

Multilateralism and China–UN Relations

Niu Zhongjun

ASIA PAPER
March 2011



Institute for Security &
Development Policy

Multilateralism and China–UN Relations

Niu Zhongjun

Institute for Security and Development Policy
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden
www.isdp.eu

Multilateralism and China–UN Relations is an *Asia Paper* published by the Institute for Security and Development Policy. The *Asia Papers Series* is the Occasional Paper series of the Institute's Asia Program, and addresses topical and timely subjects. The Institute is based in Stockholm, Sweden, and cooperates closely with research centers worldwide. Through its Silk Road Studies Program, the Institute runs a joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center with the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. The Institute is firmly established as a leading research and policy center, serving a large and diverse community of analysts, scholars, policy-watchers, business leaders, and journalists. It is at the forefront of research on issues of conflict, security, and development. Through its applied research, publications, research cooperation, public lectures, and seminars, it functions as a focal point for academic, policy, and public discussion.

The opinions and conclusions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute for Security and Development Policy or its sponsors.

© Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2011

ISBN: 978-91-86635-08-4

Printed in Singapore

Distributed in Europe by:

Institute for Security and Development Policy
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden
Tel. +46-841056953; Fax. +46-86403370
Email: info@isd.eu

Distributed in North America by:

The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute
Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies
1619 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. +1-202-663-7723; Fax. +1-202-663-7785
E-mail: caci2@jhuadig.admin.jhu.edu

Editorial correspondence should be addressed to Dr. Bert Edström at: bedstrom@isd.eu

Contents

Executive Summary5

Introduction6

China–UN relations8

**First Phase: From Denying and Doubting to Selective Participation
(1949–78).....9**

Second Phase: Toward Comprehensive Participation (1978–89).....17

Third Phase: Increased Appreciation and Further Engagement (1990–)23

Concluding Remarks.....31

About the Author32

Executive Summary

Composed of 192 member states, the United Nations (UN) is the largest and most comprehensive international organization as well as the most important international platform for multilateral diplomacy. The UN is also a stable framework for international cooperation between nation-states. As one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, China holds a special international status that allows it to play a very important role in the UN. During the Cold War, the People's Republic of China was excluded from the UN for 22 years until its admission in 1971. However, China adopted a negative attitude towards the UN for a long period after its accession to the UN, during which China used the UN as a way to publicize its foreign policy and obtain economic benefits. After the adoption of its Reform and Opening up Policy, and especially after the end of the Cold War, China became more involved in the international community. Learning from diplomatic interaction with foreign countries, it began to recognize the value of the UN in trying to achieve its goal of acting as "a responsible power," and increased the scope and depth of its participation in UN affairs. Its UN policy thus underwent a gradual process of change from the restoration of membership, selective participation, comprehensive participation and further engagement. This paper analyzes the process from a historical point of view in relation to China's attitude towards the UN.

Introduction

After the Cold War, Multilateralism and multilateral diplomacy have become prominent characteristics of international relations. Many countries adopted multilateralism in their foreign policies. Then what is multilateralism? There are many definitions for multilateralism. John Ruggie states that “multilateralism refers to coordinating relations among three or more states in accordance with certain principles,”¹ while Robert O. Keohane defines it as a “practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions.”² James Caporaso in turn explains: “As an organizing principle, the institution of multilateralism is distinguished from other forms by three properties: indivisibility, generalized principles of conduct, and diffuse reciprocity.”³

China is no exception; multilateralism has also been a vital component of China’s independent foreign policy of peace since the 1980s. However, unlike scholars in Western countries, Chinese scholars prefer to use the term multilateral diplomacy. Associated with the characteristics of clarity, fairness and consistency, in China multilateral diplomacy is considered a cooperative diplomatic approach that plays positive roles in strengthening international exchange and dialogue and promoting international cooperation. Li Baojun defines multilateral diplomacy “as opposed to bilateral diplomacy ... a form of international cooperation and coordination, conducted by three or more international relation actors (including state-actors and non-state actors) by medium of building up international organizations, concluding international treaties or holding international organizations, etc.”⁴

The multilateral diplomacy after the Cold War is the concrete embodiment of world multipolarization, economic globalization and the internationalization of global problems in the field of diplomacy. Multilateral

¹ John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (1992), pp. 566–98.

² Robert O. Keohane, “Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research,” *International Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Autumn 1990), p. 731.

³ James Caporaso, “International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations,” *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer 1992), pp. 600–1.

⁴ Li Baojun, *Dangdai Zhongguo waijiao gailun* [Theory of contemporary Chinese diplomacy] (Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 1999), p. 232.

diplomacy not only shows that multilateral agendas increase day by day, international organizations expand constantly, but also supports multilateral activities aiming at peace and cooperation.

China's multilateral diplomacy has four aspects. Firstly, China energetically participates in various international organizations' multilateral activities with the United Nations as part of its core, as well as in the WTO, G-20, etc. Secondly, China promotes multilateral cooperation with surrounding countries in the fields of politics, economy, security and so on, to strengthen cohesiveness of Asia, especially East Asia. Thirdly, China constantly improves its relations with developed countries, making great efforts to increase mutual coordination and beneficial cooperation. Fourthly, China continues to consolidate cooperation with developing countries, setting up effective multilateral consultation and cooperative mechanisms.

At the same time, China's multilateral diplomacy has the following four characteristics: firstly, China's multilateral diplomacy insists on the traditional principles of international relations, such as sovereign equality, peaceful settlement of international disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Secondly, as the biggest developing country, China especially emphasizes its relationships with developing countries, and supports them in setting up the new international order. Thirdly, as the biggest country in East Asia, China treasures its relationships with its neighbors, aiming at regional peace and development. Lastly, in its diplomatic practice, China values flexibility while safeguarding its national interests.

However, China's multilateral diplomacy nowadays is still restricted by many factors. Internationally, the inequalities and irrationalities of the current international order, as well as the unilateralism and bilateral alliances of the United States constitute an unfavorable environment for the development of China's multilateral diplomacy. Domestically, issues in economic development, the Taiwan issue and ethical issues are all playing unfavorable roles. Additionally, the lack of experience in multilateral diplomacy and soft power also prevents China from playing an effective role in multilateral diplomacy commensurate with its permanent member status.

China–UN relations

As one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United Nations (UN) is the most important international platform for China's multilateral diplomacy. China holds a special international status that allows it to play a very important role in the UN. As Shen Wei stated, "For China, its permanent seat in the Security Council is not just a status symbol or safeguarding mechanism for national sovereignty. China has moved more progressively in using its diplomatic power to create maneuver space for a multipolar geopolitics."⁵

As China's Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing pointed out, China seeks to bolster the standing of the UN as the premier multilateral organization that can promote China's vision of "democracy in international affairs" and building a "just and fair international order."⁶ Interestingly enough, the western scholar Evan Medeiros also has a similar opinion on this matter: "China clearly sees such organizations as venues in which to advance its vision of fostering a multipolar world, greater 'democracy in international relations,' and 'building a harmonious world'."⁷

This report divides China's interaction with the UN into three phases. The first phase is from 1949 to 1978, during which China took the sovereignty interests as the driving force behind its foreign policy on the UN. The second phase is from 1979 to 1989, during which the interaction between China and the UN stepped onto the normal track, and the interests of development became an important index of China's foreign policy. The third phase is after 1989, when China formed good relations with the UN, and started to become an active participant in UN activities with an attitude of responsibility.

⁵ Shen Wei, "In the Mood for Multilateralism? China's Evolving Global View," Centre Asie, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, *Working Papers* (July 2008), p. 6, www.ifri.org/downloads/Chinamultilateralism.pdf

⁶ Li Zhaoxing, "2006 nian guoji xingshi he Zhongguo waijiao gongzuo" [The international situation and China's diplomatic work in 2006], *Qiushi* (online), January 2007.

⁷ Evan S. Medeiros, *China's International Behavior: Activism, Opportunism, and Diversification* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), p. 77.

First Phase: From Denying and Doubting to Selective Participation (1949–78)

During World War II, China was the major force in fighting against Japan in Asia. That role made it possible for China to become one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. As Samuel Kim said, “Not long after its establishment, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) wanted UN membership to gain international recognition and legitimacy.”⁸

The New China wished to assume its representation in the UN, viewing it as a platform for trying to safeguard the victory of the Chinese revolution. For example, “One month after PRC’s establishment, its premier Zhou En-lai delivered a statement to UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie and president of General Assembly Carlos P. Romulo, asserting that PRC was the solely legitimate representative of China and requesting the UN to cancel all Republic of China’s rights and legitimacy.”⁹ Consequently, China’s Deputy Prime Minister Wu Xiuquan was sent to give a speech at the Security Council in 1950. He accused the United States of invading Taiwan, which is considered Chinese territory, and called for the restoration of China’s legal representation in the UN.

However, the communist New China was excluded from the UN due to its participation in the communist camp headed by the Soviet Union. Responding to the outbreak of Korean War in 1950, China sent the “People’s Volunteer Army” into Korea, but was condemned as the “aggressor” by the UN General Assembly on February 1, 1951.¹⁰ In the following two decades, China was absent from the UN, and its seat was taken by the Kuomintang regime on Taiwan, representing the “Republic of China.” The UN, which was established as a platform for contemporary multilateral diplomacy, had

⁸ Samuel S. Kim, “China and the United Nations,” in Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg, eds., *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999), p. 45.

⁹ Chih-hi Hsiu, “Multilateralism and Chinese UN Policies,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention, Chicago, February 28, 2007, p. 6, http://thomaskoe.piranhoe.de/Multilateralism_and_Chinese_UN_Policies.pdf

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; China Institute of International Affairs, *China and the United Nations* (New York: Manhattan Publishing Company, 1959), p. 165.

in the eyes of New China, turned into a salon where Western anti-China forces gathered and exerted influence. The new Chinese government considered the UN as “the tool for an imperialist clique headed by the United States to expand their invasion to the world.”¹¹ For example, in 1965, Foreign Minister Chen Yi suggested that the United Nations “should take the United States as the aggressor, and rescind its resolution which takes China and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as aggressors.”¹² Due to such unpleasant historical experiences, China was critical of the UN, and for a long time its UN policy was full of animosity and suspicion.

With regard to the function of the UN, Beijing stated that “the United Nations can and should be the key element in international affairs ... if the UN could play an important role in consolidating world peace and safeguarding the security of people around the world, it would win the honor it deserves and earn more prestige ... the UN fails to perform its duty under many circumstances.”¹³ Chinese scholars commented, “the United Nations is only a forum for capitalist politicians and an exclusive tool for the two hegemonic countries: the United States and Soviet Union.... and a bureaucratic organ for coffee breaks, chatting and quarreling.”¹⁴

As a result, from the perspective of diplomacy, the international situation during the Cold War era was characterized by the confrontation between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. During this period, China’s strategic foreign policy focused on the world revolution, anti-imperialism and anti-hegemony, and it used the UN as its shooting target, as the UN was used as a tool by anti-China forces controlled by the United States. China claimed that “the growth, strength and development of PRC are not decided by whether China is a member of United Nations or not.”¹⁵ At one point, China even proposed establishing a new

¹¹ “Waijiaobu fayanren chize Meiguo caozong Lianheguo dahui feifa tongguo dui Zhong-Chao jinyunan de tanhua” [Foreign spokesman’s remarks on accusing UN’s illegal embargo to China and DPRK under the control of the United States (A)], *Documents of China’s Foreign Policy(c)*, Vol. 2 (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1958), p. 27.

¹² “Chenyi waizhang zai yici jizhe zhaodaihui shang de jianghua” [Speech by Foreign Minister Chen Yi at the first press conference], *Beijing Review*, Vol. 3 (1965), pp. 11–12.

¹³ *The People’s Daily*, September 20, 1959, Sec. 5.

¹⁴ Fu Hao and Li Tongcheng, eds., *Jingtianweidi: Waijiaoguan zai Lianheguo* [Manoeuvre: Diplomats in the United Nations] (Beijing: Chinese Overseas Publishing House, 1995), p. 8.

¹⁵ *The People’s Daily*, December 4, 1964, Sec. 4.

United Nations. When this proposal was raised in a talk Chairman Mao Zedong had with Indonesia's President Sukarno, Sukarno asked Mao why China did not seek to restore its representation in the United Nations. Chairman Mao answered: "Since the United Kingdom, United States and France are all imperialist and colonialist countries, and have all got into the United Nations, we Chinese are fighting them outside the United Nations."¹⁶

Generally speaking, China's attitude towards the UN regime was one of denial and doubt during this period. China believed that the developing countries were forced and had no other choice but to accept the existing conditions as set by the developed countries. At the same time, the international political and economic order, manipulated by the developed countries, was set up in favor of exploiting the developing countries, which meant it could not be fair and impartial. As a socialist country, and not being able to join international organizations like the UN in the first place, not much room was left for China to develop its multilateral diplomacy. It interacted mostly with developing countries and socialist countries. The few multilateral diplomatic moves China made were limited in object and scale, such as international communist movements and a few international conferences. As a result, China took a position where it not only refused to recognize the validity of the UN, but also strongly opposed such an international regime. For example, Mao Zedong said in January 1960: "In three years, five years, or even ten years, I will not care about any international organization. The United States has to give in to us, not we to them. In the end the United States will give in."¹⁷

During the 1950s and 1960s, China lacked knowledge of multilateral diplomacy such as the Geneva conference (1954), the Bandung conference (1955), and the skills necessary to participate effectively in international organizations. China did not take the international organizations led by the West as partners but saw them only as short-term platforms for identifying more new allies with which to fight the superpowers. At this stage,

¹⁶ Mao Zedong, "Guanyu uifu Zhongguo zai Lianheguo de hefa xiwei wenti" [On the restoration of China's representation in the United Nations], in *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy* (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press and World Affairs Press, 1994), pp. 263–74.

¹⁷ Mao Zedong, "Zai guanyu guoji qingkuang de yiqi jianxun shang de piyu" [Comments on a briefing on international affairs], in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* [Mao Zedong's manuscripts after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (Vol. 9)] (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 1996), p. 4.

multilateral diplomacy was mainly used by China to publicize foreign policy and promote anti-imperialism and anti-hegemony.

Table 1. The Votes in the United Nations on the Lawful Right of China

Annual	Affirmative votes	Negative votes	Abstention votes
1950	10	37	8
1951	11	36	4
1952	7	41	11
1953	10	43	2
1954	11	42	6
1955	12	41	6
1956	24	46	8
1957	27	47	6
1958	28	43	9
1959	29	43	9
1960	34	41	22
1961	47	57	19
1962	42	55	12
1963	42	56	12
1965	47	46	20
1966	46	56	17
1967	45	58	16
1968	44	57	23
1969	48	55	21
1970	51	47	25
1971	76	35	17

According to the above table, the membership change of the UN General Assembly made it more and more possible for China to gain admission towards the end of 1960s. On October 25, 1971, Resolution 2758 was passed by the General Assembly, by which the PRC was recognized as the sole legitimate government of China. This event made China realize the importance of the rise of the Third World and its strengthened role in the United Nations. China had been expecting that this would happen, but not that it would happen so soon. Although in 1970 the number of votes supporting China exceeded those against for the first time, China saw that it still had a long way to go. Mao Zedong admitted that “the victory at the UN Assembly this time is out of my expectation.”¹⁸ Because this restoration of China’s

¹⁸ Chen Dunde, *Shengli zai 1971: Xinzhongguo chongfan Lianheguo jishi* [Victory in 1971:

seat was in a way unexpected, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was busy with Kissinger's upcoming visit, the Chinese government was hesitant to send a delegation to attend the 26th General Assembly when invited by UN Secretary-General U Thant.¹⁹ But Mao said that "since the African brothers and medium-small countries carried China into the UN with a sedan chair this time, how can we disappoint them? Let us send a delegation to the UN Assembly!"²⁰ So a delegation was put together in a hurry and dispatched to the UN. China's admission to the United Nations consequently led to China's admission to other specialized agencies of the United Nations, such as UNDP, UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNESCO, etc.

As China was in the midst of the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), although China restored its legal representation in the UN, its attitude towards it did not fundamentally change during the remainder of the 1970s and it did not participate actively in the UN until the late 1970s, however. As Kim stated, "Although China's legal representation in the UN had been restored, its participation in UN affairs were limited and only symbolic in the 1970s."²¹ China continued to maintain that UN was a tool in the hands of imperialist and hegemonic countries. Furthermore, as a newcomer China was not familiar with the complex UN system, including its structures, procedures, customs and political environment. Apparently China maintained its logic, formed during the revolution, and would handle international issues with the same mentality. This was highlighted in a speech given by Ambassador Qiao Guanhua, as representative of the PRC mission to the UN at the 28th UN Assembly in 1973, with regard to China's judgment of the international situation: "Since a long time ago, the Chinese government believed that the world is now undergoing furious turbulence, reformation and re-organization. [...] The present international situation is totally in disorder rather than longstanding peace. The mainstream of

The record of China's return to the United Nations] (Beijing: People's Liberation Army Arts Press, 2004), p. 273.

¹⁹ Xiong Xianghui, *Wode qingbao yu waijiao shengya* [My life as a diplomat] (Beijing: CCP History Press, 1999), p. 345; Yin He, "China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations," Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Asia Paper* (July 2007) p. 19, <http://www.isdp.eu/files/publications/ap/07/yh07chinaschanging.pdf>

²⁰ Xiong, *Wode qingbao yu waijiao shengya*, p. 347.

²¹ Kim, "China and the United Nations," p. 45.

today's disorder is the voice of the independence of new nations, the liberalization of ethnic groups, and the revolution of peoples."²²

Judging from its limited experience, China felt it could not do much more than take the UN as a "forum," where it could criticize the hegemonic behavior of the superpowers and voice the demands of the developing world. In 1974, Deng Xiaoping's brought up his famous "Three Worlds" theory at the UN General Assembly, and declared that China belonged to the Third World. As a developing country, China attached great importance to upholding justice for developing countries in the UN, which forced the world organization to approve a series of resolutions that did not conform to those advocated by the United States and the Soviet Union. As observed by Faust and Kornberg, "China brought a whiff of fresh air to the United Nations in the 1970s. Western countries feared the presence of Communist China in the Security Council. Yet once in the Security Council, China behaved conservatively, often abstaining rather than vetoing controversial votes. Ironically, China became a strong advocate for the Third World by virtue of its membership in the UN, but it also became a major player in the international system that many in the Third World abhorred due to the system's inequality."²³

At the UN General Assembly, the Security Council and relevant committees, China expounded its positions on issues like East Pakistan, arms control, the Middle East, Portugal's invasion of Guinea and racial discrimination in Africa. These positions were different from those taken by the United States and the Soviet Union, but made China win the support of many developing countries, as the result of China's long efforts in supporting the decolonization movement around the world. Therefore, it was widely accepted that "China is the representative for the Third World in the United Nations. China's position was closer to the Non-Aligned Movement, and China fully supports developing countries in many political and economic issues."²⁴

²² *Woguo gaibiaotuan chuxi Lianheguo youguan huiyi wenjianji (1973 nian xuji)* [Documents of the Chinese mission's participation in relevant UN conferences (Sequel to 1973 Vol.)] (Beijing: People's Press), 1974, p. 5.

²³ John R. Faust and Judith F. Kornberg, *China in World Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), p. 210.

²⁴ "Hannianlong tuanzhang zai yibanxing bianlun zhong de fayan" [Remarks by Ambassador Han Nianlong at the General Debate] (September 27, 1979), in *Woguo daibiaotuan chuxi Lianheguo youguan hu yi wenjianji (1979.7-1979.12)* [Documents of the

A speech delivered by the head of the Chinese delegation on this special occasion at the United Nations is stirring, even today: “We have consistently maintained that all countries, big or small, should be equal and that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence should be taken as the principles guiding the relations between countries. The people of each country have the right to choose the social system of their own country according to their own will and to protect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their own country. No country has the right to subject another country to its aggression, subversion, control, interference or bullying. We are opposed to the imperialist and colonialist theory that big nations are superior to small nations and small nations are subordinate to big nations. We are opposed to the power politics and hegemony of big nations bullying small ones or strong nations bullying weak ones. We hold that the affairs of a given country must be handled by its own people, that the affairs of the world must be handled by all the countries of the world, and that the affairs of the UN must be handled jointly by all its member states, and the superpowers should not be allowed to manipulate and monopolize them. At no time, neither today nor ever in the future, will China be a superpower subjecting others to its aggression, subversion, control, interference or bullying.”²⁵

However, China got overly obsessed with the negative effects of UN actions on human rights, arms control and other issues, and neglected the positive side. It was absent from the UN Human Rights Council for a long period, and, as such, did not make good use of this important organization in international human rights, failing to publicize the significant improvements on human rights in the New China achieved by the current government, nor did China explain its own human rights values. Although China resumed membership in the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1971, it did not participate fully for a start, since it saw itself as a poor, developing country.²⁶ On arms control, at this time China did not expect that any substantial effects could be achieved by the UN’s work.

Chinese delegation’s participation in relevant UN conferences (July 1979–December 1979)] (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1980), pp. 1–17.

²⁵ “Chinese Delegation Speaks at the UN” (January 1972), *Woguo daibiaotuan chuxi Lianheguo youguan huiyi wenjianji* [Documents of the Chinese delegation’s participation in relevant UN conferences (1972)] (Beijing: People’s Press, 1973), p. 9.

²⁶ Greg Moore, “China’s Cautious Participation in the UN Human Rights Regime,” *Human Rights & Human Welfare*, Vol. 1 (January 2001), p. 27.

With regard to peacekeeping operations, China insisted that international disputes should be resolved peacefully by the nations involved, and that settlements had to be compatible with the principles of the UN Charter; at the same time, foreign interference in the internal affairs of countries should be strictly prohibited. During this period, China reserved its approval to the peacekeeping operations initiated by the UN Security Council, and China stayed consistent with its position regarding the peacekeeping operations initiated by the UN Security Council: China opposed the United Nations' getting involved in a country's domestic conflicts, did not endorse dispatching the UN peacekeeping force, would not take any financial responsibility and refused to vote or abstained in voting.

The reason given was that "China has always been opposed to the dispatch of the so-called 'peacekeeping forces'. [...] Such a practice can only pave the way for further international intervention and control with the superpowers as the behind-the-scenes bosses."²⁷ Chinese representatives in the United Nations reiterated many times that "China does not agree to place the expense of UN peacekeeping forces under the expenditure of the United Nations. The Chinese government will not assume any responsibility and refuses to vote on this issue."²⁸ China created its own "fifth voting style," which meant that it was present during the Security Council voting process but kept silent and did not participate in voting.²⁹ From November 24, 1971 to December 22, 1976, China refused to vote in 46 of 158 votes – 29 percent of all refusals, the most of any of the Security Council permanent members.³⁰

²⁷ U.N. Security Council Verbatim Record, S/PV.1750, October 25, 1973.

²⁸ *Zhongguo daibiaotuan chuxi Lianheguo youguan huiyi wenjianji (1978)* [Documents of the Chinese delegation's participation in relevant UN conferences (1978)] (Beijing: People's Press, 1980), p. 18.

²⁹ "The Early Days after China's Returning to UN," *China News Week*, September 19, 2005.

³⁰ Kim, *China, the United Nations and World Order*, p. 209.

Second Phase: Toward Comprehensive Participation (1978–89)

In the late 1970s, great changes took place in China and in the outside world. The two superpowers had become less powerful, and as a result their control over the other countries was reduced; at the same time, Third World countries achieved great development in many areas, and demanded a bigger role in international affairs. Outside of China, globalization caused greater economic interdependence; in China, the end of the Cultural Revolution made it possible and necessary for Chinese leaders to reflect on China's national policies, especially foreign policy. A policy of opening up and reform was adopted in 1978 by the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh National Conference of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and was to become an important part of Chinese national policy.

In January 1979, diplomatic relations were established by China and the United States, and China began to coordinate policies with Western countries in opposing the Soviet Union after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. At the 12th National Congress of the CCP, the "independent foreign policy of peace" was put forward, aiming at building a peaceful international environment and a favorable climate for China. As a Chinese analyst noted, "'Peace' means that China began to formulate its foreign policy from the viewpoint of whether it is beneficial to international and regional peace, instead of the viewpoint of pursuing military superiority, while 'independence' means that China began to formulate its foreign policy according to its national interests and the common interests of peoples of all the countries in the world."³¹

This policy regarded independence as the basic position, and the main tasks were taken to be to build a peaceful and steady international and surrounding environment for the modernization of the country, and treated the maintenance of world peace and the promotion of common development as the purpose of friendly cooperation with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. In May 1984, Deng Xiaoping

³¹ Xia Liping, "China: A Responsible Great Power," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 10, No. 26 (2001), p. 18.

first brought up “the principle of peace and development.” When meeting with the Brazilian President João Batista de Oliveira Figueiredo, Deng said: “Many problems exist in the current world, among which two are standing out: the peace issue and the South–North issue, also called development issues.”³² Deng believed that the risk of war was decreasing, and that, on the contrary, the importance of economic construction had increased sharply, so that China should safeguard world peace through its own development.

Under such circumstances, China’s attitude towards international organizations including the UN changed greatly. Generally, China realized that the only way to change the unfair West-dominated economic and political order was to participate actively. Only through participation could China contribute to a change in the prevailing order, making it fairer, more rational and more democratic. China changed its role from that of a challenger to that of a participant, and transformed its traditional diplomatic logic to one that was based on her national interests. China adjusted its view of the UN and other international organizations as it found that it needed to adapt itself to the international environment and to “engage in international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy.”³³

During this period, China also gained more knowledge of UN affairs and multilateral diplomacy, which led to its reevaluation of the organization. China came to realize that the UN was irreplaceable and had a far-reaching significance for the whole world, although it had made some mistakes and, even now still has many shortcomings, and that “the world needs the UN just like the UN needs the support of every country.”³⁴ In the Chinese government’s report of the Fourth Session of the Sixth National People’s Congress (NPC), the notion of “multilateral diplomacy” was put forward for the first time, and it was announced that, “China adheres to the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter, supports UN efforts and actions in

³² Deng Xiaoping, “We shall concentrate on economic development,” in *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan* [Selected works of Deng Xiaoping], Vol. 3 (Beijing: People’s Press, 1993), p. 56.

³³ Samuel S. Kim, “China’s International Organizational Behavior,” in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 421; He, “China’s Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations,” p. 21.

³⁴ “Zhaoziyang zongli zai lianda juxing jinian Lianheguo chengli sishi zhounian tebie huiyi shang de jianghua” [Zhao Ziyang’s speech at the UN General Assembly on the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations], *The People’s Daily*, October 25, 1985, Sec. 1.

promoting world peace and world development, and actively participates in UN activities in all regards. China extensively takes part in international organizations and vigorously conducts multilateral diplomacy for closer international cooperation between different countries in all fields."³⁵

With such a change in attitude towards the UN, China changed its former strategy of selective participation, and started to actively engage with UN undertakings in many fields. During this period, China launched many cooperative projects with the UN, especially in the areas of economics and technology. Such projects later also extended to a wider range, from peaceful uses of outer space to exploration of undersea resources, from educational exchanges to environmental protection. However, participation still remained at a superficial level. Most of the time, China was still adapting itself to fit in, and affected the organization by simply being a low profile member.

In 1980, China became a member of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and also gave up the original status of being the only developing country that refused to accept multilateral assistance and quickly became the country that accepted the greatest amount of multilateral technical assistance. Actually, many economic and functional inter-governmental organizations within the UN system became financial channels that China used in order to accelerate its development and prosperity, including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund For Population Activities (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank. Chinese representatives also attended the 69th session of the International Labor Conference, which signaled the restoration of the Chinese position in the ILO, of which it subsequently became a permanent council member. China automatically lowered her UN member fee from the 5 percent in the 1970s to 1–2 percent, in accordance with her economic power and developing country status.

China made continuous efforts to defend the legitimate rights and interests of the developing world. One of the most notable examples was when China used her veto on the issue of electing the UN Secretary-General in 1981. China attempted to temporarily block the re-nomination of Kurt

³⁵ Han Nianlong, *Dangdai Zhongguo waijiao* [Contemporary Chinese diplomacy] (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1987), p. 384.

Waldheim as Secretary-General to show support for Third World countries who wanted Tanzanian Foreign Minister Salim Ahmed Salim to win the post. China insisted that the Secretary-General should be one who could represent the benefit of member states at large, instead of one who only follows the policy of the superpowers. On this issue, the developing countries, led by China, and Western developed countries formed two camps, fighting against each other. China voted against Waldheim 16 times, just as the United States voted against Salim 16 times. In the end, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, from the Third World country Peru, became the fifth Secretary-General of the UN on December 31, 1981.

Another example is that China attended the UN conferences on Cambodia, and made great contributions to the political resolution of Cambodia. In addition, China, along with other developing countries, has attended all the sessions of the Third Conference on the Law of the Sea of the United Nations (UNCLOS), which lasted for nine years, and also played a part in the formulation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, thus becoming a contracting party to the latter.

In the 1980s, China started to show an active attitude towards disarmament activities both within and outside the UN. At the beginning of 1980, it became a member state in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament and participated in a wide range of disarmament talks and the conclusion of relevant conventions. In 1986, the Chinese foreign minister explained China's positions on disarmament at the 41st session of the United Nations General Assembly. In 1988, at the Third Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations, China presented the eight-point positions of the Chinese government on disarmament and provided relevant government files, which drew attention from conference attendees. Also in 1984, China became a member of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and in October of the same year was appointed a member state of its council.

China used a new standard to evaluate the UN peacekeeping operations. In 1981, China clearly declared that "we support the United Nations in its positive efforts to avoid an escalation of conflicts and seek peaceful settlements. Outside intervention and mediation can be resorted to when necessary provided that they are based on a strict observance of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the basic norms of international

law.”³⁶ In the same year, “China voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolution 495, which extended the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), following with its voting in favor of all subsequent UN Security Council Resolutions concerning peacekeeping operations.”³⁷ During this period, China has striven to distinguish between those peacekeeping proposals that might be driven by the intent to interfere in other countries’ internal affairs and those that would truly benefit the country or area in trouble. China sought to be flexible when it comes to supporting certain peacekeeping plans. In 1982, China started to pay the contributions it owed to the UN Disengagement Observer Troops and the UN temporary troops to Lebanon.

By late 1985, a new Chinese attitude had emerged. China “not only encouraged the United Nations to play a role in settling international conflicts but also stipulated that the PRC could and should contribute its due share, actively, in these efforts.”³⁸ In 1986, China was invited by the UN and responded by sending an observer mission to the Middle East for an on-site inspection of the UN’s peacekeeping work. In 1988, China joined the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. As the Chinese representative at the UN Li Luye said “Since UN peacekeeping operations have become an important way to safeguard international peace and safety, and are indeed effective in helping resolve conflicts and maintain peace, China is willing to be together with the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, to contribute to safeguarding peace.”³⁹ In 1989, China sent twenty civilian officials to join the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), to work for the Namibia election.

In 1981, China officially became a member of the Human Rights Committee, and since then China has participated in drafting many human rights

³⁶ *Zhongguo dai biaotuan chuxi Lianheguo youguan huiyi wenjianji (1981)* [Documents of the Chinese delegation’s participation in relevant UN conferences (1981 Vol.)] (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1981), p. 130.

³⁷ Stefan Staehle, “China’s Participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Regime,” MA thesis, The Elliott School of International Affairs of the George Washington University, May 21, 2006, p. 26, http://aladinrc.wrlc.org/bitstream/1961/4312/1/Thesis_Staehle_Final.pdf (accessed on November 6, 2008)

³⁸ Yitzhak Shichor, “China and the Role of the United Nations in the Middle East,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (March 1991), p. 255.

³⁹ Xie Qimei and Wang Xingfang, *Zhongguo he Lianheguo* [China and the United Nations] (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1995), p. 88.

conventions.⁴⁰ China was also identified by her attention to and support for the right to development at the Human Rights Commission. By cooperating with the UN, China became part of the undertaking to promote universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. By adopting international conventions and norms, China helped others see where its place is in a system that now makes more sense to them.

⁴⁰ Including the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Declaration on the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. For further information, see “Jiji Canyu Guoji Renquan Huodong” [Actively participate in international human rights activities], Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the European Union, March 15, 2004, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cebe/chn/ssht/rqwt/t74953.htm>

Third Phase: Increased Appreciation and Further Engagement (1990–)

Towards the end of the 1980s, the international environment that China faced was dominated by three changes. First, religious and ethnic conflicts, border disputes and deep-rooted animus menaced the security and stability of some areas, while terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction brought new threats to people. In addition, due to economic globalization, some poor countries were marginalized and the gap between rich and poor was widening. These problems, which cannot be solved by countries on their own, called for global cooperation. Second, the events at Tiananmen Square in 1989, the rise of China's national power and international influence were seen as constituting a so-called "China Threat," while the Western countries exerted pressure on China on the issues of democracy, human rights and Taiwan, which resulted in a sharp increase of the pressure on China and presented a challenge for China. Third, the bipolar pattern characterized by the confrontation of the United States and the Soviet Union collapsed and different powers redefined and regrouped themselves. This provided an unprecedented opportunity for the UN. The world after the Cold War was still not tranquil, with the regional conflicts, existence of the gap between the South and the North and the increase of global issues. The world needed the UN more than ever.

Under these new circumstances, the Chinese government also began to adjust its diplomatic strategy by making the UN the most important arena for its diplomacy, through which China could be better engaged in the international regimes and the multilateral and multidirectional diplomacy. This diplomatic arena can also facilitate China's integration into the international society and the establishment of China as a powerful country with reputable image. Based upon the foreign policy of "Taoguangyanghui yousuo zuowei" [Keeping a low profile and doing one's job], which had been presented by Deng Xiaoping, the policy of "keeping a low profile," "cooperation, communication and avoidance of confrontation," constituted the basic principles of Chinese diplomacy since the end of the Cold War. China's UN diplomacy showed growing flexibility and pragmatism,

emphasizing international cooperation and dialogue and advocating that threats and challenges can only be dealt with through multilateralism and collective action. As the best arena for implementing multilateral cooperation, the role of the UN can only be strengthened and her authority must be asserted. Strengthening the role of the UN by reform had not only become the common desire and demand of the many member states but also tallies with the UN's long-term interests.⁴¹ In the meantime, China started to use its veto more cautiously and expressed its view on many controversial issues by abstaining from voting. Furthermore, in consideration of "doing one's job," China promoted full-scale involvement in international society, and her UN diplomacy became more active. "For China, the more appropriate and effective way to take her international responsibilities was to blend into the existing structure and modify it part by part in the process of solving the universal issues faced by all human beings."⁴²

In 1999, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji put forward the new diplomatic strategy by which China was becoming a "responsible great power." Further engagement in UN affairs was one way in which this goal was to be achieved. China believed that, in order to become a great power with world influence, it was crucial to establish a good image in the world, which would not only boost solidarity, confidence, and patriotism, but also consolidate the state's power and the society's basic value system, insure stability and facilitate the development of friendship between China and other countries. Also, a good image was seen to mitigate potential disagreements and problems, promote the opening-up process, boost the confidence of foreign governments, enterprises, investors, and business people, and attract funding, technology and talent. Moreover, as a Chinese analyst noted, "it would greatly assist the opening of the international market, diversification of sales of Chinese commodities, enlargement of its market share, enhancement of cooperation and communication with other countries in areas such as science, technology, culture, and education and the promotion of Chinese

⁴¹ Li Zhaoxing, "Jinian Lianheguo chengli 60 zhounian: Weihu heping tuidong fazhan" [In celebration of the 60th anniversary of United Nations: Preserving peace and promoting development], *The People's Daily*, September 13, 2005, Sec. 7.

⁴² Yu Zhenliang, *Daguo zhanlue yanjiu* [Research on the strategy of great powers] (Beijing: Central Press of Compilation and Translation, 1998), p. 350.

culture.”⁴³ Under this guidance, China now took a more active and constructive part in the UN and other international organizations.

First of all, one of the most notable signs that China viewed UN affairs as increasingly important after the Cold War was that Chinese leaders actively attended the UN high-level conferences and delivered important speeches. Before the end of the Cold War, this occurred only once, when Deng Xiaoping, then the Vice-Premier of China, went to New York in April 1974 to attend the Sixth Special Meeting of the UN General Assembly. In January 1992, Chinese Premier Li Peng attended the Security Council summit held at the UN headquarters in New York. In October 1995, Chinese President Jiang Zemin attended the Special Commemorative Meeting of the 50th Anniversary of UN. In September 2000, President Jiang Zemin made a speech at the UN New Millennium Summit, emphasizing that “the positive functions of the UN should be enhanced instead of weakened, and the authority of the UN should be maintained instead of harmed.”⁴⁴ Chinese President Hu Jintao stated during a speech at the UN’s 60th anniversary on September 14, 2005, and proposed the concept of a “Harmonious World,” emphasizing that “the United Nations, as the core of the collective security mechanism, plays an irreplaceable role in international cooperation to ensure global security. Such a role can only be strengthened and must not in any way be weakened.”⁴⁵ As a Chinese scholar noted, “this proposal, focusing on peace and development issues shared by the whole world, carried great international importance. It concerns the ultimate goal of global governance and is in accordance with the UN’s vision of today’s world.”⁴⁶

With regard to security, China now presents itself as an unwavering supporter and active participant in peacekeeping operations. In the face of the new international security landscape, China has begun to make active efforts to avoid the intensification of conflicts and seek peaceful solutions

⁴³ Yu Changmiao, *Shiliuda yihuo de Zhongguo* [China after the 16th National Congress of the CCP] (Beijing: People’s Press, 2002), pp. 370–73.

⁴⁴ Jiang Zemin, “Jiang Zemin zai Lianheguo qiannian shounao huiyi shang de jianghua” [Jiang Zemin’s speech at the UN New Millennium Summit], *The People’s Daily*, September 7, 2000, Sec. 1.

⁴⁵ Hu Jintao, “Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity,” Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the United Nations’ 60th Session, United Nations, New York, September 22, 2005.

⁴⁶ Pong Zhongying, “Quanqiu hua yu ‘hexie shijie’” [Globalization and the “harmonious world”], *World Affairs*, 2006, 1, p. 67.

through the UN, playing an increasingly important role in UN Peacekeeping Operations. China announced that it would provide 20 civilian officials to the mission in Namibia in October 1989. In 1990, five military observers were sent to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East, marking the first time that China contributed personnel to a UN peacekeeping mission.⁴⁷ In 1992, China voted for UNSC Resolution 754 establishing the United Nations Transitional Administration in Cambodia (UNTAC), and then sent a military unit to participate in UNTAC, consisting of forty-seven military observers and a total of 800 engineering personnel, comprising China's first UN troops.⁴⁸

In January 2000, at the request of the United Nations, the Chinese government dispatched 15 civilian policemen to the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor. It was the first time China sent civilian policemen to a UN peacekeeping operation.⁴⁹ The first time China sent civil police outside Asia was in January 2001, when Chinese civil police went to Bosnia-Herzegovina on a peacekeeping mission. According to the UN Peacekeeping Department's monthly statistics, China sent about 100 people to UN Peacekeeping Areas every month before 2002, far less than countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Russia. From 2003, the number grew rapidly to about 300 per month, rising to more than 1000 per month after 2004, however. In the last few years China has continued to increase its presence in peacekeeping. This sharp increase has drawn the attention of the whole world. As of December 31, 2010, China contributed 2,039 personnel to UN peacekeeping missions (peacekeeping troops 1891; police officers 92, and military observers 56). In that month, China was the largest contributor among the P-5 states, and ranked as the fifteenth larg-

⁴⁷ For more details, see United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/untso/>

⁴⁸ Liu Ying, "Zhongguo diyi zhi weichi heping budui: Zhongguo Fujian junshi gongcheng dadui" [The First Chinese Peacekeeping Army: The Chinese Military and Construction Force of Fujian Province], *Military History*, No. 1 (1993).

⁴⁹ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "China's National Defense 2000," xinhuanews, October 2000, http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2002-11/18/content_633170.htm

est UN peacekeeping mission contributor worldwide.⁵⁰ At present, China is involved in ten of the fifteenth UN peacekeeping missions worldwide.⁵¹

With regard to development and human rights, China participates in the multilateral diplomatic activities in terms of human rights, society, education, science, culture and many other categories in the United Nations, and has established a sound cooperative relationship with other specializing agencies. In September 1992, the Chinese foreign minister pointed out at the 47th UN Assembly that “the UN should pay more attention to and make every effort to meet the needs and requirements of economic and social development of developing countries, which should be on the list of priority. Only under such circumstances can the UN be a trustworthy international organization, which will also win itself universal support around the world with the enhancing of its prestige and functions.”⁵² Since the Chinese mission led by the former permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Li Zhaoxing, took part in the first substantial meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1993, China has actively participated in the main activities of the Committee, never missing any annual substantial meeting. China and the World Bank co-hosted the Global Poverty Reduction Conference in 2004. In 2005, the UN Country Team adopted a common framework for cooperation in China.⁵³ China and

⁵⁰ As of December 31, 2010, UN peacekeeping mission personnel contributions were: China, 2,039; France, 1,540; Russia, 2,158; UK, 282, and the U.S, 87. For more details, see UN website: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>

⁵¹ As of December 31, 2010, China is participating in the following Chapter VII operations: UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). As of December 31, 2010, China is also participating in the following Chapter VI operations, United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO); United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH); UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS); United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT); the United Nations Operation in Cote d’Ivoire (UNOCI); the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

⁵² Li Wuyi, *Daguo guanxi yu weilai Zhongguo* [Relations between the superpowers and China in the future] (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2002), p. 431.

⁵³ “UN partnership in China,” United Nations in China homepage, January 27, 2008, <http://www.un.org.cn/local/en/cms/p/resources/30/337/content.html>

the United Nations co-hosted the international conference on Millennium Development Goals in 2005, and the International Poverty Reduction Center was founded in the same year.

China also established comprehensive cooperation with the United Nations on finance and food security. China pays special attention to the international monetary and financial work, from which it also benefits significantly. Since China and the World Food Programme (WFP) began their cooperation in 1979, China has made cash donations to the WFP. Since 2006, China has greatly increased its financial contribution to a total of US\$30 million by the end of 2008.⁵⁴ According to Anthony Rachobokoane Thibeli, Lesotho's ambassador to China: "I congratulate this long time cooperation between WFP and China. I attribute my deep gratitude for that cooperation which recently donated food aid to the Basotho people who were suffering due to three decades of drought."⁵⁵

China takes active part in UN activities in the human rights field and pays great attention to the cooperation with the UN Human Rights Council. China has responded to the letters on human rights from the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights and other UN human rights bodies.⁵⁶ The Fourth World Conference on Women hosted by China in 1995 was a great success, and the tenth anniversary of the conference was held in 2005. China has signed 21 international covenants on human rights and has seriously fulfilled its obligations to the covenant. In 2001 China ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in 1998 it ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. China enjoys a cooperative relationship with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OCHR (Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights). China was elected a member of the UN Human Rights Council in May 2006.

Another important aspect of China's participation in the work of the UN is that an increasing number of Chinese have been elected high ranking officials of the United Nations. On October 24, 2005, Zhang Xinsheng, Vice-Minister of Education of China, was elected the President of the Executive

⁵⁴ "A Photo Exhibition Commemorating 30 Years of Cooperation between the WFP and the Government of China Opened Today," United Nations in China homepage, March 3, 2009, <http://www.un.org.cn/local/en/cms/p/news/27/1020/content.html>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ "Progress in China's Human Rights Cause in 2000 (2001)," Chinese Government's Official Web Portal, http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/27/content_17546.htm

Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Dr. Margaret Chen from Hong Kong was appointed as the seventh Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) on November 9, 2006, the first time a Chinese citizen has been appointed as the top official of the UN specialized agency and the first international organization presided over by a Chinese person. It is a breakthrough for the Chinese government to fully support and nominate a Chinese citizen to be the top official of an international organization. The day after the appointment of Dr. Chen as WHO Director-General, another Chinese, Zhao Houlin, was elected Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). On November 27, 2007, the World Trade Organization appointed Chinese attorney Zhang Yuejiao as a member of the Appellate Body, the top institution for world trade dispute settlement. On February 4, 2008, World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick appointed the Chinese economist Justin Lin as the Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist of the World Bank. It was the first time the World Bank had appointed a citizen from a developing country to this position.

Finally, China also actively participates in and expresses its opinion on the reform of the United Nations. On June 7, 2005, the Chinese government published the *Position Paper of the People's Republic of China on the United Nations Reforms*, which was the first time China presented its opinions and suggestions regarding UN reforms. The main points were that "reforms should be in the interest of multilateralism, enhance the UN's authority and efficiency as well as its capacity to deal with new threats and challenges; ... reforms should safeguard the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, especially those of sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful resolution of conflicts and the strengthening international cooperation, etc.; ... reforms should be multidimensional and multisectoral, and aim to succeed in both aspects of security and development. Especially, reforms should aim at reversing the trend of the 'UN giving priority to security over development' by increasing inputs in the field of development and facilitating the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)."⁵⁷ The paper also points out that priority with regard to the reform

⁵⁷ "Zhongguo zhengfu fabu guanyu Lianheguo gaige wenti de lichang wenjian" [Position paper of the People's Republic of China on UN reforms], *The People's Daily*, June 8, 2005, Sec.15. See website: <http://ls.china-embassy.org/eng/xwtd/t200081.htm>

of the Security Council should be given to increasing the representation of developing countries. Developing countries, who account for more than two thirds of the UN membership, are seriously under-represented on the Security Council.⁵⁸ At the same time, China has also actively participated in the concrete process of UN reform, thus pushing the development of the UN reform.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Concluding Remarks

Due to the outbreak of the Cold War, the long exclusion of China from the UN and other reasons, China's stance towards the United Nations has undergone a process of marked change, from one of denying and doubting its value to one of positive engagement. After the end of the Cold War, China adapted itself to the new international situation in a short period of time, and adjusted its UN policy, broadening its participation in the activities of the UN, and also played a more and more important role, addressing the dual demands presented by its national interests and the requirements of international diplomacy. China identifies itself as a "responsible and peace-loving country," and promises to fully support all kinds of work of the UN. China not only benefits from the activities of the UN, but also makes a successful contribution to the world body. During the process of actively participating in UN diplomacy, China's international role has changed greatly: from a big country outside the international system into one actively attending international affairs, safeguarding international social stability as well as having great influence on territory and world affairs; from being an opponent and onlooker to an initiative participant and builder of the international system; from pursuing targets despised by the international community to being an actor that is valued as well as is trusted. As such the interaction between China and the United Nations has proved that "the UN needs China, and China needs the UN."⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Qin Huasun, "Lianheguo xuyao Zhongguo, Zhongguo xuyao Lianheguo" [The UN needs China, and China needs the UN], *The People's Daily*, Sec. 7, December 17, 1999.

About the Author

Niu Zhongjun is an Associate Professor of the Department of Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs Administration at China Foreign Affairs University and Director of its Political Science teaching and research section. He graduated from Peking University in 2005. He is the author of *Conflict Prevention* (2007) and co-author of *China's Diplomacy from China's opening and reform* (2008) and *EU's Common Foreign Policy and Security Policy from a Globalized Perspective* (2008). He has also published more than ten articles in academic journals.