



**Doctoral
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Ágnes Szunomár

Great power with Chinese characteristics

**Great power ambitions, role and partners of the People's Republic of China
in the twenty-first century**

Ph.D. dissertation

Consultant:

András Blahó, Dr.
university professor

Budapest, 2012

Department of International Economics

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1. Background of the research and relevance of the topic

Today, China is the fastest growing country of the world economy while also the world's second largest economy. If we compare this China with the one which started to modernize three decades ago, the development is more obvious. The communist country launched real market economy processes by allowing the free movement of prices and wages, partially recognizing private property, and adopting the essential role of profit. In the past decades, this system has pulled hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty, it opened new perspectives for small and large enterprises, of which the Chinese are actively trying to take advantage. The country has opened its doors to overseas investors, reduced its duties and – by adopting the rules of the World Trade Organization – it has become a real open economy. Hundreds and thousands of companies deploy their production here, because low wages and operating costs are coupled with excellent infrastructure. Moreover, China itself is a huge market as well, where the shopping habits of the emerging and strengthening urban middle class do not significantly differ from the Western habits.

After the end of the Cold War, the People's Republic of China found itself in an international environment, in which it had never been before. Although the international rejection, which surrounded the country, proved to be relatively brief, it was enough for the Chinese leadership to make sure that it wants to avoid similar situations. The isolated country – facing domestic and international criticism, concerns and uncertainties – has entered the road of great power evolution and achieved so many diplomatic success that nowadays the twenty-first century is considered to be the century of China.

While China's international environment was formed by external factors in the 90s, today China is shaping it by itself and the rise of China is undoubtedly the most important reality of contemporary world politics. In fact, not only China is a new factor in global politics, but through China's rise globalization itself has entered a new phase as well, where all the governments, companies and average people keep count of this new player. Whilst China's economy is growing, the country becomes gradually an unavoidable player in the international scene, which is a consequence of its economic development, but also a result of a conscious decision: now China wants to become a great power and it intends to be involved in all important international issues and global economic processes. Due to its size and emerging economy, it is also able to do that.

The thesis focuses on the development, characterization and nature of this great power of China. To this end, we try to demonstrate how did the Chinese power politics evolve from foreign policy and foreign trade policy, how it worked together with other countries before and how China cooperates with other powers and regions now, as well as what ideas, methods and goals does it have and how it has raised the former Middle Empire to a great power of the twenty-first century. The dissertation seeks to ascertain what kind of great power will China be, what characterizes it, whether it is motivated by economic, political or world power objectives.

When compiling the concept of the thesis and formulating hypotheses, our main goal was to examine the subject of the thesis with an objective and impartial approach, as the international scientific literature is biased against China in many direction:

- Typically, the majority of the western approaches considers China's growth as a threat to the current world order, promotes its containment and truly believes that China's future lies in its "westernization". Nevertheless, some European scholars and their works have a greater empathy and understanding towards China, they emphasize the importance of cooperation, pointing out that due to its different roots and thousands of years of history, China will never become like the West, therefore the expectations about China can be made only in the light of China's history and values. However, the major weakness of the latter perspective is, that it uses almost exclusively culture, history and political theory when approaching the processes in China, while a more detailed economic aspect is omitted.
- The strengthening of Chinese scientific interest concerning the rise of China is also noticeable. These perspectives take into account the Chinese characteristics, however, some of these works still lacks a complex approach, and cannot secede from the important questions of the Sino-American relations. Some Chinese authors attempt to interpret the global intentions of China, which analyses can be used during the work, but only with a critical restriction that the Chinese point of view is dominant there.
- There is also a significant China-research in Central and Eastern Europe, mainly in Hungary, where a lot of work of the several well-known Hungarian sinologists – Tálás, Jordán, Polonyi, Juhász, Vámos, Mészáros,... – can be used. The Hungarian China-research has been substantial in recent years but is experiencing a new golden age nowadays. The research of the Institute of World Economics of the Hungarian

Academy of Sciences between 2006 and 2010 – in which I have been involved as well – is also remarkable because such a current, comprehensive and extensive material about China did not exist previously in Hungarian language. These works are mainly studies in different volumes, in which several aspects concerning China are elaborated, however, the connections between them have not been examined yet.

With this dissertation I would like to contribute to these shortcomings and fill in the above mentioned gaps with a work, which on the one hand analyses China's rise, role and ambitions in a complex way, taking into account as many aspects as possible, while, on the other hand uses an independent, impartial perspective.

The hypotheses of the dissertation are the followings:

1. This great power of China will not be a hegemonic power with unipolar goals. Its methods, behaviour and attitudes also differ from those of the former great powers.
2. As a great power, China is looking for cooperation with other major powers, in the course of this, it seeks multi-polar balance of power. During this relationship building, both the United States and the European Union are important partners for China, however, the EU will rather be a real strategic partner for China, while the U.S. remains a competitor.
3. As a great power, China is becoming the mouthpiece, opinion leader, an increasingly important investor and finally the leading power of the developing world. In Central and East Asia, the role of China is already unshakeable, while in its African and Latin American relations China not only meets its demand for energy and raw material but also significantly contributes to the economic growth of these areas.
4. China's great power transformation is accompanied by an internal transformation, where the special type of development creates a uniquely modernized Chinese state. The reason for this „democratization” is not just internal but it is also part of the preparation for the future great power commitments, as a modernized and democratized China will be a more acceptable partner for the West while it also offers a more appropriate model for the rest of the world.

2. Sources and methods

The dissertation uses basically three types of sources. One of the most important sources is the relevant scientific literature, which represents both the Western research studies – available in English or German language – dealing with the development, economic expansion and foreign policy ambitions of China, and also the Chinese literature, available in English language. We put a particular emphasis on the differences between Chinese and Western approaches and also on the separation of those conflicting views. Since the dissertation has been written from an independent, Central and Eastern European point of view, the scientific literature of the region – especially the studies and articles of Hungarian scholars – is utilized as well. As in the dissertation we analyse several aspects, we also use a wide range of sources. Of course, we cannot know all the available studies concerning the several aspects of the topic, but tried to use and process as much as possible.

Secondly, we also examined – especially in the case of bi- and multilateral relations – the documents and declarations which regulate the relationship between China and a region, a country or an organization (such as the European Union, the United States, Africa, ASEAN, etc.). These documents, strategies and declarations (for example the Shanghai Communiqué, the European Commission's strategies for China and the Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, etc.) were chosen to match the topic, but selected subjectively, which means that these documents do not always fully and proportionately cover all the relations of China analysed in the dissertation.

Thirdly, we also used the official statistics to analyse the economic relations of China. In the dissertation we processed all the basic economic data, which characterize the status and growth path of the Chinese economy or the bi- and multilateral economic relations of China (such as the EU-China, the US-China, the Africa-China, or the ASEAN-China relations). We also use these data to make charts and graphs to demonstrate better the changes and turning points in those relations. To be consistent, we tend to use the data of the National Bureau of Chinese Statistics because some data can be found only in Chinese sources, and these statistics are often utilized by the international organizations as well.

Personal experience is also an important additional source of the dissertation which is based on a ten-year interest in the topic, on my work experience as a researcher of the Institute of World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences since 2010 and also on my

experience as a consultant of the government commissioner dealing with the development of the Hungarian-Chinese relations between 2006 and 2010.

Regarding the research method, as the dissertation has been written in the field of international relations, we use a multi-disciplinary approach, namely we combine the method and approach of international politics, international economics, history, and sometimes international law. The time frame of the dissertation ranges from 1949 to present days but in the analysis we basically focus on the post-Cold War period, particularly on the post-millennium decade. The analysis is carried out simultaneously on three levels by using the methods of comparison, historical analysis and statistical evaluation. These three levels are not sharply separated from each other, and tend to characterize the whole dissertation in order to draw a more realistic picture and a sound conclusion.

During the research, we used mainly the method of comparative analysis since we compared the writings and results of other researchers with each other on the one hand, and with our own opinion and ideas on the other hand. The differences between the North American, Western European, Chinese and Central and Eastern European viewpoints regarding China made it especially necessary to compare and confront these views in order to get a comprehensive picture of China's great power qualities and potential.

The next level of the analysis is the historical approach, in which we examine – by analysing past and present diplomatic events, documents and declarations - how both the Chinese worldview and the world's image of China have changed in the last decades. The statistical analysis takes place in connection with this historical context. By combining these two levels of analysis, interesting conclusions can be made about the changes in the attitude of some countries and regions towards China. In this way, for example, connection can be found between the softening of the positions of some EU member states concerning the arms embargo on China and the growth in their Chinese arms exports, as the arms embargo doesn't cover non-lethal weapons. But if we take a look at the question of granting the market economy status to China, the same process can be observed: if a larger amount of Chinese FDI appears in a European country, that country's approach toward this question will certainly improve.

The dissertation tends to approach its topic from several aspects; its concept is to describe the development and characteristics of the Chinese great power in the light of its foreign political history and external economic background. The former relations with the regions of the world economy, the method of the relationship building – and the changes in it – are all contribute to

the understanding of how China sees its great power role, with whom and to what extent it wants to cooperate in the future: who can be a real strategic partner, who will be a “henchman” and will there be a competitor at all?

The dissertation consists of five main units. The “Introduction” chapter is followed by a historical retrospect (“Chinese foreign policy and great power politics of China from 1949”) which analyses the development of Chinese foreign policy and foreign economic policy from the inward-looking isolationist policy, through the primer steps of “reform and openness”, till the doctrine of “peaceful rise”. This chapter aims to show that China consciously prepared itself for the great power status from the very beginning but mainly from the late seventies, however it didn’t want this position immediately but chose the path of deliberate progress. For the sake of robust economic development, China studied other – including foreign – practices, it tested the impact of foreign capital in special economic zones, while its foreign policy slowly went beyond the aim of reaching economic goals and appeared as a global factor in international issues concerning its own region first and global questions later.

The next chapter deals with the potential partners of China – the United States, the European Union and the developing world – in three subchapters. In all of these subchapters we examine the historical background of the relationship first, then analyse the most important topics of these relationship, namely the main issues which hamper or – on the contrary – promote closer ties of cooperation.

In the case of Sino-US relations, a number of debates create tensions between the two countries: China’s military development, the Taiwan question, human rights abuses, trade deficit and the exchange rate debate. The number and depth of these tensions suggest that the strategic alliance between China and the United States won’t be able to exceed the level of competing partnership, there won’t be a cooperating “G2”, these two powers cannot be real partners just rivals, although strategic ones. The relationship between the European Union and China is also encumbered with some tensions, some of them also political – such as the questions of human rights, Tibet and the arms embargo –, but those are rather rhetorical questions thanks to the increasingly closer economic ties between them. There are some economic debates as well – such as the questions of market economy status, intellectual property rights and sustainable development – but the two entities are more flexible and incline to cooperate. The final conclusion of this subchapter is that although both China and the EU have still a lot to develop separately and jointly too, their real strategic partnership is more likely than a strong China-US cooperation.

The last subchapter of the third chapter deals with a more complex relationship, namely China's relation to the developing world. Although we analyse a lot of countries and regions, different in many ways from each other, there are several common features in their relationship with China. These countries and regions were mostly under the supremacy – or in the economic sphere – of other powers due to their colonial past or other historical reason. This historic dependence prevailed in the modern era as well and resulted in a hierarchical relationship, where the developed state still wants to dictate and intends to enforce its own rules and system to the developing state. Today, the Chinese expansion questions the leadership of the US and Europe in Latin America, Africa, East Asia, and the leading role of Russia in Central Asia. China offers a friendly partnership and win-win cooperation to the developing countries and often stresses that it wants to treat them as equal partners. Although this is not always the reality, China tries to ensure the benefits for both sides and create lasting values indeed. The “Chinese package” contains the variety of concession contracts, the development of local infrastructure, preferential loans, agreements on debt remission, aids and preferential conditions to improve the developing country's export potential. In the spirit of great power relationship building, in this subchapter we also deal with China's role within the BRIC group, and the opportunities and potential for cooperation between them.

Through the conclusions and outcomes of the previous chapters, the fourth chapter characterizes and defines the great power of China by analysing the main features of it. In the first subchapter (“Ideologies and ideas in the foreign policy”), we examine how the ideologies and teachings – such as nationalism or Confucianism – compatible with – and contribute to – China's great power ambitions. Just as the Chinese state building was historically linked to nation building, nationalism is also an integral part of Chinese great power consciousness and vice versa. Although nationalism used to be a disputed ideology till the 90s, now it serves the whole nation and creates unity over Chinese ethnic diversity. In ancient times, Confucianism – as the official state ideology – had created a close relationship between dynasties, thus ensuring continuity. Since then, the imperial era has ended, but the Confucian doctrines and principles have not disappeared, in fact, the Chinese leadership rediscovered those and applies them again.

The next subchapter (“The methods of the great power: soft power and economic power”) reveals that China's current power policy differs from both its own previous foreign policy and those of other major powers, as it uses the tools of soft power rather than hard power. Although China doesn't neglect its military development, but those – according to the official

Chinese positions – are primarily to protect the country, namely the Chinese leadership just wants to “inform the world” that they have all range of weapons and tools of modern military. In the case of China, the concept of soft power is beyond the scope defined by Nye, as in addition to culture, education, internal and external policy also the economic steps – such as aids, financial and infrastructural investments – are closely related to it. To go on with this train of thought, the Chinese assistance provided during the Asian financial crisis in 1997-1998 and also the Chinese purchases of European government bonds recently after the crisis can be considered as part of this process. However, it is true that neither of those assistances was pro bono activity, since China gained profit in both cases.

The third subchapter (“Internal transformation of the great power”) analyses the process of China’s internal transformation, both the signs of the potential shift in its economic model and the signals of democratization – with our own word formation: “sinocratization”. In China, there are already more elections than anywhere else in the world, however this process appears only on the level of village committees. At the same time, the Chinese Communist Party already declared its intention to open up higher governmental levels to the possibility of freedom of choice. In this chapter we show that the acceptance and adaptation of some specific features of democracy means that sooner or later the economic modernization and transformation will be followed by political reforms, particularly in order to maintain the legitimacy of the party.

The last chapter (“Conclusion”) summarizes all the relevant information described in the previous chapters and subchapters, evaluates the hypotheses and also explains what objectives will China have as a great power and what kind of world order would be suitable for it. Neither a unipolar, nor a bipolar world is desirable for China, since it believes in multipolarity, where the United States and the European Union can be power poles just like the members of the BRIC group.

3. Results of the dissertation: the evaluation of hypotheses

3.1. Birth of a new type of great power

(H1) The great power of China will not be a hegemonic power with unipolar goals. Its methods, behaviour and attitudes also differ from those of the former great powers.

Although many people fear it, there is no real “China threat” just a country with huge size and great performance, which would like to be an active part of the world order, and wants to act and behave responsibly following the ideology of “peaceful rise”. This great power also differs from other powers, since it prefers to use the methods and tools of its soft power instead of hard power, when building relations with other regions and countries. Global dominance is not part of its great power ambitions but it wants to continue its growth and development, it wants to familiarize China with the world to dispel the fears about China’s growth, to prevent the formation of anti-China coalitions arising from such misunderstandings and to secure status quo. Actually, China will never be a single hegemonic power, a superpower like the US, and not only because it is still a developing country in many respects but also because China doesn’t aspire to such honours, as it doesn’t want to finance and control all the problems of the world, it helps only when it fits its own strategy or suits its own interests. The Chinese understanding of power is special: China has never been an imperialist power, and still doesn’t want to shape the world into its own image, it looks for cooperation and harmony in its external relations, which – of course – does not mean that it would eschew profit motives.

Analysing the relations, characteristics and processes in the chapters of the dissertation, we can see an interesting duality which the earlier great powers did not possess: China is a developing and a developed country at the same time, it bears the main features of both type of countries, so it can find a common ground and perspective with both types of actors of the world. These attributes are complemented by the great power consciousness composed of Chinese nationalism and Confucianism, which results in a great power that is strong and confident but respectful, different from the other powers in its assets and approaches, has the ability to renew itself, while being both deliberate and innovative. If one of the leading players of the international system differs from the previous ones, it may have an impact on the international system itself as well. While for some countries it is the real “China threat”, it means hope and opportunity for others.

3.2. Multipolar balance of power – partners and competitors

(H2) As a great power, China is looking for cooperation with other major powers, in the course of this, it seeks a multipolar balance of power. During this relationship building, both the United States and the European Union are important partners for China, however, the EU will rather be a real strategic partner for China, while the U.S. remains a competitor.

The multipolar worldview is sympathetic to China because it can seek after a leading position – a great power role – without taking the tasks and responsibilities of a unipolar or a bipolar power. China builds its own sphere of influence, where it could decide – based on its own economic and political interests – where and to what extent it should cooperate with other regions and countries.

In a multipolar world, the United States and the European Union can be poles, just like the BRIC countries. In the spirit of this, China builds its bilateral ties with the main power poles of the world. Analysing the opportunities for cooperation between these poles, we conclude that the relationship between China and the US is troubled with many contradictions and problematic issues, originated in the different way of thinking, different ideologies and power asymmetries. However, there are also some contradictions in the case of EU-China relations, these are easier to resolve than in the case of Sino-American relations, since the relation with the European Union is not endangered by such serious tensions and the EU is more open to the cooperation. The EU can efficiently supplement China on such global issues like poverty, climate change, the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, or human rights, moreover, multipolarity is a common purpose for China and the EU, while the US is wedded to its comfortable hegemonic world order.

In the case of the cooperation between Russia, India, Brazil and China, the countries are very well aware of the opportunities for cooperation, therefore they are mutually willing to make gestures and concessions too.

3.3. China as the leader of the developing world

(H3) As a great power, China is becoming the mouthpiece, opinion leader, an increasingly important investor and finally the leading power of the developing world. In Central and East Asia, the role of China is already unshakeable, while in its African and Latin American relations, China not only meets its demand for energy and raw material but also significantly contributes to the economic growth of these areas.

Next to the main poles of power, also the countries of the developing world represent an increasingly important role in Chinese foreign policy. Beijing has been building its bilateral relations in this field for decades, although the period of the last ten to fifteen years is more decisive in this field. China builds its own sphere of influence in the developing world as well, but it constantly pays attention to make this cooperation mutually beneficial and useful to all of the parties involved in it.

Regarding the East and Southeast Asian relations, the strategic importance of the region for China is undisputable and in some cases, it is also easier for China to cooperate, thanks to their common – historical and/or geographical – roots. The development of a close relationship with these countries was important from the early stages of the Chinese foreign policy, even in the isolationist era. In this spirit, China supported the Southeast Asian economies in 1997-1998, and participates in the ASEAN +3 and ASEAN +6 processes. For a long time Central Asia seemed to be a place for US-Russian competition, but today it is much more likely that the Chinese influence will be strengthened in this region while pushing the other two powers into the background. This process also raises some geopolitical questions, since today the states of Central Asia can have a major key role in deciding issues such as energy policy or the war on terror.

On the one hand, for the other developing countries, especially for African and Latin American states, China offers a great opportunity to break out from poverty and isolation and to reduce their foreign political and economical dependence on Europe and North America. On the other hand, these countries might prefer to listen to a power which is successfully developing for decades with a development path different from that in the West, it is still a developing country just like them, and has no political requirements.

3.4. Increasingly modernized and „democratized” economy and state

(H4) China’s great power transformation is accompanied by an internal transformation, where the special type of development creates a uniquely modernized Chinese state. The reason for this „democratization” is not just internal but it is also part of the preparation for the future great power commitments, as a modernized and democratized China will be a more acceptable partner for the West while it also offers a more appropriate model for the rest of the world.

The global conformity necessarily involves economic and political constraints. China has to face many internal economic and social problems resulting from its own economic development, for example it has to tackle problems of the people living in the periphery, such as the income gap or social cohesion. However, it would be too early to bury the Chinese one-party system, as it has been able to renew itself from time to time, the Chinese people are proud of the country's economic and foreign political successes, consider the result as their own and see the rise of their country as a continuation of a previously interrupted legitimate process. The problems China is facing are real and major but not insolvable, if the appropriate reforms are coupled with the patience of the people. For China, this might really have a chance.

However, the internal political transformation of China is not only a constrain, forced by the globalization process, but an ambitious strategy, which was laid down by Deng Xiaoping and Mao Zedong (who was also thinking of developing a so called “new type of democracy”). According to the 2007 party congress, the political reforms are no longer a possibility but a necessity, because the Chinese Communist Party committed itself to improve democracy in a specific way and sense. According to Yu Keping, „democracy is a good thing, but that does not mean that everything about democracy is good”, it is full with internal inadequacies and contradictions. Nevertheless, there is no socialism without democracy, just like there is no modernization without democracy as president Hu Jintao mentioned it earlier (Yu [2008] pp. 3-5). So in China, the idea of democracy is not accepted unconditionally either, i.e. not in its western sense. China transforms the idea of democracy to its own image, adapts it and utilizes just some features and institutions of it. In order to easier understand it more easily in the West, we can call this “democratization” process – with our own word formation –

“sinocratization”, while the result of it can be called “sinocracy”, which is actually – with the terminology of Deng Xiaoping – democracy with Chinese characteristics. This process has started already, there are free elections in local politics, jurisdiction has been modernized as well, and the modest welfare of society (“xiaokang”) is a declared political goal of the Party. The “sinocratization” is, however, a slow process, is not characterized by drastic and sudden changes, while its special purpose is to create a “deliberative democracy” which will be carried out by the party leadership, and work under the control of it in the future as well.

4. Summary of conclusions

In our opinion, the Chinese great power is different from the previous great powers in many aspects. But if one of the major players of the international system has different characteristics from the previous ones, it will certainly affect the international system itself. This raises the question whether China can provide a model to other countries. China's economic system – which is socialist, capitalist and has special Chinese characteristics at the same time – is very successful, able to survive crises and – although facing several problems – it has the ability to renew itself, in this way, it can be attractive to many developing countries. The “democracy with Chinese characteristics”, which we call “sinocracy”, can also provide a model to all the countries that have tried – if tried at all – unsuccessfully the adoption of the Western-style democracy. But does China want to create and export models, does it want to become an economic or political pattern for other countries? We do not think so. “Sinocracy” as a political model is still evolving, its applicability is a question of the future, while the economic model is specially designed for China. The Chinese leaders rarely mention the phrase “model”, they prefer to speak about “socialism with Chinese characteristics” or a “socialist market economy”, of which we know that it is rather capitalist than socialist nowadays, but its special Chinese character is undisputable.

China’s adapted methods and strategy are specific and unique, so those may not inevitably lead to similar results elsewhere. Tálas also mentions that the Chinese typically avoid the use of the phrase “Chinese model” (Tálas [2011] p. 297), which also suggests that they don’t have “world saviour plans” with it. The “Chinese model” is in fact a model for catching up, a particular set of economical and political ideas, where the state, i.e. the central governance has a special role. According to Tálas, this model is not static but dynamic, and its domestic – and also its potential foreign – success will depend on how it will be able to meet the economic

and social problems that China is facing (Talas [2011], p. 321). However, it's a fact that the essence of Chinese success – at least partly – lies in the mixture and the appropriate adaptation of existing methods, which strategy is worth to try for others too. Therefore, if the Chinese economic model will meet the challenges it faces, while the model of “sinocracy” will live up to the expectations, then these methods and patterns will have a good chance to appear – partly or as a whole – in the countries of the developing world. However, China will never force its “models”, methods or attitudes on others, as it would undermine the essential element of these.

Concerning China's declared great power ambitions, the trio of sovereignty, stability and development can be identified as strategic interests. Sovereignty refers primarily to territorial integrity and national unity, stability means political stability, namely the stability of the Party and the political system, while development refers to sustainable economic and social development. To achieve these goals, a new and more sophisticated strategy is emerging in China. In the spirit of this strategy, the Chinese approach to security is transforming, namely it takes into account the economic and non-traditional challenges beside the political and traditional military interests; in this spirit, Chinese diplomacy becomes more multilateral, and issue-oriented; the economic development is transforming; while new values and ideologies appears in Chinese politics and everyday life.

The days of Deng Xiaoping's strategy of “keeping a low profile” are gone, and China is becoming more and more active, participating in international life, stepping up as a responsible world power on the global stage. This evolving international responsibility has multiple roots as – besides the classical meaning of it – China has to measure up to the expectations as a great power, as a huge developing country and also as a member of the UN Security Council. The increased responsibility of China just partly originates in the growing expectations the country is facing. It is true that more and more – especially developing – countries expect China to represent heir interests, while other – mostly the developed – countries expect China to use its increased influence and power to stabilize the current world order, but as a matter of fact, this new kind of responsibility is also in China's own interest: as the Chinese economy is growing and expanding globally, the Chinese interests are spreading all over the world as well, which means that China is becoming increasingly interested in the stability and prosperity of these regions.

The concept of “harmonious world” is in fact China's first official idea of the international order, and vision about what the world – and China within that – should be like. The Chinese

have recognized that their stability, growth and development can have a positive impact on the world and vice versa, as the cooperation with other regions and countries is essential for the development of China, while Chinese growth is also indispensable for global prosperity. Just as President Hu Jintao stated at the 17th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party: “China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the world enjoy stability and prosperity without China”¹.

¹ Quote from President Hu Jintao’s speech at the 17th Party Congress, 2007. Source: China Daily, 25 October, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-10/25/content_6204667.htm (7 June 2012)

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