

# China's International Security Challenges and Response at Present and in the Coming Five Years<sup>\*</sup>

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SINCE 2010, various events have indicated that China's external relations are becoming increasingly tense. China is being gradually "put into the center," in which it is shackled by external forces and becoming getting involved in conflicts and frictions of interests, while its potential disputes with the external world are becoming more obvious and severe. Seemingly overnight, China has fallen into a serious security dilemma. This indicates that China's modernization has gone through take-off stage and entered a stage of transition. The reasons for this are as follows: The global community and international structure are facing historic profound changes; China's rapid growth has gone beyond the psychological bottom line of international society; various imbalanced situations caused by globalization are focused into China's current foreign relations; hegemonic powers' expectations of the impact of China's rise on the current international system have led to adjustments of their policies toward China; the request and expansion of China's national interests has touched the "overlapping area of core interests" with related countries; and the

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uncertainty in China's development has aroused international concern and precautions. To China, which is in the process of development, this is not an unexpected dilemma, but a threshold it must cross for the rise of the country and the rejuvenation of the nation. It is simply a start, and in the coming five years, China will face even more complicated difficulties and challenges to its international security.

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## I. CHINA'S MAJOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

### 1. The deterioration of overall international security environment is unfavorable for China's modernization

IN 2011, signs of turbulence were evident worldwide. The first was the convergence of the continuously deteriorating global economic crisis and profound changes in the international structure, bringing severe instability to the international economic and political order. The second was the collapsing international balance of power, while the power game has shaken the major power relations. The third is that the widening global wealth gap, collapse of middle-class and political polarization have led to increasing confrontation. The fourth is that the Western countries, mired in multiple crises and facing the shock of institutional and structural reforms, have transferred their problems onto the developing countries. The fifth is that the Islamic countries' pursuit of modernization is in disorder, giving rise to regional upheavals with spillover impact. The sixth is that worldwide industrialization is ushering in an era of marine industrial civilization, while interest-based struggle and confrontation over maritime resources are becoming prominent. The seventh is that, as no country can afford any more natural disasters in the midst of the world's deteriorating ecological environment, natural crises are evolving into social crises. The eighth is the growing negative impact of the Internet, the exposed fragility of Internet security, the increasing danger of Internet

hijacking and challenge to state power, and the abruptly upgraded mass destruction threat and nuclear proliferation. The ninth is that the U.S.'s hegemony has been shaken, which has reduced the supply of international public goods and widened the international power vacuum. The tenth is that, as international public cognitive ability is lagging, the global community has failed to take effective measures to respond to the new demands of global governance, which has damaged its stability.

In 2012, this tendency toward instability is continuing and expanding. As the causes of international turbulence are fundamental, inherent, overlapping, systemic and interactional, and by nature roots in institutional and systemic reform, this turbulence has to be profound, long-lasting and wide-ranging. Great turmoil brews great crises, and great crises lead to great transformation. The "great structural changes over the past 500 years" since international relations came into being, the profound reflection upon the Western capitalist "institutional crisis," the transformation of the development pattern in newly emerging industrial countries, as well as the resolution of the deep-rooted conflicts and problems in globalization will be conducted in an extremely unstable international environment.

In the five years to come, which coincide with China's Twelfth Five-Year Plan period, China will undergo a significant economic transformation and in-depth social reform. At the same time, its modernization will step into "the trap of medium income," while domestic reforms will face inevitable thorny problems. The two tasks of changing the development pattern (expanding domestic needs) and adjusting the economic structure (industrial upgrading), require simultaneous efforts, while economic, social and political reforms will all become urgent, and the external environment for China's domestic reform will gradually tighten. Over the past 30 years of reform and opening up, except for the two or three years before and after the drastic changes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the 1989 Beijing political turbulence, we have never faced such a security dilemma caused by intertwined domestic and foreign pressures.

**2. American geo-strategic focus moves eastwards, intensifying China-U.S. competition and making China's peaceful development at a higher risk**

AFTER the Cold War, the United States adopted a strategy of "Beyond Containment," along with a trajectory from oppressing the Islamic countries, extruding Russia, to handling rising China as its major point. Its strategic tendency is aimed at projecting U.S. hegemony into the oriental world. The "Engagement and Enlargement" strategy of the Clinton administration and the "Unilateralism and Pre-emptive Strikes" strategy by the George Bush administration could be both regarded as the applications of the "Beyond Containment" strategy in various stages and forms. The "9/11 terrorist attacks" distracted American strategic attention and the judgment of major threats, disturbing the eastward shift of its strategic focus. Otherwise, the strategy game between U.S. and the Asia-Pacific region would have started at the very beginning of the new century. Confronting the dramatic changes in the international strategic structure, and facing the reality that the U.S.'s strategic capacity has been somewhat reduced by the anti-terrorism wars in the past decade, the Obama administration has successively adjusted its global strategy. The American understanding of security threats restored to tradition, with Asia and the Pacific targeted as the central stage for the rejuvenation of the U.S. global leadership. The eastward shift of the world's geo-strategic focus is turning to the Asia-Pacific as the U.S. has changed its allocation of strategic resources. Against this background, in response to China's rise in the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. has taken frequent measures to restore the balance of power, which has aggravated the mutual distrust and strategic competition between China and the U.S., and made it uncertain whether it is possible to establish a new type of relationship between the two powers.

What merits our special concern is that there is some internal connection between the U.S. military actions and its strategic priority targets. In each decade after the Cold War, the U.S. has launched direct or indirect war against its opponents: To oppress the Muslim world, the U.S. launched two Gulf wars, two anti-terrorist wars and military intervention in Liberia; to isolate Russia, the U.S.

launched the Kosovo War and set itself against Russia in the Russia-Georgia armed conflict; George Bush claimed to switch Russia's and China's positions soon after he assumed the presidency, and proclaimed that the U.S. would definitely intervene once war broke out in the Taiwan Straits, to which the China-U.S. aircraft collision incident was a preview. Looking back further, we find the U.S. has also launched many wars to promote its global strategies since the end of World War II: In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. launched the Korean War and the Vietnam War; in the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. launched many proxy wars against the Soviet Union in the Third World, and started the arms race named "Star Wars." History warns us that as the U.S. shifts its strategic focus eastwards to the Asia-Pacific region, direct or indirect military conflicts between China and the U.S. will be inevitable. If so, the two countries will fail to forge a new path of the major power relationship, fail to avoid the tragic cycle of political challenge-response among great powers, and follow the same old disastrous road of UK-Germany and U.S.-Soviet Union confrontations. In this case, China's overall international and

regional environment will not remain peaceful, and China's peaceful rise will collapse halfway. Therefore, to dispel the increasing strategic mutual distrust between the U.S. and China, to maintain the sound development momentum of the cooperative and mutually beneficial China-U.S. relationship, and to prevent China-U.S. relations from falling to confrontation have become China's biggest security challenges and major tasks for the next five years.

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### **3. Continuous global economic downturn and energy supply fluctuation have severely affected China's economic development**

IN THE past five years since the global economic crisis broke out in mid-2007, the Western economies have experienced a short-term recovery, but are now witnessing a downturn in all aspects.

The Euro crisis, which has resulted in both political and economic uncertainties has taken place in three waves: first, the sovereign debt crisis; second, the banking crisis; and third, the real economy crisis. In 2012, the EU economies fell in recession again.

The American economy, struggling in twists and turns, stimulated by government-incentive policies, is undergoing intermittent recovery without obvious employment increase. The American economic situation is unstable; in fact, it is worse than at any other period of time since World War II. Currently, the American economy is still facing three difficulties: high unemployment rate, heavy debt load and ever-decreasing real estate pricing. In addition, the foundation for economic recovery is still weak.

The root of an economic crisis is usually overproduction, while that of a financial crisis is excess liquidity. Globally, a large amount of currency was put into circulation in the first phase of the financial crisis, which further aggravated the excess liquidity of capital and worsened the international financial environment. According to statistics from the Bank for International Settlement (BIS), in 2009, government-issued bonds worldwide totaled US\$3.92 trillion in response to the financial crisis, while the figure in 2000 was only US\$0.36 trillion. Thus in this decade, the fluidity scale was expanded ten times, which aggravated the sovereign debt crisis in the second phase. In spite of a lot more currency being put into circulation, economic growth didn't rebound, but witnessed decreasing employment; consumption growth was greatly shackled by serious inflation and debt pressure; there was almost no need to promote expansionary fiscal policy and currency policy; and there were no other alternative measures of economic governance.

This indicates that Western society hasn't fundamentally cured the crisis of the past five years, and the structural economic imbalance which caused the crisis hasn't been fixed. Western electoral politics showed its institutional disadvantage during the crisis; the right-wing and left-wing political powers were captured by interest groups, attacking their opponents rather than promoting a unified, effective and farsighted policy to address the crisis. Besides, the newly emerging developing economies' hope of being "unhooked" from the economic downswing of the developed



countries is fading. The spillover effects of the Western economic crisis have severely hampered the economic growth in developing countries. A number of newly emerging economies are facing the risk of a hard landing. Newly emerging economies are confronting the triple difficulties of “stabilizing economic growth, preventing inflation and adjusting economic structure.” Even if economic and social transformation could go smoothly, it would only produce the desired results in three or five years. That is to say, facing the severe economic crisis, both developed countries and newly emerging developing countries find it difficult to complete their structural adjustment and reform in a short time.

As the major economies are sliding and causing intermittent negative effects, it is completely predictable that the global economy will witness long-term downturn and stagnation. This will severely affect China’s future economic trends. Moreover, energy prices that should have gone down during the economic depression are tending to rise because of the turmoil in Western Asia and North Africa. According to a prediction by Maria van der Hoeven, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), if the investment to secure energy production from the Middle East and the Persian Gulf is not available, the international oil market might have to raise prices to US\$150 per barrel in 2015. This will further raise production costs, worsen the trade environment, and increase the difficulty of China’s economic structural transformation.

#### **4. Disputes over maritime sovereignty bring uncertainties to China’s peripheral security and good-neighboring policy**

SINCE 2010, the waves of contradictions surged in China’s waters where tranquility and peace used to dominate. The strategic competitions around China’s peripheral seas have been increasingly intensified with frictions constantly occurred and antagonism continued escalating. The intense situations surfaced simultaneously in the yellow sea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea, between which close interaction prevailed. The storms of tensions kept gathering over the year 2011 and eventually unfolded when entering 2012. There are three causes leading to the very circumstance. In light of the general trend, with the arrival of

global industrial age, a majority of countries around the world have embarked on industrialization with a sharply growing demand for raw materials and resources. Those countries are speeding up ocean exploitations in the context of civilization departure from ocean commerce to ocean industry which not only regard the seas as the channel for trade but also workshop where most of exploitations are taking place.

Some of China's neighboring countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia all have access to sea. Having entered the stage of rapid industrial growth, those countries are compelled to devote more efforts to ocean exploitation for the sake of creating new industrial growth opportunities. Marine economy, in this regard, has been set as top priority in those countries' national development strategies and is expected to serve as one of the pillars to their respective economies. Those marine-focused policies and national development strategies have contributed to the rising economic competition and heated sovereignty dispute over the stakes at sea. Under the global crisis, the governments in those costal countries, greatly plagued by the sharply shrinking overseas market and the flood of international capital withdrawal, is tempted to turn to ocean economy or intentionally take advantage of sovereignty disputes as a solution to confront crisis, hoping to reduce the negative impact of the crisis on their economies and welfare and meanwhile protect their ruling positions by channeling domestic furies outwards.

Besides, China's surrounding environment is unique. The U.S. has been seeking to re-orientate its strategic focus to Asia-Pacific region, a posture seemingly intent to contain China, which has been echoed and applauded by those countries attempting to grab maritime space from China. While supported by the U.S., they refuse to compromise and take hard stance against China instead.

The maritime geo-strategic condition in terms of geography does not favor China either: A majority of offshore areas are blocked by multiple tiers of island chains and beyond those island chains lay a number of coastal countries with which China has disputes. While in terms of strategic position, China still fails to obtain any advantage by the facts that the islands in China's claimed waters



are occupied, coastal waters are partitioned and ocean resources are grabbed. The South China Sea has become a perfect example in this regard where China's neighboring countries have collaborated with more than 200 oil companies and drilled no less than 1,000 oil wells in the name of international bidding for joint development. And meanwhile, the absence of collaboration between oral and practical approaches in Beijing's response has put the country in a disadvantaged position of confronting a group of adversaries simultaneously. Having already defined maritime stake as their core national interests, those countries, backed up by some other great powers and pressed by their domestic public opinions, find big temptation to heat frictions and tiny space for compromise, making it extremely difficult for everyone involved to resolve the disputes and the probability of confrontation or armed conflicts trembles on the verge of becoming a reality.

During the Western industrialization era, the world had witnessed two catastrophic wars between the great powers for material resources. When entering the age of global industrialization, is there any possibility that there would be another global warfare for maritime resources? China today has to face an increasingly urgent pressure and security challenges especially in the South China Sea. The approach that China would adopt for addressing those concerns matters both in terms of national interest and national grand strategy and would largely decide not only the fate of China's established strategy highlighting relationship with neighbors and security of peripheral area but also the future of China's relations with ASEAN countries.

##### **5. The appeals for democracy coupled with new interventionism undermine China's political stability**

THE SOCIAL unrest surfaced in Western Asia and North Africa (WANA) in 2011 is spreading over the Greater Middle East, whose underlying nature is the outburst of the cry long-time accumulated for social modernization in those developing countries undergoing industrialization and modernization. Internal crisis, in this process, served as trigger while external force functioned as fuel. A number of countries in the WANA region whose economic growth has

outpaced political systems development have become the first victims in this wave of social upheaval.

The impactful intervention of the Western forces is another aspect in the context of the social unrest. Some western countries take advantage of those countries' domestic demand for social changes to serve their plan of shaping a new regional geo-strategic situation with further implications in regard to new development of Western interventionism that the principle of "human rights trumping sovereignty" has been supplemented by supporting democratic reform and overthrowing tyrannical rule in the name of the majority's will so as to gain legitimacy. Those countries bridge the civil wars with foreign intervention, using the internal conflicts to fuel the escalation.

The affinity between WANA countries' internal demand for democratic reform and the new Western interventionism has multiple implications. In the name of global governance, those events could be replicated and become widespread, making the rest of the world in vulnerability. Some emerging countries with internal frictions resulting from social transition might find it increasingly difficult to maintain social stability. The frictions in those countries, including development imbalance, income disparity, and the absence of social justice and issues of corruption could be the triggers to social unrest. Entering the first decade of the new century, Beijing has seen an upwards tendency of domestic unrest coupled with social transition, further domestic political reform and interest redistribution, which could possibly be used by some western countries out of the purposes of undermining China's social stability, partitioning Chinese territory and furthermore containing China's rising through fueling China's domestic frictions or adopting new interventionism once the state fails to maintain stable.

Besides, Beijing has to confront an increasingly deteriorating ecological environment, which has already constituted a growing segment of non-traditional security threats posed to the whole country. China's former development pattern has been proved unsustainable since that economic growth is achieved partly at the expense of damaging the ecological environment. In the coming

five or ten years: catastrophic weathers like air pollution, alternating droughts and floods, and large-scale epidemics, known as four major ecological crises, would strike China frequently and beyond exert negative impact on China's social and economic life. The severe damage inflicted to lives, resources, national strength and social infrastructure will undermine the country's cultural and humanistic environment and the recovery could be unaffordable for governments of various levels. We could neither underestimate the growing security threat to the people's welfare caused by ecological damage, nor neglect any chances that natural disasters might explode social unrest and collapse the entire country.

## II. BEIJING'S APPROACHES TO ADDRESS EMERGING CHALLENGES

### 1. Updating China's foreign policies by leadership with far-sighted strategy

BEIJING's foreign strategy in the preliminary stage of social modernization has been proved perspective and successful by its achievements in modernization over 30 years' reform and opening up. Briefly, this strategy, carrying main theme of development and peace, aims to fuel China's economy and growth by adhering to promoting cooperation instead of confrontation and keeping low profile while seeking achievement with highlights including "China-U.S. relations, peripheral security and prevent Taiwan independence." Currently, China's modernization has entered a new historical stage, with a dramatic social transformation proceeding inside while intensified struggle for interest abroad. Generally speaking, China will further the path of peaceful development, value its successful experience, and update the strategic approaches in pace with the changes both in the domestic and the international circumstances.

The dilemmas that Beijing is facing in external security have exposed the invalidity of China's established strategies in terms of effectively responding to the emerging challenges. The previous accomplishments have prevented Beijing from updating its foreign policies in accordance with the changing situation, leading to China's incompatibilities with new international security regime

in a globalized era, the reluctance to undertake the role as an emerging power, and the inexperience in using enhanced strength. These problems are rooted in the ambiguity of Beijing's guiding principles, which is also the cause of ideological divergence in strategy-making circles. Instead of letting the divergence in strategic guidelines continue widening, Beijing should immediately embark on the restructure of high-level design in pace with the leadership transition taking place in the Party's 18th National Congress. Through in-depth consideration and planning in joint community of the leadership and the elites, China could formulate new strategic ideologies and guidelines in pace with the times, so as to take the initiative to effectively cope with the possible emerging severe and complicated threat both in the present case and the future.

## **2. Preparing to meet the possible "black swan" phenomena**

THE TURMOIL mushrooming today in some countries mostly has its domestic source and involves a multiple of stakeholders instead of being single-area and region limited. Fundamentally, the outbursts of social unrest in those regions are the outcome of enduring severe incompatibilities between the demands for growth in globalization and the life style brought by capitalism and the political system and international structure. Meanwhile, those events could also be seen as a result both from institutional and systematic transformation and the accumulated frictions in an era of globalization, which are expected to be long-lasting, impactful and broadly-related. Besides, the weakened managing capability and undermined stability of the international community fail to prevent the negative impact of the upheavals from being widespread through the inter-connecting global network and further evolving into even more chaotic situations. Those circumstances provide Beijing with clues to understand international situation and formulate fundamental strategic response in accordance.

Currently, the declining global economy and escalating financial crisis have crippled global investors' confidence; The austerity measures for addressing the debt crisis adopted by the governments in some developed countries are in severe conflict

with the stake of the popularity. The mushrooming upheavals around the globe are causing further panic in a much broader scope; some countries challenge the others' core interest on maritime issues, which invoke public furies and therefore deprive those governments of clear direction in foreign affairs; and irrational instigation through the Internet and hackers' trouble-making are exacerbating international tensions. The considerations of election prevail over the long-term strategic perspective in a number of influential countries undergoing leadership transition. All those factors above are contributing to the formulation of a weird state against normalcy, disturbing stability and rationality under normal circumstance and irritating public irrational furies. Under normal circumstance disputes could be easily resolved, while in an abnormal state, conflicts tend to be escalated. Over a period of time, the irrational tendency in the international community might prevail thus make it increasingly difficult to put dispute under control.

China, if failed to equip itself with perspective, plans and approaches to confront the worst-case scenario or employed flawed policies, would be trapped in pitfall as a result of strategic ambiguity or fooled by tricks and therefore suffer damage. This global social upheaval would profoundly impact China on both the external and the internal. China's relation with outside world, including China-U.S. relations, will be largely dependent on how Beijing addresses its own affairs. China's future relations with outside world are expected to be desirable only on condition that the country could further reform and develop while maintain stability. Or the circumstances could be completely different. However, opportunity for China to survive the international chaos and fulfill peaceful rise also exists in this very upheaval. Beijing should place its focus of future strategies on maintaining its domestic order during the upheaval and taking advantage of the situation to help navigating the globe in transform sailing towards peace and stability.

**3. Paying special attention to the historical lesson of Germany**  
FOR CHINA, the fall of Soviet Union and Germany are the two

most valuable cases worth further studying. The collapse of the former under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev is a typical example in terms of collapse resulting from flawed domestic politics while the latter ruled by Kaiser Wilhelm prior to World War I is a perfect picture showing how a nation could be destroyed by silly international strategy. Regarding Germans, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said, "Mentioning the German people, I always feel dejected. As individuals, they are commendable, but as a group, they are so pitiable."

German nation has presented human society with a large number of top thinkers throughout history, while its leaders constantly made mistakes regarding national strategy, bringing considerable setbacks over the process of nation's development. There are similarities between Germany over a century ago and China today in terms of international status they occupied and challenges they confronted. Both countries are geo-environmentally unflavored. Ranked as world's second biggest economy with growing national strength, both countries cause worldwide anxiety and have to confront increasing external pressure and a narrowing space for development attributed to the pressure exerted by surrounding major powers. Both countries have seen a surging of people's nationalism and militarist tendency inside. Otto von Bismarck's smart strategies and flexible tactics used to bring Germany desirable environment and prevented Germany from becoming the target of major power, allowing Germany to enjoy a 20-year peaceful rise.

However, the subsequent years had seen an increasingly impatient Germany with a reckless leadership. Constrained by the belief that "the war with the United Kingdom is inevitable," Berlin lost its strategic flexibility, making the frictions with other major powers continue escalating and eventually to warfare which led to the country's collapse. "History doesn't repeat itself, but similar histories often appear." The story of Germany's rise could be also regarded as a history showing how Europe was heading for battlefield. China today has demonstrated its adherences to peaceful development and peaceful rise and therefore should study German lessons to avoid the very tragedy 100 years ago.



#### **4. Reviewing and standardizing China's international behavior to meet the needs of the era of globalization**

MANY PEOPLE talk about globalization, but they don't actually share a common conception of the globalization era. Judging the theme of contemporary time is the highest-level strategic evaluation, as it decides the form and path of foreign policies. After the end of the Cold War, the world witnessed drastic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the 9/11 terrorist attack, the Western financial crisis, and the turmoil in Western Asia and North Africa. These upheavals cover the Eastern, Western and Southern worlds, including socialist, capitalist and Muslim countries. In other words, the requirements of the globalization era have involved all kinds of countries and their international relations in the tide of reform. Mikhail Gorbachev, George W. Bush, Osama bin Laden, Lehman Brothers Bank, Muammar Gaddafi, etc., were merely actors on the stage of history, while the actual director was productivity and mode of production in the globalization era. Why did the Berlin Wall come down? It was because the globalization era requires a uniform world market for organized production. Why did the U.S. unipolar hegemony come to its end? It was because a single country is incapable of solving global problems in the globalization era. Why are the developed countries trapped in financial crises? It is because the mobility of the factors of production in the globalization era has changed the direction of "international capital flow" in which the profits go to the Western world, and has also changed the rule that economic upheavals only happened in peripheral countries but not the central ones. Why was the Gaddafi government brought to an end? The reason was that, as most of the developing countries have embraced the global industrialization, the Arab world has to reform its backward social and political structures. Catching up with the pace of history and adopting proactive foreign policies is the key for a country to gain the initiative in addressing international security. Reviewing the history of the post-Cold War era, we find that all foreign policies that went against the historical trend failed, no matter what ideological banner they were holding. We should learn from this history, review and readjust our foreign policies to meet the needs of the era of globalization.

What are the new standards raised by globalization for state actions? First, interdependence and mobility in the international community under the impact of globalization make peaceful development an inherent demand of this era. This will definitely become the mainstream of the international political and economic order. Second, as interdependence among all countries deepens, both the pattern of national interests and the interest-driven state actions tend to emphasize mutual benefit, which creates space for all countries to build international relations proactively. Third, the globalization era requires worldwide industrialization and informationization, whereby science, democracy, equity and transparency have become the four major demands of modern society. All types of states must follow this historical tide. Fourth, extensive issues and profound conflicts caused by globalization have put forward the tasks of global governance. Good governance, along with peace, development and cooperation, is the theme of the time. Opposing hegemonism, power politics and wars, and promoting democracy in international politics has been the common voice. Governance and good governance have become the universal value in the era of globalization. Fifth, as the integrity of international relations and the exchange of information have been enhanced, the anarchic tendency in state actions is reducing; state rationality and international restraint are playing an increasing role; multilateral integration and lawful dependence have become the norms of international conduct. Sixth, as all countries become increasingly interrelated, so do the domestic affairs and foreign affairs in one state, and the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs become less tenable. We should rethink sovereignty transfer and international intervention by overall analysis. Seventh, as the stability of international society becomes the requirement of the growth of productivity in the globalization era, individuals, extremist groups and nations, whose destructive power have been enhanced by the popularization of technology, have become a strategic threat to the sound development of globalization. When formulating our present and future foreign policies, we have to take these new codes of international conduct into consideration to expand our strategic

vision. In the changing global situation, China's diplomacy must change itself before changing the world, so as to improve its image and gain strategic initiatives.

### **5. Addressing the relations between major powers within the framework of a multipolar world**

FACING the aggressive offense from the U.S. alliance in the Asia-Pacific region, China finds itself more isolated than at any other time, as it lacks reliable allies. Some people propose that China drop the non-alignment policy adopted 30 years ago when China's reform and opening up started, seek alliances with North Korea, Pakistan, Myanmar and other traditional friendly neighbors, and coordinate with Russia to resist the Asia-Pacific alliance led by the United States.

Take the strategic confrontation on the Korean Peninsula for example. Nine years ago, for the peaceful development in Northeast Asia, China advocated and realized the Six-Party Talks, attempting to establish a regional mechanism for promoting peace and cooperation in order to get rid of the Cold War type confrontation between North Korea and its opponents. However, the Six-Party Talks bore no fruit, and deviated from the track of achieving denuclearization, peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Instead, North Korea has pursued its strategic target of possessing nuclear weapons and maintaining its political regime. China became only a figurehead in the Six-Party Talks, while the leader of North Korea came to play a dominant role. This provided a valid argument for the U.S., Japan and South Korea to restore the confrontation on the peninsula. In other words, the partial dysfunction of the Six-Party Talks was also a failure of China's attempt to establish the mechanism. The China-North Korea alliance cannot be revived, because the current security environment of Northeast Asia is completely different from that during the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-1953). The contest between North Korea, which strives to maintain the Korean Peninsula confrontation and, U.S. and South Korea, which sticks to their confrontation policies, is the root of the instability in Northeast Asia.

For the same reason, it is inappropriate for China and Russia to resume their old alliance. During the period of hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union, China benefited most, whether it formed an alliance with one of them or not. The reason was that the two sides regarded each other as the major rival, leaving China to play its card. Now, as the United States regards China as its major rival and Russia becomes the beneficiary of this situation, how can China rely on Russia? In this multipolar world, as the national interests of all states have become intricately intertwined, how is it possible to draw a clear line between conflicting blocs? After the Cold War, Russia followed the “double-headed eagle” diplomacy that takes account of both Western and Eastern interests and tended to be pro-Western some times, focusing on building relationships with the United States and Europe. And Vladimir Putin, who has his own belief, will not be tempted by other countries. Russia tries to keep a balance between the major powers, even if it is necessary to coordinate actions with China, Russia would decline to resume its alliance with China to oppose the United States, as this choice would simplify the intricate interest pattern in the multipolar world, back to the Yalta system, and restore the confrontation between land power and sea power in East Asia during the Cold War period.

The correct approach for China to face the U.S.-led alliance in the Asia-Pacific is to balance its relationships with the major powers in the framework of a multipolar world instead of a bipolar one. First of all, China should adhere to the principle of “cooperation instead of confrontation,” and consider China-U.S. relations top priority while building strategic relationships with other major powers. In the meantime, China should also reinforce its strategic cooperation with Russia to check and balance the United States; strive to build positive China-Russia, China-U.S.-Europe, China-Japan-Korea and China-U.S.-ASEAN relationships; and enhance the cooperation in the Shanghai

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Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS countries. As long as China strengthens its strategic cooperation with Russia, maintains close economic and political ties with Europe, continues to approach the ASEAN countries, improves its relationship with Japan, and consolidates its cooperation with the BRICS countries, it is possible to lead the U.S.-China relationship toward a positive direction.

## **6. Formulating and implementing comprehensive strategies to use national strength in a rational manner**

TO SOME DEGREES, China's current "security dilemma" in international society derived from the global power shift. Henry Kissinger once said, "No matter how restrained the policies China adopts, China's giant shadows will terrifies its opponents and neighbors." To solve the problems caused by the rapid growth of its national strength, China should make the best of its growing strength for its peaceful rise. First of all, China should make more efforts to exploit its national strength. In modern times, China was a weak country which has been bullied for a long time. Since the reform and opening up, China has been striving to avoid confrontation and focus on its own development. However, as it grows strong, China has no idea of how to play the role of a major power or safeguard its national security and interests effectively by demonstrating and utilizing its national strength. But, China should be confident that the changing world power pattern and China's growth are favorable for China to maintain its national security, as the situation has improved our means to safeguard our ends.

The most impressive imprint that the globalization era has etched on international relationships is its duality—confrontation and cooperation. These have infiltrated into all aspects of international relations, and are also the root of intricacy of foreign relations. The globalization era differs from the Cold War period in the nature of diversification and transition. In other words, Cold War ideology is fading, but remains; cooperation and mutual benefit have become the basis of national interests, yet are still weak. The duality of international relations is foundation for safeguarding national security by a realism approach. The principle that "war

is the continuation of politics by other means” is not obsolete, yet comes with more preconditions and restrictions attached. Intricately intertwined cooperation and confrontation require all states to formulate their foreign policies corresponding to duality of international relations.

China should adopt the tactics of “countercharging the U.S.’s strategic containment while building a new type of major power relationship through cooperation,” and implement this as a long-term national strategy. These tactics require avoiding linear thinking about foreign relations, combining confrontational and cooperative political operations, and making full use of both hard power and soft power. Therefore, China should use its national strength smartly by joining in the power game, reinforcing hard-line tactics and using force to safeguard its national interests. In the meantime, China should adopt the new principle of utilizing its national strength for the purpose of its peaceful rise. This doesn’t mean simply showing muscles, but rationally demonstrating and projecting its increasing comprehensive power, especially its military strength, aiming at suppressing provocations, enhancing deterrence, settling disputes and promoting peace negotiations.

### **7. Sticking to the principle of “keeping a low profile and doing something worthwhile” in the new situation**

WITH THE eastward shift of its strategic focus, the United States, taking advantage of surrounding countries’ concerns over China’s rise, has frequently taken measures against China, and assumed an aggressive posture to cope with China. Some countries, misled by false judgments, seize chances to make provocations. In this situation, China should demonstrate its strength timely to warn countries that are swollen with arrogance. Meanwhile, China should also be clearly aware that its current security dilemma might further deteriorate while the United States gains the upper hand, and should avoid falling victim of its provocations.

Now “keeping a low profile” is not as prevailing as before, but we should not be manipulated by such an impatient mood. The essence of Deng Xiaoping’s keeping-a-low-profile strategy is to avoid challenges, disperse pressures and stay away from the focus of



conflicts by being humble. This is a crucial strategy which enables China to exploit international contradictions, allows the country to cover its weakness by diplomacy, bend in order to straighten up, and make the weak able to resist the strong. After the drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, when public opinion in China feared that the United States would turn its focus to China, Deng Xiaoping reminded us that “we shall not exaggerate the adverse situation and our unfavorable position, as there are still many other world conflicts which are more violent; some conflicts have emerged, and we can make use of them, the key is how we seize opportunities.”

The United States put forward the shift of its strategic focus eastwards as early as during Bill Clinton’s term of office, but why wasn’t it put into practice? After George Bush assumed the presidency, the U.S. frequently challenged China, quite seemingly to wage a war against China in the Taiwan Straits. However, the 9/11 incident and two antiterrorist wars distracted the U.S. at that time. Now, since there is no possibility for China to play as a weak country any more, China should take advantage of international conflicts to disperse the pressures on it. In the present multipolar world filled with intricate problems and conflicts, all countries are facing multifaceted troubles and crises, thereby having no time to pay all attention to contain China even when it has grown to an impressive power. Now the U.S. is eager to get rid of the burden of antiterrorism war and shift its strategic focus eastwards. However, it is not easy to completely remove the political consequences of the 9/11 incident; the major antiterrorism battlefield is still firing, and the influence of international terrorism upon America’s global strategy is continuously fermenting. The U.S. and NATO will be trapped deeper in the expanding Middle East turmoil. The extension of the Western Asia and North Africa turbulence, the escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and potential war over Iran’s nuclear program all concern the major interests of the United States and the stake is too big to be ignored. Is it possible that a potential war waged by the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region might be replaced by one in some other region? Strategic distraction of the United States remains probable.

The U.S. has to carefully handle its strategic cooperation with China, as it needs China to provide more assistance and share more responsibilities in the Asia-Pacific region. All these are constraints on the U.S.'s global strategy and China policies, forcing the U.S. to employ a balanced policy toward China. In the meantime, China needs to interpret the eastward shift of the U.S. strategic focus comprehensively on a realistic basis. The U.S.'s Asia-Pacific policy is not exclusively focusing on China, but also a demonstration of its global strategic rebalancing in order to get rid of the troubles. Fundamentally speaking, the geo-situation of the Pacific Ocean is like a bowl of water, with China and the United States as the two hands holding it from the East and the West. If Sino-American strategic relationship were seriously unbalanced to one side, how could peace be kept in the Pacific Ocean? If so, there would be no "Asia-Pacific century," and the U.S. would fail to take advantage of Asia-Pacific prosperity, realize economic rejuvenation and retrieve its world leadership position. The political think-tanks of both China and the U.S. certainly know this fact. The U.S.'s superior position in the Asia-Pacific region, especially around China, will change as time goes by and as conflicts persist. Therefore, in order to handle the current difficulties, it is a correct choice for China to stay calm and patient, seek opportunities and make the best use of international contradictions, and even bear some sufferings, but not pursuing goals beyond our abilities when the time is not ripe.

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