

# On China's Traditional Culture and Peaceful Development Strategy

Wang Xinjun

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## Abstract

At the end of the twentieth century, China—with its long history—shone with renewed youth, rose up on the world stage as a powerful force and infused the troubled world economy with new vigor. Because of China, human civilization is now entering a new phase. In this context, the direction of its development, the problems and contradictions facing the country and its future relationship with the world have become focal points of international attention. For this reason, the Chinese government put forward the idea of China's peaceful development strategy. This article discusses the cultural basis and origins of the idea of this strategy from the point of view of China's traditional culture and historical development and analyzes the reality of China's contemporary security as well as difficulties and prospects for carrying out its peaceful development strategy idea. The conclusion of this essay is that in China the peaceful development idea has a profound relationship with the culture and the basic psychology of the people and moreover is in keeping with the trend of world development. The principles of China's peaceful development, peaceful co-existence, equality and mutual benefit, mutual respect and so on, which constitute China's international political outlook, will surely have a real, long-lasting and fundamental influence on the international political order. At the same time, China's peaceful development idea should admit reasonable elements from Western international politics, so as to make it more in line with China's security realities and so as to increase the feasibility and operability of policy.



## Introduction

*“The world trend is vast and mighty,  
I those who go with it will prosper;  
those who go against it will perish.”*  
Sun Yat-sen

After 30 years of reform and opening up, China is on its way to healthy and rapid development. No other country in human history has had as profound an impact on the world as today’s China, and the fate of this nation of 1.3 billion has never before been so connected to that of the world. From any perspective, the globalization of China is an unprecedented historical process. China’s impact is increasing, and how the country will influence the world and what strategy it will adopt to cope with globalization is a global concern. In the report to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CCP), it was explicitly pointed out for the first time that China will “unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development.”<sup>1</sup> The Chinese government published white papers on China’s peaceful development in December 2005 and September 2011, and has chosen the peaceful development strategy on behalf of China’s 1.3 billion people. The country will cooperate with others to live in harmony and enjoy mutual development.

How can we interpret the essence and intention of China’s peaceful development strategy; what is the relationship between China and other countries; what is China’s international responsibility, and in what direction will China’s national defense policy lead? These questions need to be answered, for the sake of China and for the rest of the world. This report is a preliminary attempt to address these questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Hu Jintao, “Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects,” report to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, October 15, 2007, reprinted in “Full text of Hu Jintao’s report at 17th Party Congress,” [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn), October 24, 2007, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content\\_6938749.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm) (accessed June 8, 2012).

# Chinese Traditional Culture and Grand Strategy

## The Relationship Between Culture and Grand Strategy

National grand strategy refers to the way in which the national spirit and cultural essence are carried forward. Chinese grand strategy originates from the country's traditional culture, which nurtured its civilization for thousands of years. China's peaceful development strategy is based on the thinking of great Chinese thinkers and takes into account the current situation of China. It demonstrates the connection with Chinese history and culture in its way of thinking. China's peaceful development strategy inherits, carries forward and innovates its traditional cultural essence in the modern era in the fields of politics, economics, culture, diplomacy and social life. Therefore, it is necessary to grasp the essence of Chinese traditional culture in order to fully understand the nature of China's grand strategy.

We have to establish one important concept before we move on to a brief introduction of Chinese history and culture. One of the fundamental features of Chinese culture is the distinction between substance and application. In China, philosophy, ethics, life, managing one's family, career, or ruling a country and formulating foreign strategies, share the same essence or foundation. This shared essence is the substance of Chinese culture. When the substance is combined with reality, application comes into being. For example, one could make use of Sunzi's wisdom in *The Art of War* when doing business, running for president or finding love. Wisdom is the substance, which one can apply for various purposes. The relationship between China's grand strategy and its culture is that between substance and application. The two are inseparable.

## Some Distinctive Features of Chinese History and Culture

If we want to know China today, we first need to understand its culture; and if we want to know its culture, we need to understand its history. The reasons why China is as it is lie in its cultural concepts, values and ways of thinking, which are distinct from those of the West.

Firstly, there is great continuity in Chinese history and culture over time. Values, outlooks and ways of thinking have been passed down from generation to generation. The written history of China is over 5,000 years old. As we all know, four great ancient civilizations have existed in human history and prospered for a period. However, China is the only one of these ancient civilizations that has not disappeared. Over the course of more than 5,000 years, its history and culture has continued to evolve, and we are still using Chinese characters that were invented 4,000 years ago. Now, we can illustrate this point through an example. The Chinese have the habit of drawing up family lineages. The family of Confucius, which is honored as the largest family in China, has endured for nearly 3,000 years. The last time a family lineage was made was in 2009. By now, the number of descendants of Confucius amount to two million, and the 80th generation has already been born. The total cost of making the family lineage in 2009 was 13 million RMB. We can only be amazed at the vitality of such a cultural heritage. Although China's current situation is constantly changing, its people still share similar values, philosophy and ways of thinking as their ancestors. This proves the greatness of the wisdom of Chinese ancestors. The theories that they created resemble a giant spiritual treasure house, from which the nation continues to draw nourishment. From the perspective of history, the reality of China today is only a point in the long process of its development; Confucianism has a long-lasting bright future awaiting it.

Secondly, the inclusiveness of Chinese culture. Though China also once experienced temporary division, during most of its 5,000-year history, all nationalities were united under the governance of a central dynasty. China has always remained a country with a large population containing many nationalities. The periods of division in Chinese history only demonstrated that the unifying forces always overcome the dividing forces.

Before the 19th century, China was invaded by foreign tribes many times, but the result was that the invading tribes were themselves assimilated into Han culture and gave up their own cultures. This situation applied to nearly every regime established by foreign tribes, including the Northern Wei Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty established by the Mongols and the Qing Dynasty established by Manchus. These minorities conquered the Han Dynasty by force, but were ultimately conquered by culture. The history of the development of Chinese culture is the history of the fusion between the

Han nationality and the minorities. Obviously, the unification of Chinese nationalities could not be achieved by force; it would be impossible to sustain a unified nation and history by force. A nation may be kept united for 30 or 50 years by force, but not for more than 4,000 years as has been the case in China. In its history, there were tyrants who governed by force, but these dynasties were never long lasting.

The magic of Chinese culture is that it united so many nationalities, differing in population, religion and ethnic composition, under the banner of the Chinese nation for 4,000 years. If we look at the history and current situation of other countries in the world, we have to admit that this is really amazing.

Thirdly, the love of peace in Chinese culture. During China's 5,000-year history, we can hardly find any record of China invading other countries. Many wars occurred in Chinese history, but most of them were civil wars, peasant revolts aiming at overthrowing a tyrannical dynasty or wars against aggression. Some might say that the Mongols who founded the Yuan Dynasty once invaded areas as far west as the Danube River. The Mongols were a minority living on horseback and roving the grasslands. They conquered the Song Dynasty, which had been ruled by the Han nationality. Imperial China remained the most powerful country in the world for a very long period of time, but China lived in perfect harmony with its neighbors. Beginning in 1405, Zhenghe's fleets consisting for more than 200 ships set sail seven times, and each voyage saw a crew totaling over 27,000 onboard. According to the "Biography of Zhenghe," in *The History of the Ming Dynasty*, Zhenghe's seven expeditions lasted for 28 years, and visited more than 30 countries in the West Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. His voyage occurred 87 years before than that of Columbus and 92 years before that of Vasco da Gama. These large fleets did not bring war and conquest by blood and fire, but were based on the ideas of equal trade, diplomacy and the majesty of the Ming Dynasty, which was the strongest country in the world at that time. This kind of peaceful expedition was not easy to understand for the Western world. As a matter of fact, it was the result of Chinese traditional culture and traditional education excelling in virtue.

## **The Essence of Chinese Traditional Culture and Strategic Thinking**

It is Chinese culture that creates miracles. It is both extensive and profound, and I will therefore briefly introduce the essence of Chinese culture.

### *The Formation of Confucianism*

During the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period (770–221 BC), Chinese territory was occupied by numerous nations who constantly waged war against each other, causing people to suffer. How to realize peace so that the country could flourish and people live in peace was the major quest of contemporary thinkers, among whom Confucius was one. They began to draw lessons from previous experience of governance, looking for ways to establish international peace and manage state affairs. Thanks to the efforts of these thinkers, Confucian thought finally took shape. During this period, various schools of thought were dynamic and made great achievements in the history of Chinese thought. This phenomenon has been called the Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought. Their achievements of thought during this period laid the fundamental framework of human spirit and system of values for the Chinese nation for the next 2,500 years. Without this extremely solid foundation for the development of the Chinese nation, China would have disappeared like other ancient civilizations. China's development was mostly influenced by Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhist thought, which were introduced into China around the second century. The most surprising thing is that in their essential core they resemble each other. What we now see is a China is very different from what can be seen in Western countries.

### *The Basic Spirit and Framework of Chinese Culture*

The core idea and main value of Confucianism is benevolence. According to Confucian thought, benevolence or universal love is the nature of the universe. Confucianism holds that humans when they are born are good at heart. The values of benevolence consist of three dimensions: firstly, to establish affection and caring among people; the emperor should love his subjects; the subjects should admire their emperor; and brothers and sisters, parents, relatives, friends, working colleagues and strangers, should all be affectionate and kind to each other. Secondly, all creatures should be

treated with affection, and not harm other creatures and destroy nature, but realize that humans are superior beings. Thirdly, one should restrain one's selfishness and help other people and benefit all. The ultimate goal is to realize harmony between nature and human beings. Especially in the relations among people, Confucianism holds that in order to achieve harmony between human beings, groups, and countries, one must adhere to the values of benevolence: tolerance, mutual respect, mutual learning, mutual help and cooperation. Every man has selfish desires. If one wants to acquire the virtue of benevolence, one has to refrain from selfish desires and surrender part of the benefits to others.

If you have been to Beijing and have visited the Forbidden City, you will find that there are three major halls where the Chinese emperors performed their duties, namely, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony and the Hall of Preserving Harmony. The character 和 (*hé*) is found in the names of all of the halls. Supreme Harmony means that all relations in the universe are coordinated; Central Harmony refers to international peace, domestic peace and ethnic peace and that there is good weather for crops and people live in peace. Preserving Harmony refers to the balance between the spiritual and physical aspects of individuals, which will lead to a clear mind, wisdom and health.

There is one important concept in the Confucian theory of ethics, also known as a political concept, which is "saintly inside and kingly outside"; simply put, "to strengthen the soft power of oneself, and conquer others and win their respect by virtue. If you are an official, you must be virtuous to realize political brightness and social justice. To improve one's moral integrity is the compulsory course for every ambitious young man, no matter whether you have resolved to establish yourself in politics, business, academics or in personal conduct."

There are four steps to achieve the ambition of one's life: self-discipline, managing one's family, ruling the country and conquering the world. People are required to begin from their moral behavior and to set an example for their family members. Only after the family is well run will one be qualified to rule the country and to be concerned about world peace. Only through the governance of talented people possessing these virtues will social justice and equality be realized. Then people will live in peace and the world will become peaceful and harmonious.

This thought is definitely idealistic but was advocated by most Chinese Emperors. Even today, it is still the dominant value in China by which historical figures are judged.

The practice of the values of benevolence is harmony. The meaning of harmony is kind connections established between human beings, groups, countries, as well as man and nature, man and cosmos. This connection has to fully embody the values of benevolence, with the purpose of reaching the realm of harmonious but different. Only after accomplishing this will divergence and conflicts, or even wars, be minimized or totally avoided. The ancient Chinese not only focused on the cultivation of benevolence, but also on its practice.

The *Book of Rites*, one of the Confucian classics says, "When the great Way prevails, having faith and promoting good will cement peaceful relations." Thus, the thought of the unity of the world is put forward and a path leading to peaceful relations and development is pointed out. The *Book of History*, another Confucian classic, advocates the idea that "people live in peace, and nations live in harmony."

Peace in traditional Chinese culture implies tolerance, cooperation, mutual respect and mutual benefit. This core value has been fully embodied in the governing thought, diplomatic principles and in people's daily life philosophy for many generations. Looking back, we can see that without Confucianism China would neither have a cultural heritage of over 5,000 years nor a unified history. At the same time, Confucian thought has long been the cultural source of China's centralized political system. Though China has experienced times of division, the unifying force has always been stronger than the dividing force. China's developed politics, economy and culture exert great attraction on the neighboring minorities. Several ethnic fusions in Chinese history were not motivated by force, but by – to put it in contemporary terms – "soft power" factors such as economy and culture. Even the minorities that conquered the Han were assimilated into Han culture, including the Mongols who established the Yuan Dynasty and the Manchus who conquered the Ming Dynasty.

Hence, the ancient Chinese thinkers sought to create a stable social order built on benevolence and implemented harmony. In building an ordered, idealistic society in which everybody is settled, they attended to these own duties. It is easy to see that the implication of peace differs vastly

between the Chinese and Western cultures. In China, the core idea of 和平 (*hépíng*) is 和 (*hé*) meaning that two or more persons or objects live in peace and cooperation; 平 (*píng*) refers to the state in which there are neither conflicts nor wars. In Western languages, the concept of peace differs from that in Chinese. For example, peace in English and мир in Russian merely designates the warless state, without the meaning of “live in harmony and cooperation.”

The ancient Chinese governors in dealing with international relations followed the diplomatic principle of “building trust by virtues and attracting the neighboring countries by civilization.” The extensive and friendly international relations between China and its neighbors sometimes took the form of the tributary system, which lasted until the Western invasions with mighty ships and powerful weapons in the middle of the 19th century. Only after that did China realize that a combination of advanced institutions and technologies from the West combined with Chinese peace culture, tradition and spirit constitutes the real grand development strategy for China.

# The Formation and Main Idea of China's Peaceful Development Strategy

## China's Basic Views Towards Global Trends

To clearly grasp the global development trend is a precondition for grand strategy planning for most countries. Sun Yat-sen, the pioneer of China's democratic revolution once said: "The world trend is vast and mighty, those who go with it will prosper; those who go against it will perish." The relationship between the world trend and national strategy is like that between a sailboat and the monsoon. The monsoon is the global trend and the sailboat is the national strategy. If the sailboat is able to utilize the wind, it will arrive at its destination much sooner; however, if the sailboat goes against the wind, it will be capsized by the surge in the end. Two extreme negative examples are the German and Japanese national strategies during the Second World War. Their defeat did not originate in their military mistakes. During that time, Germany and Japan both had eminent military commanders and brave soldiers, but still could not escape their fates. The reason was that their strategic thinking and direction were mistaken. Beneficial lessons that deserve deep reflection can be drawn from these examples.

From the perspective of international politics, economy and relations in the modern era, China believes that the historical trend leading the world today is globalization and regional integration. We have reason to believe that no matter how strong the anti-globalization forces may be, globalization and regional integration contribute to global development trends that cannot be resisted or reversed. The greatest international integration to occur since nations were first established is accelerating. This kind of integration of nations is inherently necessary for the productive development of society. Moreover, globalization is regarded by some as the essence of capital expansion. While modern information technology and convenient transportation are speeding up globalization, they are also impacting traditional state boundaries, ethnic and religious boundaries and people's psychological boundaries. Against the background of globalization, the rise of terrorism can be seen as an extreme anti-globalization force. Terrorism is no

more than the product of globalization at a specific stage and will not last forever.

Global development trends raise new standards and values for human behavior, including openness, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, mutual help, mutual benefit and so on. These new values are gradually acknowledged by international society. However, the view of power based on realist theory still dominates the international society and order. Therefore, countries need to work together to replace the old values of power politics with new values that conform to the requirements of the new age.

The idea of peaceful development is one of China's great attempts to combine its own development with world trends in the 21st century. To associate the national revival movement of China with its 1.3 billion people with the destinies of other countries in the world, and realize world peace and harmony, or the unity of the world, has been the lofty ideal of the Chinese people for hundreds of years. It is also the ultimate goal of its peaceful developmental strategy.

### **The Formation of the Idea of Peaceful Development**

By the end of the 1990s, most Chinese had just emerged from poverty, and the development of China had entered a new stage. Both leaders and intellectuals were exploring new strategies that could reflect the requirements of the times and the national need to guide the future development of China and its foreign relations. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and other strategists of the older generation proposed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as the guidelines for China's diplomacy. These have been implemented since 1953. However, great changes have taken place both in the world and in China, and development has become the most important subject for China and the world. China not only needs to live in peace with other countries but also to develop friendly cooperation and create win-win situations. Therefore, China's grand strategy must reflect the new requirements of the contemporary situation, which in turn provides the conditions for the Chinese proposal of new strategies.

On November 3, 2003, at the Bo'ao Forum for Asia, Professor Zheng Bijian introduced the concept of China's "peaceful rise" (*héping juéqǐ*).<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> Zheng Bijian, "A New Path for China's Peaceful Rise and the Future of Asia,"

concept evoked an enormous response and led to extensive discussion. The most direct motivation behind the idea was that some countries recklessly denounced China as a “threat,” and held that its rise would upset the global geopolitical balance and intensify conflict with the hegemonic states. The idea of China’s peaceful rise was introduced by Chinese scholars, who wanted to make a comparison and distinction between the rise of contemporary China and the rise of other countries in world history. In the beginning, the peaceful rise was only a topic for the academic world and not yet a theoretical system.

In Western international political dictionaries, the word “rise” carries the connotation of a changing international order. However, the primary mission of China in the foreseeable future is to deal with the problems that it encounters in its own development rather than playing a leading role in international politics or challenging the current international order. By 2004 the term “peaceful rise” had been replaced by “peaceful development,” since the latter was more consistent with the spirit of China’s traditional culture and current situation. Therefore, the concept of peaceful development was soon accepted by Chinese leaders and academic circles. The Chinese government published a white paper entitled *China’s Peaceful Development Road* in December 2005. From then the idea of peaceful development began to be systemized and concretized. In September 2011, the Chinese government published another white paper, also entitled *China’s Peaceful Development*, which demonstrated that this idea had become the Chinese government’s strategic guideline for handling the international and domestic situation. Already incorporated as part of the short-term and long-term goals of China’s economic, political, diplomatic, scientific, cultural and national defense development, the concept of peaceful development was no longer an explanation or a slogan; it was the firm and explicitly established will and strategy of the state, and the action for agenda which embodied the consensus of China’s 1.3 billion people.

## The Fundamental Principles of Peaceful Development Strategy

Being the grand strategy of contemporary China, the idea of peaceful development involves a series of targets and principles. It is also an ideological system that is constantly developed and improved. The foundation of this strategy is the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The primary goal is to solve the problems of China's sustainable development, while the ultimate goal is to link the development of contemporary China with the destinies of all nations in the world in order to realize the unity of world, which will lead to win-win situations, common safety and shared prosperity. The ways to realize this goal are to establish international mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual study, mutual help, solidarity, cooperation and joint progress, which are also the values underlying China's peaceful development strategy.

The theory of the peaceful development strategy means to fully carry forward China's peace culture, traditions and spirit, having a history of thousands of years; and to combine this with modern advanced ideas and technologies in order to realize mutual benefits and achieve a win-win situation for the development of China and the world. China's official credo is to develop by maintaining world peace and to maintain world peace by developing China, emphasizing China's dependence on its own power to innovate and develop, adhering to the principle of reform and opening up and learning from the strengths of other countries, complying with the trend of economic globalization, and striving for mutual benefit and development with other countries, while working with international society to establish a harmonious world with lasting peace and shared prosperity.<sup>3</sup>

In my opinion, China's peaceful development strategy contains a number of principles for guiding both its domestic economic development and its foreign relations. The principles can be divided into those for domestic development and for foreign relations. They are fundamentally interrelated.

First of all, the peaceful development strategy is an inevitable requirement of China's economic and social conditions. Under this strategy, China's economic and social development should pursue five ideas. The first one is autonomous development. Independence and autonomy are the

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<sup>3</sup> Information Office of the State Council, The People's Republic of China, "Full Text: China's Peaceful Development," September 2011, Beijing, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-09/06/c\\_131102329.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-09/06/c_131102329.htm) (accessed June 8, 2012).

foundation for China's development, and self-reliance is an admirable tradition. Over the past 30 years, China has prioritized the development of the domestic economy through indigenous innovation and has promoted a shift in the mode of economic development to the overall benefit of society. The second is open development. Development open to the world is China's fundamental national policy in building socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the age of globalization, China is learning how to fully utilize the intellectual results and resources of all mankind to improve the great national revival movement and serve mankind with China's own development achievements. The third is scientific development. Taking a scientific approach to people-oriented, comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development, we should not only promote the health and rapid development of the economy but also of the construction of a harmonious society in order to ensure a sound domestic environment for peaceful development. The fourth is balanced coordinated development. We should implement the overall strategy of regional development to solve the problem of unbalanced development between east and west and the ethnic minority areas; adjust industrial structures and solve the problem of unbalanced industrial development; improve the systems and increase the peasants' income to solve the problems of unequal treatment of rural and urban residents and unbalanced development between rural and urban areas. The fifth is sustainable development. According to the definition used by the United Nations, sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is a difficult task.

In the areas of international development and foreign relations, China's peaceful development strategy includes five ideas. The first is peaceful development. The core guiding principle tells the world that China will not realize its development by means of aggressive wars or predatory expansions as Western countries have done, but will contribute to world peace with its own power and advocate the use of negotiation and dialogue to settle international conflicts and contradictions. The second is cooperative development. Each nation is an equal member of the international community. Cooperation, interest sharing and undertaking responsibility are the choices that are in the best interests of all nations. China advocates friendly cooperation with no hostile confrontation, mutual trust with no suspicion,

and equal treatment with no use of force. The third is common development. China constantly makes its own interests to be more consistent with the common interests of mankind. In its own development, China is trying to make the world develop. China will never do selfish things while compromising the benefits of other nations. The fourth is win-win development. Finding and broadening common interests is now the key to China's success after more than 30 years of reform and opening up.

The Chinese government has repeatedly stated that China will integrate its own interests with the common interests of other nations and promote world peace and cooperation.

It should be pointed out that the domestic and international development principles of the peaceful development strategy constitute an ideological system of interconnection, complementarity and mutual improvement. For example, China's domestic sustainable development is the basis for living in harmony with other nations. The peaceful development strategy will not last for long unless China changes its development mode and restrains material desires. Let's give an example. If most Chinese had their own automobiles, the number of cars in China would reach one billion. And if each car consumes an average of one gallon of petrol each day, then the daily consumption will be one billion gallons. If the world's daily oil production is 30 million barrels, then we will have 1.26 billion gallons of petrol produced each day (one barrel=42 gallons).<sup>4</sup> The global energy shortage will inevitably lead to international tensions. According to China's Ministry of Public Security, the total number of cars in China exceeded 100 million in 2011.<sup>5</sup> Obviously, this kind of development mode is unsustainable for China.

### China's Thinking on National Interest

National interest is a fundamental consideration of the development strategies of all modern nations. The goal of national strategies is to maintain and

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<sup>4</sup> For global oil production, see "2009-2010年世界石油产量预测" [2009-2010 World oil production forecast], [www.chinabaogao.com](http://www.chinabaogao.com), August 18, 2009, <http://market.chinabaogao.com/shiyou/0QV4KH009.html> (accessed June 8, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> "中国汽车保有量突破1亿辆 占机动车总量近五成" [Car ownership in China exceeds 100 million, accounting for half of all motor vehicles], [www.chinanews.com](http://www.chinanews.com), September 16, 2011, <http://www.chinanews.com/auto/2011/09-16/3333477.shtml> (accessed June 8, 2012).

increase the important interests of the country. China's peaceful development strategy is no exception.

According to modern Western international relations theory, countries pursue their national interests and power. However, Chinese people do not like to talk about national interests, but rather about national security. Compared with Westerners, Chinese have a less clear concept of, and boundaries for, interests, and interests often give way to personal loyalty and affection. This cultural and psychological phenomenon is mainly the result of the virtue and morality teachings of Confucianism. As Confucius said: "The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain."<sup>6</sup> Mencius responded to the Emperor thus: "If your Majesty say, 'What is to be done to profit my kingdom?' the great officers will say, 'What is to be done to profit our families?' and the inferior officers and the common people will say, 'What is to be done to profit our persons?' Superiors and inferiors will try to snatch this profit the one from the other, and the kingdom will be endangered."<sup>7</sup> Mencius thought that the results of countries' pursuing interests are wars, conflicts, social corruption and chaos.

Although Confucian thought admits that interests exist, it is opposed to the pursuit of personal and partial interests. Confucianism holds that the pursuit of personal interests may lead to international war, social chaos and moral deterioration. Men, societies and nations might be strong or weak. If we encourage everybody to pursue their interests, relying on their own power, this will definitely lead to bullying; the strong get even wealthier while the weak get even poorer. Only by advocating virtues and morality (benefit the public, benefit others) can a social environment of love, mutual respect, peace and harmony be created. Influenced by Confucian moral ideals, the Chinese share the common characteristics of face-saving and remaining faithful to friends.

Noble ethics can be a great help in maintaining fairness and justice in society and harmonious relations among people. However, in promoting social development, such ethics is less powerful than realism and utilitarianism. In more than 2,000 years of Chinese feudalism after the emergence of the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, Chinese rulers relied on

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<sup>6</sup> *The Analects, Book IV*, trans. James Legge.

<sup>7</sup> *Mencius, Vol. 1, Ch. 1*, concerning King Hui of Liang, trans. James Legge.

Confucian ethics as the tool for maintaining their imperial dominance. They suppressed the activities or even the thoughts of people, pursuing their own interests, and did not advocate improvements of productivity and public welfare through scientific and technological development. Many valuable scientific and technological innovations were laid aside as a result of this. Chinese feudalism lasted for more than 2,000 years without the germination of capitalism, which was a severe hindrance to the development and progress of China.

We can see that the reason for China's backwardness was not exactly the advocacy of Confucian spirits of love and peace, but that the feudal rulers dogmatically employed Confucian thoughts to maintain their own feudal dominance.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China embraced the theory of proletarian revolution. The proletariats of the world were not divided by national boundaries; they belonged to the same family. China admitted class interests but not national interests. National interests used to be regarded as narrow nationalism. China established the principles of developing diplomatic relations first with socialist countries and the Third World countries. The Chinese were both aspiring idealists and realists in practical matters. China declined the Soviet Union's proposal in 1958 of an agreement on Far East air defense, establishment of a long-wave radio station and building of a combined fleet. This showed that the priority of Chairman Mao in dealing with international issues was the national interest. However, for issues not involving sovereign independence and territorial integrity, ideology is still an important principle when dealing with international issues.

By the end of the 1980s, the reform and opening up of China had already made much progress. China's supreme leader Deng Xiaoping explicitly stated that national interest should be the supreme criterion for China in dealing with international issues. On October 31, 1989, when he met with Richard Nixon, the former U.S. president, Deng said: "When dealing with the relations between the two countries, we should place the country's own long-term strategic interests in first place, with mutual respect for national interest. We should not be bothered by historical grievances, differences in social system or ideology. Nations, large or small, strong or weak, should

respect each other and treat each other equally.”<sup>8</sup> Deng continued: “We all deal with issues taking national interest as the supreme criterion; we are practical on such important issues; we should respect each other and be open-minded.” This statement of Deng Xiaoping marked the beginning of a new era in China’s foreign relations. No longer fettered by ideology, China began to develop friendly, cooperative relations with the world.

From then on, national interests began to be referred to more frequently in speeches and statements by Chinese leaders. In recent years, the concept of national core interests has emerged. What they constitute has become a hot topic for the academic community and the public. On July 29, 2009, Dai Bingguo, a member of State Council told a reporter that China’s national core interests are, first, to maintain the fundamental institutions and institutional security; second, to maintain security of territory and sovereignty; and, third, to maintain economic and social development and stability.

As seen in the abovementioned white paper, *China's Peaceful Development*, published in 2011, based on China’s Constitution as well as the guarantee of sustainable development of economy and society, the Chinese government firmly maintains national core interests, including national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity, stability of national political system and overall social situation.

Moreover, as is made clear in China’s Constitution, the stability of the national political system and the overall social situation and the guarantee of sustainable development of economy and society are national core interests, because the current national political and economic system in China are closely linked to the future and destiny of China. All of the achievements that China has made today can be attributed to the CCP, which continues to uphold the socialist system and leads the people in making constant innovation and arduous efforts. China could not have made such brilliant achievements without the system established by the Constitution.

The concept of China’s core interests is clearly defined in government documents, and reflects at least two aspects of progress. First, China is keeping up with the world’s common practice; its national interests are clearly defined, and the boundary of national core interests is clarified, which helps

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<sup>8</sup> “1989年10月31日 邓小平会见尼克松” [Meeting of Deng Xiaoping with Richard Nixon], 中国共产党新闻 [Chinese Communist Party News], <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64165/70486/70542/4867791.html> (accessed June 12, 2012).

reduce international frictions and conflicts. Second, China's confidence is increasing; the country no longer shies away from announcing its national interests. Now that China's national core interests have been clarified, this means that it has the power to prevent its own interests from being violated; otherwise, its national dignity and reputation would be severely damaged. Therefore, the so-called national core interests involve the supreme security of the country, and herein resides national dignity. It is also the principle for what the country is doing; in case of the violation of its bottom line, China will definitely take all possible measures, including force, to stop it.

An obvious effect was that U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden restated on August 18, 2011 in Beijing that the United States fully understands that the issues of Taiwan and Tibet are core interests for China; that the U.S. will firmly pursue the one-China policy; that "Taiwan independence" will not be supported; and that the U.S. fully acknowledges that Tibet is an integral part of China. This means that the national core interests of China have won recognition and respect from the international community.

Maintaining national core interests is the most fundamental part of China's national strategy; another important mission is to develop the country by enhancing national strength, promoting social prosperity and increasing people's living standards through international cooperation.

In one word, the basic implications of contemporary China's peaceful development strategy include an adjustment of China's own development model to widen and deepen the intersection and consistency of its own interests with those of other countries; to comprehensively establish a mutually beneficial community with other countries and regions on various levels and in different domains. This is a strategic idea that connects China's own destiny to that of other countries. In a sense, the peaceful development strategy is a strategy of self-restraint and self-control in relation to many aspects of the country's development, which reflects its enhanced sense of international responsibility.

## **Three Domains of the Implementation of the Foreign Relations Principles of China's Peaceful Development Strategy**

The focus of China's peaceful development strategy is to apply innovative thinking to come up with solutions for the major domestic and international historical issues that it encounters during the course of its development. The primary issue confronting the Chinese government is how to resolve the problems of domestic development, or to be more specific, the problem of sustainable development. The goals for national development by 2020 proposed at the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China are to build a well-off society and initiate a new stage of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The major obstacle to achieving these goals for the country's development is realizing sustainable development, which is also important for contributing to the foundation of international peace. If a radical solution for China's own sustainable development cannot be secured, its foreign relations will undoubtedly be affected.

### **China's Outlook on International Responsibility and its Practice**

One fundamental requirement of the peaceful development strategy is to enhance China's sense of international responsibility and the ability to act on it. As a big country with an economy that is becoming ever stronger, China has recognized that many of its interests are closely linked to the common interests of mankind. With regard to issues of sustainable development, which are closely associated with world peace, and the general wellbeing of mankind, China will undertake greater international responsibilities and obligations as its own capacity grows.

For example, China has recognized that global environmental pollution and global warming are serious challenges to human security, survival and development. China is the world's largest producer of goods and exporting power, and faces the challenge of combining economic development and carbon emissions reduction. Reducing pollution and protecting the environment are not only necessary for China in order to attain sustainable

development, but also part of the country's international responsibilities and obligations. The Chinese government has promised the world that China's carbon dioxide emissions per unit GDP will be reduced by 40–45 percent by 2020 compared with 2005. There are a number of important measures to be taken to achieve this goal. China will, first, step up energy saving and change the current mode of economic growth to reduce energy consumption per unit GDP; second, promote reforestation actively and develop carbon-sink forests; advance the construction of key forestry ecological projects and forestation of 25.29 million hectares; comprehensively manage the area of soil and water loss of about 230,000 km<sup>2</sup>; third, actively develop clean and renewable energy sources such as nuclear energy, wind energy, solar energy and geothermal power; fourth, strengthen water pollution prevention of key watersheds, air pollution prevention and management of industrial waste water, waste gas and solid waste, and vigorously develop recycling. In the past five years, the ecological environment and air quality in some of China's cities has improved significantly.

In 2005, China passed a renewable energy bill and at present there are dozens of renewable energy demonstration cities under construction. New energy is now listed as one of seven key fields supported by the state and many national and local preferential policies have been formulated. With these policies, China is expected to become the leading photovoltaic manufacturer and exporting country. Take nuclear power for example: if the scale of nuclear power is expanded to 80 million kW in installed capacity by 2020, then China will save at least 300 million tons of standard coal.

China is making great efforts to find the best solution for combining the demands posed by ecological and environmental challenges with economic and social development. Resource conservation and environmental protection constitute basic national policies. The 12th Five-Year Plan clarifies that over the next five years, China's water consumption per unit of industrial added value will be reduced by 30 percent; the effective utilization coefficient of agricultural irrigation water will increase to 0.53; the proportion of non-fossil energy in primary energy consumption will reach 11.4 percent; energy consumption per unit of GDP will decrease by 16 percent and carbon dioxide emission per unit of GDP will be reduced by 17 percent. The total discharge of major pollutants will also be reduced significantly. Chemical oxygen demand and sulfur dioxide emissions will be reduced by eight

percent; ammonia nitrogen and nitrogen oxide emissions will be reduced by 10 percent; and the forest coverage rate will be increased to 21.66 percent and forest stock volume will increase by 600 million m<sup>3</sup>.

Over the next five years, China will improve its energy saving and emissions reduction incentive and restraint mechanisms; optimize the energy structure; control total energy consumption; improve price formation mechanisms of resource products and tax system of resources and environment; improve the laws and regulations of energy conservation and emission reduction and strengthen the liability assessment; implement the principle of resource conservation and environmental protection in every aspect of production, distribution, consumption and construction and enhance sustainable development capacity.

In response to global climate change, China does not dodge its responsibilities and obligations, and has already adopted comprehensive measures to actively combat global warming. First of all, China will strengthen its control of greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions through the adjustment of industrial structure and energy structure, energy saving, energy efficiency improvement and increase of forest carbon sinks, etc. China will also control total energy consumption; implement rigorous management; accelerate the formulation of energy development plans and clarify the overall goal of emission control and responsibility allocation and implementation mechanism; secondly, China will enhance the capacity to adapt to climate change through the implementation of national strategies as well as strengthen research, observation and impact assessment of climate change. We should take climate change into account during the distribution of productive forces, infrastructure construction as well as the design and construction of major projects; enhance our capacity in preventing and mitigating natural disasters by strengthening monitoring, early warning and prevention of extreme weather and climate events; third, facilitate international cooperation. Adhering to the principle of common but disparate responsibilities, China will actively participate in international negotiations and promote the establishment of a fair and reasonable international cooperative system to address climate change; strengthen international talks and exchanges over strategic policies to combat climate change; implement cooperation in scientific research, technological development and capacity building, etc.; promote the building

of international cooperation platforms and management system for funds and technology transfer, and provide support and assistance to developing countries in dealing with climate change.

China will take on more international obligations and responsibilities in controlling arms, maintaining world and regional peace and stability as well as eliminating poverty in developing countries.

### **Transformation and Practice of China's Foreign Policy**

In modern history, powerful countries seeking hegemony seem to be a "curse" causing international political ups and downs. China's peaceful development strategy is a new attempt to break this "curse." The current global development trend provides favorable conditions for implementing this peaceful development strategy. Other countries want to see China following this path, and the CCP and the Chinese people have the same resolution and plans to do so. Taking peaceful, cooperative, joint and harmonious development as the lodestar, China will advance its foreign policy transformation; actively expand its common interests with other countries; narrow divergences and seek common ground while respecting the differences between countries; strengthen cooperation and achieve win-win situations, while proving to the rest of the world that China will never seek hegemony.

As China has already chosen the road of peaceful development, it has no political will to seek hegemony. Over the past years, China has established mechanisms for strategic dialogue and consultation with the United States, Europe, Japan and some emerging powers, and exchanged views on major issues of current world and regional order, bilateral relations, etc. in order to enhance mutual understanding and trust, reach strategic consensus and expand common interests, and reduce troubles and setbacks. With respect to the interests and concerns of all parties, China has carried out consultations at various levels, through which China and the countries concerned can begin to understand each other's positions and settle some disputes. As for some specific issues, the time is not yet mature to reach a final resolution, and China asserts the importance of patience and waiting for a good opportunity to solve these issues. Objectively speaking, our country has indeed achieved some positive effects by adopting peaceful means to settle the contradictions between the superpowers. Meanwhile, it has also accumulated experience and confidence in coordinating with superpowers.

The Asia-Pacific and the areas along the Pacific west coast are crucial for China's survival and development and relations with these areas directly determine China's security environment. In order to improve relations with neighboring countries, China launched its policy of "building friendship and partnership with neighboring countries" as early as 1991. Over the past 20 years, China has made great efforts to promote good-neighborly and friendly relations and cooperation with its neighbors, and worked together with them to build a regional environment of cooperation, peace and stability, equality, mutual trust and win-win situations. China's leaders have repeatedly asserted that China does not seek hegemony in Asia, and the bilateral and multilateral agreements we have signed with Asian countries do not have a single article that is exclusive. Our country has a positive and open view of regional cooperation and welcomes cooperation. China will continue to strengthen unity and cooperation with developing countries, deepen traditional friendships, expand practical cooperation and provide assistance to developing countries and consolidate common interests. Moreover, China will continue to take an active part in multilateral affairs, undertake its due international obligations constructively, promoting a more fair international order.

As China's national interests and the interests of other countries in the world merge, our country takes a positive and serious attitude fulfilling its international responsibility as a great power. Since the beginning of China's reform and opening up, the Chinese government has regarded the safeguarding of world peace and promotion of common development as one of China's three major historical tasks.

In recent years, China has increased its engagement with international and regional issues in order to build a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity. Some aspects are important: first, China actively participates in solving important global problems such as energy crises, food shortages, climate change, terrorism, natural disasters, infectious diseases and financial crises, the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Darfur problem; second, China makes great efforts to promote economic development both at a regional and global level by taking advantage of its own development successes. In recent years, China's economy has come to account for over 10 percent of world economic growth and over 12 percent of international trade growth, creating hundreds of

millions of jobs for other countries and regions; third, China is actively participating in and facilitating global development and public welfare. China cooperates with other countries to implement the United Nations Millennium Development agenda, which focuses on world security and human progress. China is an active builder of a new platform for South–South cooperation and North–South dialogue; fourth, China is actively working to facilitate regional cooperation mechanisms and promote development of all kinds of cooperative mechanisms, including 10+1, 10+3, China–Japan–ROK trilateral cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the East Asia Summit (EAS), the APEC leaders’ informal meeting, etc. and advocates new cooperative initiatives, which can promote regional cooperation, making it enter a new stage. China has already become an indispensable actor for facilitating work for world peace and progress in the modern world.

### **Transformation and Practice of National Defense Policy**

Throughout thousands of years of Chinese civilization, a defensive national defense policy was pursued by nearly all dynasties. When New China was founded, it announced its defensive defense policy to the world. The Common Program of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference adopted in 1949 clarifies that the task for its defense is to “safeguard China’s independence and territorial sovereignty as well as the integrity of Chinese people’s revolutionary achievements and all the legal rights.”

China’s peaceful development strategy is consistent with its defense policy, which make the national defense policy and military strategy fit the new era. The Chinese army strives through informationization to improve its ability to protect national security, build international peace and carry out diversified tasks. To strengthen mutual trust and cooperation with foreign armies and maintain regional and world peace is the new mission of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA); to safeguard national security and international peace is part of the strategic goals and principles of China’s military modernization and the way the armed forces are used.

The most distinctive feature of China’s national defense and military strategy is to defend and gain mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck. Even as a child every Chinese learns the ancient teaching that one should never intend to do harm, but should always guard against the harm

others might cause. China's national defense policy and military strategy fully embody the essence of this precept. The country's deep-rooted peace culture not only provides the basis upon which the Chinese character is built, but also affects its long-term foreign relations and national defense policy. China will not at any time invade other countries or interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. It pursues the principle of respect for other countries' sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, cultural traditions and freedom in selecting their own development path. China's view on the use of force is very explicit and strict: it shall only be used when China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and major national interests are seriously and deliberately violated. Nearly 100 years of history has demonstrated that China is the world's most prudent country with regard to resorting to military force. The Chinese believe that it is immoral to bully the weak and resort easily to military force.

China is opposed to the use of threats and force in international disputes, and advocates peaceful negotiation to settle international conflicts and divergences. It is opposed to power politics and bullying in international society and the strong dominating the weak. For the more than 60 years since the founding of New China, China has scrupulously abided by this principle.

China's armed forces are the fundamental guarantee of China's national security and freedom. Under the guidance of the peaceful development strategy, the reason why China is promoting military modernization is only that it wishes to keep pace with world military development and strengthen its ability to safeguard its own security and peace as well as its ability to fight against aggression through informationization.

At present, China's armed forces stand at a special historical stage with simultaneous development of mechanization and informationization. It must be admitted that there is a big gap between China's military modernization level and that of the developed countries. The principal contradiction in China's military buildup is that the military modernization level is still not adapted to the requirements of winning local wars under conditions of informationization. Before 2020, centered around thorough mechanization and advanced informationization, China's military forces will improve their ability to perform diversified military tasks. The key capability is the mode change of combat capability generation as the main line and the capability

to win local wars under conditions of informationization. The long-term development goal is to modernize China's national defense and army building until the middle of the century.

China does not engage in arms races and opposes them. It has kept a distance from the fierce nuclear arms race in the world since it developed its own nuclear weapons in the early 1960s. China develops limited nuclear weapons only to fight against nuclear blackmail and in order to possess its own nuclear deterrence. Meanwhile, it solemnly promises that it will not be the first one to use nuclear weapons and will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries and regions. Therefore, there is no such problem as China possessing excessive nuclear weapons. In the development of conventional weapons, China's goal is to develop its military force to a level roughly on a par with its national power. That our country selectively develops a few but efficient offensive weapons is not to compete with any country for military supremacy but to meet the active defense needs and strive not to be dominated by any other country in times of war.

After the short-term alliances between China and the former Soviet Union were terminated, China built up its national military security through its own efforts. It does not engage in military alliances or form part of any military bloc against a third party. It believes that military groups (alliances) are walls that hinder the establishment of peace, mutual trust and cooperation. Historically speaking, military alliances are the main factor that leads to war and regional security tensions.

To improve military mutual trust and participate in international military cooperation is the new task of the Chinese army in order to implement China's peaceful development strategy. This is an important foundation for and means of reducing the risk of military conflicts, achieving mutual security and maintaining regional stability. Under China's peaceful development strategy, the Chinese army is adapting to the new reality that China's economic interests have already merged with those of most countries in the world. Currently, the Chinese army is actively exploring new ways to realize international mutual safety and new channels to cooperate on security matters. After entering the new century, the Chinese army has strengthened military mutual trust as well as communication and cooperation with its neighbors and the world's military powers, pushing forward

the institutionalization and normalization of international military mutual trust as a long-term military activity.

Strategic consultation and dialogue are important for establishing international military mutual trust and building world peace. In recent years, the Chinese military has carried out security and defense consultations with 22 countries. So far, 11 rounds of defense consultations and six rounds of defense policy coordination talks have been held between China's Ministry of National Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense. The two countries have also established a military maritime security consultation mechanism. The General Staff Headquarters of the PLA and the Russian armed forces have held 13 rounds of strategic consultations. The Chinese military also participates in the ASEAN Regional Forum and has pushed forward the mechanism of security dialogue and cooperation under the framework of 10+3. Strengthening the establishment of military mutual trust in regions bordering on neighboring countries is important for China in order to prevent misjudgment, reduce the risk of conflict and maintain the safety and stability of the border areas. China has signed agreements for establishing trust measures and maintaining peace in border areas with India, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Bhutan and other countries. China's Ministry of National Defense has signed Frontier Defense Cooperation Agreements with its counterparts in Russia, North Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, etc. Along the borders the Chinese border forces have set up more than 60 stations for border talks and meetings, and thousands of talks and meetings take place each year. China has also carried out bilateral border blockades and controls, joint counter-terrorism training exercises, joint patrols, joint inspections and so on. Such activities not only greatly improve China's security environment but are also effective for promoting regional peace.

In order to meet the growing concerns of international society over China's military development and to improve the transparency of its military, China has released *National Defense White Papers* since 1998. So far, seven issues have been released. In 2008, the Ministry of National Defense set up the military spokesman system, which is responsible for releasing information about the PLA to the rest of the world. China also submits reports on its military spending to the United Nations every year. In addition, the Chinese military in recent years has invited foreign military observers and military

attachés to watch the PLA military exercises nearly ten times. Foreign military delegations were organized to visit China's navy, army and air force and meet their PLA colleagues, which gave the foreign military personnel a good chance to get in contact with the Chinese military and reduce their suspicions. At present, the Chinese armed forces have established military relationships with more than 150 countries.

The Chinese military participates actively in peacekeeping operations approved by the UN and in world humanitarian aid missions. From 1990 to 2010, the Chinese military participated in 19 UN peacekeeping operations, and has dispatched a total of more than 17,000 peacekeepers. Many Chinese soldiers have dedicated their young lives to the cause of world peace. Since 2002 when China began to provide material aid to Afghanistan, the Chinese military has dispatched 28 international humanitarian aid missions, provided tents, blankets, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, food, generators and other relief materials with a total value over 950 million RMB to 22 disaster-affected countries, and arranged for military planes and trains to deliver aid to them. The Chinese military also sent professional forces to provide emergency relief in large-scale rescue actions.

The armed forces of China and other countries are learning to make up for each other's deficiencies through exchanges and cooperation. China has trained military personnel from over 130 countries and engaged in professional exchanges in areas such as joint anti-terrorism operations, relief aid, military theory, equipment technology and talent cultivation. China held its first joint military exercises with other countries in 2002, and by December 2010 had completed military training exercises with 44 countries. By that time, the Chinese army had held seven joint anti-terrorism exercises with other member states of the SCO. These joint exercises and drills enhanced the performance of the PLA and armed forces of other countries in coordinated actions against non-traditional security threats.

# Peaceful Development Strategy and Foreign Relations

Over the past 30 years, China's economic and social development has undergone tremendous changes, which have been reflected in regional and global international relations.

Implementing the principle of the peaceful development strategy, China's most important foreign relationships in the future will be with the United States, Japan, India and ASEAN. The supreme characteristic of these relations is great uncertainty, which makes it necessary to establish a crisis management mechanism to implement prevention and control. Relations with the EU, Africa and South American countries are also very important. However, as these relations belong to China's normal international relations, problems in these cases are normal for international relations and not marked by great uncertainty, which, thus, make them easy to deal with.

## Sino-U.S. Relations

China and the United States are the most influential countries in the world. With its total GDP of US\$15 trillion and excelling in coming up with 40 percent of the world's innovations, the U.S. is the most powerful country economically and technologically and is the only military power that can project its power globally. All these strengths mean that the U.S. is a hegemonic power that cannot be matched or replaced. For its part, China is a developing country with the world's largest population and an economy that has continued to maintain a rapid growth rate of 10 percent over the past 30 years. With its 5,000 years of history, China has made great contributions to human civilization, and its hardworking people will give their country unlimited potential and a bright future. It is worth noting that both China and the United States have nuclear weapons. Although the technological level of China's military is still far from that of the U.S., the Chinese army is also one of the strongest in the world.

Current Sino-U.S. relations form a complex system with both positive and negative aspects. The relationship evinces both driving force as well as resistance. As the two countries are in an interdependent relationship, mutual cooperation is a necessity, but the reality is that there is also

competition and strife between the two. This cooperative interdependence and competitive struggle make their relations move forward. Therefore, this relationship should be investigated from a number of angles, so as a comprehensive and objective judgment and mastery of the overall situation can be made.

As the only global hegemonic country, the United States regards the entire globe as its sphere of interest. Even China and the countries surrounding it are taken by the U.S. as objects of political and economic interest. The U.S. is not willing to accept any challenger. Some Americans tend to put ordinary problems between China and the U.S. under the microscope, but this leads not to the problems being seen more clearly, but rather appearing to be larger than they really are.

In recent years, a series of problems, including the Taiwan question, the South China Sea dispute, the RMB question, the Tibet issue, human-rights issues, the trade deficit problem and intellectual property rights questions have harmed the Sino-U.S. relationship and made it evince frequent and great fluctuations. In fact, all problems between China and the United States can be divided into two kinds. The first kind consists of actual problems such as the trade deficit and protection of intellectual property rights. These problems require that both sides make efforts to find solutions acceptable to both sides through negotiations. Another kind of problem is related to international political hegemony, the core of which is dominance over world affairs. This is not to say that China is ready to strive for dominance with the United States but that the U.S. is more worried about its hegemony since severe signs of recession have emerged in America in recent years. Thinking that China will soon vie with it for dominance, the U.S. has shown that it is prepared to fight a decisive battle with China. In reality, this just reflects the psychological state of the U.S. in a time of economic crisis. Many problems, such as the idea that China's military strength constitutes a "threat," as well as "the South China Sea issue," "the human-rights issue," and "the RMB issue" are all derived from the problem of hegemony.

According to the Realist School of international relations studies, the fight for power between China and the United States is a structural conflict that will inevitably lead to war in 30–50 years. This oversimplifies a complex political situation. Personally, I believe that there is no life-and-death conflict stemming from power structure involving the two countries. If that

were in fact the case, a critical situation will arise only in the next 50 years or later. This only shows that the political analysts who have reached this conclusion fail to have a thorough understanding of China's actual situation and strategic culture. In the next 30–50 years, China will focus on domestic development and not spend much energy on the contest for global or regional hegemony with the U.S. It is still too early to tell how the actual relationship between the two countries will look like in 50 years. Even if China becomes the world's largest economy with a GDP that exceeds that of the U.S., China will still lag behind the U.S. and Europe. The key aspect is domestic development, because China has a large population and is characterized by vast differences in natural and environmental conditions. Therefore it is a difficult task to resolve the development problem of 1.3 or 1.5 billion people. It requires unlimited creativity and inventive exploration. I believe that diplomacy must be subordinated to domestic politics. Based on this, I believe that the Chinese will not set aside their heavy task of domestic development and be eager to become the world's leading power.

From the perspective of China's peace culture, peace tradition and peace spirit, it is unthinkable for China to start a war with a powerful country in order to become a global hegemon, though this kind of thing has been seen in the history of Europe.

Since China does not intend to contend for hegemony with the United States, the American people should have no reason to fight with China. They are obsessed with the use of military force in international politics, because the U.S. has the strongest military force in the world. For the United States, I think that the September 11 attacks were a profound lesson on the consequences of hegemony. However, many in the United States would seem not to agree with my opinion.

Given that the possibility that China and the United States will fight for global hegemony in the coming 30 or 50 years is so small, the problems to be tackled will only be those ordinarily found in international relationships, and can be solved by improved communication and negotiations, just as is the case in international conflicts between the U.S. and the UK. Such conflicts are nothing special and require no detailed discussion in this report.

Regarding the Taiwan question, in fact originally this should not have been turned into an issue between China and the U.S., as it is a Chinese domestic affair, but the reality is that it has become a problem between the

two countries. If the United States continues to use the Taiwan issue as a chess piece to curb China, this would reflect the wishes of only a few Americans. In fact, most Americans have recognized that they cannot continue to curb China's development by using to the Taiwan issue as a tool. That is to say, the right to take the initiative is gradually coming under the control of the Chinese people themselves; Taiwan may be indifferent for the next 20 to 30 years or even a little longer, but sooner or later must return to the Mainland and cannot possibly leave China. This is an inevitable development that the U.S. cannot obstruct, just as it cannot prevent China's growth. Now, for the Americans, the Taiwan issue is only a means to squeeze more surplus value from both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The Americans should not fight with China to stop China from unifying.

If we have to describe the transition of power from China to the United States, I prefer to believe it is a peaceful transition. Just like a person's aging, the decline of the U.S. is also natural. Many rational Chinese people also hope this process will proceed gradually.

### **Sino-Japanese Relations**

Sino-Japanese relations are extremely important for both countries and for East Asia as a whole. The two countries form an extremely complex and tangled relationship. The reason why it is so important is that they are the most important countries in Asia with economies accounting for more than 10 percent of the global economy. Furthermore, they are geographical neighbors; the nature of their relations directly determines the peace, stability and future of East Asia. From a historical perspective or from the point of view of practical needs, developing an amicable relationship is a common need and important issue for both. Geopolitics determines that China and Japan have no other choice but to get along well with one another for their joint development.

Many analysts believe that the status quo of Sino-Japanese relations is "cold politics and hot economy," which basically reflects the current situation.

In 2010, the total volume of trade between the two countries reached US\$301.85 billion, an increase of 30 percent compared to 2009. Imports, exports and total volume hit a record high that year. That total trade volume with one country exceeded US\$300 billion is unprecedented in Japanese

history.<sup>9</sup> China has become Japan's largest trade partner, while Japan is China's fourth largest trading partner. By the end of October 2009, Japan's actual investments in China had reached US\$68.99 billion, making Japan the largest investor in China, surpassing even the EU.<sup>10</sup>

A variety of statistical data show that the economies of China and Japan now form an interdependent relationship. Their close economic relationship has also become the material base for advancing their bilateral ties.

However, the political relationship between China and Japan has been cold during the latest 20 years, due to the historical problems, the Diaoyu Islands issue and the issue of rights and interests in the East China Sea. The fundamental problem, I'm afraid, is that Japan is unable to look positively on China's rapid development, and views geopolitical competition between the two countries as inevitable. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, which was an epoch-making bourgeois reform campaign in Japan's modern history, Japanese politicians generally accepted the Western realist view of international relations.

China and Japan have territorial disputes over the East China Sea demarcation and the Diaoyu Islands issue. Territorial disputes are common in international affairs and not exclusive to Sino-Japanese relations. What is important is how to properly deal with such disputes. Resorting to force cannot be the correct method of solving problems. And territorial disputes cannot be solved in the near future. Any impatience may lead to further complicated problems.

In view of the different arguments used by China and Japan in relation to the Diaoyu Islands issue as well as the development of bilateral relations, China has reached an understanding with Japan that the two countries will solve the problem later on, sticking to the consistent policy and not taking any unilateral actions, so as to avoid repercussions on their overall relations.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> “2010年中日贸易总额达3018.5亿美元 创历史新高” [Sino-Japanese trade in 2010 reached US \$301.85 billion, a new record high], Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, February 21, 2011, <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/o/dh/201102/20110207409060.html>

<sup>10</sup> Zhang Jifeng [张季风], “后危机时代日本对华投资的机遇与前景” [Opportunities and prospects for Japanese investments in China in the post-crisis era], *经济参考报* [Economic Information Daily], December 1, 2009, <http://jjs.cass.cn/2009/1202/236.html>

<sup>11</sup> “中日关系间的钓鱼岛问题” [The Diaoyu Islands question in Sino-Japanese relations], *People's Daily Online*, January 4, 2003, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2003-01-04/091>

Historical reasons, territorial disputes and other reasons have caused deep mistrust between China and Japan. The lack of mutual trust is an important cause of their cold political relations and the series of contradictions between them.

The historical lessons of Sino-Japanese relations are clearly known by the peoples of the two countries. During the period of 1937–45, Japanese militarism launched a full-scale war of aggression against China, which caused great losses to both sides, especially enormous psychological damage to both peoples. In 1972, diplomatic relations were restored. Since then, their economic and social development has begun to benefit from their good-neighborly and friendly relations. In particular, over nearly 30 years, economic relations between the two countries have developed rapidly. China has provided a vast market for Japanese goods, while China's exports of rare earth metals and coal have provided cheap and high-quality raw materials for Japan's manufacturing industry. Japan has given official development assistance (ODA) to the Chinese government, which has provided valuable financial support for the development of China's economy and infrastructure projects.

In 1996, Michael Armacost, the former U.S. ambassador to Japan, wrote that "a security connection between these two Asian giants is counterintuitive, except in the context of a threat that Russia no longer poses and the United States will not provide."<sup>12</sup> His opinion seems not to make much sense, however; things are not exactly as he claimed. Although there are issues of trust in relations between China and Japan, the United States is not willing to see too close a Sino-Japanese relationship, which would be adverse to the U.S. strategy in Asia. However, there are many reasons why China and Japan should build a strong security relationship but they are just blanketed by the U.S. hegemonic interests in East Asia.

As is known to us all, the United States depends on its treaties with Japan and Republic of Korea to uphold its hegemonic interests in East Asia. Therefore, Japan and South Korea do not have the capacity to pursue their own independent foreign policy, and are constrained by the foreign policy of the United States. Policy circles in the U.S. have argued that the East

Asian security mechanism comprised by China, Japan, North and South Korea would impair the status and rights of the United States in East Asia, no matter whether the U.S. is included or not. Therefore, the United States cannot permit the emergence of a new security mechanism in East Asia.

On the other hand, the trilateral relationships among China, Japan and South Korea evince entanglements and lack adequate trust. Japan feels uncomfortable with the reality that China is developing rapidly and has a GDP that exceeds that of Japan, which has caused right-wing extremist tendencies to appear. Furthermore, the pain caused by the Japanese invasion of China has not eased for some Chinese, which has given rise to nationalist sentiment, while relations between Japan and South Korea have experienced many ups and downs due to territorial and historical issues. Such negative factors have affected the formation of the East Asian security mechanism.

Japan's future development prospects and status in East Asia depend, to a great extent, on the nature of its relationships with China and the United States. Owing to China's rapid rise, the development of Japan is subject to the influence of the U.S. and China, instead of depending only on the U.S. Such a change makes Japan trapped in the dilemma that it has to make an important choice for its future. If Japan chooses to return to Asia and accompany China – just as France and Germany did in the European integration process – promoting peace and prosperity of Asia, Japan will really wash off its sins of the Second World War, just as Germany did, and win the trust of all the Asian countries. Then Japan will become a new reliable member of Asia.

Worryingly, some Japanese politicians and military personnel argue that in the next 20 years Japan should launch an all-out competition with China, to continue to act as a pawn in America's so-called 'balance of power strategy,' as well as bring on splits and contradictions in Asia in an attempt to realize the goal of becoming a normal country and casting off the bondage of its defeat in World War II by curbing China's development. If Japan chooses this strategy, both Japan and the other countries will undoubtedly be harmed and it will be impossible for the country to exert an appropriate influence on the construction of the new Asia that corresponds to its economic strength.

Recorded history indicates that it was 2,200 years since China and Japan came into contact. For nearly 2,100 years, China was stronger and more

prosperous than Japan. Japan was stronger than China only during 100 years after the Meiji Restoration. During these 100 years, Japan launched two large-scale wars of aggression against China within less than 50 years (the first Sino-Japanese War, 1894–95, and the War of Aggression against China, 1931–45). During the 2,100 years when China was stronger than Japan, China never invaded Japan. This is a fact that no Japanese can deny. It also reflects the different understanding of the relationship that the Chinese and the Japanese have.

The second Japanese war of aggression against China still has a great impact on Sino-Japanese relations, far greater than the impact of the territorial disputes. It is not just that a part of the Chinese people still cannot let it go, but it is even still the cause of severe psychological problems among many Japanese. Firstly, they worry and fear that China will take revenge against Japan once China has become stronger; secondly, the Japanese feel more comfortable taking the same position as the Americans in foreign relations.

In one word, the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations will be a long and tortuous process. However, gradual improvement is the general trend of these relations. The pace may pause, but the general direction will not be reversed. The East Asian Security Mechanism will not make any great progress in the next ten years.

### **Sino-Indian Relations**

China and India are the most influential Asian countries, and both are undergoing rapidly industrialization and becoming rising powers in international politics.

Historically, the contact between China and India was not particularly close due to the barrier of the Himalayas. An event with historic significance occurred in the 1–2 century AD when Buddhism was introduced from India to China. In 627 AD, the monk Xuan Zang of the Tang Dynasty left Xi'an. He journeyed on foot for 13,000 km, visited Xinjiang, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and arrived in India to study Buddhist scriptures, and brought back 657 volumes of Buddhist scriptures. Buddhism has become the largest religion in China today.

The population of China and India totals about 3.5 billion, accounting for 37 percent of world population. The two countries are faced with a heavy

development task. Development is the central subject of both. In the 21st century, trade between India and China has developed rapidly. The Sino-Indian trade in 2010 reached US\$61.7 billion, up by 43 percent from in 2009, which was far beyond the expectations of the two countries. The amount of exports from India was US\$20.8 billion, while its imports amounted to US\$40.8 billion.<sup>13</sup> China is India's second largest trading partner, while India is China's eighth largest partner. Thus, the economic ties between the two countries are becoming closer. Chinese and Indian leaders have frequent exchanges and contracts and have cooperated actively and successfully in international affairs on several occasions.

Geopolitically, India is the largest and strongest country in South Asia, overlooking the Indian Ocean. In the past 30 years, with the steady development of its economy, India began work towards reaching the status of a world political power. Five aspects of its national strategy are important. India has developed its nuclear weapons vigorously. In 1998, it successfully completed a test of nuclear weapons; its quantity of nuclear weapons has been growing year by year. It is actively seeking to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council; it is vigorously strengthening its conventional military power and making great efforts to develop its economy as well as science and technology.

However, some negative factors are also found in contemporary Sino-Indian relations. China achieved a total military victory in the Sino-Indian border conflict in the early 1960s but quickly withdrew to its original line of actual control. To the present day, part of the boundary has still not been demarcated and India has occupied a considerable area of Chinese territory. In 1959, the Dalai Lama launched a rebellion and was allowed to establish a government-in-exile with the permission of India. All of these have left some hidden dangers to the development of Sino-Indian relations.

The major obstacles to Sino-Indian relations are border and territory disputes. Most other issues derive from these problems. Those who claim that China wants to encroach on the Indian Ocean are just speculating. China has no ambition for the Indian Ocean, but merely wishes to protect its freedom of navigation. Some Indian soldiers worry that they may lose the

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<sup>13</sup> Bilateral trade between China and India in 2010 reached US\$61.7 billion, an increase of 43 percent.

land occupied by them for decades when India is at a disadvantage because China is developing faster than India.

With the great importance that must be attached to Sino-Indian territorial disputes, China is actively seeking solutions to prevailing problems. During his visit to India in December 2010, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao pointed out that in recent years both sides have established special representative meeting mechanisms, formulated political guidance principles, held good dialogues and communications and expressed the sincere desire to work together to resolve the boundary problems. In the face of difficulties, the most important thing is to advance along the right track, to narrow differences step by step, to build consensus, to increase confidence, to step up consultation and coordination on border affairs as well as to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, Sino-India relations have to some extent been influenced by geopolitical competition. India regards the developing relationship between China and the South Asian countries as containment directed against India. In response to China's construction of the Gwadar deep-water port in Baluchistan with Pakistan and the Irrawaddy river corridor in Burma, India has formulated its Look East policy, and has actively developed economic and strategic relationships with Vietnam, Laos, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and other countries. India signed defense agreements with these countries.

This issue will not exert any great influence on the Sino-Indian relationship, but it reflects the lack of depth of Sino-Indian mutual trust. Strengthening Sino-Indian mutual trust is a long-term process. There is an old Chinese saying: "As distance tests a horse's strength, so time reveals a person's heart." To further improve the Sino-India relationship, both sides need to make joint efforts. Only if the two countries join their efforts together can they obtain good results.

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<sup>14</sup> Wen Jiabao [温家宝], "彻底解决中印边界问题需要耐心和时间" [Fully resolving border issues between China and India will require patience and time], *The People's Daily*, December 17, 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqzx/2010wjbfyb/2010-12/17/content\\_11716216.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqzx/2010wjbfyb/2010-12/17/content_11716216.htm)

## China—ASEAN Relations

China and Southeast Asian countries have maintained very amicable relationships for thousands of years. From ancient to modern times, many countries have accepted the protection provided by China. The population of southeast China moves freely within the region; Chinese have made great contributions to the prosperity of the region by bringing in advanced culture and production technology. The hometowns of many Southeast Asians are in Mainland China. China and Southeast Asian countries have developed a profound traditional friendship.

The year 2011 was the 20th anniversary of the China–ASEAN dialogue and cooperation process. In 1991, this process started formally. The China–ASEAN win-win cooperation pattern has been established over the past 20 years, and the cooperative achievements have been fully reflected in political, economic, regional affairs and other fields. From a “dialogue partner relationship” to “the 21st century oriented good-neighborly partnership” and then to “the peace and prosperity oriented strategic partnership,” political mutual trust has made a qualitative leap due to joint efforts. China–ASEAN trade has risen from less than US\$10 billion in 1991 to US\$292.8 billion in 2010, and the average annual growth over the 20 years has been over 20 percent. China has become ASEAN’s largest trading partner. Since April 2010, ASEAN surpassed Japan and became China’s third largest trading partner.<sup>15</sup> According to China–ASEAN free trade agreements, ASEAN countries have lowered the average tariffs on Chinese export commodities from 9.8 percent to 0.1 percent. In 2015, 90 percent of goods exported to China from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam will enjoy zero tariff treatment.<sup>16</sup> Southeast Asian countries are benefitting from China’s rapid development. China will import vast amounts of fruits, rice and other agricultural products from Southeast Asia.

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<sup>15</sup> Xinhua, “合作包容共赢--写在中国东盟建立对话关系20年之际” [Cooperation, inclusiveness and mutual benefit: written at the 20th anniversary of the dialogue relationship between China and ASEAN], [www.ce.cn](http://intl.ce.cn/zgysj/201110/22/t20111022_22780515.shtml), October 22, 2010, [http://intl.ce.cn/zgysj/201110/22/t20111022\\_22780515.shtml](http://intl.ce.cn/zgysj/201110/22/t20111022_22780515.shtml) (accessed June 14, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, “中国—东盟贸易额2011年将超过300亿美元” [Trade between China and ASEAN will exceed 30 billion dollars in 2011], [www.ce.cn](http://intl.ce.cn/zgysj/201106/29/t20110629_22511339.shtml), June 29, 2011, [http://intl.ce.cn/zgysj/201106/29/t20110629\\_22511339.shtml](http://intl.ce.cn/zgysj/201106/29/t20110629_22511339.shtml) (accessed June 14, 2012).

The major problems residing in the relations between China and some ASEAN countries are territorial and interests disputes about the South China Sea. These problems began to show up mainly after the 1970s when China went through the Great Cultural Revolution and had no time or capacity to deal with changes in this region. Since the 1990s, world energy prices started to increase and the countries around the South China Sea began to explore oil and natural gas resources in cooperation with Western countries. The disputes worsened. Objectively speaking, with China's economy continuing to develop, its national defense capability (including the navy forces) improved. Some ASEAN countries began to worry that China would fight for the territory of South China Sea, so they resorted to asking other countries to intervene, complicating the South China Sea issue.

Over the past 20 years, China has made sustained efforts to find a solution to the South China Sea dispute through political and diplomatic means without resorting to direct use of military force. Just think about it, if the ASEAN countries had been facing the United States rather than China, this situation would certainly not be the result today. China's restraint and tolerance over the South China Sea dispute should be internationally recognized. In 1984, Deng Xiaoping first put forward the concept of "Laying aside differences and seeking joint development." In 1990, China officially presented a proposal that implemented this position with regard to the South China Sea issue, in the hope that the South China Sea dispute could be solved with the ASEAN countries involved through peaceful negotiations and common development.

In 1999–2000, China signed a framework of bilateral relations in the 21st century with ASEAN member states. In November 2002, both sides signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which basically eased the biggest dispute between the two sides in regional security. In October 2003, China officially joined the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as a country outside of Southeast Asia, and both parties agreed to establish a strategic partnership relationship. In 2002, China put forward the Amicable, Secure and Prosperous Neighborhood policy aimed at "building friendship and partnership with neighboring countries." The China–ASEAN Free Trade Zone was already initiated in 2005, and planned to be completed in 2010. It is the world's third largest

free trade area (after North America and Europe) with a total GDP of US\$2 trillion and total trade of US\$1.2 trillion.

In July 2011, China and ASEAN held a 10+1 foreign minister meeting in Bali, Indonesia, and a follow-up action pointer for implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea was adopted. This shows that both sides have the ability and willingness to solve and control the most troublesome issues. It was a landmark and was the most important achievement during 20 years of dialogue between ASEAN and China. These achievements will enhance mutual trust and peace, friendship and cooperation in South China Sea and promote regional peace, stability and prosperity.

## Concluding Remarks

The peaceful development concept is a development strategy put forward based on the spirit of China's 5,000-year-old traditional culture and contemporary national conditions. Since the implementation of China's peaceful development strategy, many positive results have been recorded, which strengthens China's faith in promoting its peaceful development strategy.

History will eventually prove that China's peaceful development strategy is the only strategic choice that can integrate China's development with that of other countries all over the world; it is consistent with the global development trend and is a great golden avenue that will lead to the renaissance of the Chinese nation. The Chinese firmly believe that more and more nations will adopt the peaceful development path and that the future is bound to become increasingly promising. Peaceful development represents the general direction of global development. The world has good reason to believe that the ancient Chinese civilization is adapting to the new changes in world history, and that the Chinese people will make more and more major contributions to human peace, progress and prosperity by making use of their own peaceful spirits and creations. The world will become more peaceful and beautiful because of the development of China.

China advocates that both the developed and developing countries should clearly take the road of peaceful development and change the present international political thinking. The peaceful development concept should become the path for all countries in the world to realize common development and prosperity.

China's peaceful development strategy is not complete pacifism. Although China advocates that international disputes should be resolved through equal dialogue and negotiations, China will retain the option of the use of military force to defend its own national interests when external forces attempt to intrude or maliciously plunder Chinese territory and property.

*Translated by Feiran Chen*

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