Against the background of China’s ascent as a major economic power, this Chaillot Paper offers a unique overview of the debates on foreign policy that have taken place in China over the past decade. It analyses the main trends in the domestic strategic debate and the extent to which they are likely to shape China’s role in the international arena. Various issues are highlighted, including the implications of the “peaceful rise” strategy for China’s foreign policy, the question of China’s international identity and China’s responsibility as a stakeholder in the international system. Chinese attitudes to the concepts of sovereignty, hegemony and multipolarity, and how they differ from prevailing Western assumptions, are also explored. The analysis also focuses on the tensions between the “peaceful risers” and the proponents of a more militant nationalism in China.

China’s future evolution as a world power is an issue of paramount importance to the European Union. For the EU, the key challenge is to engage China in a multilateral approach to global governance. In this context, it is hoped that this Chaillot Paper will provide valuable insights into the different schools of thought underpinning the formulation of Chinese foreign policy.
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CHINA’S FOREIGN POLICY DEBATES

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Note

Most of the academic articles and publications referred to in this Chaillot Paper are in Chinese. Wherever quoting from these various sources the author has provided translations in English, but would like to point out that some translations may be rather loose or approximate.
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What kind of world power will China be in the next ten or twenty years? The answer to this question, which is openly debated within China’s strategic community, is of paramount importance to the future of the European Union. It will determine to a large extent the nature of the international system over the coming decades. Will the new multipolar order be governed essentially by a revamped balance-of-power system or indeed by a multilateral system, in line with vital European interests? Could the world be headed towards a non-confrontational bipolar system, given that in the European press the G-2 denotes today’s superpowers, ‘a China-US condominium’. Some of the answers are to be found in the current Chinese strategic debate. But because China, like any other power, big or small, is not alone in the world, there is a reciprocal influence that external powers and strategic thinkers will inevitably exert in setting China’s path. This is yet another reason why gaining insider knowledge of the current Chinese strategic debate is of the utmost importance.

There is perhaps no topic of greater importance to the analysis of contemporary international politics than the rise of China. The overview that Zhu Liqun sets out in this Chaillot Paper is remarkable in that it provides many insights that help formulate an answer to where its recent ascent as a major economic power is leading China. Her work will doubtless help readers understand better the main trends in China’s strategic debate that are likely to shape its future course as a world power. As she writes, ‘current debates on China’s foreign policy will have a major impact on China’s interaction with international society in the years to come’. Trying to understand China’s rise on the basis of simplistic stereotypes hastily justified by the lack of transparency of the Chinese system will result in a grossly distorted picture. Answers must be sought in closely following China’s international debate – much as Chinese analysts closely follow Europe and the world.

It will perhaps come as a surprise to many to discover in these pages how lively and contradictory the debate on the best course for China – within its strict scholarly confines – actually is. The strategic debate revolves, as Zhu Liqun explains, around the many foreign policy
China’s foreign policy debates

implications of Deng Xiaoping’s ‘peaceful rise’ strategy. It concentrates on the distribution of world power, China’s identity as a foreign policy actor, and the course of action that should consequently be pursued. In fact, what we are now witnessing is a debate about whether or not China should pursue the policy of peaceful rise, and help create a constructive international environment. The alternative argument holds that China’s interests would perhaps best be served and its objectives more readily achieved by acting as a traditional big power, either because coerced into doing so by a hostile international climate or indeed because superpower status and its inherent advantages are already at hand.

The present study focuses on the academic debate, to which a prodigious number of academic centres, think tanks and journals contribute, reflecting the work of an extensive community of scholars, who are more and more involved and more and more present in the international debate. What we do not know exactly is to what extent scholarly debate influences the foreign policy establishment: in other words, what is the impact of academic debate on the actual power structures, within government and Chinese Communist Party circles alike? We are equally left in the dark as to what extent these views are shared by the wider public, and indeed how much if at all public opinion matters in foreign policy formulation. A number of indications – not least the fact that universities and think tanks are public institutions – lead us to believe, however, that the domestic debate about China’s rise to world power status and its implications involves the entire Chinese political elite.

Interestingly, at first glance, some aspects of the Chinese debate, as described by Zhu Liqun in the following pages, are strikingly familiar. They seem to distantly echo aspects of the European debate. This is perhaps the typical debate of all transitional periods in which rising powers are trying to define their positions and assert themselves on the world stage, but without assuming a revisionist power attitude, far less even a revolutionary one, but rather taking the path (reflecting a preference that both China and the EU share) of prudent reformism.

Most Chinese scholars think the present international system where unilaterality and multilateralism coexist in varying degrees depending on the issues at hand is favourable to China’s rise, mainly because China’s development strategy (which entirely determines its foreign policy) is deeply reliant on its integration into the international economy, the openness of foreign markets, massive technology transfers, unimpeded access to energy and raw materials, and also the sustained economic resilience of such countries as the United
States of which it holds prodigious amounts of foreign debt. A stable and peaceful international system is therefore required. Zhu contends that the main trend in Chinese strategic thinking favours the status quo and finds no particular quarrel with the US’s ‘benign hegemony’, a marked predominance of the United States in the world, seen in the present circumstances rather as a factor of stability and predictability.

A parallel exercise on the EU strategic debate would, paradoxically enough, find Europeans less prepared to accept unchallenged US global leadership and dominance. With the debate over the Iraq war still resounding, European attitudes would most certainly be marked by consciousness of the danger of unilateralism and much scepticism in relation to the possibilities and merits of benign hegemony, unlike what seems to be the case in China. This is perhaps the result of a greater attachment in Europe to multilateralism and a more values-based approach to foreign policy than the ‘pragmatism’ that predominates in China.

As the author explains, both main schools of thought in China, the ‘peaceful risers’ and the nationalists, seem to concur that today’s world is what in the Chinese discourse is ‘called “yichao duqianding”’ [which] proposes a simultaneously unipolar and multipolar world (p. 26) and regard this as typical of an era undergoing a transition to full multipolarity. Differences of opinion are limited to deciding what are the world’s ‘poles’ among the world’s powers and what is their correct hierarchy, and crucially to determining how they relate to and what their attitude is to China’s rise. Some scholars cast doubts on the extent to which the United States and Japan, its main ally in Asia, will pledge consistent support to China’s strategy in the long run. India is considered by some as part of the pantheon of world powers alongside the United States and Japan, China itself, the European Union and Russia. For others, India has yet to earn its place among the great powers. However, there is a consensus that India has a wealth of potential and ‘is equipped with the requisite attributes to become a world power’ (p. 32) not least due to the yet untapped reserves of ‘soft power’. Therefore India’s rise is of immense importance to China. Relations between China and India, two nuclear powers with unsolved border disputes, deserve close attention because peace in Asia and the solution of many regional problems largely depend on the way these will evolve. Most Chinese scholars are persuaded that India’s strategy is one of peaceful rise, alongside China’s.

Where the European Union is concerned, there seems to be little doubt in China that the rise of the EU as a global player is in the interests
China's foreign policy debates

of China and few believe that the EU will ever try to oppose the rise of China, all the more since the EU is seen as a peacefully-rising civilian power with little appetite for direct involvement in Asia’s balance-of-power games. This is why China considers the EU a very important strategic partner. Southern Europe’s recent fiscal crisis and what was judged as the EU’s failure to show unity in dealing with it, however, shook the faith of the Chinese leadership in the future of the EU project (leading notably to serious doubts about the solidity of the single currency), but the official position on the EU’s status among strategic partners did not change as a result.

The debate on China’s international identity also vaguely echoes the European debate. Some hold that China is still a regional power, others that it has already risen to global power status. Both views, according to Zhu Liqun, cut across all foreign policy schools of thought. The differences with Europe are glaring, however, on the question of the international responsibility of global powers, and in particular views on the Responsibility to Protect are wide apart. Most Europeans tend to accept that international responsibility is the natural consequence of European states’ history and the values they share; most Chinese scholars surveyed here tend to be influenced by the traumas of colonialism and a traditional concept of sovereignty. Even those supportive of the ‘responsible power’ notion question how far China is prepared to go in taking on more international responsibilities. As to the Responsibility to Protect, it goes squarely against a generally unquestioned ‘defensive’ concept of sovereignty. Darfur illustrates the Chinese dilemmas in this respect. Zhu Liqun relays the view that in effect systematic rejection of the duty to intervene has been dropped in this case, and concludes it may yet have ‘far-reaching repercussions for China’ and bring about changes in its diplomacy in the sense of more broad acceptance of the idea of multilateral intervention. Many in Europe and in the United States have been calling for China to take on a greater share of international responsibility. Those calls seem to have found an echo in the internal debate, even if the Chinese scholars surveyed by Zhu Liqun in this volume seem to take great pains not to break ranks with developing nations and are wary of China being seen as a leading power, fearing the resulting costs in overstretch. Whether this has led to making China aware of the limits of picking and choosing the advantages of international recognition without being willing to pay the price in terms of contributing towards peacebuilding efforts, only the future will tell.

The present study shows that the official strategy of peaceful rise is not universally supported. Some of its opponents contend that China’s foremost objective should not be economic prosperity but power itself.
To become powerful and achieve recognition, China should not only be concerned with economic development but with military might as well. The authors of the recently published book *Unhappy China* take this logic to the extreme, exploiting Chinese nationalistic feelings. In their view, since China has already risen as a superpower, it must be recognised as such and act accordingly. In their own words, ‘with Chinese national strength growing at an unprecedented rate, China should stop debasing itself and come to recognise the fact that it has the power to lead the world, and the necessity to break away from Western influence’; in the same vein, they argue that China ‘should incorporate retribution and punishment’ into its diplomatic strategy.

The long-term impact of this more extreme nationalistic trend is far from being clear. The present overview shows that among Chinese scholars the nationalistic trend is a minority phenomenon and that its more extreme manifestations are harshly criticised both by scholars and officials. Zhu Liqun portrays the authors of *Unhappy China* as representing no more than an isolated nationalistic tendency which advocates that China should adopt a more confrontational attitude in dealing with international society. Susan Shirk, who was in charge of relations with China during the Clinton years, is less dismissive of the *Unhappy China* authors and their supporters. She contends that, nationalistic trends being tangibly on the rise, the strategy of peaceful rise, predicated on compromise with external powers (in particular Japan and the United States), ‘might be cast as capitulation and become politically suicidal.’ In her view, nationalistic trends also jeopardise the prospects of political reform and democratisation by providing a potent alternative to them.

The implications for the EU of China’s rise are far reaching. First, China must be taken seriously in the strategic debate, not merely on economy- and trade-related issues but also on global governance. The evolving responsible power debate should be encouraged by the EU as a way of engaging China in an effective multilateral approach to regional problems, namely in Africa. The multilateral engagement of China on global issues like proliferation or climate change cannot be achieved by the EU alone, but can only be the result of the reform of multilateral institutions and real progress in global governance, which is incompatible with present preferences for *ad-hoc* G formations, like the G2 or even the G-8. The G-20 goes to show the decisive role of the US and the support larger initiatives find among global players. Second, it is critical for the EU not to demonstrate a preference for China over India: it should be seen to favour equal power status for both great Asian powers and refrain from getting involved in a dangerous balance-of-power game in Asia. The EU-China bilateral agenda is certainly in the interests of both, but has limited impact on the domestic debate on China’s international identity. The best

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* Song Xiaojun et al., *Unhappy China: The Great Time, Grand Vision and Our Challenges* (Nanjing: Jiangsu People’s Press, 2009.)

strategy to make China's rise compatible with EU interests is to bind it into a universal multilateral nexus. Finally, as this overview demonstrates, as in the EU, the US and India, the likely leading world powers in 2025, China's foremost priority is economic and social development. This signifies the improbability of war among big powers in the present situation. In short, 'peaceful rise' is not just China's official policy but more largely a strategy for global governance, and making this work through multilateral institutions should be high on the EU's external action agenda.

Paris, September 2010
Executive Summary

This *Chaillot Paper* extensively analyses internal debates on China’s foreign policy that have taken place over the past decade. It is framed around three core concepts and based on an analysis of articles, books and commentaries published by prominent Chinese scholars in the field of international relations. The three concepts, *shi*, identity and strategy, respectively refer to the general context wherein China’s foreign policy is formulated and conducted, China’s identity in international society, and China’s national goals and values.

The paper is structured into four main chapters. Chapter One offers a structured framework of core concepts to provide readers with a better idea of how domestic debates regarding foreign policy matters are conducted in China. The first core concept is *shi*, a Chinese term, used quite often to denote the overall configuration of the world order. It is believed in China that a good foreign policy derives from a sound understanding of *shi*. The second core concept is identity, concerning Chinese scholars’ thinking about China itself. Since China lost its centrality in Asia and became a semi-colonial country in the middle of the nineteenth century, the question of China’s national identity and the direction in which this should evolve has constantly puzzled China. These questions have become even more conspicuous since China has acquired new prominence in the international community and emerged as a fast-growing major economic power. The third core concept is strategy. Based on this, Chinese scholars have debated issues like the objectives, principles and values of China’s foreign policy.

Chapters Two, Three and Four are devoted respectively to a systematic analysis of internal debates on the understanding of *shi*, China’s identity and foreign strategy. With regard to *shi*, the paper discusses how the distinctive features of the international system are perceived and major powers are depicted by Chinese International Relations (IR) scholars. It focuses on how concepts of hegemony and multipolarity are defined and expounded, and which major powers are the focus of more attention. International institutions are not discussed in the paper, except the newly developed G-20: this is not because
they are not of importance for the Chinese IR community, but just due to the fact that the author's framework of analysis mainly emphasises the distribution of power and the topics explored in this paper are those highlighted in the internal debates. The paper finds that the understanding of *shì* in China has not only become more diversified and pluralised, but has also undergone a fundamental transformation during the last ten years. The international context is generally perceived more positively, even though scholars also believe that China is now facing a more complicated situation on the world political chessboard, which presents more challenges and difficulties for China in conducting its foreign policy.

As far as the concept of identity is concerned, the paper examines the questions of how China should position itself in the current international system, how much responsibility China should take on, what kind of role China is going to play and the extent to which China's understanding of international responsibility coincides with Western concepts and perspectives. New developments with regard to the Chinese perception of sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect are also discussed in the paper. The intensive debate on China’s identity has been precipitated by the increased attention given to China in the international arena since China, especially as an economic power, has begun to have an impact far beyond its borders. And it has also been triggered by the international community asking China to do more as a responsible stakeholder. For many Chinese scholars, China has gradually constructed an identity as an insider rather than an outsider of the international community. Some of them acknowledge that China now possesses multiple international identities, but believe that these are not inevitably contradictory.

In relation to the question of strategy, the debate over the objectives, principles and values of China’s foreign policy has never been as intense as it is today. Scholars claim conflicting goals for foreign policy to pursue, and advocate contrasting paths for it to follow, revealing different values to which they attach importance. The regional order in East Asia has also been a subject of discussion under the concept of strategy, since it is a priority for China’s foreign policy and it is frequently discussed within China’s IR community. Nationalism is another highlighted issue, one that has attracted a lot of attention in China as well as in the wider world. The paper presents the various strands of ideological thought and discourse on international affairs, ranging from extreme nationalism to neo-internationalism, whose proponents argue that there should be more cooperation among nations at both regional and global levels.
The concluding chapter attempts to categorise foreign policy debates in China based on the current dominant schools of thought in Chinese international relations. In fact, China’s intellectual worldviews range along a spectrum from ‘offensive realist’ at the one end to globalist views at the other end. It is therefore becoming difficult to find consensus among Chinese IR scholars on the various key aspects of Chinese foreign policy. Realism is quite often perceived as a dominant ideology which has had deep roots in Chinese culture for several centuries, but this paper finds that this is not the case today. The preponderant voice heard in the Chinese IR community nowadays is that which champions the liberalist worldview: this view is represented in at least one third of the international relations publications studied in this volume, while roughly another one third comes under the category of the constructivist view. Both these schools of thought argue for more cooperation with and deeper integration into the international community. The dynamics behind this new development stem from both internal factors (great social change) and external factors (international pressure). As a result of constantly reforming and changing itself in its process of modernisation and transformation, China now makes a major impact on the outside world. Meanwhile China itself cannot escape being influenced and being changed by others in the world. As China embeds itself more deeply into the international community, foreign policy making in China is becoming a more complex business, with more issues to be dealt with, more challenges to be faced on a variety of fronts, and a larger constellation of actors becoming involved. Among the latter ranks the IR community, which is going to become more conspicuous and in the future will play a more significant role in the process. Current debates on China’s foreign policy will have a major impact on China’s interaction with international society in the years to come.
Introduction

Contemporary China is a country of ancient traditions, with centuries of deeply ingrained cultural philosophies still exerting great influence on Chinese society. It is also a country in the throes of rapid transformation, modernisation and economic development, with all the associated elements of trial and error impacting every facet of contemporary Chinese society. All this adds to the complexity of China’s already intricate culture: deep-rooted ancient traditions combined with rapid transformations in domestic development and China’s identity vis-à-vis international society. This is the climate in which China’s foreign policy is now made, with a growing number of actors and factors impacting on decision-making processes. Unprecedented heated discussions on foreign policy have increased in China during the past decade. Such discussions, in addition to the three big rounds of debates on China’s development path conducted among Chinese elites since China’s adoption of the reform and opening-up policy (see box overleaf) and the vigorous online debates currently taking place in the internet era, have fostered the growing openness and plurality of Chinese society. These major forces have contributed to important changes in China’s domestic political policies, such as attempting to reconcile conflicting interests in Chinese society.

This paper provides analysis of and insights into the internal debates on China’s foreign policy through an examination of various writings published by prominent and influential Chinese scholars in the field of international relations. It is structured into four main parts. Chapter One offers a structured framework of core concepts to provide readers with a better idea of how domestic debates regarding foreign policy matters are organised in China. Chapters Two, Three and Four are devoted respectively to a systematic analysis of internal debates on the understanding of shi, China’s role and identity in international society, and its foreign strategy. The concluding chapter attempts to categorise foreign policy debates in China based on the current dominant theories in Chinese international relations and the various dynamics underlying internal debates on China’s foreign policy.
China’s foreign policy debates

The debates on China’s development path

The first round of debates took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the Cultural Revolution had just ended. The Chinese were at this stage not yet emancipated from Maoist ideology and the belief in the ‘two whatevers’ (the view that whatever policy decisions the late Mao Zedong had made and whatever instructions he had given must be followed unswervingly). So the debate focused on how to establish the criterion of truth, specifically on the question of whether practice was the criterion for testing theories. Deng Xiaoping strongly opposed the ‘two whatevers’, advocating that truth should be sought from empirical facts. This eventually brought about a great emancipation of the minds of the Chinese. The second debate, which emerged at the end of the 1980s, was about whether the market economy is socialist or capitalist in nature. In response to criticism that the reform and opening-up policy meant going down the road of capitalism, Deng Xiaoping delivered significant speeches during his tour of southern China in 1992, emphasising the need to further emancipate Chinese minds and to lay the foundations of a new path for the construction of a socialist country with distinct Chinese characteristics. As for the debate over whether the policy China had adopted since 1978 was ‘capitalist’ or ‘socialist’, he said the chief criterion of judgment should be whether it promotes the growth of productive forces in a society, increases the overall strength of a country and improves the living conditions of ordinary people. Deng Xiaoping’s speeches during his tour in South China played a key role in further promoting China’s economic reform and social progress in the 1990s. The third debate was about whether the reform and opening-up policy was going in the right direction towards modernisation. Voices against the reform and opening-up policy became louder as it became apparent that adoption of the policy had led to growing social disparities in China. Yet much of the heat in this debate dissipated at the end of 2005 when the 17th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party reached the consensus that, with regard to solving the problems facing the country, China had no alternative but to ‘unequivocally stick to the path of reform and opening up’.
This paper employs three key concepts in its analysis of internal debates on China’s foreign policy. These are shi, identity and strategy. Shi, a Chinese term, refers to the overall configuration of power and the direction or tendency of the process of change in which an actor acts and interacts. The Chinese believe that shi should be well understood before a decision is made. It involves two elements concerning international affairs: the distinctive feature of our times or the broad trends discernible in the contemporary world and guoji geju, which roughly means the international power configuration. Identity refers to who an actor is, and constitutes ‘a property of intentional actors that generates their motivational and behavioural disposition.’ Foreign policy making is the process of calculating what national interests are and how to achieve them, but interests always presuppose deeper identities ‘because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is.’ Strategy refers to how national interests and goals can be realised within international society. These concepts are not only the key aspects considered in China’s foreign policy decision-making but are the basic issues around which domestic debates on China’s foreign policy revolve.

Shi

Identifying the current shi is always a central concern when China conceives its international strategy. This is mainly due to the Chinese tradition of holistic thinking and philosophy of change. The Chinese have always attached great importance to the overall ‘big picture’ when considering any situation and its inherent potential for change. As analysed above, as far as international relations are concerned, shi, the general world situation, involves

1. The ancient Chinese concept of shi, for which there is no Western equivalent, has been translated variously as ‘the disposition or propensity of things’, ‘circumstance’, ‘power or potential’, and can apply to various domains ranging from aesthetics to statecraft to military strategy. In the latter context it often refers to the strategic configuration of power. The French sinologist François Jullien explains this concept in depth in his book La propension des choses (Seuil, 1992), translated into English as The Propensity of Things: Towards a History of Efficacy in China (Zone Books, 1999).
3. Ibid., p. 231.
4. It has been a fundamental idea in Chinese thinking that change is prevalent and inevitable. The prevalence and inevitability of change is also what is elaborated in the Book of Change (I Ching), the oldest book in China. This expresses the belief that ‘the only proposition that does not change is that everything else is subject to change’. This book is the nearest thing to a universal guide to Chinese thought and action ever since Chinese civilisation emerged some 5,000 years ago.
two main aspects: the distinctive feature of our times and the international power structure. An altered understanding of the distinctive feature or theme of our times is the starting point of fundamental change in the Chinese worldview. China could not have increasingly and deeply involved itself in international society since 1979 without having changed its perception of the distinctive features of our contemporary era – no longer war and revolution but peace and development. Identifying the distinctive feature of our times represents a major consideration for Chinese scholars in their debates on China’s foreign policy. These domestic debates focus on the overriding characteristics of today’s world or on the nature of the existing international system. Specifically, all of this concerns the issue of China’s relationship with the current international system. It also provides a crucial window to understanding changes in China’s foreign policy and the Chinese people’s perception of the international system.

Guoji geju refers to the Chinese understanding of the international power configuration. It is another core concept widely invoked by Chinese scholars in their discourse on the international situation in relation to China’s foreign policy. Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, China had long occupied a central position in the regional structure in East Asia mainly through its use of soft power measures in its conduct of foreign relations, resulting in its weak sensitivity to emerging powers. China lost this central position after its confrontation with western powers in 1840. Due to its harsh experience of 100 years of colonialisation, China learned to attach great value to sovereignty. It also learned that ‘lagging behind leaves one vulnerable to attacks’. This has led to an acknowledgement of the significance of hard power. China has also become sensitive to the international power structure. So the status of other major powers in the current international system naturally becomes the primary starting point of foreign policy debates conducted by Chinese scholars.

The concept of shi actually reflects China’s concern about world order, which constitutes a central consideration for China in formulating its middle-and-long term strategies. The key questions it involves are: who is the dominant power? Will the current configuration of power bring harm to China? Can it maintain the peace and stability of the world? What is its broad trend of development? Good judgment regarding these issues means having a sound mastery of the broad trends in the current world situation, which ensures a country’s ability to act judiciously. Shunshi erwei, another idea contained in the concept of shi, means to follow the general tendency and do things accordingly. This paper will use the concept of shi as a starting point to analyse Chinese scholars’ discussions about the basic and
distinctive feature of our times, the contemporary era’s trend of
development and the structural characteristics of today’s world order.
It will focus especially on how they look at other major powers in
the world such as the United States, the European Union and some
of the emerging powers.

Identity

Identity is a second core concept in Chinese thinking. It is treated
not from an ‘entity approach’ as in the Western way of thinking but
from a ‘process approach’ in the Chinese way of thinking. For
the Chinese, “relations” are the most significant aspect of social life and
the hub of all social activities. Chinese people believe power and
identity are both defined within the network of relations. The concept
of relations and the idea of change have fundamentally shaped the
Chinese belief that actors manage and maintain relations in the
process of international interaction, and that actors may enjoy multiple
identities in multifold relations, which may not be conflictual but
complementary. China, in line with this way of thinking, attaches
great importance to its role and position in the international system,
regarding its position therein as a major factor in defining national
interests and formulating diplomatic strategy. Chinese scholars have
also paid much attention to the issue of China’s identity vis-à-vis
international society. They emphasise the fact that identity is fluid
and changing and deny the existence of a single, fixed identity.
Actually, the issue of identity has been crucial to China ever since
it experienced a drastic fall in status from its imperial heyday as the
‘Middle Kingdom’ to becoming a semi-colonial country in the middle
of the nineteenth century. From that time on, questions like ‘who
am I?’, ‘how should I evolve?’ have constantly puzzled China.

The three decades following China’s adoption of the reform and
opening-up policy have seen continuous growth in China’s economy
and its influence in the world. Meanwhile, China has been considering
its identity vis-à-vis international society, reflecting on questions
such as ‘what is the nature of Chinese identity’ and ‘what role should
China play and what responsibility should she take on the world
stage?’ Such questioning directly highlights various issues: what kind
of power is China, a global or regional power?; what type of state
should China become, a status quo or a revisionist state?; what kind
of relationship should China develop with international society?;
what responsibilities should China shoulder in the international
arena as its economy continues to grow?

5. According to Qin Yaqing, an entity approach is an approach characterised
by taxonomical thinking and conflictual dialectics embedded
in the Western way of thinking, emphasising dualistic conflict paradigm
s like West vs. non-West, China vs. Western-led international society, communist
planned economy vs. liberal market economy and so on. The
process approach, however, is based upon relational thinking
and complementary dialectics, both of which are rooted in
Chinese philosophical and intellectual traditions. The
process approach focuses more on the context than independent
individuals and views the former as constantly shifting
relations in which identity can be defined, redefined, constructed
and transformed. See Qin Yaqing, ‘International society as
process: institutions, identities and China’s peaceful rise’, The

Guanxi Lilun’, Zhongguo Shehui Kexue, no. 3, 2009, p. 82. NB Translations of all
Chinese publication titles cited in the footnotes are provided
in the Annex on pages 61-73.
Strategy

A third core factor that looms large in the discourse of Chinese academics regarding China’s foreign policy is diplomatic strategy. This refers to the art of using various means to realise national interests and goals. China has a tradition of strategic thinking with a special emphasis on the overall situation or ‘big picture’, the dynamics of change and long-term interests. Increasingly, China has been faced with more complex diplomatic tasks in relation to a range of international, regional and domestic demands, with its gradual integration into international society. In this context, diplomatic strategy is of vital importance in deciding on the priority of issues and basic principles for policy implementation. So analysing discussions by Chinese academics on China’s diplomatic strategy will serve to provide a better picture of domestic debates on Chinese foreign policy.

In short, domestic debates on China’s foreign policy mainly centre on the three core concepts: shi, identity and strategy. In the light of these three concepts, internal debates can be better framed and more clearly understood.
Understanding *shi* requires being able to figure out the general trend of international change and the current distribution of power in the international system. The term ‘the distinctive feature of our times’ is frequently used by the Chinese to describe the general tendency of the world situation and the term *guoji geju* is often employed to describe the international power structure. So here these two sub-concepts are used to analyse domestic debates on China’s foreign policy from the perspective of *shi*.

**The distinctive feature of our times**

Chinese leaders’ perception of the distinctive tenor of our times greatly influences the basic orientation and thrust of China’s foreign policy. The following illustrations may be helpful. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, Mao Zedong, in response to the containment and blockage policies that US-led western countries adopted against China, contended that the international system was predominantly pro-capitalist in nature and more significantly, confrontational towards China. So he proposed that China needed to be prepared for a total war and should replace the existing international system with a new one. At the end of the 1970s, Deng Xiaoping, however, recognised that the world we were living in was not one dominated by war and revolution as depicted by Lenin and Mao Zedong. He argued that war could be avoided, and that peace and development were the characteristic themes of our times. This marked an important change in Chinese leaders’ perception of the world situation and ushered in the era of reform and opening-up.
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The new policy has opened China’s doors to the world and the world to China. China and the world have both greatly benefited from the policy. However, there have been setbacks and doubts along the way. The bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in May 1999 sparked a nation-wide debate on China’s understanding of the current ‘theme of our times’. This led to a reconsideration of the western world’s intentions and the dominant role that the United States played in international affairs. Doubts were expressed about China building a cooperative relationship with the international system.

Two questions raised in this debate included: had world capitalism changed? If so, would this change bring greater peace and development to international society in a climate where China could enjoy a more benign external environment? Within this context, influential Chinese scholars such as He Fang, former director of the Institute of Japan Studies at the China Academy of Social Sciences, published articles and books describing the profound changes in capitalism after the end of World War Two. They argued that the world had entered into a new era of peace and development. It was quite possible for China to avoid involvement in a war with western powers and to cooperate with them instead.7 Many scholars contributed to the discussions. Some argued in favour of He Fang.8 Others argued against He Fang from different perspectives.9 The latter group strongly contended that the theory of peaceful development was based on ‘misjudgment of the international situation and would distort foreign policy making and mislead public opinion’.10

This debate is quite exceptional in the Chinese international relations academic community in terms of its duration, depth and scope. It touches upon the issue of China’s relationship with the international system at a profound level. The Chinese mindset was nurtured by the painful historical experience of foreign aggression and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s to believe that the international system was an imperialist one, based on exploitation and dominated by the law of the jungle. Although Deng Xiaoping replaced this historically shaped worldview with the idea that the world now was comparatively peaceful and stable, there still existed widespread mistrust and suspicion towards the international system. Under these circumstances, this round of debates at the end of the twentieth century contributed to enlightenment and to a fundamental change in Chinese people’s perception of the international system. Since then scholars and policy makers have generally held that it is possible for China to construct a positive relationship with the international system and that China should constructively involve itself in international society.

In 2009, an official summary was published by President Hu,11 reflecting the contemporary views of Chinese policy makers and the Chinese Communist Party. President Hu focused on five points:
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(i) profound transformation, (ii) a harmonious world; (iii) common development; (iv) shared responsibility and (v) active engagement. His central idea is that the world has undergone profound changes and that China’s future and destiny are closely linked with the future of the outside world. Therefore, China should not only actively integrate itself into international society, but also seek common development and assume more responsibility in building a relatively harmonious world. This is regarded as articulating the most positive Chinese perception of the international community, and of China’s relationship to it, since 1840.

# Guoji geju

In their analysis of the international distribution of power, Chinese scholars have tended to focus mainly on American hegemony, multipolarity and the emergence of other major powers. Chinese scholars still care most about how much room the Western-dominated international system can provide for China’s development. The United States, as the current sole superpower in the international system, has traditionally been regarded as the strongest power which could possibly hinder China’s development. Debate on hegemony includes evaluation and analysis of America’s power and its role. Besides the US, other major powers considered include the European Union, Russia, Japan and emerging powers like India.

# Hegemony and the status of the United States

Chinese scholars have seldom argued positively in favour of hegemony or a hegemonic rule. This has much to do with Chinese historical experiences dating from the middle of the nineteenth century. Traditional China accepted hegemonic rule but made a distinction between ‘rule by force’ (ba dao) and ‘rule by virtue’ (wang dao). Hegemonic rule realised by virtue was highly praised and to be pursued. The term ‘rule by virtue’ is similar to the idea of ‘benign hegemony’ as highlighted by G. John Ikenberry. Due to the suffering of the Chinese people as a result of Western power politics at the time of the Opium War of 1840, the term ‘hegemony’ in the Chinese discourse has been perceived as denoting an unethical rule of might instead of being an objective description of power. Thus, ‘hegemony’ has become strongly derogatory and almost identical in meaning with ‘hegemonism’. Criticism of hegemonism can be found in many Chinese official documents and writings published by scholars. The Chinese IR community ‘has generally been negative’ about hegemony and the theory of hegemonic stability.

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Recently, there has been a reconsideration of the role of hegemony in the international system. Some scholars now differentiate between the concept of hegemony and that of hegemonism. They distinguish hegemony from the perspective of governance within the international system and argue that the theory of hegemonic stability ‘is largely borne out by the reality’\(^{14}\) because the existence of a hegemon actually provides public goods and the basic security guarantee international society needs, functioning as a stabilising force in the international system.\(^{15}\) This view further contends that hegemony is of crucial importance in the early stages of establishing international institutions.\(^{16}\) American hegemony is recognised as a comparatively new type of hegemony. The United States ‘has to a certain extent played the role of a world government by establishing world security and economic systems with itself at the core, thus making its strong structural power embedded in the world order.’\(^{17}\) In other words, international stability in the past twenty years has depended largely on the United States as the ‘sole hegemon’\(^{18}\) because theoretically the hegemon is not only the provider of international stability but also the shaper of international norms.\(^{19}\)

Although some scholars accept the stabilising role of the hegemon, they point out that the United States has been much less willing to provide international public goods since the end of the Cold War. ‘Traditional international public goods under the control of the hegemon are facing the trend of privatisation, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increasingly being a typical example of public goods privatisation in international finance.’\(^{20}\) As a result, contrary to the predictions of the hegemonic stability theory, provision of international public goods has not been strengthened but on the contrary has become unstable due to hegemonic control. Some commentators argue strongly that, since single hegemony is unsustainable, it is imperative to develop collective hegemony in order to maintain the stability of the international system.\(^{21}\)

The role of the United States in Asia is also a central concern of Chinese academics. While an increasing number of Chinese scholars are of the view that the United States plays a stabilising role in East Asia, especially in constraining Japan through its alliance with Japan, the preponderant view is still that the US strategy in Asia is based on self-interest and that the US aims to benefit from facilitating mutual balancing among Asian powers.\(^{22}\) So it is impossible for China and Japan to realise fundamental reconciliation in their bilateral relations.\(^{23}\) Nor will the United States support the integration process in East Asia. The power and institutional structures of American hegemony lead to unfavourable and negative policies toward East Asian integration.\(^{24}\)

The outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008 gave rise to further debate on America’s international decline. As a matter of fact, the decline of American influence has long been an important concern of Chinese scholars. Whenever a significant international incident occurs, such as the American invasion of Iraq and the prolonged war in Afghanistan, the topic of America’s decline is debated with renewed intensity. Currently, the impact of the financial crisis on the United States is a major topic among Chinese scholars. Regarding this, there are generally four different views. The first view holds that the financial crisis has revealed that something is fundamentally wrong with the American financial system, but not its economy. The foundation of the American macro-economy is still the best in the world and it will experience a quick economic recovery. Most proponents of such a view are Chinese scholars who have done research on both the American and world economy for a long time. The second view favours a ‘super-stability’ theory: American dominance will not decline in the short term due to the US’s political capacity for self-correction, economic resilience, social dynamism and creativity, and its ability to preserve its position as a military superpower. Advocates of this view are Chinese scholars who have long studied American domestic politics. The third group puts forward a theory of ‘hegemonic decline’. This argument is based on the history of American economic development, its political system, and its cultural and religious factors. These commentators contend that the current financial crisis is rooted in American institutions. Some scholars even claim that something has gone wrong with the ‘American spirit’. Hence, the very roots of American dominance have become rotten and the general trend of decline is irreversible, as evidenced by the 9/11 attacks and the financial tsunami of 2008. The fourth view takes the form of ‘American conspiracy’ theory, which is amply discussed on the internet and in the mass media. Advocates of this theory believe that the financial crisis originated in Wall Street and those who have been hit the hardest are beyond the United States. Specifically, ‘the United States is lightly injured, Europe seriously affected, and China damaged internally.’

Some Chinese scholars point out that it is imperative for China and the United States to cooperate because of their high degree of economic interdependence. History shows that the most likely way of realising a peaceful power transition is through facilitating and supporting the dominant power in maintaining world order, thus preserving the stability of the international system. Others argue that the G-2 or ‘China-US condominium’ deserves due attention. This discourse is a new development of previous notions of ‘stakeholder’ and ‘responsible major power’, suggesting that Sino-US interdependence has been reversed in the aftermath of the financial crisis. The financial crisis shows that the United States has difficulty in providing public

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goods and in sustaining the cost of maintaining a stable international system. It needs the active involvement of other countries, including the emerging powers. Greater cooperation between China and the United States will be essential to world stability and security.  

**Multipolarity and yichao duoqiang**

In contrast to the relatively negative view of the Chinese toward ‘hegemony’, the term ‘multipolarity’ is commendatory in the Chinese discourse. Since the end of the Cold War, the term has frequently featured in China’s domestic newspapers, magazines and journals and has often appeared in official government documents. The view held by some American scholars\(^\text{30}\) that the post-Cold War world is unipolar has attracted extensive attention from Chinese scholars, and relevant writings on this topic abound. Nevertheless, multipolarity has long been interpreted by China as a positive international development.

Chinese scholars hold that a multipolar world order is one in which big powers are mutually checked and constrained, a useful bulwark against unilateralism. Multipolarity has been represented as an ideal international paradigm for power relations.

Deng Xiaoping argued that by any standard China constituted one pole.\(^\text{31}\) However, opinions differ regarding the number of ‘poles’ in the international system. What constitutes a ‘pole’ in the international system? Some scholars argue that there are three important poles (i.e. the US, the EU and East Asia). Other scholars hold that there are five poles (the US as the superpower while China, the EU, Japan and Russia are the other four strong powers).\(^\text{32}\) Others believe that there are six poles (i.e. the US, Japan, the EU, Russia, China and India). The Chinese discourse known as *yichao duoqiang* proposes a simultaneously unipolar and multipolar world. Since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, more discussions have focused on the changing role of the United States as the world’s sole superpower. Some Chinese scholars agree that American power has declined. Most Chinese scholars still hold that ‘the financial crisis may have weakened American financial and economic power, but it has impacted other powers more. Compared with them, the United States has demonstrated more adaptability and resilience in enduring and coping with the crisis. This means that the US will remain as the single superpower in the short-term, and the *yichao duoqiang* structure will not change substantially.’\(^\text{33}\)

Other scholars argue that ‘the embryonic form of the new international system, after twenty years’ transition, is faintly visible, with a basic framework of multipolarity and rule-based multilateralism and negotiation, featuring diversity and a variety of actors’, and estimate that the transition towards the new system should be basically

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completed in 2020-2030.\textsuperscript{34} The future international system, seen from this perspective, is neither unipolar nor multipolar. Instead, it will undergo a long period of transition, eventually turning into a multilateral order featuring negotiation and cooperation among powers.

Interestingly, in recent years, a growing number of Chinese scholars have begun to criticise the idea of multipolarity, arguing that it is a manifestation of simple-minded wishful thinking, reflecting ‘the traditional state-centred mentality of power politics’, and that ‘a multipolar world order is not at all a new world order.’\textsuperscript{35} They point out that multipolarity is not the only trend of the contemporary international political landscape, and that looking at world politics from the perspective of ‘polarity’ reflects a power politics mentality. They propose instead that we should advocate cooperation among big powers, especially the idea of a ‘harmonious world’ wherein different countries respect each other and peacefully coexist.

In the minds of Chinese scholars, a harmonious world is a diversified world. Most importantly, it is a de-hegemonised world because China and India are examples of ‘non-hegemonic powers’ and ‘non-hegemonic civilisations.’ According to this view, the twenty-first century is a century of ‘de-hegemonisation’, and a century that will witness the demise of power politics.\textsuperscript{36} Other scholars contend that the ‘future international distribution of power will neither be reduced into a structure without poles, nor develop into a completely new configuration of several poles, but will be gradually flattened.’\textsuperscript{37} Small powers are attempting to gain more influence and not be eclipsed by big powers within the network of institutions. This can be realised by establishing regional or inter-regional alliances (regional integration), thus reducing the gap in power distribution between big powers and blocs that are made of small states. Small powers, by way of forming state blocs, are no longer marginalised in the games of big powers. They can play a crucial or even leading role in international issues, just as big powers do. A case in point is the European Union.\textsuperscript{38} For some Chinese scholars, a harmonious world should be one without hegemony where big powers set the example, fulfil their duties and shoulder their responsibilities while small ones enjoy equality, democracy and when necessary aid from the big powers. This reflects a new development in Chinese thinking about multipolarity, which represents not only a return to Chinese traditional culture and values but also reflects a progressive attitude of learning from the EU.


\textsuperscript{37} Chen Yuqiang, op cit in note 26, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
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Other major powers

The European Union

European power has long been a puzzle to Chinese scholars. One consideration for IR specialists is that the European Union is a non-sovereign state. Its special decision-making mechanism as a confederation makes it hard to understand the nature of its power. Moreover, most EU Member States are also members of NATO and in this set-up the European Union is just regarded as a quasi-independent actor in terms of traditional security. The EU is a new entity (integrated actor) with multifold attributes, and thus the object of much discussion in China.

Some Chinese scholars, who observe the importance of the EU from the perspective of Sino-US relations, suggest that the EU is not independent.39 However the majority of Chinese scholars recognise the EU’s independent role and importance in the international system40 and regard it as a major power in the world,41 emphasising that the European Union is ‘an independent actor who acts on its own initiative in international society, whose presence itself, action or non-action, has a strong impact on international relations and other actors.’42 The European Union is an indispensable ‘stabiliser’, ‘balancer’ and ‘example setter’43 in today’s world. From the perspective of the construction of the international order, ‘the European Union is a concentrated representation of a flattened international structure.’44 There is a great disparity in power between the United States and other states in the world when compared individually. However, European countries have greatly reduced the gap between them and the US by forming a union of states through regional integration.45 When it comes to soft power, Europe tends to focus more on ‘transforming the world by rules’, rather than ‘conquering the world by force.’46 In many cases, Europe has made outstanding contributions to the development and progress of international norms.47 The success of the EU in its eastern enlargement has proved the strength of its soft power. Only Europe’s soft power can be regarded as a kind of shareable international public good.48

Despite general recognition of the significance of the EU, some scholars still hold that ‘Europe was “marginalised” in world politics in the twentieth century’. As to events that take place on the soil of Europe, no matter how dramatic they are, they simply attract much less attention in the media and public opinion (this is the case at least in China).48 The European Union is genuinely a positive normative power, but if the EU thinks that its model will be emulated and replicated elsewhere in the world, then it is dreaming. ‘The EU’s attempt to spread its model throughout the world in its self-defined way, identifying “European

39. See, for example, Chen Zhiqiang, Xin Guoji Zhixu Goujian Zhong de Oumeng’, Nanhai Xuebao (Zhexue Shehui Kexue Ban, no. 2, 2000, pp. 55-59.
44. Chen Yungang, op. cit. in note 26, p. 32.
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norls” and “European values” with “universal norms” and “universal values” and enforcing them on others, is not only illogical in theory, but also unfeasible in practice.49 In attempting to apply its model to a diversified world the EU runs the risk that this will be interpreted as evidence of a new European imperialism, displaying the EU as fundamentally intolerant.50 The distinctiveness of the EU model actually outweighs its universality. Hence, its influence on various regions in the world is limited.51

Russia

Views vary when it comes to Russia too. Some scholars argue that the Russian Federation is undergoing a sharp decline in prestige and influence on the world stage. It is no longer a superpower on an equal footing with the United States, but a second-class state instead.52 Contemporary Russia should just be regarded as a political and military power, not an economic power.53 If Russia continues with its development model of ‘a strong state and weak society’ and does not change, its development will be unsustainable, despite Russia’s resurgence. ‘The fundamental reason why Russia’s strength and prosperity cannot last long lies in the relationship between the state and society. Peter the Great’s modernisation programme and Stalin’s model did achieve great progress for a period of time. Yet they failed to lay a strong and long-lasting social foundation for a sustainable strong state. Russia’s power and prosperity will not last long under this model.’54

However, some scholars emphasise that Russia is already well on the way to revival. They hold that ‘Russia’s relative power and absolute power have actually made much headway as compared with the early years after the collapse of the Soviet Union.’ ‘The danger of Russia being reduced to a second-class or third-class country for the first time for nearly two to three hundred years’ at least seems to have vanished. Proponents of this view contend that ‘Russia is regaining its power and influence on the world stage.’55

Russia’s resurgence has stood out as a noticeable change in the international power configuration in recent years. ‘Putin’s 8-year term in office has seen Russia move from political chaos to political order, from economic decline to economic growth, and from social turbulence to social order. With rapid economic growth, Russia has returned to the community of world economic powers.’56 Many Chinese scholars argue that although Russia’s relative power has declined to some extent, ‘Russia is “a world state” with the potential to be “a world power”’. So Russia is ‘still a major power whose strength should not be underestimated.’58

51. Ibid., p. 154.
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Japan

The Chinese IR community has attached much importance to studies of Japan, focusing in particular on Japan’s strategic evolution since the end of the Cold War. Scholars generally hold that Japan is a country with the ambition of becoming a major power. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, Japan has aimed at becoming a ‘political power’. Japan is in pursuit of the status of a “normal state”, i.e. the status of a political power, by strengthening the Japan-US alliance, seeking for permanent membership of the UN Security Council, and carrying out “all-around diplomacy” including Asian diplomacy and environmental diplomacy. Japan is becoming clearer and clearer in its goal, firmer and firmer in its action.39 But Japan’s diplomacy on the whole takes on the features of ‘small country diplomacy’ in practice, being subordinate to the United States, and suffering from the lack of a clear identity. As a result, it is inevitably difficult for Japan to realise its ambition of becoming a major political power.60 The transition in the international distribution of power that has resulted from the current financial crisis has had the strongest impact on Japan within the circle of developed countries, to an even greater extent than it has had on Europe. Internationally, the birth and institutionalisation of the G-20 have constituted a kind of challenge and threat to both Japan’s hard power and soft power. Regionally, Japan’s international power, which depends on its identity as a ‘representative of Asia’, has been seriously weakened by the successive emergence of inter-regional mechanisms such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the Asia-Europe summit in the past twenty years.61 Besides, Japan’s status in the international economy is in rapid decline due to its sluggish economic growth.

Other Chinese scholars contend that Japan’s international status has not declined, especially in East Asia where Japan continues to have considerable influence. Japan, ‘as the biggest economy, the largest source of investment and a strong military power in East Asia, will play a significant role in the future order of East Asia’.62 Since Japan has adjusted its strategy from a regional power to a world power, China will inevitably face a new Japan whose political and economic influence continues to expand.63 ‘Transitional Japan feels unaccustomed to and uneasy about China’s development. It even feels astonished and threatened. Every diplomatic action on the part of China will be exaggerated or twisted, even used to fan the flames of nationalist sentiment.’64 Japan has not let down its guard against China.65 In view of the history of conflict and aggression that has characterised relations between Japan and China, fears that China would “take revenge” on Japan after its dramatic rise have contributed to a socio-psychological climate within Japan in which the “China Threat” theory flourishes.66 ‘As the United States finds it hard to


position and define China, Japan, under the influence of the US, also wavers in its China strategy. Various signs demonstrate that Japan, as a US follower, is very contradictory and uncertain in its strategic positioning in relation to China.  

Nevertheless, some Chinese scholars argue less alarmingly that ‘a variety of indicators show that different circles in Japan are becoming calmer and more objective in their assessment of China’s rapid development in recent years.’68 ‘Accepting the reality of China’s rise’ has increasingly become the basis for consideration of Japan’s China policy. This reflects the change in the social mood which has resulted in the failure of Junichiro Koizumi’s policy of visiting the Yasukuni shrine and pushed Shinzo Abe to break the deadlock in the Japan-China relationship. It encouraged Yasuo Fukuda to continue his efforts to improve Japan-China relations.70 ‘A historic transition began to emerge in Japan’s perception of and relationship with China.’71 Fukuda’s view of ‘Japan-China cooperation’ has reflected the new thinking and change in Japan’s perception of China and thus its China policy. Although it will still take some time to see how this new attitude will be reflected in Japanese foreign policy, the significance of the change deserves much attention. As China’s development will not cease, Japan’s readjustment of its Asian policy and China policy will not be tactical but strategic.72 ‘Psychologically, Japan has gradually got used to the reality of China’s development. Having gained visible benefits from China’s economic rise a majority of Japanese have a heart-felt desire for a normal development of Japan-China relations.’73

The emerging powers and the G-20

China is a developing country. Chinese scholars have paid close attention to ongoing trends in emerging countries and generally have a fairly optimistic perception of their rise. First and foremost, they argue that emerging countries are rising collectively and that their growing power is a positive and important feature of the contemporary international system. Their rise is a long and gradual but irreversible trend.75 They also hold that the rise of developing countries, as represented by the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), is generating profound changes in the current international political and economic order, giving a strong impetus to the multipolarisation of world politics and the diversification of development models. The rise of emerging countries has changed the world economic order and accelerated the restructuring of the international power configuration.76 ‘They have transformed the world economic structure and the structure of global interests as well.’77
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India

Chinese scholars started to notice the rise of India when it launched its nuclear tests in 1998. They subsequently embarked on a wide-ranging discussion of such issues as the rise of India as a great power, factors contributing to India’s rise, its model and characteristics, and the implications of this for the international system and Chinese-Indian relations.

A unanimous view does not exist among Chinese scholars as to whether India has emerged as a major power or not. Some Chinese specialists in Indian studies believe that India’s rise is less a fact than a possibility because India cannot yet be regarded as a fully-fledged economic power in the global arena, as shown by its total volume of foreign trade, foreign exchange reserves and its GDP. Some other scholars contend that India’s economy as a whole is still a rather closed one. They also argue that ‘there are serious drawbacks in India’s parliamentary democracy … Its infrastructure, which lags far behind the current state of development of its manufacturing and service industries, has severely hindered their further development. The issue of Kashmir still puts a lot of pressure on India’s security.’ They therefore conclude that India’s emergence is a long-term process, and currently is still in its primary stage.

Some specialists in international studies, however, argue that ‘India as an emerging power has undeniably risen, either in terms of scale or in terms of key indicators employed to evaluate major power status.’ ‘It is an inevitable trend for India to emerge as a strong power in the twenty-first century or in its early decades.’ ‘India’s rise has become an indisputable fact, despite the existence of many restraints and challenges on its way to becoming a world power in the near future.’

Both of the two groups of Chinese scholars believe that India is equipped with the requisite attributes to become a world power. ‘India is the second most populous country in the world with a large territory, has achieved great development in its economy, science and technology and military capability, and enjoys a relatively stable political system, thus creating a good foundation for it to become a world power.’ ‘India’s economic growth triggered by the liberalisation reform has seen its GDP grow to be the twelfth in the world economy (according to the statistics of the 2005 fiscal year calculated by exchange rate).’ ‘Politically, although India’s democracy is not the most efficient, it provides institutional guarantees for the implementation of reforms and protection against political volatility which is worthwhile for China to draw on.’ In addition, India’s long history and civilisation as well as its political
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stability have become important sources of its soft power. Some scholars also argue that the key factor in understanding India’s rise is the fact that India has always harboured the ambition to become a great power and has practised a quite effective realist strategy in its conduct of international relations. Apart from self-help, balance of power and free-riding have been India’s strategic choices. India free-rides in the car of the United States because the US, as the strongest major global power, is edging closer to India and is also in need of India to balance China. Nevertheless, creating a balance of power is the fundamental and long-term objective of India. Other scholars observe that the post-Cold War strategic environment is also favourable to the ascent of India. The big shift in the international power structure and the basic trend of world events since the end of the Cold War have created an external guarantee for India’s basically peaceful rise. In terms of foreign relations, India’s position in the US’s global strategy has been greatly improved. Its relationship with Russia has also been quite positive in recent years. All this is very helpful to the rise of India.

Interestingly, a majority of Chinese scholars argue positively in favour of the Indian model and India’s rise, in stark contrast to the attitude of Indian academia and the press who regard the rise of China as a threat. Most Chinese scholars argue that India’s rise is basically a peaceful one. India has chosen a basically peaceful way to rise in at least the past two decades. India’s trajectory as a rising world power has been marked by distinct national characteristics. Some scholars argue that the model of India’s rise is characterised by three main features. First, India’s rise may be an unprecedented one with a low level of national wealth, which means it may lag behind developed countries in terms of material prosperity, but on the other hand it may manage to achieve a more harmonious coexistence between man and nature, thus enjoying a sustainable economy and social justice. Second, its rise may be accomplished through peaceful means. Third, its rise may be achieved by constructing a cooperative multipolar international structure. In short, this type of rise, i.e. one that is mild, gradual and mixed, may become a new model (not the only model of course) of rise.

There are of course some scholars who argue that India’s rise may lead to trouble since it has behaved as a revisionist towards the post-World War II international system. For example, India does not accept the postwar hierarchical international system as represented by the five big powers of the UN Security Council. Besides, India’s self-perception is in conflict with international perceptions of India. In order to gain international recognition, India often tends to aggrandise its power and is anxious to impress other countries with its power by spending enormous amounts of money in building aircraft carrier
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fleets, leasing nuclear-powered submarines from Russia, sending vessels from its small naval fleet to cruise in the South China Sea which is far away from its own coastline, and claiming to be the fourth economic power in the world. ‘India pays great importance to the building of its defence capability, which can become the chief manifestation of its world power status, but this has a negative impact on the stability of the international system.’94

India’s rise also influences the ties between China and India. A majority of scholars stress that an emerging India will contribute positively to international multipolarisation, arguing that the simultaneous rise of China and India is favourable to the peace and stability of Asia and the world.95 They believe that ‘India’s rise and China’s increasing development are not mutually contradictory because the two countries will develop together as cooperative partners rather than strategic competitors.’96 However, there are still some scholars who contend that the simultaneous rise of China and India will bring a dimension of uncertainty to Chinese-Indian relations. ‘The two countries are both complementary and competitive in economy and trade, but competition outweighs mutual complementation on the whole.’97 In terms of geopolitics, ‘in the future in Asia it is very likely to happen that, when the behaviour of any of the three countries, the United States, China and India, is understood by the other two as striving to dominate Asia, that country will face joint balancing from them.’98 The three countries, therefore, will be major players in shaping Asian regional architecture in the early decades of the twenty-first century. How they interact with each other and how they manage their relations will have a direct effect on future peace and stability in Asia.

The G-20

Some Chinese scholars have been very cautious in commenting on the G-20. On the one hand, they contend that the emergence of the G-20 shows that a new round of ‘cyclical transition’ of international leadership has formally started. ‘The birth of the G-20 is closely related to a major change in the international distribution of power. It is a political reflection of the substantial rise in the status and role of the emerging economies,’99 suggesting that some significant and profound changes have taken place in the nature of power politics.100 However, they emphasise that international systemic transition is a long, tortuous and difficult process. Many major problems remain to be resolved. Can the G-20 successfully manage its transition from an economic crisis management forum to a key global governance body? Can it take its place among the main body of international institutions that enjoy world authority? How will it solve the problem of reconciling universal representativity and

94. Ibid. 
96. Zheng Ruixiang, op. cit. in note 80, p. 37. 
98. Song Dexing and Shi Yinhong, op. cit. in note 81, p. 23. 
99. Lin Limin, op. cit. in note 74, p. 36. 
efficiency? How will it deal with the inconsistencies between the G-20 and other current institutions such as the UN? How will it clarify its relationship with the G-2, the G-8, the BRICs and other blocs? If these problems cannot be resolved, the G-20 may remain stagnant at the starting point of international systemic transition, thus having great difficulty in making much progress.\textsuperscript{101} Besides, the G-20 is currently a temporary and improvised organisation set up by the major economies to deal with the global financial crisis, which exists primarily in the form of summits and conferences. It does not have a permanent secretariat, it has no executive authority, no power to impose sanctions and so on.\textsuperscript{102} So it is a bit premature to expect the G-20 to bear the grave responsibility of global governance, especially to expect it to become the leading mechanism of global financial governance.\textsuperscript{103}

Compared with the above wait-and-see attitudes, other scholars are quite optimistic. They stress that ‘the formation of the G-20 mechanism is, from any perspective, a tremendous progress in history and a great breakthrough in the evolution of a new world order.’\textsuperscript{104} They confidently believe that the G-20 will probably replace the G-8 in the future and become the principal forum for global economic cooperation and coordination and the major policy coordinating mechanism of the world economy.\textsuperscript{105} The voting power of emerging countries in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will have increased by 5 percent by the year 2011, which represents an important change and redistribution of international power. The G-20 held three summits in 2009. It is playing an increasingly important role with regard to a growing number of issues. ‘It is highly likely that it will replace the G-8, thus becoming the main framework and decision-making platform for coordinating and negotiating (global) economic and financial issues.’\textsuperscript{106}

Yet other scholars contend that the G-20 is actually an appendage to the G-8. ‘All member states of the G-8 are members of the G-20. They enjoy a superior position within the group and to a great extent dominate its development.’\textsuperscript{107} ‘The way in which the G-20 operates is dictated by the G-8 which enjoys more influence in setting the agenda of the G-20 through its dominant status both in the Financial and Monetary Council of the IMF and in the executive council of the IMF, World Bank, International Liquidity Bank and Financial Stability Forum.’\textsuperscript{108}

All in all, the Chinese understanding of shi, the general tendency of the world situation, is pluralistic and diverse but generally positive. Most Chinese scholars stick to the view that the distinctive feature of our times is peace and development. They perceive guoji geju, the international power structure, in terms of the coexistence of a
superpower and several other major powers. Relations among major powers are perceived to be cooperative rather than conflictual. Softer and more positive attitudes are adopted towards the role of the United States and Japan. In other words, Chinese scholars tend to interpret the general tendency of today’s world as generally dominated by peace and cooperation, which is overwhelmingly in tune with the touchstone of contemporary Chinese diplomacy, i.e. to seek peace, development and cooperation.  

Chapter 3

Debates on identity

Discussion on the broad trends at play in the world serve to provide a clearer idea of the nature of the international system and the status and roles of major powers. As China integrates more fully into world affairs, the Chinese IR community has given much thought to China’s identity vis-à-vis international society. Debates centre on whether China is a beneficiary, a participant and a status quo state of the international system, or a reformer, a revisionist or even revolutionary state of the system. Exploring the question of identity has meant giving particular consideration to China’s international responsibilities. The kind of role and identity that China actually assumes in the international system is fundamental to China’s diplomatic strategy, and thus becomes the focus of discussions conducted by Chinese scholars. In what follows, the paper goes on to analyse how Chinese scholars look at China’s relationship with the international system and its international status, role and identity.

China: a global or regional power?

Few Chinese scholars claim that China is already a global power. Instead, the general opinion is that China is still a regional power in East and South Asia. The current dominant view holds that China is developing into a global major power. Currently, China cannot really lay claim to be a world power as such. It merely enjoys some attributes of a world power. For example, some argue that China is a world economic and trade power while others regard China as a ‘quasi-superpower’.110 China’s swift recovery from the 2008 global financial crisis has obviously enhanced the confidence of many more Chinese scholars.

110. Hu Angang, Zhongguo Jueqi yu DuiWai Kaifang Cong Shijiexing Kaifang Daguo Dao Shijie Xing Kaifang Qiangguo, Xueshu Yuekan, no. 9, 2009, pp. 52-60.
China’s foreign policy debates

in evaluating China’s power. They contend that China ‘has created a miracle of growth, has become an economic powerhouse and achieved unprecedented improvement of its status in the international economy. China has gradually developed from a regional power into a new world power.’112 ‘Extensive global links are gradually turning China into a global state.’113 China ‘is moving from the periphery of the world stage to its centre.’114 ‘China is maturing into a world power.’115

Some Chinese scholars already regard China as a global power, while other scholars argue that the confidence underlying such an assumption obviously results from an underestimation of various difficulties and challenges inevitably facing China in the process of modernisation. It is still unknown whether China will be able to succeed in its efforts towards modernisation. China is far from a global power in its current phase, and should be positioned as a big developing country. Some scholars even point out that taking into account the current problems facing China, ‘a rise in power does not necessarily result in the increase in both status and influence.’116 China is not an economic power yet, though it has growing economic weight. Although made-in-China products can be seen all over the world, only 0.3 percent of Chinese companies have a capacity for self-innovation. This constitutes a serious structural defect in China’s economic growth model. Hard power and soft power are extremely imbalanced, with the latter apparently taking on the typical feature of being ‘small in quantity and weak in quality.’ The imbalance is clearly manifested in the cumbersome bureaucracy, severe shortage of educational investment, and limited political reform which is still confined to certain grass-roots efforts and has lagged far behind the country’s economic development. Strengthening soft power has become a central issue for China in the process of modernisation.117 Having observed various problems in the process of China’s modernisation and barriers in the course of its transition, Chinese scholars universally hold that China’s rise to world power status will be a long and tortuous process. China is still a developing country, albeit a big developing country, facing a lot of problems. In terms of its position within the international system it is probably best classified as a developing country marked by a set of distinct national and socio-economic characteristics.

China’s international role and identity

Some Chinese scholars have regarded China’s international role as the fundamental strategic issue.118 China’s economy has developed much more rapidly since it joined the World Trade Organisation, eliciting a positive attitude among Chinese academics towards

globalisation and the current international system. It has been widely recognised that China is a beneficiary of globalisation and the current international system as well.119 Before China’s adoption of the reform and opening-up policy, it had a revolutionary relationship to the international system. Its policy was aimed at overthrowing the old world order and constructing a new one. By integrating itself into the international marketplace and international society through its reform and opening-up policy, it has gradually changed into an insider of the international system, become a status quo state and thus no longer seeks to overthrow the current international system.

This transformation of identity is reflected in China’s formulation of policy and in its behaviour on the world stage. From the perspective of China’s relationship with the international system, the country has adopted a basic policy of cooperation rather than confrontation towards the United States. Regionally, China’s behaviour is characterised by attempts to participate increasingly in regional cooperation rather than trying to remould the regional power structure by coercion. With regard to China’s involvement in international institutions, since 1979 China ‘has increasingly sought to integrate international institutions and accepted international institutions, instead of challenging and changing the international institutional system.’120 Moreover, a majority of Chinese scholars hold that the international environment is overall relatively favourable to China’s rise. Politically, China obviously occupies a relatively advantageous position in the political security arena within the global institutional system led by the United Nations. Economically, the advantages also outweigh the disadvantages for China. ‘In historical terms, it has been the first time for China to play a positive and comprehensive role in building a world order. It is a great mission that history has entrusted on China.’121 Hence, China should make full use of the opportunity to play a positive and comprehensive role in building a world order. It is a great mission that history has entrusted on China.’121 Hence, China should make full use of the opportunity to play a constructive role in the international system, and participate in the creation of international institutions in particular. As a result of more positive attitudes to the international system among Chinese officialdom, China has increasingly integrated into the international system, though the extent of China’s integration varies in different fields, especially when its weak voice in the international arena, lack of agenda-setting capacity and executive capability in building international institutions is taken into account, as well as its lack of influence on international civil society due to the low level of interaction of Chinese civil society with international society.122

China’s perception of its own international role is driven to a great extent by outside factors. A case in point concerns observations made by Robert Zoellick, former US Deputy Secretary of State and incumbent president of the World Bank, who described China as a ‘stakeholder’ of the international system in 2005. This triggered
vigorous domestic discussions on China's international role. Soon this view was endorsed by Chinese scholars and the term was taken up by officials. Another example is the international community's recurrent emphasis on 'China's responsibility'. In spite of the criticism such discourse generated in China, it prompted Chinese scholars to reflect on China's role and responsibility in world affairs.

Some Chinese scholars emphasise that interaction between China and the international system is subject to a dynamic process of change. ‘China's profound readjustment of its relationship with the international system is a long and complex process, and it is through this process that China defines its international role.’ As a result, China will retain many features of a developing country as well as those of a developed one for a long time and preserve its own distinct characteristics. In other words, China is and will continue to be a country with multiple identities and roles for a long period of time. In the view of some scholars, international society is a network of relations and China interacts with various countries, big or small, and international organisations within the network. The process of interaction is actually a process of establishing relations and also a process of mutually influencing and reshaping each other's identity and interests. Relations are multifold. So are identities. Relations are also fluid, as are identities. Any identity is path-dependent and subject to the flux of historical events and processes. In the past three decades, China's success in its peaceful rise has been mainly due to the internal transformation it has undergone through interaction with and practices in international society. For scholars who perceive developments from this process approach, China has changed not only in behaviour but also in identity, both of which are interrelated and correlated. ‘China struggled over the threshold of membership of international society and has evolved in the last three decades from a revisionist to a detached and then to a status quo power. The identity shift, the institutional selection and norm acceptance have all been peaceful. So has been China's interaction with other actors in international society, both bilateral and multilateral. It seems therefore that there is no adequate reason to believe that China will violently defy international society in terms of newly emerging institutions.’

When Robert Zoellick first put forward the concept of China as a 'stakeholder', many Chinese scholars had no idea of the responsibilities that this vision of China's role in the world involved. Most of them

124. Ibid., pp. 18-23.
125. Qin Yaqing, op. cit. in note 6, pp. 82-83.
126. Qin Yaqing, op. cit. in note 5.
128. Qin Yaqing, op. cit. in note 5.
were negative and critical about the ‘China’s Responsibility’ theory. As the concept gradually came to be accepted in China, Chinese scholars began to debate what and how much responsibility China should assume in the context of international society.

First and foremost, what is international responsibility? The term ‘international responsibility’ is not unfamiliar to the Chinese. Much active discourse in the past focused on China making contributions to world peace and stability. China was duty-bound in this regard. However, such discourse concerning China’s international responsibility was relatively general. From the perspective of revolutionary diplomacy, this meant that China should provide aid to third-world countries to overthrow the old international order and build a new one. Currently, ‘international responsibility’ refers to ‘obligations that a member of international society should undertake in relation to the external world in the fields of the economy, politics, security, morality and so on, reflecting the contributions a country should make to the external world.’ ‘International responsibility is a derivative attribute of a member state of international society. Countries, big or small, should bear certain international responsibilities.’

What then is China’s international responsibility? Some scholars hold that the status of an ‘emerging major power’ should at least be the basis for China’s self-positioning in the world. It should also be the basis for China to define its international responsibility, rather than blindly pursue two different routes by separating ‘foreign affairs’ from ‘domestic affairs’, or demonstrating China’s enthusiasm about multilateralism merely through involvement and cooperation in international institutions. Specifically, China’s international responsibilities are interpreted by some scholars as follows: ‘Economically, China’s major responsibility is to safeguard the contemporary international economic order and rules, to participate in addressing the deteriorating global imbalance and environmental problems, to enhance financial openness, to further promote market reform, to improve the social security system, to actively transform the mode of economic growth and to increase international aid. Politically, China’s main responsibility is to promote dialogues and mutually beneficial cooperation between countries with different social systems and civilisations. In the field of security, China’s primary international responsibility is to ensure peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits, counterchecking any crisis that might be caused by Taiwan separatists, to prevent, coordinate and negotiate with regard to any impending conflicts and confrontations in Asia, and to participate in a wide range of security operations, including UN peacekeeping operations and crackdowns on non-traditional security threats.’

Many scholars emphasise that China’s international responsibility should be defined on the basis of China’s national interests, rather than the interests of Europe and the United States. The United States and Europe define China’s international responsibility from the perspective of their own interests and concerns, claiming that China’s responsibility is to uphold and maintain the existing international order together with them. But their interests may differ from China’s.132 As the world’s most populous country, China’s primary responsibility should be to provide for its citizens, who account for one-fifth of the world population, and ensure them a better life. ‘This is not merely a domestic affair, but also one of international significance. It is the greatest contribution that China makes to humankind by working out solutions to internal problems such as development and stability.’133 For this reason, national interests should be the fundamental factor in determining China’s international responsibility. ‘The key issue at the heart of “China’s responsibility” is to effectively fulfil its domestic responsibilities.’134 ‘China’s responsibility is definitely not the obligatory list imposed by western powers, but international and national missions voluntarily undertaken by China in line with its own capability and practical national conditions.’135

There are a group of Chinese scholars who believe that the China Responsibility theory implies that China is not a responsible state. In their view this type of discourse in the West is a manifestation of the China Threat theory and aims to exert pressure on China by forcing it to assume responsibility.136 Others contend that the China Responsibility theory masks a strategic conspiracy by the United States and other western powers to set a trap for China.137 China needs to remain vigilant about overstated claims that China’s strength presents a threat to national security.138 ‘The Threat theory and Responsibility theory are inter-linked, and will constrain China’s development. The Threat theory will take the form of the Responsibility theory. It will prevail whenever China fails to undertake responsibilities as they (the western powers) require.’139

What is the bottom-line of ‘responsibility’?140 International expectations of China exceed its own self-assumed expectations of responsibility. Many scholars propose that China should adhere to certain principles in bearing responsibilities. Most importantly, China should do what it is able to do, no less and no more. Some scholars propose the following broad guiding principles in this regard: acting in line with state identity and national interests, acting according to China’s capabilities, and referring back to previous practices and experiences.141 Other scholars advocate the following more specific principles. Firstly, China should insist on common but different responsibilities. China recognises
that every country in the world shares common duties with regard to major issues concerning the future of mankind, but considers that common duties do not mean that countries should simultaneously bear the same responsibilities. Instead, responsibilities should be based on countries’ individual history, national conditions, stages of development, population level and environment. Secondly, China recognises that responsibilities cannot be independent of rights. Developing countries have the right to develop their economies and improve democracy, and to demand that the West make amends for historical mistakes, to ask for more technical and economic aid, and to have a say in international affairs. China should oppose too much international responsibility being placed on the shoulders of developing countries. Thirdly, China should be vigilant and make sure that international responsibilities match up with international laws. It is the common responsibility of all countries to maintain the United Nations Charter and the existing international legal system. China should oppose the imposition of one country’s will, values and domestic law on others and the arbitrary definition and evaluation of other countries’ international responsibilities. Fourthly, China should undertake international responsibilities in proportion to its capabilities. China should not assume international responsibilities out of proportion to its own strengths and development phase. Nor should it shoulder international responsibilities at the price of sovereignty, security and development.\textsuperscript{142}

Other scholars emphasise that China’s responsibility should ultimately ‘start with managing its own internal affairs well. Economically, China should assume international responsibilities unconditionally in terms of economic duties (e.g. product safety) and ensure the relative stability of China’s monetary policy. Politically, the Chinese government should above all be responsible for its own people and demonstrate a commitment to good governance, increasing the attraction of its state systems and value system and learning from western democratic practices. Only by doing so can China establish its moral credentials in the international arena. In addition, China should observe the international conventions that it has signed and give guarantees with regard to its performance in this respect.’\textsuperscript{143}

Specialists on African studies argue that China’s responsibility should be mainly for developing countries, particularly for Africa, since Africa occupies a core place in China’s foreign policy. For them, China is still a developing country, as are African countries. So when China speaks for Africa in the international arena it is speaking for itself.\textsuperscript{144} Moreover, China has a historical responsibility to promote the south-south dialogue and cooperation. And better cooperation with the US and the EU on African affairs will enhance Sino-US and Sino-EU relations.\textsuperscript{145} Specifically, more responsibility

\textsuperscript{142} Li Jie, ‘Cong Zerenlun Toushi Guoji Tixi Zhuaxing’, Guoji Wenti Yanjiu, no. 1, 2008, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{143} Li Nan, op. cit. in note 140, p. 153.
\textsuperscript{144} He Wemping, ‘Cong Zhongfei Guanxi Kan Woguo Zai Fazhangzhong Guojia de Liyi he Zhanlue’, Yafei Yanjiu, no. 3, 2008 p. 29.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p. 31.
China’s foreign policy debates for Africa means providing it with more aid. Non-interference in internal affairs based on mutual respect should be a guiding principle for China’s official development assistance (ODA) to Africa since Africa’s marginalisation is mainly due to the legacy of colonialism which hinders its development.146 China has the same historical experience, so the idea of non-interference is mutually shared, not unilaterally imposed.147 And aiming at capacity building in Africa should be another principle of China’s responsibility for Africa, simply because it will help the sustainability of African development in future. Mutual benefit and a ‘win-win’ result have long been the objectives of China’s African policy and this should remain the case.148 Some scholars also argue for multilateral cooperation in dealing with African affairs and seek to explore a better format for sharing responsibility among major powers.149

On sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect

China’s concept of sovereignty, ever since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, was close to the notion of absolute sovereignty, with its core elements being independence, the inviolability of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. This had a lot to do with China’s security environment during that period. Major powers such as the United States adopted the policy of containment, embargo and besiegement towards China, thus causing serious and tangible threats to China’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. Historical experiences also meant that China was very sensitive to issues of sovereignty.

This view began to change after China opened up to the outside world. A good example is the ‘one country, two systems’ policy developed by the late Deng Xiaoping during the negotiation of the handover of Hong Kong in the 1980s, which represents the first sign of China’s softened stance on sovereignty. As China integrates further into the international system, more Chinese scholars have taken the view that sovereignty is a historically constructed concept. History changes, and so accordingly does the idea of sovereignty. The issue of sovereignty therefore should be approached from a historical, open and constructive perspective, which has gradually gained currency among Chinese scholars. They hold that ‘state sovereignty is a historical phenomenon and continues to develop.’150 It was created together with the emergence of the modern nation-state system and has been changing as the system transforms. So it should be understood historically.151 Besides, ‘global issues cannot be solved by a single

149. Yang Lihua, ‘Jianshe Kechixu de Zhanlue Huoban Guanxi’, Xiya Feizhou, no. 9, 2008, p.15;
150. Ren Weidong, ‘Quanquihuajinzheng zhong de Guojia Zhuquan: Yuanze, Tiaozhan ji Xuanze’, Guoji Guanxi Xueyuan Xuebao, no. 6, 2005, p. 4
country but through global efforts at building an international regime whose authority comes from pooling national sovereignty. In this case, absolutely and narrowly defined sovereignty is becoming less and less applicable to the current situation of globalisation. As such, it will be a necessary choice for countries to independently transfer part of their sovereignty to participate in international cooperation and integrate into international society, for the sake of gaining opportunities of further development in international society. In practice, it is an undeniable fact that national sovereignty has been transferred and weakened. There is ample evidence that China too has experienced changes in its understanding of national sovereignty, with its idea of sovereignty having greatly evolved from seeing sovereignty as absolute to seeing it as relative. The idea of realising national interests through international cooperation has been accepted by the Chinese government and has become a major factor that influences China's international behaviour.

Such a relatively universal acceptance of the altered idea of sovereignty, however, does not mean that Chinese scholars have reached a similar agreement surrounding the issue of the ‘Responsibility to Protect.’ There are basically two schools of thought on that matter. One supports conditional humanitarian intervention, and the other opposes it.

Scholars who are in favour of conditional intervention argue that the human rights norm has gained the unquestionable status of a universal international law. Any action that contravenes it is legally invalid. This means that acceptance of and conformity with the universal human rights norm has become an important criterion in judging the legitimacy of contemporary states. International society, therefore, has the right to implement humanitarian interventions, which have also gained a high degree of legitimacy nowadays. This suggests that resistance to such international interventions by invoking the principles of absolute sovereignty and non-intervention, either in legal terms or on moral grounds, cannot be justified, nor will such resistance be widely recognised, sympathised with or supported. Sovereignty is not absolute but limited, and humanitarian protection concerns international peace and security. They emphasise that humanitarian intervention is in essence ‘a reflection of the minimum requirement in terms of supporting human rights and human dignity.’ Nonetheless, they oppose the idea that humanitarian military intervention is also universally applicable, arguing that the negative effects of military intervention are quite manifest. The use of military force in humanitarian interventions often tends to be prejudicial to the principles of humanitarianism, justice and neutrality. It is also very likely to be manipulated by hegemonist states to serve their own

159. Ibid., p. 122.
national interests.\textsuperscript{160} Thus, the issue of intervention needs to be treated with caution.

The growing recognition of the doctrine of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ has inspired some Chinese scholars to look at the ‘non-intervention’ principle in China’s diplomatic practice. They argue that ‘it is necessary to reconsider its connotations and take note of the conditions for intervention efforts.’\textsuperscript{161} Some scholars, after conducting intensive research into China’s participation in the UN peacekeeping operations, point out that ‘the normative power of humanitarian intervention has already made China face greater pressure in the United Nations. In addition, China is seeking to build the image of a responsible power and is pursuing the international strategy of cooperating with other major powers, thus compelling China to be more cooperative in peacekeeping operations.’\textsuperscript{162} Scholars who study the issue of Darfur also observe that ‘the adoption of an UN resolution on the issue of Darfur shows that China’s position that “the internal affairs of Sudan should be solved by the Sudanese government itself” has been practically abandoned.’\textsuperscript{163}

The Darfur crisis may have far-reaching repercussions for China. It may bring about ideational change in China’s diplomacy.\textsuperscript{164} Some scholars believe that ‘the Darfur issue shows that China is faced with double challenges and a difficult choice over different norms.’\textsuperscript{165} If China insists on the principle of non-intervention, humanitarian crises in Darfur and elsewhere cannot be resolved, which could lead to China becoming the target of international blame; on the other hand, China may not be able to provide sufficient and effective protection for its overseas interests and its citizens living abroad. However, if China accepts the principle of intervention, it will be in a dilemma too. China may face more international pressure to shoulder greater external responsibility for which China currently does not have sufficient capacity. And China’s influence on the third world countries may well be jeopardised because most of them still advocate the principle of non-intervention. Moreover, most Chinese take a negative view of external intervention due to their historical memory of the sufferings inflicted on the Chinese people by imperialist military intervention in China in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{166} They conclude, therefore, that China should support the idea of intervention on condition that such interventions are conducted in a multilateral framework and are conducive to regional order and to the prevention and halting of mass atrocities.\textsuperscript{167} China should also bear in mind that it can only act in accordance with the responsibility to intervene within the limits of its own capabilities.

There are still some scholars who strongly oppose any form of humanitarian intervention. They argue that it is impractical to deny...
state sovereignty in contemporary international politics. In their view, ‘humanitarian intervention contravenes the principles of state sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs, and prohibition of the use of force enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.’ For some scholars, the issue of Kosovo is the latest example of breaking up a sovereign state in the name of humanitarian intervention. They contend that the West, over the past ten years, has developed a new mechanism of humanitarian intervention and is trying to make it the basis of international order. They add that the key questions with regard to the issue of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ are: what is ‘international society’?; when should ‘humanitarian intervention’ occur, under whose authority and how? ‘China, as a big developing country whose human rights record is monitored closely by the West and notably Human Rights Watch, should take precautions and make early preparations for such a new development.’

In conclusion, China’s growing integration into international society has generated an intense internal debate about China’s identity. The general view maintains that by seeking development inside the international system rather than outside the system, China has gradually adopted a new national identity as a responsible stakeholder or a status quo state. For most Chinese, this evolving identity is not in conflict with its identity of being a big developing country with its own distinctive culture and traditions, including a different political culture. Chinese scholars are now more optimistic than Western scholars concerning China’s identity and its relationship with international society simply because they do not conceive of China’s identity as a static phenomenon but as part of a dynamic ongoing process. Another noticeable phenomenon in China’s identity debate is the general ‘no-enemy assumption’. Most Chinese scholars do not perceive China’s identity and identity reconstruction in terms of a dichotomy of the self versus the other, but from a relational perspective with complementary dialectics. Defining China by naming and targeting an enemy is largely absent as a feature of the discourse in the debates.

168. Ren Weidong, op. cit. in note 150, p. 3.
171. Ibid., p. 13.
172. For example, Barry Buzan has expressed serious doubts about the possibility of China’s peaceful rise simply because China’s political culture is different from that of the West. See Barry Buzan, ‘China in international society: is ‘Peaceful Rise’ possible? ’ The Chinese Journal of International Politics, no. 3, 2010, pp.5-36.
Chapter 4

Debates on strategy

China’s diplomacy has long been driven by aspirations of strong power, rejuvenation, modernisation, and rise, as well as by the historical experience of centuries of victimisation and humiliation. The past thirty years since China’s reform and opening-up has witnessed fundamental changes in China’s international strategic thinking. China no longer focuses on confrontation or remains aloof from international society as it did in previous decades. China’s diplomacy is now predicated on a set of new strategic concepts and principles, some of which have triggered debates among scholars as the international situation changes.

Strategic objectives

The year 2008 was the thirtieth anniversary of China’s reform and opening-up. While recognising the changes that have taken place in China in the past 30 years, Chinese IR scholars started a debate, quite a rare one in recent years, on China’s strategic goals. Although peaceful rise (or peaceful development) and the construction of a harmonious world have become key themes of a dominant discourse in China, it is still a contentious issue whether the creation of a powerful nation or of a better standard of living for its people should constitute the primary objective of China’s diplomacy.

Yan Xuetong, director of the Institute of International Studies at Tsinghua University, published an article in the Global Times entitled ‘The loftiest goal of a country is not being rich’ in mid-March, 2009. It considered whether China should be vigilant about being rich but not powerful. His article attracted the attention of both the press and academics. He proposed that many people mistakenly regard [174] Heated debates of this kind in Chinese public life are rare mainly because debate in China is generally characterised by expressing different ideas without directly naming and targeting those who express opposing views. The debate between Yan and Ding is exceptional. It may pave the way for China to have more open debates.
national construction as enterprise management because economic construction has been China’s central task for such a long time. The primary goal of a country is to safeguard the interests of the people, which include possession of wealth and security, sovereignty, international dignity and the protection of national values. These interests are hardly commodities that can be purchased with money in the market. Historically, there have been wealthy countries who have not been strong and there have even been cases of national decline in the process of accumulating wealth. Today’s China is not equipped with the same military capability as Russia. Nor does China enjoy the same prowess in making significant scientific discoveries as does Germany, France and Japan. Yan Xuetong advocates that China should make use of its wealth to enhance national capabilities.\(^{175}\)

After the publication of Yan’s article, Ding Gang, senior editor of the *People’s Daily*, refuted Yan Xuetong’s argument, stating that Yan ignores the most important and highest goal of a country, i.e., to guarantee fairness and justice. He argues that only under a fair and just system can a country effectively turn its wealth into national capability so as to achieve the goal of a strong country and ensure a better life for the majority of its people. He adds that a strong country without a fair and just system is fragile, short-lived and unsustainable.\(^{176}\)

Their debate has stimulated considerable discussion among the public. Some scholars and journalists explicitly endorse the view that a powerful nation should come first while others agree with Ding Gang that prosperity of the people constitutes a prerequisite for a nation to be powerful. Over the centuries China has suffered tremendous aggression and humiliation from imperialist powers, thus generating a strong aspiration to become a powerful nation. But its national weakness lies in the poverty of its people. Too much emphasis on becoming a powerful state but little attention paid to how to allow the people to prosper is exactly the difficulty that China is facing today.\(^{177}\)

This debate has triggered another one, namely, how large should China’s military be? Liu Mingfu, professor at China’s National Defense University, stresses in his newly published book that China’s rise must have a military dimension and that it is necessary to aim for first-rate military troops and state-of-the-art military forces. He advocates that ‘China should compete for the status of champion nation and usher in the China era.’\(^{178}\) After its publication, the book gained a number of followers.\(^{179}\) But it has also been the target of fierce criticism. Many scholars argue that China’s rise does not need to include having the strongest military. They point out that ‘if China’s model eventually includes having “the most powerful military troops in the world”, it would not be a good one, but an old model of power politics
Debates on strategy

competing for world hegemony. ‘The future world will be a world of cooperation.’ ‘China should take the lead in neo-internationalism, benefiting and letting others benefit from it.’ These two conflicting viewpoints have been followed up by various debates conducted on the internet and in various publications. Such debates are gradually evolving into profound thinking about values, which will be of great social significance to China’s future development.

Taoguang yanghui (keeping a low profile)

In the early 1990s, Deng Xiaoping formulated the strategic concept of taoguang yanghui as a guideline for China’s diplomacy. China’s standing in international affairs was extremely low at this time as a result of the Tiananmen Square incident of 4 June 1989. Deng Xiaoping called on China to continue to calmly conduct its domestic (and foreign) affairs and insist on going its own way. He proposed that China should unswervingly pursue the reform and opening-up policy. Twenty years later, and with China having become a major economic power, some scholars believe it is no longer necessary to adhere to this principle since the situation has changed. Today, an animated debate is taking place in the Chinese IR community which centres on whether China should continue to keep a low profile (taoguang yanghui).

A segment of opinion holds that with the spillover effect of China’s rise and the expansion of China’s national interests, in practice it is becoming increasingly hard to justify the principle of keeping a low profile. This posture has often resulted in China being labelled as ‘irresponsible’ and ‘non-transparent’. This state of affairs is not conducive to safeguarding China’s national interests in its current phase. As an emerging power, China should not just immerse itself in self-protectionism by ‘hiding its capabilities and biding its time (another interpretation of taoguang yanghui).’ Adherence to this principle has failed to create a peace-loving international image for China. ‘On the contrary, whenever we place great emphasis on the principle of keeping a low profile the China Threat theory resurges and comes at us from all directions.’

They propose that ‘according to changing national interests and internal and external conditions, China should take an active stance on major issues, pay attention to tactics, seize the right opportunity and act properly to take control of situations.’ Deng Xiaoping’s diplomatic principle of taoguang yanghui and his arguments on China’s domestic development such as the ‘cat theory’ and the theory of ‘wading across the river by feeling for stones’ reveal a kind of ‘tide-surfing strategy’, which was tailored to the needs of the...
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circumstances during the past three decades of reform and opening-up. Now ‘China needs a tide-making strategy to further promote peaceful development.’\(^{185}\) In other words, China should anticipate and consciously shape a favourable international situation, continually create opportunities and open up a broader space for development. Therefore, China needs to play a constructive role in addressing topical issues globally and regionally and in tackling various global challenges. This means that China should carry out a ‘constructive interference’ policy when necessary and have the courage to assume international responsibilities.\(^{186}\)

With regard to the above criticisms, some scholars emphasise that Deng Xiaoping’s idea of keeping a low profile and making some contributions in the international arena implied that China should be navigating along the ‘middle course’, and concentrate on more practical things rather than seek leadership or hegemony.\(^{187}\) ‘The present international distribution of power has not undergone substantive changes, compared with that prevailing when Deng Xiaoping first put forward the idea of “keeping a low profile and making some contributions.” For this reason, it is necessary for us to adhere to Deng’s diplomatic strategy.’\(^{188}\) ‘We have learned from history that countries who challenged the most powerful state in the then international system for the sake of seeking leadership, eventually ended in failure.’ So ‘the principle of keeping a low profile and making some contributions is a wise counsel from Deng Xiaoping for China in the twenty-first century. It is definitely not an expedient policy for one or two decades, but long-term strategic thinking, a strategy to strive for the realisation of a harmonious world, and the image that a confident and modest nation shows to the outside world.’\(^{189}\)

Regional order in East Asia

As China increasingly defines itself as a major regional power in East Asia, an extensive debate is emerging concerning China’s status and role in the East Asian region. Some hold that China is likely to become the most important centre of power in the Asia-Pacific region and to play a bridging role in communicating with and bonding actors in the region. With the increase of its overall strength, China’s central status in the Asia-Pacific region cannot be supplanted by any other country, including Russia, Japan, India or the US.\(^{190}\) There are also discussions about the role of the leading power and forms of regional cooperation. Some oppose open regionalism, arguing that it is the fundamental reason why ‘it is difficult to define objectives, to make clear who belongs and who does not, and achieve substantive progress in the construction of an East Asian community.’\(^{191}\) The


\(^{186}\) Ibid., p. 16.


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lack of consensus in East Asia provides opportunities for American engagement. Reaching consensus among major East Asian powers, especially between China and Japan, is a prerequisite for nurturing the identity of the East Asian community. Therefore, ‘East Asian regionalism’ rather than ‘open regionalism’ should be pursued.

Others hold that it is of great significance for East Asian countries to uphold the principle of ‘open regionalism’, which allows countries outside the region such as the US, Australia, New Zealand and India to engage in the processes of East Asia integration. China has accepted open regionalism in order to avoid excluding the United States and conflicting with American core interests. It has given tacit consent to the concept of overlapping regions instead of eagerly advocating a clear and rigidly defined concept of region. China has adopted modest attitudes toward various co-existing forms of regionalism, encouraging inclusiveness and diversification and being cautious about exclusive regional cooperation. All these policies have achieved important political results, i.e., reducing American concerns and resistance and avoiding impinging on American strategic interests in this region. At the same time, open regionalism can foster political cooperation and security coordination in East Asia, thus easing the soft strategic encircling of China. It can also attract more powers outside East Asia to exert a strategic constraint on the US-Japan alliance.

Yet some argue that the so-called ‘ASEAN-led’ regional community with its commitment to open regionalism is essentially a misleading ‘illusion’. Reality shows that East Asia is not yet equipped with the conditions to build a perfect ‘regional community’ since it is severely lacking in a structural and cultural basis for community building. We should strengthen mechanisms of ‘fostering trust and security’ and actively nurture mutual understanding and mutual trust among East Asia powers. Opposite opinions hold that the matrix of political identity in East Asia is undergoing a fundamental transformation from animosity to community. There are many favourable elements for the construction of a community of East Asian nations such as deepening inter-dependence, a strengthened sense of a common destiny and gradually emerging and universalised common norms among East Asian countries. A kind of regional political culture is coming into being in the process of building the East Asian community.

193. Xiao Huanrong, op. cit. in note 191, pp. 35-36.
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Nationalism

A rapidly rising country will inevitably have to make a choice in terms of what should be the main driving impetus for national development. There are constant debates on whether China's development should be driven by nationalism characterised by self-centred and narrowly defined national interests, by internationalism which requires China to bear international responsibilities while pursuing its own interests, or by a combination of both. Professor Shi Yinhong, an expert in the history of international relations, has pointed out that 'China is most unique in the tenacious continuity of its history punctuated by radical and profound reforms.' 'Contemporary nationalism in China is not only a decisive force in driving forward the process of reform essential to China's modernisation but also an important conduit for preserving China's traditional features.' In his opinion, Chinese nationalism is mainly characterised by foresightedness, calmness, patience and respect for tradition, but it is also necessary to prevent narrow-minded nationalism from hindering the grand reform drive towards China's modernisation.\(^\text{202}\)

China's development over the past few decades has taken place in the context of a struggle between tradition and reform. Nationalism (patriotism) and internationalism represent the opposite poles of this struggle. Having accumulated over many years, Chinese nationalism 'prevails over the voices of democracy. Anti-democracy forces can make use of the intrinsic and exclusive feelings of nationalism to resist the reform drive towards modernisation'.\(^\text{203}\) At the same time, strong momentum towards reform also pushes China to learn from advanced civilisations and adopt a positive attitude towards internationalism. It has long been an issue how to maintain a balance between China's indigenous culture and other cultures, which means excessive dependence on extreme nationalism and internationalism alike should be avoided in China's interaction with international society.

Thus, extreme nationalism exists in China, as illustrated by the book \textit{Unhappy China} (2009),\(^\text{204}\) which adopts a sceptical and indeed confrontational attitude towards the relationship between China and international society. At the opposite end of the spectrum, neo-internationalism is advocated and indeed this constitutes the dominant discourse and the main trend in China. Neo-internationalism calls for China to get actively involved in the international system, to take part in the process of regional cooperation, adopt open regionalism and maintain a cooperative relationship with the major powers.\(^\text{205}\) It stresses that what China needs is the kind of ‘China model’ recognised by the international community, rather than...
the inward-looking nationalism which has been largely abandoned by international society.\textsuperscript{206} China ought to become a rider, not a free-rider, by fully taking part in the process of globalisation in order to achieve continuous progress.\textsuperscript{207} It should be recognised that Chinese nationalism has taken on more positive features in the last twenty years, with its energies directed towards fulfilling important national projects, including economic development, nation state building, political unity, independence and Chinese national rejuvenation. Its positive nature lies in three aspects. It adopts an international strategy which attaches great importance to international cooperation and global economic integration. Furthermore, it no longer advocates overturning the international status quo by way of revolution. It emphasises China’s contributions to the welfare of the world and the region when designing and fulfilling China’s own national ambition.\textsuperscript{208}

Basically, therefore, topics of discussion on China’s strategy range widely from objectives and principles to the values that China’s foreign policy should pursue and be guided by. Opinions differ a great deal. Some opinions appear to be extreme nationalist, whereas others tend to be liberal internationalist. At this point in time, with China entering into a new stage of development after three decades of reform and opening-up, the debate on where China is heading and what kind of country China should become is of great significance both in the context of interaction with international society and within China itself.


Conclusion

Four conclusions can be drawn after this thorough exploration of the internal debates on China’s foreign policy that have taken place over the past decade. Firstly, there is no unitary understanding of foreign policy in China. Opinions differ with regard to various aspects of China’s foreign policy, and these have been publicly voiced in various print and internet media. All references quoted in this paper come from academic books, journals and newspapers. All the authors cited are scholars mainly from the international relations community and the sphere of Chinese diplomacy studies. In making known and publishing their different viewpoints, they seek to influence foreign policy making. The debates on China’s foreign policy have generated lively domestic dialogues and often have a strong impact on the formulation of foreign policy. This illustrates the fact that Chinese society has increasingly evolved into a pluralistic society characterised by a wide diversity of ideas.

Secondly, liberalism, in general, dominates foreign policy debates in China. The ideological tendencies of Chinese scholars can be classified into four major categories according to their theoretical orientations, i.e. Marxism, realism, liberalism and social constructivism. Reflecting the basic assumptions underlying each theory, Marxism focuses on class and class struggle, realism on power and the conflicting nature of international relations, liberalism on weakening the forces of anarchy and increasing international institutions and cooperation, and constructivism on ideas, norms, culture and identity. The main currents in Chinese foreign policy studies can be distinguished according to the abovementioned four categories.

According to the studies of Professor Qin Yaqing, a renowned scholar in international relations theory, Chinese IR theory studies as they have evolved over the past thirty years can be split into three distinct
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schools of thought. He has come to this conclusion by analysing 1,124 articles related to international relations theory published in five Chinese leading journals, World Economics and Politics, European Studies, Foreign Affairs Review, International Review and Contemporary International Relations, from 1978 to 2007. The three main schools of thought he identifies are liberalism, realism and social constructivism, accounting for 78 percent of the material surveyed: of these liberalism is the biggest in proportion, accounting for one third of the total. During the past thirty years, Marxist-oriented articles predominated prior to 1990 while articles with a liberal thrust have predominated since 1990. In 2007, liberal-oriented articles reached 44 in number, compared to 33 for realism-oriented ones and 35 for constructivism-oriented ones.\(^{209}\) We argue in this paper that the trend towards liberalism has generally reflected the shift in thinking that China’s foreign policy studies have so far revealed.

Thirdly, the general tendency of the world situation as it is currently evolving is interpreted by most Chinese scholars as overwhelmingly dominated by peace and cooperation, even though there is a varied spectrum of opinion in this regard. China’s identity in international society is believed to have fundamentally changed from that of a revolutionary outsider and a detached state to that of a responsible member of international society. This is the main aspect of the identity issue, although questions about how deeply China should get involved in international society and how much responsibility China should bear are still under discussion. Vigorous debates on China's foreign strategy highlight the diversity and heterogeneity of Chinese society, all of which will profoundly impact China in the years to come.

Finally, a growing number of actors and factors are having an impact on China's foreign policy process. Domestic debates on China's foreign policy are driven by both internal and external forces. One strong factor is external pressure. China’s adoption of the opening-up policy over the past three decades has meant that China has become both deeply involved in and tremendously influenced by international society. These influences, and the concomitant problems, issues and challenges, have stimulated Chinese academic circles to reflect on China's relationship to the international community and its policy choices, and to engage in a domestic debate on this topic. Other factors derive from the great social changes that have taken place in China. Currently there are 384 million PC internet users and 233 million mobile internet users in China.\(^{210}\) Chinese citizens therefore have access to a vast arena in which to express themselves in the Information Age. By 2007, the urbanisation rate had reached 44.94 percent. Social stratification in China is evolving rapidly with the middle class expanding steadily. These developments constitute

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great changes in China’s foreign policy making environment and have had a direct influence on the formulation of foreign policy. At present, unfortunately, studies about how interest groups, think tanks and internet users affect decision-making in China are lacking. It is obvious that China’s foreign policy process is becoming more and more open, with academic communities exerting greater influence on China’s foreign policy making and on China’s diplomacy.

This Chaillot Paper has endeavoured to give an overview of the foreign policy debate in China that, it is hoped, will provide useful insights to all those interested in China’s attitude to and role in today’s international system.
Annexes

Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes


Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes


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Footnote 23: ‘Baquan Ganshe, Daguo Duikang yu Dongya Diqun Anquan de Goujian’ = ‘Hegemonic interference, great power rivalry and regional security building in East Asia’; *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* = *World Economics and Politics*.


Footnote 31: ‘Guoji Xingshi he Jingji Weiti’ = ‘The international situation and economic issues’; *Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan, Di 3 Juan* = *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3.

Footnote 32: ‘Qianxi Dangjin “Yichao DuoQiang” de Guoji Geju’ = ‘A tentative analysis of the contemporary “simultaneously unipolar and multipolar” international order’; *Fazhi yu Shehui* = *The Legal System and Society*.

Footnote 33: ‘Guoji Geju Duanqinei Buhui Fasheng Genbenxing Bianhua’ = ‘Fundamental changes will not take place in the international structure in the short term’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* = *Contemporary International Relations*.


Footnote 35: ‘Dui Zhongguo Duojihua Zhalue de Lishi yu Lilun Fasi’ = ‘Reflections on the history and theories of China’s multipolarity strategy’; *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* = *Studies of International
Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes


Footnote 40: ‘Oumeng Shi Yige Shenmeyang de Liliang?’ = ‘What kind of role is the EU playing in the international system?'; Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi = World Economics and Politics; Guoji Tixi yu Zhongou guanxi = The International System and Sino-European Relations.

Footnote 41: Ouzhou Yanji = Journal of European Studies.


Footnote 49: “Guifanxing Liliang Ouzhou” yu Oumeng Duihua Waijiao’ = ”Normative power Europe” and the EU’s diplomacy towards China’; Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi = World Economics and Politics.

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Footnote 56: ‘Eluosi Guojiguan de Bianhua yu Duiwai Zhengce Tiaozheng’ = ‘Change in Russia’s world view and the readjustment of Russian foreign policy’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.

Footnote 57: ‘Shilun Eluosi de Guoji Dingwei yu Zhanlue Zouxiang’ = ‘A tentative analysis of Russia’s international position and strategic orientation’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.


Footnote 60: ‘Riben de Daguo Zhixiang yu Xiaoguo Waijiao’ = ‘Japan’s big power ambition and small state diplomacy’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.

Footnote 61: ‘Guoji Quanli Zhuanyi yu Riben de Zhanlue Huiying’ = ‘The International power transition and Japan’s strategic response’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.

Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes


Footnote 65: ‘Riben “Bei Bianyuanhua” de Youlv Jiqi Waijiao Zhengce Zouxiang’ = ‘Japan’s fear of being marginalised and its foreign policy orientation’; Guoji Ziliao Xinxi = International Data Information.


Footnote 73: ‘Riben dui Dangqian Shijie Xingshi Jiqi Waijiao Zhanlue’ = ‘Japan’s view on the current international situation and its diplomatic strategy’; Dangdai Shijie = Contemporary World.


Footnote 75: ‘Fazhanzhong Guojia de Xunsu Xingqi Jiqi Yingxiang’ = ‘The rise of developing countries and its impact’; Yafei Zongheng = Asia and Africa Review.


Footnote 78: ‘Guoji Tixi yu Yindu Jueqi’ = ‘The international system and India’s rise’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.

Footnote 79: ‘Yindu Jueqi de Taishi’ = ‘The posture of India’s rise’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.

Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes

Footnote 81: ‘Shijie Zhengzhi zhong Yindu Heping Jueqi de Xianshi yu Qianjing’ = ‘The reality and prospect of India’s peaceful rise in world politics’; Nanya Yanjiu = South Asian Studies.


Footnote 87: ‘Ruanshili yu Yindu de Jueqi’ = ‘Soft power and India’s rise’; Guoji Wenti Yanjiu = International Studies.

Footnote 91: ‘Yindu Jueqi Moshi Tanxi’ = ‘A probe into the pattern of India’s rising’; Nanya Yanjiu = South Asian Studies.

Footnote 95: ‘Quanqiu Jujiao xia Zhongguo, Yindu Jueqi de Zhanlue Fenxi’ = ‘Strategic analysis of the rise of China and India under global focus’; Dangdai Shijie yu Shehui Zhuyi = Contemporary World & Socialism.

Footnote 97: ‘Yindu Jueqi de Guoji Zhengzhi Jingjixue Fenxi’ = ‘Using the IPE method to analyse India’s ascent’; Nanjing Shida Xuebao (Shehui Kexue Ban) = Journal Of Nanjing Normal University (Social Science Edition)

Footnote 100: ‘G-20 Beihou de Quanli Jiju yu Fensan’ = ‘Power accumulation and decentralisation behind the G-20’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.

Footnote 102: ‘G-20 Kaiqi le Tansuo “Quanqiu Zhili” Xin Lujing de Jihui zhi Chuang’ = ‘The G-20 has opened a window of opportunity to new ways of exploring “Global Governance”’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.


Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes

Footnote 111: ‘Guoji Geju de Bianhua Qushi’ = ‘Tendency of change in the international structure’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* = *Contemporary International Relations*.

Footnote 113: ‘Zhongguo Waijiao de Quanqihua ji Qishi’ = ‘Globalisation of China’s diplomacy and its revelations’; *Dangdai Yatai* = *Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies*.

Footnote 114: ‘Miandui Guoji Diwei de Tigao, Zhongguo Gai Zenmeban’ = ‘What should China do in the face of its improving international status?’; *Jinri Zhongguo* = *China Today*.


Footnote 116: ‘Ruhe Kan Zhongguo Guoji Diwei Xinbianhua’ = ‘How to look at new changes in China’s international status’; *Shishi Baogao* = *Current Affairs Report*.

Footnote 118: ‘Zhongguo Guoji Jiaose Fenxi’ = ‘Analysing China’s international role’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* = *Contemporary International Relations*.


Footnote 121: ‘Zhongguo Jueqi yu Guoji Zhixu’ = ‘China’s rise and the international order’; *Taipingyang Xuebao* = *Pacific Journal*.

Footnote 122: ‘Zhongguo Canyu Guoji Tixi de Pinggu Zhibiao ji Xiangguan Fengxi’ = ‘Evaluation index for China’s participation in the international system and relevant analysis’; *Jianghai Xuekan* = *Jianghai Academic Journal*.


Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes

Footnote 130: ‘Zai ‘Taoguang Yanghui’ yu ‘Yousuo Zuowei’ Zhijian Qiu Pingheng’ = ‘Seeking a balance between “keeping a low profile” and “doing something”’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations*.

Footnote 131: ‘Gaige Kaifang Yilai Zhongguo Zeren de Zhanlue Sikao’ = ‘Strategic reflection on China's international responsibility since the reform and opening-up policy’; *Dangdai Shiji Shehuizhuyi Wenti = Issues of Contemporary World Socialism*.


Footnote 133: ‘Yanjiu he Lijie Zhongguo de Guoji Zeren’ = ‘Studies and understanding of China’s international responsibility’; *Shehui Kexue = Journal of Social Sciences*.

Footnote 134: ‘Zhongguo Zeren yu Heping Fazhan Daolu’ = ‘China’s Responsibility” and peaceful development’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations*.


Footnote 136: ‘Zhongguo Zerenlun Keyi Xiuyi’ = ‘Theory of “China’s Responsibility” can be laid to rest’; *Renmin Luntan = People’s Tribune*.

Footnote 137: ‘Lixing Bianxi Zhongguo Zerenlun’ = ‘Rational interpretation of China’s Responsibility’; *Renmin Luntan = People’s Tribune*.


Footnote 139: ‘Zhongguo Guoji Zerenlun Pingxi’ = ‘Analyses of arguments for China's international responsibility’; *Mao Zedong Deng Xiaoping Lilun Yanjiu = Studies on Mao Zedong’s and Deng Xiaoping’s Theories*.


Footnote 142: ‘Cong Zerenlun Toushi Guoji Tixi Zhuaxing’ = ‘Analysing the international system transformation through the Responsibility Theory’; *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu = International Studies*.
Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes


Footnote 152: ‘Lun Quanqiu Shidai Tichu Guojia Zhuquan Zizhu Youxian Randu Fanshi de Yanjiu Jiazhi’ = ‘On the research value of the proposal of independent partial transfer of state sovereignty in the era of globalisation’; Guoji Guanxi Xueyuan Xuebao = Journal of University of International Relations.


Footnote 170: ‘Jingti Xifang yi “Rendao Zhuyi Ganyu” Weiming Dianfu Xianxing Guoji Zhixu’ = ‘Be vigilant about the West upsetting the existing international order in the name of “humanitarian intervention”’; Xiandai Guoji Guanxi = Contemporary International Relations.


Footnote 176: ‘Guojia Caifu Yunyong, Guanjian Shi Gongping’ = ‘Fairness is the key to the use of national wealth’; Huaiqiu Shibao = Global Times.

Footnote 177: ‘Minfu Caineng Guoqiang’ = ‘Only when citizens are rich can a country be strong’; Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan = China Newsweek; ‘Guoqiang Xu yi Minfu Wei Jichu’ = ‘A powerful nation should be based upon prosperous people’; Huaiqiu Shibao = Global Times.


Footnote 179: ‘Zhongguo Yao Ganyu Jianshe Zui Qiangda de Jundui’ = ‘China should dare to build the strongest military’; Huanqiu Shibao = Global Times.

Footnote 180: ‘Zhongguo Bubi Zhuiqiu Zui Qiangda de Jundui’ = ‘China doesn’t need to build the strongest military’; Huanqiu Shibao = Global Times.
Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes

Footnote 181: ‘Zai “Taoguang Yinghui” yu “Yousuo Zuowei” Zhijian Qiu Pingheng’ = ‘Seeking balance between “Taoguang Yanghui” and “Yousuo Zuowei”’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* = *Contemporary International Relations*.


Footnote 183: ‘Hexie Shijie yu Zhongguo Xinwaijiao’ = ‘The Harmonious World and China’s new diplomacy’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* = *Contemporary International Relations*.


Footnote 189: ‘Jianshou Budangtou Fangzhen Tuidong Jianshe Guoji Xin Zhixu’ = ‘Adhering to the guideline of not seeking leadership and promoting the building of a new world order’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* = *Contemporary International Relations*.

Footnote 190: ‘Lun Zhongguo zai Yatai Diqu de Quyu Zhongxin Diwei’ = ‘China’s central role in the Asia-Pacific region’; *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi Luntan* = *Forum of World Economy and Politics*.


Footnote 192: ‘Dongya Diqu Zhixu de Weilai: Dongya Haishi Yatai?’ = ‘The Future of the East Asian Order: East Asia or Asia-Pacific?’, *Nanyang Wenti Yanjiu* = *South Asian Affairs*.

Footnote 194: ‘Dongya Gongtongti Bu Keneng Shi Kaifang de Diqu Zhuyi’ = ‘The East Asian community cannot be an open regionalism’; *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* = *World Economics and Politics*.

Footnote 195: ‘Dongya Gongtongti Yuanjing de Xuhuanxing Xilun’ = ‘East Asian community: reality or illusion?’; *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* = *Contemporary International Relations*.

**Annex: Translations of Chinese publication titles in the footnotes**

Footnote 197: ‘Zhongguo Dongya Zhanlue de Zhankai’ = ‘The evolution of China’s East Asian strategy’; 
*Dangdai Yatai* = *Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies*.

Footnote 198: ‘Guanyu Jianli Dongya Gongtongti de Jidian Sikao’ = ‘Some thoughts on establishing an East Asian community’; 
*Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* = *International Studies*.

Footnote 199: ‘Gongtongti yu Dongya Hezuo’ = ‘Community and East Asian cooperation’; 
*Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* = *World Economics and Politics*.

Footnote 201: ‘Dongya Gongtongti Jianshe Jincheng he Meiguoduo Zuoyong’ = ‘The process of East Asia community building and America’s role’; 
*Waijiao Pinglun* = *Foreign Affairs Review*.

Footnote 202: ‘Zhongguo Lishi Zhizhong de Lianxu he Biange yu Zhongguo Xiandangdai Minzu Zhuyi’ = ‘Continuity and change in Chinese history and nationalism in modern and contemporary China’; 
*Waijiao Pinglun* = *Foreign Affairs Review*.

Footnote 203: ‘Weile Minzu de Zuigao Liyi, Weile Renmin de Changyuan Fuzhi’ = ‘For the supreme interests of the Nation and for the long-term welfare of the people’; 
*Taipingyang Xuebao* = *Pacific Journal*.

Footnote 204: *Zhongguo Bu Gaoxing – Dashidai, Damubiao ji Women de Neiyou Waihuan* = *Unhappy China: The Great Time, Grand Vision and Our Challenges*.

Footnote 205: *Cong Guoji Zhuyi Dao Xin Guoji Zhuyi: Makesi Zhuyi Guoapxian Sixiang Fazhan Yanjiu* = *From Internationalism to Neo-internationalism: Study of the development of Marxist Thinking on International Relations*.

*Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* = *World Economics and Politics*.

Footnote 207: ‘Chuantong Neiwai de Dangdai Zhongguo: Zhengzhi Lingdao, Duiwai Zhengce yu Qi Zhongguo Texing’ = ‘Contemporary China with and without traditions: Political leadership, foreign policy and Chinese characteristics’; 
*Waijiao Pinglun* = *Foreign Affairs Review*.

*Guoji Wenti Luntan* = *International Forum*.

*Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* = *World Economics and Politics*.

Abbreviations

ASEAN Association of South-East Asian Nations
BRICS Brazil, Russia, India and China
GDP Gross Domestic Product
IMF International Monetary Fund
IR International Relations
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ODA Official Development Assistance
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Against the background of China's ascent as a major economic power, this Chaillot Paper offers a unique overview of the debates on foreign policy that have taken place in China over the past decade. It analyses the main trends in the domestic strategic debate and the extent to which they are likely to shape China's role in the international arena. Various issues are highlighted, including the implications of the 'peaceful rise' strategy for China's foreign policy, the question of China's international identity and China's responsibility as a stakeholder in the international system. Chinese attitudes to the concepts of sovereignty, hegemony and multipolarity, and how they differ from prevailing Western assumptions, are also explored. The analysis also focuses on the tensions between the 'peaceful risers' and the proponents of a more militant nationalism in China.

China’s future evolution as a world power is an issue of paramount importance to the European Union. For the EU, the key challenge is to engage China in a multilateral approach to global governance. In this context, it is hoped that this Chaillot Paper will provide valuable insights into the different schools of thought underpinning the formulation of Chinese foreign policy.