

China and Major Powers in East Asia

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China is one the major players in Asian economy and politics, and China's relations with other major powers such as the United States, Japan, and Korea always are the strategic foundation of Asian security.

China and the United States

1. The Current Status of the Sino-US Relations: The Best Time in Thirty Years?

There has been a high words and remarks on the Sino-US relations in recent years since the two sides end up their disputes on the EP-3 incident in June 2003 and since September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York and Washington. The high words are even higher from the American side, for the Secretary State Colin Powell and other high level administration officials regarding the relationship "at best time in thirty years since President Nixon visited China" in 1972.¹

However, there has been almost no Chinese responding the Secretary's nice words on the relationship. Officially, the Chinese government has given a positive assessment on the current bilateral relations with the United States in the past three years. The Chinese President Jiang Zemin, in later 2002 when he was still the president of the country, even regarded the relationship having gone into a "new stage of stable and constructive development."²

The real assessment on the relationship, from the Chinese view if not so from American view, is the basic satisfaction on the recent development and still great suspicion on the direction and long-term future.

When talking about the current situation of the relationship, both leaders and officials in Washington and Beijing have said it is "good." Is good for what? Nobody answers it quite clearly. They said clearly it is a good relationship between the two big countries in the world, but nobody says what the relationship is. Or in other words, no

¹ Ren Minjun: "Qian Qichen Points Out that Sino-US Relations Should Be Better," *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), November 7, 2003, p.3.

² "Jiang Zemin Met with American Guests," *China Daily*, December 12, 2002, p.1.

leaders and officials of both sides can give a clear saying about the nature and definition of the Sino-US relations today and in the future.

Both sides say it is a good relationship. But is it a friend relationship? Nobody says it clearly and continuously. Is a kind of alliance? Everybody says no. Then what is the nature or what a sort of the Sino-US relations? Nobody knows. And if everybody is not clear about current situation of the relationship, then how about the future? Again nobody is certain. Nobody is sure about nature and direction that the Sino-US relations would be in the long term future, in ten, fifteen or twenty years from now.

Then, what is the problem?

2. The Real Problems between China and the United States

American China Strategy. At least to almost all the Chinese, the real and fundamental problem in the Sino-US relations is American problem, is American China strategy problem. To the Chinese, there has always been a shadow over the relations between the two countries and that is the illness of American strategy toward China.

To be fair, even to those Chinese, there is a positive part of American China strategy. The Chinese leaders, officials, officers, scholars and general public have seen the “engagement” part of American China strategy in the post-Cold War era. They see the increasing ties between the two economies, huge amount of bilateral trade and American investment in China, various consultation and cooperation on many areas and issues between the two countries. Those positive parts of the relations are important to the Chinese understanding about the Sino-US relations now and in the future.

However, many Chinese would argue that the bad or negative part of American China strategy is more important or the most important part of the strategy, because that is the real and fundamental part. What is that? The Chinese leaders, officials, officers, scholars and general public have given some different wording.

Some say it is “containment,” others argue is “constrainment,” and still others would say it is “westernization,” “separation,” “blocking the rise of China” and many other words.

Many Chinese believe that the negative part, containing China or at least checking China, is the real intention and goal of American China strategy and American relations with China. In this assessment, engaging and cooperating with China is only tactical, is to serve American national interests. And containing or constraining China is of the strategic design, serves fundamental and comprehensive values, goals of American global strategy, including American strategy in Asia.

Americans also have same sort of “strategic suspicion” on China’s grand strategy. And to those “China threat” believers, the real and final China’s strategic goal in dealing with America and other parts of the world is undermining American global role, kicking Americans out of Asia, and seeking China’s own domination in Asia and the world.

Taiwan Issue. If anybody argues that the Chinese strategic suspicion about American China strategy is groundless, then here is the major part of those Chinese evidences, and this is Taiwan issue, or in other words, American policy and position on Taiwan issue. Although the United States has cut off its diplomatic relations with Taiwan and repeated its statement of “one China policy,” the continuing arms sale to Taiwan, the official contacts, including increasing military to military contacts between the U.S. and Taiwan, and those statements such as “protect Taiwan” stated by the President on April 24, 2001, all strengthen the Chinese suspicion that the real part of United States’ Taiwan policy is to keep China divided, or divide further by emphasizing and encouraging Taiwan’s independent movement.

And Taiwan is a fundamental and critical national sovereignty and security issue to China. Therefore, it is nature for the Chinese military, the people and the government to regard Taiwan’s independent movement and its backing force, the

United States, if not also Japan, including the possibility of American military involvement in Taiwan issue, as the major threat to China's national security and unity.

Besides Taiwan, other issues in the Sino-US relations, such as non-proliferation, trade, human rights, religious freedom, democracy, are basic and long-term troubles between the two countries, but they are not fundamental national interest issues, at least to the Chinese.

3. Future Perspectives

The changing Chinese foreign policy principle is a positive factor in today's and future Sino-U.S. relations, because China no longer put anti-hegemony as its major theme of foreign policy. This means China's foreign policy will be less anti-American or even be less focusing on the United States. However, the nature and future Sino-U.S. relations remain uncertain because the relationship is two-side story, it does not only depend on the Chinese side. The positive change of Chinese foreign policy does not automatically lead to more positive bilateral relations between China and the United States. The relationship also, and even much more depends on American China strategy and overall American foreign policy today and in the future.

On the U.S. side, the development does not look quite positively. While there have been clear and strong evidences that Chinese foreign policy is changing into more constructive direction, there has been little evidence that American China policy and American foreign policy has been moving into positive direction.

In fact, there is hard anything really and substantial new in U.S. China policy since the "9/11." There has been change in agendas, topics, formats, and tactics in American relations with China and other countries. In the past two years since the 9/11, Americans have emphasized anti-terrorism in its relations with China and other countries. It demands and needs the cooperation with China and other countries in its war against terrorism. And the result is common language and interests become a

mainstream in U.S. foreign relations with China and some other countries in the world in the past two years.

However, those are tactical not strategic change. American leaders and officials have made this very clearly in the past two or three years. In many statements given by the President, Vice President, Secretaries of Defense, States, National Security Adviser and other high level officials, American side have made clearly that the new priority of counter-terrorism does not mean American view, strategy and policy toward outside world has changed very much. As China is concerned, American view about China, policy goal towards China, positions on major issues with China such as Taiwan, human rights, non-proliferation, remain same or similar today as they were two or three years ago.

Therefore, the change of Chinese foreign policy principle is not strong enough to ensure a better relationship between China and the U.S. today and in the future. The long-term Sino-U.S. relations remain uncertain because American China strategy and policy remains uncertain, if not remains basically negative and hostile.

China and Japan

China and Japan are real Asian giants. However, the relationship between the two Asian giants has not been in a satisfactory shape for more a hundred years since late 19th century.

1. Economic Cooperation and Political Stagnation

The economic ties between China and Japan have been expanding all the time in the past decades, especially in the past years. Japan has been the largest trade partner to China in the past decade, according to official China's statistics, and Japan's trade value with China bypassed the United States in 2002, making China the largest trade partner of Japan. Bilateral trade reached US\$ 133.6 billion, up around 31% then the previous year. Japanese investment in China also expand heavily in recent years.

Besides, Japan offers most official development aid (ODA) to China, Japanese are among the largest resources of foreign visitors come to China each year. In 2003 alone, there were about 4 million Japanese paid their trips to China.¹

However, while the economic ties between the two countries are strengthening, the political atmosphere has been decay. The general public in two societies becomes less friendly with each other. People in both countries become tired with the more than five decade long issues of “history.” Governments of the two countries become hostages of their negative public mood and opinion, and thus become more rigid on those differences issues between them.

In order words, the two giants in Asia are becoming bond together in economic area and at same time, alienating further with each other in political areas.

2. The Problems between China and Japan

Compared with the Sino-US relations, people find the tones, atmosphere are less positive but actually fewer problems in the Sino-Japanese relations. Or in other words, the real problems between China and Japan are far less serious and numerous then they are appeared to be.

History and Public Resentment. The most serious problem between China and Japan is conceptual or emotional issue, it is not a real national interest issue. The issue or issues are all about history, about how to say about the history between 1931 and 1945 when Japan invaded and occupied China, causing Chinese people great sufferings, including lost of hundreds and thousands of lives, including the massacre in Nanjing and other Chinese places.

History is important for the past, today and future, but history is history. Chinese and Japanese should not live under the historical shadow for ever, or for too long. History causes emotion to too many people, but it is not a fundamental national interest issue. It was national interest issue at the war time because it was live or die issue, but it should not be live or die issue today. People of the two countries should

¹ Those figures are coming from Lu Kejian's article: “Reading the US\$ 130 Billion – The Sino-Japanese Economic and Trade Relations in 2003,” *Renmin Ribao*, January 5, 2004, p.7.

not forget the history and should learn lessons from the past, but they should not live in the past.

Regional Competition? The more substantial, strategic and long-term problem between China and Japan might be the sense and the fact of regional competition. The two Asian giants did engage competition in Asia for hundreds of years in modern times. They may still in competition in the area of economic development and regional influence now and in the future.

Competition may be inevitable, but it is nature and normal. The real issue here is how to view competition and how to manage the competition.

3. Future Perspectives

As two large economies in Asia and almost as neighbors, the economic ties between China and Japan are definitely to be stronger. This is the foundation of the Sino-Japanese relations, and it is the common interest of both nations and people of the two countries. This is an inevitable trend between China and Japan.

Therefore, the coolness of public feeling and opinion in the two countries, the conceptual and emotional problem on history will have limited impact on the real picture of long term Sino-Japanese relations. The real issues lie between the two Asian giants will be how to manage their competition in the region. Competition include economy and security/regional influence. In the interdependent and globalized world, it is possible for the two countries to find the way to manage their competition. And regional mechanism/institution such as the growing APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) and ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) or APT (ASEAN Plus Three) may develop as the solution, to provide the framework and structure for countries to play their role in regional affairs.

China and US-Japan Security Alliance

China's relations with either Japan and the United States in Asia cannot be

purely bilateral, because of the interactions of major powers and because U.S.-Japan security alliance.

1. The Chinese Acceptance and Suspicion

The bilateral security alliance between the United States and Japan has been one the most controversial security/political issue among the three major powers in the region. This was a conflicting issue in some period of Cold War era, and it seems become more serious since the end of the Cold War in late 1980s and early 1990s, especially since the signing of the Guidelines of U.S. and Japan Security Cooperation in 1996 between the two countries.

China takes U.S.-Japan security alliance as a major threat to its national security because it sees the target of the such security/military alliance in the post-Cold War era is China, as it used to be the Soviet Union and China in the Cold War era. And the specific linkage between the threat and possible real conflicts between China and the allied countries is Taiwan, because both Japanese and American leaders and officials state that Taiwan is within the “area of concern” or “area of responsibility” of US-Japan security cooperation and alliance.

Therefore, the Chinese leaders, officials, officers and scholars attacked the US-Japan security alliance heavily in middle and late 1990s, regarding the alliance as major threat to China and major obstacle for multilateral security cooperation in Asia.

But in past few years, the Chinese critics on US-Japan security alliance become fading. This does not mean that China becomes to accept the alliance system in Asia, it means that China cannot do too much to change the system and thus China might have to live with the system.

However, it does not mean China support or accept the system. China may never accept the US-Japan security alliance as a positive or legitimate security structure/mechanism in the region of Asia, because the bilateral nature and the exclusiveness of the system.

Strange enough, that as China does no show any flexibility toward the

US-Japan security alliance in Asia, it has shown some flexibility and acceptance toward American military presence in west Pacific and Asia based on those bilateral security system between the U.S. and Asia-Pacific nations, including Japan.

In recent years, the foreign ministry and officials in China tend to state that American military presence in Asia has been “a historical phenomena.” This could mean that Chinese government recognizes the rationale or reason for American maintaining troops in Asia and accepts the military presence. In a number of official talks between Chinese and American government officials, including some high level talk, the Chinese side has made clearly to their American counterparts that China has no intention to challenge American military presence in the Western Pacific and East Asia and China does not oppose American military presence in the region.

2. China and the Limitation of US-Japan Security Alliance

Even China sounds to accept American military presence and some American security role in Asia, there looks no way for China to accept U.S.-Japan security alliance system and any role it wants to play in regional security.

First is because China does not accept Japan to play a regional security role, no matter Japan does it unilaterally or bilaterally with somebody. The historical memory on the time when Japan tried to play the regional security role before and during the World War II prevents Chinese and Koreans from accepting Japanese regional security role, again unilaterally or bilaterally. It is one thing to ask the Chinese to forget the history, but it is quite another thing to ask the Chinese to accept a regional security role of Japan's military.

Secondly, it is almost impossible for China to accept that U.S.-Japan security alliance as the guarantee of regional security in Asia. American and Japanese officials always state that their security alliance has played such a role and has been a “cornerstone” and contributed to regional security in Asia. No matter whatever they say and whatever the rationales behind the statements, the Chinese government, military and people will never buy it and never accept it. Because if a bilateral

arrangement between two countries serves as a regional security mechanism, where is the role of the most of other countries in the region? And who can guarantee the security interests of the countries who are not parts of the bilateral alliance?

Therefore, the U.S.-Japan security alliance will never have the legitimacy to become a structure/mechanism/arrangement for the regional security in Asia, at least to the Chinese. Besides the Chinese resistance, other countries will also have the difficulty to recognize the regional role of such a bilateral alliance, even most of them welcome some roles the alliance system playing in the region.

China and the Two Koreas

By traditional standards, Koreas are not major powers in Asia and in the world. However, if one looks at the economic and military strength of the two Koreas, or even only one Korea in the south of the peninsula, one should recognize that Republic of Korea is a major power in Asia and an united Korea is going to be another major power in Asia and in the world in future, economically if not also militarily.

1. China and DPRK

Beside Iraq, another hard evidence to indicate the major shift of China's foreign policy is North Korea.

In more than five decades since the foundation of PRC in 1949 till very recently, the stated Chinese position on anything of North Korea had been clearly and consistently. When stated about DPRK (The Democratic People's Republic of Korea), the Chinese government always stated its support and sympathy with the Korea. China never criticized North Korea in its public statements given by its leaders, officials and official news media. China might remain silence toward anything that North Korea did that the Chinese did not like.

However, it is no longer the case now. Since the new Korean nuclear crisis breaking out in October 2002 when North Korea leaders telling the visiting U.S.

Assistant Secretary Mr. James Kelly that the country is developing nuclear weapons, the Chinese government changes its position on Korean issues. This time, from October 2002 to now, the Chinese government does not support North Korea, nor keep silence on the actions that North Korea taking and the Chinese do not like. Since October 2002, all Chinese leaders, old and new, and Chinese Foreign Ministry officials have repeatedly stated: China supports non-nuclearization of Korean Peninsula, the Korean Peninsula should not have nuclear weapons; all the relevant parties should honor the agreements, clearly refer to the 1994 US-DPRK Framework Agreement and NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) that North Korea has joined. The Chinese leaders and officials even go far to state that China opposing the development of nuclear weapons on Korean Peninsula. This may be the first time in more than half a century that China publicly states that is opposing something that North Korea is doing. Although at the same time the Chinese government states that the security concerns of North Korea also should be addressed, and China does not support military actions and sanctions against North Korea.¹

The new Chinese position on North Korea has number of rationales, and one of them is because the change of fundamental theme of China's foreign policy. Because that policy is nor longer opposing hegemonism, then the nuclear issue between DPRK and the U.S., and other issues between the United States and other countries are nor longer view as something between hegemony action and the suffering party of hegemonism. Thus China does not need and should not automatically oppose American position in international affairs, because American positions are no longer viewed as all the hegemonism through the Chinese eyes. And even they are hegemony actions, the Chinese need not always oppose them because opposing hegemonism is no longer the major task of the Chinese foreign policy.

¹ The official Chinese statements on North Korean nuclear issues since October 2002 can be seen from the following reports: Meng Yan: "Tang, Powell Talk about DPRK Issue," *China Daily*, January 10, 2003, p.1; Guo Nei: "China Backs Non-Nuclearization of Peninsula," *China Daily*, January 16, 2003, p.1; Hu Qihua: "Hopes for Peace Still Exist," *China Daily*, February 28, 2003, p.1; and "Restraint Called for after DPRK Missile Test," *China Daily*, March 12, 2003, p.1; Jiang Zhuqing: "DPRK Shows Resolve On Nuclear Talks," *China Daily*, October 31, 2003; and Hu Xiao: "Six-Party Talks To Resume in June," *China Daily*, March 1, 2004, p.1.

2. China and ROK

Sino-ROK relations have developed dramatically in the short period of eleven years since establishing diplomatic relations in 1992. China and ROK have become major trade partner with each other, with China becomes the largest one to ROK, and ROK becomes the fifth largest trade partner to China. Trade value between the two countries reached US\$53 billion in 2003. South Korean business has invested close to US \$20 billion in China¹, and millions of Koreans and Chinese go each other country as visitors and tourists each year. There are more than 45,000 South Korean students studying at Chinese universities, making it largest foreign students' group in China.²

The Sino-ROK relations can be said as a short of "problem free" relationship. There is almost no Taiwan, non-proliferation, human rights, security problems in their relations. The two countries have some sort of trade deficit, and small trade wars in recent years, but they are marginal compared with the overall rapidly growing ties between the two countries. Besides strong economic, social, and cultural ties, the two countries also engage in military exchange, security dialogue and consultation on Korean Peninsula issues, including North Korean nuclear issue.

3. China and Future Korean Peninsula

When united, Korea will not only become another major power house in Asia, but will also have bigger role in major power relations and whole international relations in Asia.

The future perspectives on the Sino-Korean relations have many reasons to be optimistic. Because China and Korea have enjoyed close relations in thousands of years in history, and there have been strong social and cultural ties between the two societies. Besides, economic ties between the two sides are bond to be growing ever stronger, and the two countries will be tied together economically, culturally, socially and geographically as immediate neighbors. Besides China, no other major countries, including Russia, Japan, and the United States, have had or could enjoy such a kind

¹ Zhan Xiaohong: "The Love and Hate of the Sino-ROK Economies," *Nan Feng Chuang*, January 1, 2004, p.53.

² The number was at the time of 2002, see *Nan Feng Chuang*, January 1, 2004, p.52.

relationship with Korea.

China's Foreign, Asian Policy and Regional Security

When talking about the relations between China and other powers in Asia, we have to be keep in mind that the driving force of those relationships are not matters between them, but the rationales and thinking, strategies and policies of the concerning powers. And as to China, those values, thinkings, theories, and strategies on foreign relations are under the process of great changing.

1. The Changing China's Foreign Policy

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been the single ruling party in China since 1949, and the party congress normally holding every five years is the most significant political and policy event in the Chinese politics, because usually it is the time that the Chinese leadership and even policy change. The significance of the party congress to the Chinese politics is as great as the shift of the White House to American politics and policies in every four or eight year.

In the arena of foreign policy, the 16th CCP Congress held in November 2002 did make a major or even fundamental change. Such a change has already affected China's foreign policies on specific issues in international relations such as Iraq and North Korean nuclear issues. The change looks like setting somewhat new direction of China's foreign policy in the early of the 21st century.

When somebody reads the report given by Mr. Jiang Zemin, then the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, to the delegates of the 16th party congress on November 8 of 2002, she or he may not notice too much change of the Chinese foreign policy. Large part of the statement is almost similar with the 15th party congress and those statements made by the Chinese leaders and officials in the past years.

However, there is one major shift in the statement of the Chinese foreign

policy, and this is the Zongzhi (the fundamental principle) change.

Mr. Jiang Zemin's report at the 16th party congress states that:

No matter how the international situation changes, we will, as always, pursue the independent foreign policy of peace. The purpose of China's foreign policy is to maintain world peace and promote common development. We are ready to work with all nations to advance the lofty cause of world peace and development.

¹

This statement on the fundamental principle and goal of the Chinese foreign policy is significant change because it is different from past statements.

The previous statements made at the 15th, the 14th, the 13th and the 12th party congresses in the past twenty years since 1982 always put "opposing hegemonism and maintain international peace" as the fundamental principle and goal of China's foreign policy.² The 16th party congress is the first time in the twenty years that the Chinese leadership states at the most important occasion that the Chinese foreign policy goal and the fundamental principle is no longer "opposing hegemonism" or somebody but is "maintaining world peace and promoting mutual development."³

When we look back, we may find such a shift is not an only fundamental change in the past twenty years since the 12th party congress, but it is also a major change in more than fifty years since the foundation the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC). For in the past fifty years since 1949, the PRC's foreign policy had always been "opposing" somebody or something. It opposed the imperialism led by America in the 1950s and fought a hot war with America in Korea from 1950 to 1953. It opposed both the imperialism and "revisionism" or "social imperialism" led by the Soviet Union in 1960s and 1970s. China supported the Vietnamese fighting against

¹ "Jiang Defines Theme of CPC Congress," *China Daily*, November 9, 2002, p.3.

² See Hu Yaobang's report at the 12th, Zhao Zhiyang's report on the international situation and foreign policy section at the 13th, Jiang Zemin's report at the 14th and 15th CCP party congresses, documents published by Renmin (Peoples') Press in Beijing: 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997.

³ Ibid.

Americans during the Vietnam War, had a number of serious border clashes with the Soviet Union in the 1960s. China engaged a strategic cooperation with the United States in opposing "the most dangerous superpower," the Soviet Union, in the 1970s and 1980s. And after the June 4th Tiananmen Event in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, China's foreign policy against "hegemonism" became retargeting the United States again.

It looks like that the "Fan Culture" or "opposing culture" had been the strategic culture in China's foreign policy and foreign relations for long time since the foundation of the PRC till the 16th party congress in November 2002. The change of the "Zongzhi" and fundamental goal of China's foreign policy also means the shift of China's strategic culture in its foreign policy and foreign relations. Therefore, it is really a fundamental change.

Is the shift a real change? The answer should be yes when we see the changing Chinese policies on major international relation issues today.

Iraq issue is not new to China and to the world. It has been around international community for more then decade since 1990 when Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. In the past thirteen years, Chinese position on Iraq issue has changed somewhat. The government of China stood against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and demanded Iraq withdraw its troops from Kuwait and restore the sovereignty of the nation. But China voted for absence when the United Nations passed the resolution to authorize the use of force against Iraq in 1990.

After the first Gulf War in 1991 and till recently, the Chinese position became criticizing American military action in Iraq. China opposed the setting up of the "non-fly zones" in northern and southern Iraq, and condemned American and British bombing against Iraq in 1996 and 1998. China supported the lift of sanctions against Iraq before the second Iraq war in 2003 when the inspections and investigations on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) had made progress. Chinese sympathy seemed shifting to Iraq side after the first Gulf War in 1991.

However, when the new crisis over Iraq issue developing since early 2002, the

Chinese government position took another turn. This time the Chinese government neither supports nor opposes US/UK sponsored resolution against Iraq and long planned operation attacking Iraq. China's position seems to be neutral. It repeatedly states its two-side position on the Iraq issue before the second Iraq war in March and April 2003. On one side, the Chinese said that Iraq must comply with the United Nations resolutions which requiring Iraq to give up its programs of weapons of mass destruction, Iraq must accept and cooperate with the UN inspection term in Iraq to ensure that the country did not develop the weapon systems. At the same time, the other side of Chinese position is that the UN should lift its sanctions against Iraq when the inspection had made progress, Iraq's sovereignty should be respected, and Iraq issue should resolved by peaceful means only and should be within the framework of the United Nations.¹ This is to say that China does not support American plan and action of using forces against Iraq.

The Chinese two-side position is not new. What is new is that China did not oppose American/British military action in Iraq this time in spring of 2003. Many countries, including American alliances France and Germany, and Russia stood against military action in Iraq. But China, a non-alliance and a non friend of the United States, did not say no to military action before the war, during the war and after the war.

The Chinese position of not opposing American military action against other countries is something new in the past decade since the first Iraq War in 1991. In more than a decade before recently, China stood against almost all American military actions against other countries except Afghanistan. China condemned American action in Panama, Bosnia, Libya, and Kosovo in the past decade. The only exception is the military action in Afghanistan after the 9/11. The Chinese government did not only oppose but even also supported American action in Afghanistan because this is

¹ The Chinese positions are stated with the following states: Zhao Huanxin: "Political solution Urged for Iraq Issue," *China Daily*, January 31, 2003, p.1; "Tang Reiterates Position on Iraq Issue," *China Daily*, February 5, 2003, p.1; "Jiang: UN Role Vital," *China Daily*, February 12, 2003, p.1; "Weapons Probes Must Go On: Tang," *China Daily*, February 15, 2003, p.1; "China Opposes New UN resolution on Iraq," *China Daily*, March 10, 2003; and "Top Legislators and Advisers Urge: 'Stop the Iraq War'," *China Daily*, March 22, 2003.

the war against terrorism. In all other occasions, China opposed the United States to use military forces against other countries.

The changing position of China on American military action this time is an hard evidence that Chinese foreign policy has changed, the change stated by the 16th party congress. That is China no longer taking position against hegemonism as the central theme of Chinese foreign policy. China may not like and does not support American military action in Iraq, but the Chinese did not feel that they should oppose Americans because opposing somebody no longer playing a central role in the Chinese foreign policy, the principle set by the 16th party congress.

If the above argument that there is a major foreign policy change at the 16th party congress is the real case, then the question following that will be why there is the change?

To be sure, the change of the Chinese foreign policy is not incidental. It is an accumulate and evitable step caused by the development in China and world in the past twenty years.

The change is significant because the driving forces behind the change are so fundamental and significant. It is an economic, social, cultural and a systemic change inside China in the past two decades of development.

The forces are strong in China, and therefore the change will be stabilized. The Chinese economy is likely to keep rapidly growth for another decade or two, mainly because the consumers' revolution and the strong domestic demand. Although Chinese economy has lot of difficulties and problems, such as unemployment, agriculture, state enterprises, bad loans, those difficulties are not new and they did not prevent China from rapidly development in the past twenty years, and they may not prevent China from keeping development in another twenty years.

What is more significant to the Chinese foreign policy is not just its economic basis. The most important factor affecting China's foreign policy is the changing mind-set and thinking of Chinese people, including Chinese leaders.

The revolutionary generation has gone, and so the Soviet-trained generation

such as Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, and Li Lanqing. The people who are in charge in China now at all the levels are the generation growing during the past twenty years of reform and openness. This generation knows little about revolution and the Soviet model of socialism. What they know is reform and openness that they have experienced during the past twenty years.

The new generation comes to power with new thinking. They are better educated with modern natural and social sciences. They know more about the today's world than their parents' generation. They are much more open, flexible, democratic than the old generation of Chinese people, especially the old leadership like Jiang Zemin. Although the new leadership has been in power for only little bit more than a year, it has showed lot differences from its previous one. Their new thinking and way of governance can be seen from China's news media coverage about Iraq War, their management on SARS, and their foreign trips recently.

These positive trends will be continuing because Chinese people and society are new. No one likes the old way, old thinking about personal life, about community, about country and the world. People are better educated, access more information about the world, become more well-off, care more about individual rights and freedom, and share more common values with the international community. The country and society become more developed, market oriented, and rule of law.

Those are the fundamental forces which drive China's international and external policies and actions. The general trend of China is the country becomes more integrated with the other parts of the world, including with the common values. China is getting closer and closer with international community, and it becomes a more responsible and powerful player in the world.

The change will continue but not going to be overnight. The change will be long term development, but it will also be gradual. Most of the old thinking about world and China's foreign policy stays with ordinary Chinese, rather than Chinese leaders, foreign policy officials and expert community. The Chinese general public has little opportunity to know the real outside world. Their knowledge and view about

the world, about major powers such as the U.S., Japan, European countries, are still very much old stories. Therefore, anti-Americanism, anti-Japanese, hard-line attitude is still strong and common among Chinese general public. Such public opinion will continue to exercise some influence upon Chinese foreign policy. It puts pressure on the government and restrains governmental actions in foreign and international relations, especially during crisis when emotion is strong.

Another major development in China's foreign policy thinking in the year is the introduction the concept and thinking of "peaceful rise of China."¹ The Chinese Premier talked about the "peaceful path of rise China" and he said: "China today is a country in reform and opening-up and a rising power dedicated to peace. China tomorrow will continue to be a major country that loves peace and has a great deal to look forward to."² "Peaceful rise of China" means while the Chinese leaders and people realize that the rise of China is on the way and is inevitable, then China does not want to see the rise of the country will bring too much hurts to its neighbors and others in the world, and the rise of China should not fall with the historical pattern of conflicts between major powers. Therefore, the rise of China should be "peacefully."

There is also something unchanged on the Chinese side too. Neither Chinese people nor their government has changed anything on Taiwan. Taiwan's independence is still unacceptable to the Chinese people and their leaders, and national reunification remains to be a grand dream and national goal of people in China.

To the Chinese people and their government, Taiwan is an internal issue. However, it is also an important issue in China's relations with the U.S., Japan and other countries in Asia and the world. Taiwan issue remains to be a fundamental part on which China judge other countries' China strategy and policy. And the Chinese people and government remain to be determined to fight with anybody in every front of such a fundamental national sovereignty, security and reunification issue. This

¹ Lu Hong and He Hongze: Wen Jiabao's Speech at Harvard University," *Renmin Ribao*, December 11, 2003, p.3.

² Xing Zhigang: "China Picks Peaceful Path to Prosperity," *China Daily*, February 20, 2004, p.5.

position certainly will not always lead a better and positive relationship with the outside world, especially with the United States in Chinese foreign relations and policies.

2. The New Asian Approach and Policy

The clearer cut of new thinking and new approach of China foreign policy since the 16th Party Congress and new leadership has been in Asia. Or in other words, there has been new thinking and new approach of Chinese diplomacy in Asia in the past years.

In foreign relations' practices, Asians see more active Chinese role in Asian economic development and multilateral approaches on regional security and economic cooperation. China in recent years become much more active player in APEC, ARF, APT and almost all the regional approaches. In those multilateral activities, China increasing becomes initiatives-giving rather than initiatives-accepting part. China now not only gives more ideas, suggestions, initiatives to Asia, but also gives money, material, and aid to many Asian countries in the crises of financial, terrorist attack, SARS, flu, and nature disasters. China actively promotes China-ASEAN free trade arrangement and Mekong River development among Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and China's Yunnan, a big project supported by Asian Development Bank.

Behind ever-active role of China in Asia comes with the new concepts and thinking of China's Asian policy. Such a policy became more clear cut in 2003 when the leaders and foreign policy officials stated that China's Asian policy is "Yi Lin Wei Shan, Yi Lin Wei Ban" (taking neighbors in kindness, and taking neighbors as partners), and "Mulin, Fulin, Anlin" (good neighborhood, enrich neighborhood, and secure neighborhood).¹ In his governmental report to the People's Congress session recently, Premier Wen Jiabao stated China's Asian policy: "We will continue our policy of friendship and partnership with our neighboring countries, deepen

¹ "Wu Bangguo's Speech at Asian Parliament Association Meeting," *Renmin Ribao*, September 2, 2003, p.3.

good-neighborly and friendly cooperation with all our neighbors and safeguard regional peace and stability.”¹

Conclusion: Major Powers’ Relations and East Asian Security

1. Regional Stability

The more than five decade long history in Asia in both Cold War and post-Cold War eras has approved the following argument: that Asian security lies heavily on major powers’ relations. Asia was an unstable place in Cold War times because major powers engaged and involved conflicts in Korea, Indochina, Southeast Asia and South Asia.

And when major powers have not engaged and involved conflicts in Asia, regional conflicts become isolated and limited. Although Korean Peninsula is still the lasting hot-spot of Cold War style problem and even crises, it has not affected regional security and stability too much because major powers have not used the conflicts, instead they tried to work together to manage the problem. Thus as the result, East Asia has become most peaceful place in the world since the end of the Cold War, even compared with Europe, Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

Therefore, peace, stability and development of East Asia need major powers’ accommodation, consultation and cooperation. It needs major powers to manage their differences or even conflicts in some areas such as Taiwan issue.

2. Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

As stated above, major powers relations may be the first and most critical factor for maintaining the peace and stability in East Asia, and it needs further efforts among those major powers and other powers in the region, including multilateral institutions. And the second most important factor might be the non-proliferation efforts in the region and in the world.

¹ “Wen Highlights Jobs, Development,” *China Daily*, March 6-7, 2004, p.6.

Non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament become more and more important for maintaining peace and stability in Asia because the facts that Asia has become most proliferating area of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Including South Asia, Asia now has more nuclear nations than any other continental, and the numbers are likely to grow. Asians have the concrete problems to solve in arms control and non-proliferation frontier. Besides continuing efforts on North Korean nuclear issue, the smuggling of nuclear material, technology and other material of WMD is serious security problem facing Asian nations. The smuggling materials may be used by countries and groups such as terrorist organizations and individuals and cause heavy damages to people and countries in Asia. Asians should united and work together systematically to deal with the problem.

3. Regional Security Mechanism

Asia does need a multilateral security arrangement/structure/mechanism to maintain peace and stability in the region systematically, and to provide systematic opportunity, to ensure the role for countries such as China and Japan to play in the regional affairs. Without such a multilateral security arrangement, major powers in the region will continue to have suspicions, resistance and even conflicts in regional security affairs and in their international relations in Asia. A multilateral security arrangement needs long time efforts, so the efforts should be making consistently.