imports totaled USD3.8 billion. In 2012, China's exports to the Middle East totaled USD121 billion and its imports totaled USD160 billion. China's total trade volume reached USD281 billion, accounting for 8% of her total volume of international trade (about USD3.87 trillion). By contrast, the percentage for 2005 was only 4.2%.<sup>3</sup> This growth in trade volume commands our attention. While the Middle East falls behind Europe (USD546 billion), USA (USD484.6 billion), Southeast Asia (USD400 billion) and Japan (USD329.4 billion) on the list of China's trading partners, it goes far ahead of Africa, Latin America and Central Asia.<sup>4</sup> With the growth of China's demand for oil and the expansion of the Middle East market, the volume of trade between China and the Middle East will certainly see fast growth. It is estimated that by 2014, the total trade volume between China and the Middle East could reach USD300 billion, and by 2020 that number is expected to range between USD350 billion to USD500 billion.<sup>5</sup> Of course, in terms

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<sup>2</sup> Tong Qian: Jintao Hu and other central leaders attend the 11th Ambassadorial Conference, available at: [http://news.Xinhua.net.coil/politics/2009-07/20/oonlen11740850\\_1.htm](http://news.Xinhua.net.coil/politics/2009-07/20/oonlen11740850_1.htm). (Accessed: Sept. 13, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Algerian [1].

<sup>4</sup> China's foreign trade development report 2012, Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, <http://www.twep.org.cn/upload/2013/03/12013030716033-6894.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Lee Hudson Teslin "China - Gulf Economic Relations", <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-gulf-economic-relations/p16398>. (Access date: September 9, 2013).

of trade volume alone, the Middle East's influence on China's economy is by no means decisive or strategic. As China's volume of trade with the Middle East falls behind that with Japan, the Middle East market, even if unstable, will not necessarily rock the entire Chinese economy.

China's share of the global Middle East direct investment and project contracting market is more impressive than her volume of trade in the Middle East. The project contracting market, in particular, is expanding in remarkable speed. From 2003 to July 1, 2013, China's investment and project contracts in the Middle East totaled USD72.92 billion in value, representing 10.6% of China's total investment and project contracting throughout the world. Specifically, over the same period, her total investment in the Middle East was USD23.02 billion, or 5.35% of her total investment overseas; her total project contract value in the Middle East was USD49.9 billion (or 19.37% of her total contract value overseas).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the value of direct investment is just as noteworthy as trade volume, and the project contracting market is even more so. However, USD49.9 billion in contract value in 10 years does not carry much strategic weight.

The importance of oil in the Middle East far outweighs China's investment in or trade with the Middle East. Since 2000, about 75% of the commodities imported by China from the Gulf States is oil, which plays a pivotal role in China's oil imports as a principle commodity of trade between her and the Middle East. In 2000 and 2001, Middle East oil accounted for 53.6% and 56.2% of China's total oil imports, respectively. By 2006, it dropped to 45.2% and by 2007 further down to 44.6%, and by 2011 it bounced back to 51.5%.<sup>7</sup> The outbreak of the Iraq war in 2003 affected oil exports in the Middle East and reminded China of the importance of diversified sources of oil and began searching for energy resources worldwide. Nevertheless, due to fast growth of our import volume, new energy supplies from Central Asia, South America and Africa did nothing to reduce China's dependence on Middle East oil. By 2030, an estimated 53% of China's oil imports would be from the Middle East. In the future, China will stay dependent on the Middle East as her largest oil and/or energy resource supplier and that is why the region is strategically important.

As far as security is concerned, the Middle East has such a weak relevance with China that it can pose no direct threat to her. Besides, being geographically far and disconnected from China and having no geographical disputes with her, the Middle East has no entanglement with China on any territorial or sovereignty issues. In terms of political security, none of the political systems, be they monarchies, military republics, or Islamic democracies in the Middle East, are predominant political systems featuring mainstream ideologies, but rather are currently on the defensive. Since there is no global power in the Middle East, no country will have the capacity to interfere in China's political affairs or threaten her political security.

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<sup>6</sup> Calculated according to statistics by the Heritage Foundation, The Heritage Foundation, China Global Investment Tracker Interactive Map, <http://www.heritage.org/research/projection/China-Global-Investment-Tracker-Interactive-Map>, (date of access: September 13, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Ma [2].

However, China has a Muslim population of 23 million and her Western region is closely associated with the Middle East in terms of geographical location, history, culture, ethnicity, language and religion. Inevitably, and as a part of its tradition, the Middle East region features religious, political, and cultural ideologies that target and infiltrate specific populations and regions in China. Based on experience from past decades, such infiltration and communication took place mainly through individuals, grass-roots organizations and NGOs. In the early twentieth century, “Pan-Turkism” and “Pan-Islamism” sprang up in the Middle East and Central Asia, and later spread to Xinjiang and caused the rise of Turkic Separatist Movement under the signboard of Islamism. Since the early 1980s, when China starting implementing her policy of reform and opening, Islamic revivalism has disseminated rapidly throughout Xinjiang, thus laying an ideological foundation for extremism. Also, the global “Jihadist” movement that began in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989 provided personnel and technical training for subsequent terrorist activities in Xinjiang. To conclude, it is safe to say that all previous political upheaval in the Middle East would affect Xinjiang to some extent. Key security issues Western China is now faced with are challenges from “Three Forces”—religious extremism, ethnic separatism, and terrorism. The Middle East is an international hub for the three forces. After 2001, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria became successive hubs of global terrorism and extremists from the world over frequented these countries and they often enter Western China through Central and South Asia to create a link effect. Currently, terrorist and separatist groups active in Xinjiang are closely connected with extremist forces in the Middle East and Central Asia in terms of funding, personnel and organization.<sup>8</sup>

From a strategic perspective, exclusive control of the region by any Middle Eastern country does not agree with China’s interests. In other words, the dominance of any ethnic, religious or political force in this region can jeopardize China’s interests, be it Turkish, Persian, Jewish, Arab, or Muslim. Many lessons in this regard can be drawn from history. In the middle of the seventh century, when Central Asia underwent the shock of monotheism, situation in Western China saw a complete change. For instance, China lost control of the Western region during the Tang Dynasty after she was defeated by the Arabs in the Battle of Talas.<sup>9</sup> The emergence of a mega political entity in the Middle East will put Western China in great jeopardy of its intervention. In recent years, Middle East countries have rarely interfered in China’s internal affairs on the pretext of religion, human rights and racial issues. There has been but one exception. In 2009, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan denounced China for her handling of the Xinjiang Incident. At that time, the Turkish government proposed “Zero-problem” diplomacy directed at the “South” and “East” simultaneously. Judging from its high ground in the Middle East, the way it carries itself and its growing ambition, Turkey has a lot of the makings of the ancient Ottoman Empire. It is not hard to conceive that a superpower similar to the Ottoman Empire that rises in the Middle East would definitely outshine Turkey of 2009 both in ambition and confidence. Moreover, Middle East influence on China is inserted mainly through

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<sup>8</sup> Liu [3].

<sup>9</sup> Zhen [4].

Central and South Asia. If a Mideast country were to exclusively control Central Asia, it would also pose a threat to China as well. Currently, US, China, Russia, Turkey and Iran all carry considerable influence in Central Asia, but none of them carry any exclusive weight. The relative independence of these Central Asian states poses no strategic threat to China. In the international arena, the Middle East has always been a hot spot, where the US, Europe, Russia and China are the main players. However, any exclusive control of the Middle East by any foreign force would be inconsistent with China's interests. For a long time, America's Mideast policy has been prevention of exclusive control of the Middle East by any external power. After Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, US President Jimmy Carter announced that any foreign dominance of the Gulf region constituted infringement of core US interests and that the US would fight back by all means, including military action. This principle, which is actually the cornerstone of America's Middle East policy, accords with the common interests of US and China. In consideration of the complexity of history, politics, religion, race problems, and the profundity of conflicts in Middle East, neither single country, denomination in that region nor America can monopolize Middle East for all time. However, to prevent the outside powers from doing whatever they like in the Middle East is still the interests of China. Given the complex nature of historical, political, religious and racial issues in the region, dominance of any country or religious sect over here is out of the question. The US will never have exclusive control over the Middle East. Still, prevention of freewill action in the region by any external power is in the interests of China.

As the largest developing country and the largest socialist country in the world, China differs greatly from western developed countries whether in terms of history, culture, economy, political system or ideology. It is in China's political interest to maintain the equal status and dignity of China's political ideology in the world and to keep it from being isolated or attacked by the West. In the Middle East, there are developed democracies such as Israel and Islamic democracies such as Turkey generally following defensive political ideologies that do not pose any threat to China's political ideology.

Specifically, China's political ideology follows the Four Cardinal Principles in the domestic political arena and the Five Principles of Independence and Peaceful Coexistence in the international political arena, and in terms of the road of national development, a road of gradual reform and opening. China's journey of more than 30 years' reform and opening shows that progressive reform not only helps maintain basic stability, but also gradually solves urgent political, economic and social problems, in a proactive and effective manner. In contrast, violent revolution or sticking to old practices is by no means desirable. Adherence to the socialist road and the leadership of the Communist Party of China are part of the Four Cardinal Principles. In other words, maintaining the ruling status of the party is not only legal, but also constitutional. By extension, it means that a country's political system and the legitimacy of its government should be determined by its people rather than any foreign forces. Any rash judgment on the legitimacy of another government is in itself illegitimate. Accordingly, in the past three years, when Western countries declared that Mubarak, Qaddafi and Assad lost legitimacy to lead, China has never followed suit

or joined in their ranks. In the domain of international politics, China abides by the Five Principles of Independence and Peaceful Coexistence, especially the principles of non-alignment and non-interference in other countries' internal affairs. Middle East countries in political transition have seen infiltration by Western forces so deep that that the region has become a stage of ideological struggle between the East and the West.

China's overseas interests include the legitimate rights and interests of overseas enterprises and citizens.<sup>10</sup> Currently, China has 20,000 enterprises across about 200 countries and regions and about 80 million people who travel overseas on annual basis.<sup>11</sup> Currently, China has five million citizens overseas. Statistical data concerning China's personnel and interests in the Middle East can hardly be accurate. During evacuation from Libya in 2011, it was discovered that there were then 30,000 Chinese national there. It was also known that there were 20 million Chinese nationals in Dubai. According to statistics from the Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese in 2010, there were a total of 550,000 Chinese nationals and Chinese immigrants in the Middle East that year.<sup>12</sup> The Ministry of Commerce has historically been relatively low on statistical data of investment and project contracting outside China. According to statistical data from the Heritage Foundation, over the past 10 years, China's contracted projects in the Middle East amounted to USD48.8 billion, while Libya's was only USD620 million. According to information obtained after Libya evacuation in 2011, China's contracted projects in Libya amounted to USD18.8 billion. In times of peace, China's interests overseas can be protected by the host government, but that is not the case when the political situation in that sovereign state spins out of control. China would then have to rely on its own power. Long-term turbulence and fragmentation of the Middle East have made it the most dangerous region for China's overseas interests, so China has to take it very serious and be fully prepared to deal with emergencies.

## 12.2 Sequence of Interests

Wherever two or more types of interests exist, there will always be conflicts, overlaps, offsets or connections of interests, which necessitate sorting by order of priorities. The China's Peaceful Development White Paper says that China's core interests include national sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national unity, stability of the state and social system and the basic guarantee for socio-economic sustainable development as defined in the Chinese constitution.<sup>13</sup> China's core interests could be

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<sup>10</sup> Edwards [5].

<sup>11</sup> Edwards [5].

<sup>12</sup> The Heritage Foundation, China Global Investment Tracker Interactive Map, <http://www.heritage.org/research/projection/China-Global-Investment-Tracker-Map>. (Accessed: Sept. 13, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> State Council Information Office, "China's Peaceful Development", available at <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/15598619.html>. (Accessed: Dec. 15, 2012).



divided into three parts: sovereignty, political security and economic development. In reference to the US National Security Strategy Report, China's national interests can be classified as core interests, vital interests and general interests. Based on the definitions above, China's energy interests in the Middle East can be defined as core interests. Currently, 60% of China's energy consumption depends on imports. By 2030, her energy import ratio will reach 75% and half of that will be from the Middle East. Therefore, the energy resources of the Middle East materially impact the sustainable development of China's economy and touch upon China's core interests. Although the Middle East poses no immediate, serious threat to China in terms of strategic, security and overseas interests, it has indirect major influence on China that constitutes China's vital interests in the Middle East. China's political interests in the Middle East, which are primarily ideological, can be classified as general interests.

And since stable energy supply and price call for political stability, a stable Middle East falls in line with China's core interests. Specifically, China's main energy suppliers are Gulf States. In 2011, for example, her main oil suppliers were Saudi Arabia (22%), Iran (12%), Oman (8%), Iraq (6%), Kuwait (4%), and UAE (3%). These states almost constitute all shares of the Middle East's oil exports to China. As long as the Gulf region remained stable, or as long as the Gulf States do not fall into turmoil simultaneously, the Middle East's energy supply to China will be basically guaranteed and China's core interests will not be undermined. Any turbulence in the non-oil region of the Middle East would definitely impact Israel's national security, and since that is related to the ups and down of terrorist activities, it has a lot of bearing on US interests and only weak impact on China's interests.

While such turbulence may do no harm to China's core interests, it may affect China's security and her political and overseas interests. Libya is an oil-producing country from which China imported 634.4 tons of oil in 2010, representing 2–3% of that year's total oil imports, but it's neither a key oil supplier nor an important trade partner to China. Bilateral trade volume between China and Libya in 2010 was about USD6.58 billion. Moreover, as of 2009, China's direct investment in Libya was no more than USD30 million, making it an unlikely China's primary investment destination. However, regime change in Libya has caused significant loss to China's foreign interests. China's emergency evacuation by all means cost her RMB 300 million, while the Libyan civil war caused China property losses amounting to RMB 1.5 billion. Though the total value of China's contracted projects in Libya was only USD18.8 billion, the ultimate loss might have reached USD20 billion.<sup>14</sup> Egypt's foreign trade volume of just USD8.8 billion in 2011 was economically insignificant. As the most populous Middle East country, however, its political developments have indicating significance. The military suppression of Muslim Brotherhood resulted in acute political conflicts and touched off a chain reaction. Similarly, Syria's trade volume of USD3 billion in 2011 was insignificant to China's strategy and economy, but foreign intervention in Syria's internal affairs would do harm to China's political and ideological interests. At the UN Security Council, China took the precedent using her veto power three times to veto UN motions on Syria. From 2005 to 2013, countries

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<sup>14</sup> Wang [6].

in which China had placed investment and had contracted projects worth more than USD1 billion include: Iran (USD20.3 billion), Saudi Arabia (USD14.9 billion), Iraq (USD8.5 billion), Turkey (USD5.4 billion), Qatar (USD4.7 billion), Algeria (USD4.5 billion), Syria (USD3.7 billion), Egypt (USD2.7 billion), Kuwait (USD1.8 billion), UAE (USD1.6 billion), and Israel (USD1.6 billion).<sup>15</sup> Obviously, China's interests in the Middle East were widely distributed, and the Gulf oil states, Levant, and non-oil countries in North Africa are all China's investment destinations. More importantly, China's interests overseas are related to the security of overseas Chinese citizens and it is a political issue whose importance far exceeds any economic considerations. Any turmoil in the Middle East, whether in Gulf oil states or other non-oil countries, would inexorably harm China's interests overseas. Some traditional hot issues that appear to be local and limited may not directly or immediately threaten China's interests, but they are the basis on which political conflicts intensify and terrorism spreads and they may develop into an environment unfavorable to China's interests.

Obviously, the kind of threat China's interests are faced with varies with the level, location and nature of turbulence in the Middle East. Overall though, it will negatively impact all facets of China's interests. Meanwhile, one point of view that has been holding sway both in and outside China is that the turmoil in the Middle East can engage the US in a way that prevents it from a strategic move to the east, relieves China's strategic pressure in Asian-Pacific region. On the other hand, turbulence in the Middle East can scare off Western investment, and thus leave room for emerging Chinese investment. This may sound logical and reasonable, but is actually simplistic and perverted. On one hand, turbulence in the Middle East jeopardizes China's economic, political, strategic, security and overseas interests; on the other, engaging the US can relieve China of her strategic pressure in the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, the ultimate test would be the final balance sheet between jeopardy in the Middle East and the benefits from Asia-Pacific region. First, we must look at the extent of US involvement. Critics often cite the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War as examples of wars that are large enough to hold the US in check. During these two wars, the US had committed a total of two million troops, of which more than 6,000 died and more than 40,000 were injured. Direct expenses reached up to USD1.5 trillion.<sup>16</sup> Had these wars been smaller and shorter, they would have been questionable in their potential to strategically contain America. For example, no one believes that the Libyan War has constituted any containment on the US. Second, the degree of instability must fall within the confines of Scaring away Western investment and keeping China's investment safe. Undeniably, in Middle East countries that have strained relations with the US, or countries that lack tranquility, such as Sudan, Iraq, Iran and Algeria, China can usually obtain some upstream investment opportunities and therefore wield great economic influence. China's energy investment in the Middle East focuses on upstream projects. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), one of the investors, is now the biggest foreign oil company

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<sup>15</sup> The Heritage Foundation, China Global Investment Tracker Interactive Map, <http://www.heritage.org/research/projection/China-Global-Investment-Tracker-Map>. (Accessed: Sept. 13, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Harass [7].

in Iraq. In 2008, it invested USD3.3 billion in Iraq; in 2012, its three projects in Iraq produced 704,000 barrels of oil on daily basis, accounting for one third of CNPC's total foreign oil production.<sup>17</sup> After the turmoil in Egypt in 2011, Western firms began to withdraw. In September 2013, Sinopec and Apache Corporation reached an agreement providing that Sinopec would spend USD3.1 billion to acquire one-third of Apache's interest in Egypt's oil and gas assets. Since 2005, when Western countries imposed sanctions against Iran, Chinese companies made planning investments in Iran amounting up to USD120 billion in five years. However, these investments were high-risk enterprises with an uncertain future. In fact, only USD 6 billion of China's investments in Iran took effect. In 2012 in particular, after Western countries had tightened sanctions on Iran, almost all previously negotiated upstream projects between China and Iran came to a standstill. Since 2005, Chinese investment in Iran worth up to USD22.7 billion has failed.<sup>18</sup> In 2013, China's investment security faced severe challenges from repeated backsliding in security. China's investment security has been confronted with major risks. Conceivably, China would not gloat over the United States' strategic entanglement in the Middle East, but would definitely be shocked by the turbulence over there. However, there is an interlinked cause and effect relationship between American involvement in the Middle East and unrest in the Middle East—either the US got involved due to unrest in the region, as is the case with Gulf War in 1991 or US involvement caused unrest in the region, as is the case of the Iraq war in 2003. China cannot choose one side of the coin and not the other. On the issue of regional instability, turmoil in the Gulf oil states can hurt China's core interests, while unrest in other non-oil regions touches upon China's general and vital interests. The complex effects of turmoil in the Middle East in containing the US makes it hard to make any general conclusions and they have to be judged based on actual time, place and on a case-by-case basis.

Nevertheless, stability is no equivalent to maintenance of the status quo. The status quo of the Middle East is often unstable and the balance of power there weak. Therefore, pursuit of stability necessitates change of status quo and gradual elimination of the root of unrest. Basic factors that cause the Middle East to be turbulent and vulnerable include conflicts between Islamic states and Western countries, between Arab states and Israel, between Sunni states and Shia states, between political Islam and secular political forces, between US allies and non-US allies, between autocratic governments and the people—these are all fundamental factors that cause long-term turbulence and vulnerabilities in the Middle East. Any intensification and solidification of these conflicts are not in line with China's interests. Currently, the vulnerable balance in the Middle East relies on US support, but generally speaking, Western interference is one of the key roots of long-term instability in the region and its negative effects far exceed its positive ones. Therefore, the withdrawal of Western

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<sup>17</sup> CNPC, Petrofac Make Joint Bid for Kumaila Contracts, *International Oil Daily*, March 18, 2013; Unrest Hits CNPC's 2012 Output, *International Oil Daily*, January 18, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Derek Scissors, China's Steady Global Investment: American Choices, Available at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/07/china-s-Steady-global/investment/American-choices>. (Accessed: September 21, 2013).

countries, especially of the US, from the Middle East is beneficial to the long-term stability in the region. That doesn't mean the US would walk away in an irresponsible manner, instead, it means it will leave in a responsible and orderly manner, so that the Middle East would still belong to the people there. At least, the US should reduce its direct intervention in the internal affairs of the Middle East and play an offshore balancing role so that various forces there could seek their own balance. Responsible withdrawal of foreign forces from the Middle East is in China's interests while intensified external intervention is not.

Conflicts among Middle East states, political corruption and economic deformity restrict the potential of economic development, thus affecting China's market share in the region. In 2012, the Middle East's proven oil reserves accounted for 48.4% of the world's total, while its production was only 32.5% of the world's total. During the same year, the United States' proven oil reserves were 2.1% of the world's total, while its production accounted for 9.6% of the world's total. In terms of gas reserves, the Middle East's proven gas reserves accounted for 43% of the world's total, while its production accounted for only 16.3% of the world's total. Proven gas reserves of the US represented only 4.5% of the world's total, while its production was as much as 20.4% of the world's total. In major oil countries such as Iran and Iraq, productive potential has been restricted for ages. Proven oil reserves in Iran are as much as 9.4% of the world's total while its production only accounts for 4.2% of the world's total. Iraq's percentage in proven oil reserves is 9% while its production percentage is 3.7%.<sup>19</sup> The Middle East has a large population and a lot of countries that are divided into isolated and even segregated markets of varying sizes with relatively small market capacities. During the process to restore balance of power among countries in the region, as political and economic reforms are being carried out, there will have to be a period of turbulence, conflict and vitality in which China's interests will be temporarily threatened. It is an inevitable process that's better off started sooner than better, so as to avoid violent revolution. It is therefore necessary that, all conflicting parties of the region and the major powers of the international community work together to creatively solve these historic problems and increase the level of economic integration in the Middle East.

Comprehensive analysis shows that a Middle East that sees gradual withdrawal of external forces and restoration of balance of power within is in line with China's interests, a Middle East that carries out top-down and incremental political modernization and reform is in line with China's interests; and a prosperous, stable, and economically integrated Middle East is in line with China's interests.

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<sup>19</sup> *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2013, Available at: <http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/statistical-review/statistical-re-view-of-wood-energy-2013.pdf>. (Accessed: Sept. 13, 2013).

### 12.3 Influence Analysis

Once the priorities of China's interests in the Middle East are set, the next step is to review strategic resources in China's control. There is often a gap between resources and objectives. Pursuit of objectives is always limited by lack of resources. Allocation of resources needs to be adjusted based on priority of objectives. Alternatively, priority of objectives needs to be adjusted based on the quantity and features of resources. When pursuing interests in the Middle East, China cannot possibly depart from traditional diplomacy, mainstream ideology and national strength.

Although China has huge economic resources in the Middle East, its influence on this area is still latent, prospective and regional. China today is the largest trading partner to 128 countries, the fastest-growing and leading export market in the world, the most promising investment destination and a major import country of energy resource products.<sup>20</sup> As the largest trading partner of the Middle East in 2012, China is exceptionally important to the Middle East. As the largest importer of Middle East oil, China imports the largest volume of oil from the Middle East. By IMF estimation, every 1% drop in China's GDP growth would result in a drop of 6% in metal and energy prices.<sup>21</sup> This bears greatly on the Middle East because of its role as a major origin and production base of global energy and metal resources. However, economic interdependence itself cannot automatically produce influence. The conversion to influence hinges upon the sensibility and vulnerability of dependence. Sensibility measures how fast and deep a country's policy change can affect another country. Vulnerability measures the degree of irreparable loss that changes of one country's policy causes to another country.<sup>22</sup> In the trade arena, in 2012, China exported to the Middle East USD121 billion worth of mostly light industry goods such as home appliances, telecommunications products, machinery and equipment, and foodstuffs, which can be easily supplied by alternative suppliers. Therefore, the Middle East has low sensibility and vulnerability in its reliance on China's exports, and so, China cannot possibly impact the Middle East through that. That same year, China imported USD160 billion worth of predominantly oil products from the Middle East. Currently, the oil market is still a seller's market in which all oil consuming countries fight for oil resources to ensure supply and price stability. Meanwhile, the Gulf States need a large and stable oil market, and that market is irreplaceable for China. Therefore, the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of both sides on the oil issue are relatively strong, and have reached a point where neither can do without the other.

Although China's dependence on Middle East oil is currently a restricting factor, it has the potential to be converted into a strategic resource in the future. The oil market is going through an upheaval over which the parties' predictions all vary. The International Energy Agency (IEA) and the US Energy Information Administration forecast that global energy demand will continue to grow. British Petroleum also

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<sup>20</sup> Wang [8].

<sup>21</sup> Rapoza [9].

<sup>22</sup> Robert O. Methane and Joseph S. Nye. *Pouter and Interdependence*, Little Brown and Company, 1997, pp. 11–19.

predicted that global oil demand would rise from the current 89 million barrels per day to 104 million barrels per day. Citibank forecasted that once oil demand reached the ceiling of 92 million barrels per day, it would drop in the next couple of years, but oil supply would continue to rise.<sup>23</sup> If that's the case, China and the Middle East would switch positions in the sensibility and vulnerability analysis, and oil transactions would go the way of a buyer's market instead of a seller's market, and thus China's influence on the Middle East would grow significantly. From a long-term perspective, this trend would undermine the oil producing countries' ability to control oil supply and oil price and become the biggest loser during the oil market change. Conversely, emerging countries like China would have more say in oil politics as their consumer demand rises.

Currently, the limited amount and technical caliber of China's direct investment in the Middle East can hardly translate into effective influence. Between 2003 and 2011, China accounted for just 1.8% of all foreign investment in the Middle East. By contrast, Europe and the US accounted for 24% and 18% of the total, respectively.<sup>24</sup> In particular, China is not yet in position to acquire high-end technology contracts, rarely acquires upstream energy investment projects, which means she is easily replaceable and low on sensibility and vulnerability to Middle East states. A great majority of high technology projects went to the US, Europe, Japan and Korea. For example, in 2009, Korea won the UAE project of four nuclear power stations with a total value of more than USD20 billion, while China has thus far won no market share in the huge nuclear power market of the Middle East. By contrast, China has an upper edge only in low-tech infrastructure and transportation projects. To put that in perspective, China accounted for 45% of all of the Middle East's capital construction projects contracted by foreign countries, while the US accounted for but 9% of that.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, China's potential in direct investment is huge. The Chinese government and the state-owned banks have a foreign exchange reserve of up to USD4 trillion, most of which can be used for foreign investment. Growth rate of China's investment overseas is far from meeting expectations, the amount of investment being USD69.2 billion in 2010, USD76.2 billion in 2011, USD79.1 billion in 2012, about USD80 billion in 2013 and about USD100 billion in 2016.<sup>26</sup> As China struggles to find investment markets, the Middle East has a huge demand for foreign investment. The IEA estimates that between now and 2035, a total of USD37 trillion would be needed for energy infrastructure investment worldwide, including USD430 billion in annual oil supply and USD184 billion in annual gas supply.<sup>27</sup> In the future, a major challenge for energy producers in Middle East is how best to attract sufficient investment. Needless to say, China's greatest strength lies in her role as the second

<sup>23</sup> The Future of Oil: Yesterday's Fuel, *The Economist*, August 3, 2013, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Shifting Perspective, Available at: [http://www.ey.com/publication/vwLUAssets/shifting\\_perspective\\_middle\\_east\\_2012/\\_file/shifting\\_per-spective\\_middle\\_east\\_2012\\_pdf](http://www.ey.com/publication/vwLUAssets/shifting_perspective_middle_east_2012/_file/shifting_per-spective_middle_east_2012_pdf). (Accessed: 13th of Sep, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Region's Project Market Booms, MEED, May 12, 2013, Chart: Contractors by Project Value.

<sup>26</sup> Scissors [10].

<sup>27</sup> Lee [11].

largest market in the world. In 2012, for example, China's total imports reached about USD1.82 trillion. Currently, the Middle East exports only a small fraction of non-oil products to China, but increased diversification of its economy will certainly add to the appeal of the Chinese market.

Despite her steadfast growth in foreign aid, China's aid to the Middle East is small and insignificant. By comparison, her aid to Africa is very impressive. As indicated in the China's Foreign Aid in 2009 White Paper published in 2011, China's aid to Africa comprised 45.7% of her total foreign aid, while her aid to Asia accounted for 32.8%. The Middle East was not even listed as a separate aid region. Clearly, the strategic significance of the Middle East has not yet been recognized in China's foreign aid strategy. Since the inauguration of Egypt's Morsi administration in 2012, the US has provided it an annual regular aid of USD1.55 billion, and has removed Egypt's USD one billion debt through consultation, and the International Monetary Fund has been negotiating with Egypt for a loan of USD4.8 billion. During Morsi's visit to China in December that year, China offered Egypt a loan of up to USD200 million. After Morsi had stepped down, in their efforts to support the Egyptian military, three Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE provided a one-time aid of USD12 billion to Egypt. Obviously, compared with the US and the Gulf States, China's aid to the Middle East is minimal and not enough to produce any significant impact. The gap in foreign aid to the Middle East between China and the US is not just a reflection of national strength, but even more a gap in strategic objectives between the two countries. As per statistics from a US research institute, OECD countries contributed USD 27 billion in aid to Africa in 2007, whereas China alone gave Africa USD 9.8 billion in 2011 and USD 75.4 billion between 2010 and 2011. China's aid to Africa dwarfed that from the developed countries. As a matter of fact, the Chinese government has the wherewithal to fulfill whatever pledges it makes or whatever strategic decisions it makes.

Compared with her economic potential, China's political resources in the Middle East are real and impressive. China and the Middle East have both been victims of colonization and political denunciation by the West. Economically, China and the Middle East are both in the developing stage while diplomatically they both abhor American intervention. Therefore, the two parties have a strong sense of mutual recognition in the area of political ideology, which constitutes China's biggest political resource in the Middle East. In terms of political system, China and the Middle East (except for Israel) have both accused by the West of being undemocratic and illiberal and have been repressed by western politics.

Based on the American watchdog organization Freedom House's 2013 freedom index ranking, the following countries were classified as Not Free or Partly Free: China (6.5), Algeria (5.5), Bahrain (6), Egypt (5), Iran (6), Iraq (6), Jordan (5.5), Kuwait (5), Lebanon (4.5), Libya (4.5), Morocco (4.5), Oman (5.5), Qatar (5.5), Saudi Arabia (7), Syria (6), Tunisia (3.5), Turkey (3.5), UAE (6), and Yemen (7).<sup>28</sup> Due to

<sup>28</sup> According to the report from "Freedom House", standard index is 1, the higher of the index refer to lower degree of freedom, Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world> (Accessed: Sept. 21, 2013).



common political status, China and the Middle East are often close to each other in their stands in international political struggle. They share their opposition to Western “New Interventionism,” “Responsibility to Protect,” and the “Supremacy of Human Rights over Sovereignty.” China and Arab countries have zero interests to interfere in others internal affairs, on the contrary, they all concerned to be interfered by western countries.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, when United States handle Middle East’s issue, no matter it is their allies or not, more or less they would utilize human rights or democracy, so that the Middle East countries have to beware of everywhere. Meanwhile, China and Arab countries have no interest in interfering in each other’s internal affairs and they both are concerned about interference from the West.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, in dealing with Middle East issues, the US will more or less wield the big stick of human rights and democracy in a way that puts the Mideast countries on the defensive at all times.

In the economic sphere, the waves of Western liberal capitalism also push the state-owned economic model of China and the Middle East to the outer margins and corners of the international community. In the relationship between government and market, Chinese and the Mideast governments all play leading roles in their economies. China is a state-dominated socialist market economy, while the Gulf States are predominantly state-owned oil economies. China has been referred to by Western scholars as a typical example of state capitalism in the twenty-first century,<sup>31</sup> while the majority of Mideast governments play more prominent roles in their economies than the Chinese government does. More than 76% of China’s assets are state-owned, while less than a quarter of her assets are owned by the private sector.<sup>32</sup> Government-sponsored companies comprise 80% of China’s stock market value.<sup>33</sup> State-owned (non-financial) companies account for 29.7% of China’s GDP. In 2011, PetroChina, Sinopec and China Power are listed among the top 10 of the global Fortune 500 enterprises.<sup>34</sup> State-owned enterprises account for 65% of Saudi Arabia’s economy. In Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards alone controls at least 60% of Iran’s domestic economy.<sup>35</sup> Revenue of Saudi Arabia’s state-owned Saudi Aramco represents 85% of the Saudi government’s entire fiscal budget. In 2013, China and the Mideast countries had six of the top 10 largest sovereign funds in the world. Therefore, some Arab scholars hold that China’s development path is worth borrowing by Arab societies.

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<sup>29</sup> Gearon [12].

<sup>30</sup> Gearon [12].

<sup>31</sup> Bremen [13].

<sup>32</sup> Chen Ziwu, The size of the Chinese government, Available at: <http://news.163.com/08/0225/08/45HLHU68000121EP.html>. (Accessed: Sept. 21, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> Bremniev [14], The Rise of State Capitalism, *The Economist*, January 21–27, 2012, p. 11.

<sup>34</sup> Aldo Musacchio Sergio G.I-leviathan in Business: Varieties of State Capitalism and their Implications for Economic Performance, Harvard Business School Working Paper 12–108, June 4, 2012, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Abba Milan, Taking Tehran’s Temperature: One Year on, Panel at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Available at: <http://came-gieendowmentl.org/files/0609carnegie-Tehran.pdf>. (Accessed: Sept. 6, 2013) mooperation for mutual benefit and s -aligned. it (5),



Similarity of political ideology puts China and the Middle East in the same stance in the East–West confrontation. Since its entry to the Middle East, the US has been consistently practicing hegemony and siding with Israel, and that has become the biggest rub between the US and Arab countries. By comparison, China's long-term and consistent adherence to the foreign policy of independence and peace in the Middle East has become a rich political asset. Nonalignment is the core of the “four No's and one all-around” principle of independence (nonalignment, non-isolation, non-confrontational, not targeting any third country, and all-around diplomacy).<sup>36</sup> Nonalignment does not mean no political principle or position. The fact is, China has consistently supported the national independent movements among Arab peoples and has provided the Arab world with political support in their conflicts with Israel. China has consistently declared her support for the “just cause of the Palestine people” when she refers to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Sun Bigan, China's Special Envoy on the Middle East Issue, pointed out that generally Arab states support China's stand on issues such as human rights, Taiwan and Tibet, and China supports the Arab states in their sovereignty and territorial integrity claims as well as their legitimate national interests. Non-interference in each other's internal affairs is the key in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which is stated as “Mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression and mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.” The UN Security Council is a key stage where China employs her political influence and where China has given full political support to Middle East countries. During the 1990s, China cast a total of 50 votes that were different from US votes and 22% of them concerned Middle East issues. After 2000, China cast 33 votes that were different from those of the US, and 55% of them were about Middle East issues. Such voting inconsistencies concerning the Middle East reached 72% between 2011 and 2012.<sup>37</sup> Before 2011, China had rarely used its veto power. From 1971 to 2009,<sup>38</sup> China had used a total of five vetoes only, whereas between 2011 and 2012 she used her veto power on the Syria issue for a total of three times. A great majority of China's abstaining and veto votes were cast to address issues concerning Western interference in Middle East countries over territorial sovereignty, and they had a lot to do with China's political and ideological stand. On issues of Palestine and Israel, China voted in favor of the Palestinians while the US stood for Israel's interests. China won political recognition from the majority of the Arab people through her political support for them and her non-interference in their internal affairs. Various polls show that China's presence in the Middle East is well-received. A 2010 poll by the BBC showed that 43% of the respondents maintained that China's influence was positive, while only 29% said that

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<sup>36</sup> Gu Cheng, Mu Xinhai, The ‘unchanged of change’ of China's independence, Available at: <http://www.politicalchina.org/printnews.asp?newsid=36,493>. (Accessed: 15th of Sep, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Yitzhak Snitcher Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Hearing on “China and the Middle East,” Available at: <http://origin.www.usec.gov/sites/default/files/transcripts/US-CC%20Hearing%20Transcript%20-%20June%206%202,013.pdf>. (Accessed: 15th of Sept, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> Yitzhak Shich of, China's Voting Behavior in the UN Security Council, China Brief. No. 18, 2006, pp. 4–6.

the American influence was positive.<sup>39</sup> In a 2010 poll done by the Arab Poll Center of the Brookings Institute, China ranked second on the “most popular superpower” list while the US ranked second to last on the list.<sup>40</sup> The Islamic public’s aversion to the US has become a soft spot in the alliance between the US and the Arab governments and has caused the Arab states to keep a distance from the US and to woo China as a counterbalance to US influence.

Compared with her economic and political resources, China’s military resources are so scanty that they have become a salient weakness in China’s Middle East strategy. The principal ways for a state to exert military influence overseas include military presence, military alliance, arms sales, military exercises, and military exchanges. And yet, China has no upper edge in these areas. Although there is every indication that the People’s Liberation Army is committed to developing a regional modernized army by 2020, the Chinese military made little progress in global action or global power delivery, neither does the Chinese navy have any field experience outside regional waters.<sup>41</sup> China has neither military allies nor military presence in the Middle East except for some navigation protection warships in the Gulf of Aden. Over the past four years, the Chinese navy sent 14 formations with 10,000 troops to escort 5,000 Chinese and foreign commercial ships. In September 2010, China’s Air Force and Turkey held a joint anti-terrorism military exercise, marking China’s first military activity in NATO territory and in the Middle East. China has military exchanges with just a few countries in the Middle East. Between 2001 and 2010, high-level military exchanges between China and the Middle East included 29 sessions in Egypt, 20 in Turkey, 10 in Syria, 9 in Jordan and 8 in Tunisia, far fewer and much smaller in scale than those with Africa and South America. In contrast, the US and Russian military exchanges and cooperation with the Middle East are far more extensive and in-depth. Between 1992 and 2012, the Middle East bought USD70.658 billion worth of arms from the US, USD38.59 billion from Russia, and only USD 3.3 billion from China. In addition, China’s arms sales to the Middle East saw a sharp decline.<sup>42</sup> In 2000, China’s arms sales to the Middle East accounted for 19% of her total arms sales volume that year. In 2012, it dropped to 2.5%.<sup>43</sup> From any point of view, China’s military influence in the Middle East is fully negligible.

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<sup>39</sup> Global Views of United States Improve While Other Countries Decline, BBC News, April 18, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Shibley [15].

<sup>41</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2011, Available at: <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/2011.CMPR.final.pdf>. (Accessed: Sept. 15, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Arms Export to the Middle East, SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.

<sup>43</sup> Yitzhak Shichor [16].

## 12.4 Conclusion

The interest analysis indicates the ideal goal of foreign policy, and the influence analysis based on that defines the realistic objectives of foreign policy. Further analysis of specific diplomatic principles and foreign policies will be needed to build up on the interest and influence analysis and effectively use influence to achieve diplomatic goals and protect national interests. Although China's Middle East interests are complex and need some down-to-earth research, interest and influence have strong objectivity and are easy for consensus building. By contrast, diplomatic principles and diplomatic means are more subjective, very prone to dissonances and conflicts, and therefore need meticulous, open, and inclusive research work, and a lot of wisdom. In addition, the Middle East is of direct concern over China's core interests, is the real hard interests. Nevertheless, her resources or means used to protect and pursue her interests are mainly of a "soft" nature and thus she needs a higher wisdom featuring overcoming the hard with the soft and the use of psychological strategies.

So far, under the diplomatic principle of independence and peace, China is implementing equidistant, zero-problem, all-round diplomacy in the Middle East so that China can become a popular country in the Middle East, but it cannot play a pivotal role in critical moments and on key issues. Since China is non-aligned, she will not be obligated to protect her allies and obligations. Of course, Middle East countries do not see China as an indispensable major power either. The Gulf States believe that China only pays attention to its own interests and does not care about her allies and friends, and that has become a major obstacle to better relations between her and the Gulf States.<sup>44</sup>

Although China has historically never challenged the legitimacy of governments in the Middle East, her political stance would be tested when conflicts between Middle East governments and the people there intensify. Therefore, China's diplomatic tradition and political ideology are a double-edged sword that has both advantages and disadvantages. China's interests in the Middle East are increasingly widespread, and the limited resources she has available to protect her interests are always going to be a major challenge to China's Middle East strategy. With China's growing political, economic and military presence in the Middle East, China's clout will inevitably grow, and her space of strategic choices will enlarge. However, today's Middle East is not what it used to be, neither is today's China an emerging power in history. China cannot go the old way of British and American development. Overall, China must implement the "light footprint" strategy in the Middle East, giving preference to the use of soft power rather than hard power and using more defensive measures more than offensive ones. As a European expert on international issues put it, if the US is a lion abroad, China ought to be an elephant. Lions are carnivorous animals, while elephants are herbivores. Elephants will not go on the offensive, but they are powerful enough to overwhelm others.

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<sup>44</sup> AI-Rodhan [17].

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# Chapter 13

## The Belt and Road Initiative: Security Challenges and China's Choices



Haiquan Liu

**Abstract** The strategy of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road Initiative) is of great significance to improving China's open economy in all respects. The article explores the dual security challenges faced by the Belt and Road Initiative, including conventional security challenges featuring political games among major powers, territorial and island disputes, and political turmoil in individual countries within the region as well as non-conventional threats such as terrorism, piracy and transnational organized crimes.

**Keywords** Belt and road initiative · security cooperation · Chinas choices

The Silk Road Economic Belt (“One Belt”) and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (“One Road”), also known as the Belt and Road Initiative, was a development strategy and framework proposed by President Xi Jinping during his state visits to four Central Asian countries and Indonesia in September and October 2013. It was also put on high agenda in the Report of the Work of the Government delivered by Premier Li Keqiang in 2014. The Belt and Road Initiative has very important strategic significance for China in her efforts to improve the level of her open economy. A deep discussion of the status quo and challenges in terms of cooperation on security under this framework is of great realistic significance to the realization of the strategic interests of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

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### 13.1 Status Quo of Regional Cooperation on Security

As early as 2012, at the convening of the 18th CPC National Congress, China proposed the idea of “comprehensively upgrading the level of open economy” and requested coordination of bilateral, multilateral, regional and sub-regional cooperation and pushed for her interconnection with neighboring countries. In 2013, the *Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform* suggested that we should “accelerate the construction of infrastructure, connect China with neighboring countries and regions, and promote development along the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road, so as to form a new pattern of all-round opening”. The Central Economic Work Conference in 2014 pointed out the urgency of “making strategic plans” under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. In terms of scope, the Belt and Road Initiative covers Asia, Europe and Africa. According to the principle of going far from near, the Belt going across the entire Eurasian continent can be divided into three core zones in spatial scope: the core zone, the expansion zone and the radiation zone.<sup>1</sup> The One Road going through Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea Gulf and the western coast of the Indian Ocean can be specifically divided into three sections: the Southeast Asian ocean lane, the South Asia-Persian Gulf lane and the Red Sea-Western Indian Ocean lane.<sup>2</sup> Currently, regional security cooperation in the global sphere is showing patterns of multi-level cooperation, including bilateral, multilateral, trans-regional and even Belt and Road regions. This article focuses more on mechanisms brought by the latter two kinds of cooperation on security. The current status of security cooperation discussed in this paper is limited to various security mechanisms (organizations) formed by multilateral and trans-regional cooperation.

#### (I) Outcomes of security cooperation within the Silk Road Economic Belt region

##### 1. Core Zone (Central Asia)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) founded in 2001 for the purpose of solving regional territorial disputes and reinforcing military trust in border regions has gradually evolved in more than ten years into a pluralistic security cooperation system centered on counter-terrorism, fighting drug and weapons smuggling, transnational organized crime and so on. In recent years, the SCO has kept expanding cooperation

<sup>1</sup> The core zone consists of China, Russia and the five Central Asian countries. The extension zone consists of the SCO, other member states and observers of the Eurasian Economic Community, including India, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Belarus, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova. The periphery zone consists of states and regions in West Asia and the EU, while East Asian countries like Japan and South Korea can also be reached. See also Bai and Wang [1], p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> The Southeast Asian navigation lane covers China and all ASEAN countries. The South Asia-Persian Gulf lane covers 12 countries including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE and Oman. The Red Sea Gulf-Western Indian Ocean lane includes Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique. See also Chen and He [2], pp. 76–7.

in nonconventional security areas such as economy, trade and human security. In the economic arena in particular, regional cooperation has enhanced overall regional competitiveness. In addition, in 1992, the *Collective Security Treaty* jointly signed by Russia and the Central Asian States<sup>3</sup> is a security cooperation mechanism in the nature of a military alliance. As the American influence expands to Central Asia in the twenty-first century, the mechanism is increasingly manifesting a benefit-oriented and safe approach to cooperation.

## 2. Extension Zone

The extension zone mainly consists of two sub-regions: South Asia and Eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup> After the Cold War, South Asian countries gradually gave up the pattern of seeking security on their own<sup>5</sup> and embarked on a road of cooperative security mainly based on regionalism. Through friendly exchanges among the nations, the initial formation of a peaceful and mutually trusting regional security environment has been primarily established. The 15th Summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 2008 focused on discussing issues such as food security, energy crisis and the threat of terrorism and corresponding measures in reaction thereto, thus promoting the development of regional security cooperation.

Security cooperation in Eastern Europe was developed based on the security system of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which revolves around relations with Russia and does not constitute an interactive model of a complex network. In this system, Belarus and Armenia rely on Russia more for security and have constructed an exclusive military and political alliance with Russia through a collective security treaty organization. However, Ukraine and Moldova diverge greatly with Russia on regional security strategy and therefore manifest strong de-Russianization tendencies. So, instead of joining the collective security treaty organization, they became part of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development.<sup>6</sup>

## 3. Periphery Zone (Europe)

Due to long-term historical interaction accommodating different security environment and security threats between different entities in Europe, three outstanding European regional organizations dealing with cooperation on security came into being: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

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<sup>3</sup> These countries refer to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

<sup>4</sup> The East Europe region here refers to the Republics of the former Soviet Union, including Belarus, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova.

<sup>5</sup> The models that were used to seek security alone include: the nonalignment model represented by India; the alignment model represented by Pakistan; and the protectorate state model represented by Nepal. See also Yang [3], pp. 66–7.

<sup>6</sup> GUAM was an unofficial regional alliance founded in 1997 by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Uzbekistan joined the GUAM in 1998 and then withdrew in 2005. The organization is renamed GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development on the GUAM Summit held in Kiev in May 2006.

In view of changes in Europe's security environment, NATO updated its security strategies in 1991, 1999 and 2010, respectively, which have played an important role in the process of intervening in, resolution of and participating in security governance in Europe. After more than 50 years of hard work, the EU has enhanced its ability to defend and has seen an increasing influence on resolving regional disputes; while the OSCE mainly focuses on stopping and resolving disputes and helping the countries recover from the ravages of war.

## **(II) Outcomes of cooperation on security within the Maritime Silk Road areas**

### 1. Southeast Asian routes

In the aftermath of the Cold War, there came a dramatic change in the security situation of Southeast Asia. As ideology began to take a back seat gradually and peripheral security problems became increasingly prominent, to compensate for the relative weakness of each ASEAN country, efforts have been made to establish an ASEAN-led multi-level and multi-form Southeast Asian security mechanism, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia–Pacific Security Cooperation Council (CSCAP).

On entering the twenty-first century, ASEAN has taken an active approach to consolidating and expanding security cooperation, building a security community, strengthening cooperation in counter-terrorism, combating drug trafficking and other transnational crimes, while pushing for the establishment of a Defense Minister's conference mechanism to compensate for the shortcomings of the ASEAN Regional Forum so as to compensate for the defects of insufficient performance.

In addition, an important feature of security cooperation in the region is that Western powers are seeking to become leaders of security cooperation in the region.

### 2. South Asia and Persian Gulf navigation routes

Since security cooperation in South Asia has already been discussed earlier, there is nothing more to add here. Security cooperation in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region revolves around the six Gulf States<sup>7</sup> security community. Ever since the founding of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), military arrangements and defense cooperation have been prioritized. At the end of the twentieth century, while seeking alliance with Western powers for security during the Gulf Crisis and Wars, Gulf States have in post-war eras continued to secure their captive alliances with the West as they strive to compensate for their deficiencies. On entering the twenty-first century, the six Gulf States saw rapid growth in their security identification. Apart from strengthening cooperation in conventional security, they have enhanced communication and coordination to deal with complicated regional issues like the situation in Iraq and the Iran nuclear issue and are already playing considerable roles in maintaining regional stability.

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<sup>7</sup> The six Gulf countries refer to UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.



### 3. Western Indian Ocean navigation routes

Security cooperation in this region has focused on anti-piracy operations along the east coast of Africa. The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden have become a hub of pirate activity. Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles, Madagascar and Mozambique, countries to the south of the water, have also become victims of piracy. The threat of piracy stretches south from the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles, Madagascar and Mozambique, especially the Gulf of Aden, which is one of the world's busiest water courses accommodating annually the shipping of at least 20,000 ships loaded with 12% of the world's oil supply.<sup>8</sup> In order to cope with the threat of piracy, the Indian Ocean West Coast countries and the international community as a whole have cooperated proactively in developing a multi-layer governance and anti-piracy system. The UN Security Council passed Resolutions 1816, 1838, 1846, 1851 and 1897 as measures to fight piracy. Under the authorization of the Security Council, navies of countries including China have performed escort missions and the countries have kept the momentum trying the pirates. With the concerted efforts of all parties concerned, anti-piracy missions have achieved remarkable results.

## 13.2 Dual Security Challenges Faced by the Belt and Road Initiative

With a vast territory being involved in the Belt and Road Initiative area, regional economic cooperation can also be confronted with huge security risks. This article will discuss this issue from the perspectives of conventional and unconventional security, respectively.

### (I) Conventional security

#### 1. A Game of Geopolitical Powers

In recent years, major powers of the world have successively unveiled their geopolitical strategies to boost their influence in the Belt and Road region.

In the 2007 book *The New Silk Roads: Transport and Trade in Greater Central Asia* edited by S. Frederick Starr, Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, proposed the ideas of "Greater Central Asia" and "New Silk Roads" in Chennai, India. She suggested that a transport and economic development network that connects South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia should be established.<sup>9</sup> In September 2011, she explained to the international community about the New Silk Road plans during the UN Assembly. According to her, Afghanistan is at the very center of the New Silk Road and she hoped that the neighboring countries of Afghanistan could actively

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<sup>8</sup> Peter [4], p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> Remarks on India and the United States: A Vision for the 21st Century, <http://www.State.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/07/168840.htm>.

invest in the New Silk Road. As a result, the US would still play a leading role in the development of the Eurasia heartland,<sup>10</sup> while China's influence on this region would be further weakened. Furthermore, economic cooperation between China and the concerned countries might be hindered and members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization could eventually be less cohesive. In the meantime, the US continued to promote its pivot toward the Asia–Pacific Strategy and aggressively publicized the idea of an Indo–Pacific order<sup>11</sup> to include the Indian subcontinent in the Asia–Pacific region. The US also strengthened its military forces in the Asia–Pacific region in order to provide support for its allies therein. By denying China's legitimate maritime territorial claims amid disputes with concerned countries, the US aimed to alienate China from her neighboring countries.

In 2009, the EU unveiled its New Silk Road plan through the Nabucco Pipeline Project. This natural gas pipeline will help to connect Central Asia and neighboring countries and enhance their cooperation in energy, commerce and information. Investment is encouraged and Central Asian countries can also enhance their influence by supplying energies to the EU. In addition, the EU participated in the regional disputes in Central Asia as a third party, promoting dialogues and negotiations under certain multilateral framework. On the one hand, the EU lends its hands to balance US–Russia competition in the region. On the other hand, it complicates the situation and to some extent hinders China's cooperation with the countries concerned under the framework of the “Silk Road Economic Belt”.

Russia, India and Iran signed an agreement for the North–South Transport Corridor project in 2002. To maintain Russia's regional influence, an international transport route was constructed from India to Europe via Iran, the Caucasus and the rest of Russia. In recent years, Russia has proposed to establish a Eurasian Union, integrating the Central Asian countries and accelerating economic integration of the CIS countries. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia has always seen Central Asian countries as its allies. During the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in May 2014, President Putin agreed to support the development of the Silk Road Economic Belt. But given the fact that Russia is constantly vigilant about China's actions, it is possible that China may experience some obstacles when seeking all-round cooperation with Central Asian countries.

As far back as 1997, during the tenure of Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan put forward the idea of “Eurasia diplomatic strategy.” In 2004, Japan proposed a “Central Asia plus Japan” mechanism. In 2006, it further proposed the concept of “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” aimed at enhancing economic cooperation between Japan and Central Asian countries. The core of the concept was that Japan would boost its political and economic influence in the region by uplifting economic development and globalization of Central Asian countries and utilizing the rich oil and gas reserves

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<sup>10</sup> Remarks at the New Silk Road Ministerial Meeting, <http://www.state.A/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/201109/173807.html>, [A/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/201109/173807.htm](http://www.state.A/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/201109/173807.htm).

<sup>11</sup> The concept was first unveiled in the speech “America's Engagement in the Asia–Pacific” delivered by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. See Hillary Clinton: America's Engagement in the Asia–Pacific, <http://www.stale.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/ini/2010/10/150141.htm>.

in Central Asia to guarantee its own energy supply. In October 2013, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his cabinet emphasized their concerns in the Eurasian region and pointed out that “the New Silk Road will start from Tokyo and end in London via Istanbul and Japan would like to be the steersman on the Road.”<sup>12</sup> Japan has also been working hard to maintain its diplomatic relations with and to enhance its military presence in countries alongside the Pacific and Indian Ocean. By these means, Japan intends to contain China in a broader scope of the area.

India, Iran and Afghanistan have been working together to open a Southern Silk Road consisting of overland and maritime silk roads.<sup>13</sup> Based on its favorable geographical location, India is conspiring to dominate the Indian Ocean and takes a precautionary approach to the presence of all external forces in this region. In particular, it sees China’s so-called String of Pearls Strategy as a kind of strategic encirclement.<sup>14</sup> In view of the strong geopolitical and security color of the plan, C. Raja Mohan has his doubts as to whether India would allow China to build its Maritime Silk Road via the Indian Ocean. This uncertainty will probably bring about negative effects on China’s cooperation with South Asian countries. One thing that deserves special mention is that India’s assertive maritime strategy will definitely threaten the security of China’s energy passageways. In addition, India’s active push for its strategy of “eastward advance,” its involvement in the South China Sea disputes and its economic, political and military competition with China and its boosted and expanded influence in Asia–Pacific affairs have put more strategic pressure on China as she deals with Southeast Asian countries.

## 2. Territorial and Island Disputes

Due to some historical reasons, the Belt and Road areas have long been a hub of territorial and islands disputes. Solutions to these disputes will have a direct bearing on the security guarantee for implementing these strategies. Major disputes currently existing in this area include:

On the maritime side, China has the problem of South China Sea disputes with some Southeast Asian countries. Apart from a territorial dispute over the Parcel Islands between China and Vietnam triggered by China’s oil drilling platform Ocean Oil 981 in May 2014, China has further territorial disputes over the Spratly Islands with the Philippines and Vietnam as well as territorial disputes with Japan over the Diaoyu Island and over her Exclusive Economic Zone in the East China Sea. The heart of these peripheral maritime disputes is the conflict between leaders of the regional order and their followers with China’s rise. These disputes will have difficulty finding solutions short-term and will remain a handicap for deepening

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<sup>12</sup> Zhongpeng Pang: Impossibility of Japan’s Eurasia New Silk Road. <http://opinion.huaiKjiu.com/opinionworld/2013-11/4545624.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Li [5], p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> The concept of “String of Pearls” originated from “Energy Future in Asia” by Juli MacDonald, Amy Donahue and Bethany Danyluk, Booz Allen Hamilton Report Sponsored by the Director of Net Assessment, November 2004.

China's all-round cooperation with ASEAN countries and for giving China a bigger say in a new round of trade rule making.

Some historical issues left by WWII, such as the Kashmir territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, China-India border dispute and the Israel-Palestine conflict remain unsolved.

The collapse of the former Soviet Union in the aftermath of the Cold War caused the birth of a host of sovereign states in the Silk Road Economic Belt. However, border demarcation between these states is not yet done. For example, there is an enclave of Tajikistan in the territory of Kyrgyzstan, namely Vorukh. Only 567 of the 911 km of the borderline between the two countries have been demarcated. Over 70 spots on the rest of the borderline are still in dispute. On January 11, 2014, an armed conflict broke out at the frontier of these countries. Besides, 20 percent of the borderline between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan has not be demarcated. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan also has territorial dispute over the Fergana Valley and some other Uzbek enclaves. People living in these enclaves often have conflicts with local citizens. Water resources disputes among the above-mentioned three countries are also very intense and uncompromising. All these issues, especially disputes in Central Asia, will contribute to the instability of the region and will have a direct and negative impact on the political trust and future economic and security cooperation among SCO members. As a result, stability in China's western region will be compromised.

### 3. Political Turmoil of Certain Countries in the Region

Most countries within the Belt and Road region are developing countries. Problems like social class contradictions, ethnic and religious issues all contribute to political party struggle in these countries so that their political situations may become vulnerable and uncertain, thus resulting in a lack of common sense of belonging and a lack of continuity of domestic and foreign policies. For example, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have experienced a lot of twists and turns in the process of their domestic political development. In particular, the north-south conflict in Kyrgyzstan is sharp and seasonal protests are showing signs of becoming routine.<sup>15</sup> Despite its pledge to actively participate in the development of the Silk Road Economic Belt, Kyrgyzstan announced its exit from the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway construction project in December 2013, thus adding unexpected difficulties for project coordination between the parties.

Besides, countries in the Indian Ocean area, such as Somalia and Yemen, have gradually become potentially dangerous states or regions. With the advance of the Belt and Road Initiative, China in the future will definitely increase the magnitude of her investment, expand her import and export volume and encourage personnel

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<sup>15</sup> On January 18, 2013, spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior of Kyrgyzstan announced that 726 protests and demonstrations happened in Kyrgyzstan in 2012, 316 of which were politics-related while the others were about the social economy and ecological environment of the country. See also Han Jun: Problems and Reflections on the Development of the Silk Road Economic Belt from the Perspective of Geopolitics in Central Asia, *Journal of Xinjiang University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences Section), No. 6, 2013, p. 12.

exchanges in this region. Thus, turmoil in these countries will bring about increased cost of economic investment, lower the efficiency of cooperation and have a negative impact on China's overseas interests.

## (II) Nonconventional security issues

### 1. Threat of Terrorism

The three regional forces with terrorism at the core, namely, terrorism, religious extremism, and national separatism are major factors undermining the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Increasingly, they are becoming the biggest non-conventional security threat in the region. Despite differences in political purpose, organizational model, member composition and performance among the extremist organizations, they all have one thing in common—opposition to secularization of regimes and advocacy for the establishment of a theocratic Islamic State. Influenced by changes in the situation of international counter-terrorism and regional security, regional extremist organizations now feature overlapping personnel, integrated guiding principles, decentralized activities, and fragmented organization. Meanwhile, their connection with global terrorist organizations has been reinforced. After the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan at the end of 2014 in particular, conflicts within the country stand a good chance of escalation, Islamic extremism and terrorism are likely to “spill over” to affect regional stability. In addition, in recent years, “East Turkistan” forces in and outside China have colluded to target China in their attacks from time to time, thus severely threatening the personal and property security of Chinese citizens.

### 2. Security Risks for Sea routes

Traffic safety is a major concern of the Belt and Road Initiative, a concern revolving around the “opening-up” and “cut-off” of the passageways. Ninety percent of the world's total commercial trade and 65% of its total petroleum output have to be transported by sea. The Indian Ocean accommodates half of the world's container transportation. Seventy percent of the world's petroleum products need to be transported from the Middle East to the Pacific region through the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean navigation lane includes strategic passageways, such as the Mandab Strait, the Hormuz Strait and the Malacca Strait, that impact global trade in a great way. Specifically, 40% of the global trade is transported through the Malacca Strait, and 40% of the world's crude oil trade goes through the Hormuz Strait.<sup>16</sup> The bulk of China's offshore lifeline consists of the route going from the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean to the Middle East and North Africa. If oil is the blood of industries, the route from the Middle East to the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Strait actually has become the main artery of China's economic growth.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it's critical to safeguard the security of the Malacca Strait, the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait

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<sup>16</sup> Kaplan [6], pp. 19–20.

<sup>17</sup> According to statistics from the US Department of Defense, of all of China's oil imports in 2011, 85% passed through the Strait of Malaca, 43% through the Strait of Hormultz and 6% passed

of Mandab on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Specifically, challenges faced by the Malacca Strait are mainly US control, those faced by the Hormuz Strait are mainly deteriorated security situation in the region, while those faced by the Mandab Strait are threats from piracy. According to Privacy Report 2013 issued by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), despite the obvious decline in attacks from pirates off the coasts of Somalia, down from 237 in 2011 to 15 in 2013,<sup>18</sup> the threat of attacks still exists, especially along the Somali coast and the Gulf of Aden.

### 3. Pressure from Regional Economic Integration

The purpose of China's Belt and Road Initiative is to build closer economic and trade ties between China and Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, seek further cooperation and broader developmental space, promote the development and prosperity of countries in the region through capital and technology export, and thus engineer the upgrading and rebalancing of China's economy. "Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement" (TTP) put forward by the US was to hinder the process of regional integration in East Asia, playing a differentiation role in the "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership" (RCEP) led by the ASEAN in the Asia-Pacific region. Meanwhile, Europe and America established the "Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership" (TTIP) that promotes more liberalized international economic and trade rules aimed at hindering the process of economic and trade cooperation between Asia and Europe. The TTP and TTIP have built up an interest network for the West that hinders the implementation of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

### 4. Transnational Organized Crime

China is not immune from the negative impact of transnational organized crime as she pushes for closer economic and trade ties with countries of the region as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. The aggravation of transnational organized crime, one of the world's three largest crimes listed by the UN General Assembly, has seriously affected economic development and social stability of the countries of the world.

Types of transnational organized crime include<sup>19</sup>: firstly, drug smuggling. Harm of opium produced in Afghanistan has spread to all parts of the world and the combination of "drug economy" with religious extremism in Central Asia has impacted the security of Western China<sup>20</sup>; secondly, illegally crossing of national borders. China's labor export and employment overseas have grown in tandem with the emergence of

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through the Gulf of Aden. The China-Russia and China-Central Asia oil lanes absorbed 6% and 4% of China's total oil imports in 2011, respectively.

<sup>18</sup> Somali Pirate Clampdown Caused Drop in Global Piracy, IMB Reveals, <http://www.icc-ccs.org/news/904-somali-pirate-clampdown-caused-drop-in-global-piracy-imb-reveals>.

<sup>19</sup> Xi Jinping, Promote friendship between the peoples and create a great future together, *People's Daily*, First Edition, September 8, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> The 18th PLA Navy Fleet sails off to protect navigation, Global Times Online, <http://mil.huanqiu.com/china/2014-08/5093962.html>.

various foreign labor service crimes<sup>21</sup>; Thirdly, transnational economic crimes, such as money-laundering, telecommunications fraud and so on.

### 13.3 China's Options on Security Issues Related to the Belt and Road Initiative

By implementing the Belt and Road Initiative, China can develop a full-dimensional, new pattern of opening along her coastal and border areas and within her inland areas, enhance the level of openness, increase the total economic volume and economic share of the western inland areas, guarantee the safety of maritime transportation and reinforce mutual political trust. In order to achieve the five main goals of policy coordination, road connectivity, smooth trade, financial circulation and interpersonal bonding, China will need to pay attention to three things as she deals with security risks associated with implementing the Belt and Road Initiative in addition to building up her own strength.

#### **(I) Paying attention to the provision of public safety production during the process of cooperation**

With the intertwining of traditional and non-traditional security issues in the Belt and Road region, and given the fact that many sovereign states are involved, no country can face and deal with them all on their own. Therefore, only the concept of more open cooperation can mobilize all parties within the region to actively participate in the implementation of this strategy, and ultimately achieve mutual benefits. As a matter of fact, China has been consistently committed to security cooperation within the region. As of August 2014, China had deployed 17 navy convoys that had escorted 5,670 Chinese and foreign ships and had successfully rescued or aided over 60 Chinese and foreign ships. Abdul Sahibi, a former mayor of Kabul, believes that China, out of concern for energy efficiency and security, has been attaching great importance to the development of the ancient Silk Road and has introduced the Silk Road Initiative as early as 2000 and has made multilateral proposals for the Central Asia area.

In the future, mere presentation of security proposals will be insufficient. They will need to be put into concrete practice. China will need to understand the demands of the countries within the region and actively provide the public goods for regional security governance. Despite her limited strength in the sphere of traditional security, China's current maritime military power relative to that of the US is nothing more than an "anti-interference" force under construction. However, China's dominance in the non-conventional security sphere is evident.

As her economy develops, China can propose to set up various funds to safeguard regional safety based on "interest concessions," provide economic guarantee for

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<sup>21</sup> Developmental process of the ancient Silk Road, *Continental Bridge Perspective*, No. 7, 2009, pp.2 1-2.

national security cooperation and realize “a community of shared destiny.” Of course, as far as public safety products are concerned, once proposals are made, measures and solutions must follow up and there will have to be proper care and detail-oriented concern.<sup>22</sup> Since 2011, China has declared on multiple occasions the establishment of a three-billion-yuan China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund, but ASEAN countries have so far failed to figure out how best to apply for it and use it.

**(II) Giving emphasis to the interests and concerns of all countries within the region, especially those of major powers.**

The security issue related to the Belt and Road Initiative mainly concerns countries within the region that historically have territorial disputes and political turmoil. Therefore, China should give serious consideration to the interests and concerns of relevant countries within the region. Specifically, as one of the parties involved in territorial and island disputes, China should adhere to the principle of “shelving differences and seeking joint development without relinquishing sovereignty” and actively seek solutions through bilateral consultations in due consideration of the economic interests of other countries involved in the disputes. When faced with political turbulence in countries of the region, China should maintain regional stability by upholding the principle of non-interference in other countries’ internal affairs and actively play a constructive role in pushing for peaceful solutions.

In addition, great powers play an important role in regional security issues. Great power competition in the region will be a normal phenomenon and its essence will be a contest between established major powers and emerging powers.

In the great power factor, the United States and Russia is crucial, the U.S. as a hegemonic country, in the region has a wide range of interests, and Russia as a regional traditional power, the regional security issues remain a certain influence. Therefore, in dealing with security risks within the region, China must see great powers as “stakeholders,” strengthen cooperation and coordinate the relationships properly. The US and Russia are crucial players in the major power factor. As a hegemon, the US has a wide range of interests in the region, while Russia, as a traditional major power in the region, still exerts a strong influence on all kinds of security issues within the region.

Currently, the US, Russia and China can make full use of existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, adopt flexible and diverse forms of cooperation, promote cooperation at different levels, strengthen political trust, and look for a joint point of common interests. Relative to US and Russia, China and Russia are more amenable to each other because they share a common mission of national rejuvenation. China must “connect” with the “Eurasian Alliance” to some extent and jointly safeguard the security of the Silk Road Economic Belt. At present, China and the US have a structural “security dilemma” in the realm of traditional security. China’s development is regarded as “zero sum” by the US, while Sino-Russian coordination can easily be seen as “US exclusion.” On the other hand, territorial and island disputes within the region and political turmoil within certain countries of the

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<sup>22</sup> Cai [7], p. 36.



region are strongly redolent of the US factor. Therefore, the Sino-US security cooperation should begin in non-traditional areas such as counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, fight against transnational organized crime, and using various existing dialogue and exchange mechanisms between China and the US to build trust and meet challenges together.

### **(III) Attach importance to Pakistan's role as a "fulcrum".**

In terms of geographical distribution, the northern and southern parts of the Belt and Road Initiative ensure effective interaction between the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. Although the strategic concepts of the previously proposed China-Myanmar-Bangladesh-India Economic Corridor and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor can be linked together, the link between the two is too broad to play any patent role in meeting the security challenges faced by the Belt and Road Initiative. Truly effective interaction will lie in the role the "fulcrum" countries play. Countries that are located in the overlapping regions of the Belt and the Road are South Asian countries, such as India and Pakistan. In view of the longstanding territorial disputes between China and India, China must attach great importance to the "fulcrum" role of Pakistan. Moreover, the all-weather partnership between China and Pakistan can guarantee the full functioning of this partnership.

Within the "Belt" region, China can combat various terrorist organizations, including "Xinjiang separatists" in Central Asia, by taking advantage of Pakistan's influence on Afghanistan and its own geographic location and thereby guarantee the safety of western China. Moreover, China can strengthen Sino-US security cooperation by using the "bridge" of traditional relations between US and Pakistan, use the Indian-Pakistan conflict to contain India and thereby lessen China's pressure from the southwest. Within the "One Road" region, "the bid for hegemony by major powers is like playing a chess game following the same pattern, which targets the control of the Indian Ocean."<sup>23</sup> Though China is not located off the coast of the Indian Ocean and has limited navy power, she can use Pakistan as a channel to get involved in the affairs of the Indian Ocean and ensure the safety of the sea lanes. Although China has reiterated that it has no intention to set up any military bases overseas, it does not affect her fair use of Pakistan's Gwadar Harbor located in a geographical area significant for combating piracy supply line and for ensuring energy security in the Gulf area. The Belt and Road Initiative requires that future China's comprehensively open economy will have to balance neck and neck, land and sea development. In actual practice though, her strategy seems to prioritize the One Belt over the One Road.

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<sup>23</sup> Zhang Wenmu, *On China's Maritime Rights*, Ocean Publishing House, 2010, p. 65.

## 13.4 Conclusion

By promoting its equipment manufacturing industry overseas, the Chinese government actively pushes for inland connectivity and communication construction, puts emphasis on the efficiency of inland logistics. However, as far as the writer is concerned, China in the future will still need to prioritize the use of marine resources. Despite the fact that China has constructed several international railways, including the Chongqing-Xinjiang-Europe International Railway, Xinjiang-Europe Railway and the Yiwu-Xinjiang-Europe Railway, traditional maritime trade will continue to play a predominant role for a long time to come. The time advantage of overland transportation will continue to be disturbed by various security risks, the bulk of which will be land security challenges. In recent years, however, the risk of maritime waterway safety has been greatly reduced through joint efforts of the international community in combating piracy and strengthening maritime and island dispute control. In recent years, the safety risks of the waterways have been greatly reduced.

In the future, China will work together with other countries within the region to actively cope with various risks and challenges so as to successfully put the Belt and Road Initiative into effect, thus ultimately molding China into a community of shared destiny and interest community. This will help China safeguard China's national interests, including security interests, build up her image as a responsible power, strengthen her soft power and build a favorable international environment for her modernization.

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