

# Chapter 8

## How China thinks about national security

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### Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, China's thinking about national security has changed greatly. During the Cold War, China viewed its national security mainly in terms of its struggles against the hegemony of one of the two superpowers or even against that of both superpowers and their followers. At present, China has been attaching most importance to the trend of globalisation, which has had positive and negative impacts on the country's national security. On the positive side, China's involvement in economic globalisation has increased its national strength and the range of interests it shares with other countries. On the negative side, China has faced a growing number of non-traditional threats, such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), global warming, environmental pollution, transnational crime, drug trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and so on. So, although military security is still very important for China, it is increasingly concerned about non-traditional security issues, such as energy, food and environmental security, financial security, information security, and so on. In order to resolve these issues, China and other countries have to cooperate more with each other.

During recent years, therefore, China has accepted some new concepts of security featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination.

In December 2004, China formally put forward its national security strategy, which should be subordinated to and should serve its National Development Strategy (NDS). Since the early 1980s, China has been focusing its efforts on internal economic development in order to improve the living standard and educational levels of its people. China will continue to move forward in this way for some time. The long-term purpose of the NDS is to make China a mid-level developed country, which will be strong, democratic and civilised, by 2050 ('The report of Jiang Zemin at the 15<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party', *People's Daily*, Beijing, 12 September 1997). To achieve this objective, China will continue to pursue its policy of reform and opening up, and it needs a peaceful international environment in the long term, particularly

with respect to its immediate geographic surroundings. This means that China does not want to do anything to seriously disturb the current international economic and political mechanisms, except when its national interests are threatened. Even if China can achieve its planned objective, because of its large population and the fact that its economic development is very unbalanced, it will continue to focus its attention on internal issues. At the same time, the more prosperous China becomes, the more cooperative it will be with other countries, because, in such circumstances, China will be influenced more easily by the outside world.

China has been pursuing its independent foreign policy of peace since the mid 1980s. The objective of China's foreign policy is to maintain a peaceful international environment, which will be beneficial for China's long-term economic and social development. There are four outstanding characteristics in China's current foreign policy: peace, independence, mutual respect and cooperation. First, China's foreign policy is formulated from the viewpoint of whether it is beneficial to international and regional peace and stability, rather than from the viewpoint of achieving military superiority. Second, with regard to independence, China formulates its foreign policy according to its national interests and the common interests of the peoples of all the countries in the world. Mutual respect indicates that China would like to put its relations with other countries on a base of mutual respect, and would like to see international political, security and non-proliferation agreements based on mutual respect between the member parties. Cooperation indicates that China would like to continue its cooperation based on its 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence' with all the countries in the world, including the United States, and would like to realise a concert between the major powers.

## **New thinking in China's national security strategy**

China's leadership has formulated its national security strategy for the next 20 years. There is remarkable continuity in China's current foreign and security strategies. There is, however, also something new in them.

China's leadership has tried to put forward some creative and new concepts, which will become theories for guiding further economic and political reforms in China, and will lead China to further integrate itself into international society and become a responsible power in the world, especially with regard to its neighbours. Since China began its policy of reform and opening up at the end of 1970s, it has been making great progress in integrating itself into international economic and political mechanisms. The more closely China integrates itself into international mechanisms, the more willing it will be to play a responsible role in the international community.

In recent years, the Chinese economy has been developing steadily. If China can maintain the pace of economic development, it will be among the major powers in the world by the middle of the twenty-first century. Whether China can become a responsible great power or not will depend on internal and external factors. Those factors can be divided into subjective ones and objective ones, among which international mechanisms will play an important role. The world will benefit from the peaceful rise of China as a responsible power in the international community.

### **Three major tasks for China in the twenty-first century**

In the twenty-first century, there are the three major tasks for China: to propel its drive for modernisation; to achieve national reunification; and to safeguard world peace and promote common development.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike China's three historical tasks in the twentieth century, as put forth by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s, the three major tasks for this century make no mention of 'anti-hegemony'. The new formulation indicates that China has focused on safeguarding world peace and promoting common development in its foreign and security policies. This does not mean that China will not oppose hegemony. In the future, if a country pursues hegemonic policies or actions, China will oppose them. It does indicate, however, that in China's current political dictionary, 'hegemony' does not refer to a particular country, such as the United States.

Furthermore, the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government declared again that China would never seek hegemony and would never pursue expansion. Furthermore, China has constructively put forward the concept of the establishment of a harmonious world with lasting peace and universal prosperity as its long-term objective. At the same time, China has incorporated the concept of 'people first' into its diplomacy.

### **A period of important strategic opportunity**

The first two decades of the twenty-first century will be a period of important strategic opportunity for China. During this period, China will focus its attention on building a prosperous society in a comprehensive manner. The objectives of China's modernisation are to quadruple the gross domestic product (GDP) of 2000 by 2020, and to become a mid-level developed country by 2050. In order to achieve these objectives, China needs a peaceful and stable international security environment beneficial for its economic development.

Although there are still some regional wars and armed conflicts in the world, such as the war in Iraq, peace and development remain the main themes of the era. At the same time, the trends of multipolarisation in the world and democracy in international relations have been playing an important role in restricting

hegemony and power politics. These conditions will be conducive to the maintenance of a peaceful environment in the long-term, internationally and in China's periphery.

### **Keeping pace with global trends and safeguarding the common interests of all mankind**

Due to economic globalisation, the common interests of all mankind have become more evident. China is ready to work with the international community to boost global multipolarisation, promote the harmonious coexistence of diverse forces and maintain stability in the international community. China will continue to improve and develop relations with developed countries. Proceeding from the fundamental interests of all countries concerned, China will broaden the converging points of common interests and properly settle differences on the basis of its Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, notwithstanding differences in social systems and ideologies. China has been cooperating with the United States and other countries in anti-terrorism efforts and in dealing with regional security problems, such as the North Korean nuclear crisis.

### **New concepts of security featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination**

Since the end of the Cold War, China has changed its security concepts greatly according to the new international situation and the interests of the Chinese people, as well as the aspirations of the peoples of the world for peace and development. China thinks that in order to obtain lasting peace, it is imperative to abandon the Cold War mentality, cultivate a new concept of security and seek a new way to safeguard peace. China holds that countries should trust one another, work together to maintain security and to resolve disputes through dialogue and cooperation, and should not resort to or threaten to use force. It has been proved that the new concepts of security are in keeping with the trends of the era and have great vitality.

China holds that the core of the new security concept should be mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination.<sup>2</sup> The new security concept should also be the guide for resolving disputes in international security.

The new security concepts China has adopted include the following.

1. The concept of 'mutual security'. During the Cold War, the concept of 'zero-sum games' played the most important role in international politics. With the end of the Cold War, countries should accept the concept of 'mutual security' because of the changed situation. We should oppose any country building its absolute security on the insecurity of others.
1. The concept of cooperative security. At present, all countries are facing many non-traditional security threats or transnational problems, such as

environmental problems, global warming, drug trafficking, terrorism, proliferation of WMD, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), HIV/AIDS, and so on. They should make common efforts and cooperate to deal with these challenges.

1. The concept of comprehensive security rather than military security. Since the end of the Cold War, although geopolitical, military security and ideological factors still play important roles in some politicians' minds, the role of economic factors is becoming more prominent in international relations. Thus, all countries should make great efforts to settle divergences and disputes between them through peaceful means.

### **Cementing China's friendly ties with its neighbours and building good-neighbourly relations and partnerships with them**

China regards this policy as an important part of its effort to maintain a long-term stable and peaceful international security environment. China will step up regional cooperation and increase exchanges and cooperation with surrounding countries.

### **China's peaceful rise**

China's peaceful rise comprises the rise of peace, rise by peace and rise for peace. China needs long-term peace in the international environment for its economic and social development..

Since the early 1980s, China has been focusing its efforts on internal economic development in order to improve the living standards and educational levels of its people. China will continue to move forward in this way into the future. The mid-term purpose of China's NDS is to quadruple the GDP of 2000 by 2020. The first two decades of the twenty-first century will be a period of important strategic opportunity for China. During this period, China will focus its attention on building a prosperous society.

The long-term purpose of China's NDS is to make China a mid-level developed country, which will be strong, democratic, civilised and harmonious, by 2050. To achieve this objective, China will continue to pursue a policy of reform and opening up. The objective of China's national security strategy is to defend its national interests of sovereignty, security and development, and to maintain a long-term peaceful and stable international security environment beneficial to China's economic development. In order to achieve this objective, China will continue to follow the road of peaceful development, stick to the combination of development and security and strive for the enhancement of national strategic capability. China will also wield pluralistic means of security to deal with traditional and non-traditional security threats, and seek comprehensive national

security of politics, economics, finance, the military and society. This means that China would like to continue its role as a responsible stakeholder in the international system.

China has been pursuing its independent foreign policy of peace since the mid 1980s. The objective of this policy is to strive for a peaceful international environment, which will be beneficial to China's long-term economic and social development. In recent years, China has held that safeguarding security requires new concepts. Thus, China advocates the 'new security concepts', which regard mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination as their core. At the same time, the purpose of the new security concepts is to improve mutual trust through dialogue and to spur common security through cooperation.<sup>3</sup> Recently, China put forward the concept of establishing a harmonious world with lasting peace and universal prosperity.<sup>4</sup> China also stressed its intention to go along the road of peace, development and cooperation as a member of the international community.

## **Chinese views on soft and hard power**

In today's world, the concept of comprehensive national power has been extended to include:

- 'hard power', including population, land, natural resources, military forces, and so on
- 'soft power', including appeal to, cohesion and charm of civilisations and cultures, especially image, concepts of value, political stability and 'correct' policies of countries
- bonding power, including the capabilities of economics and trade to spur economic interdependence between countries
- creative power, including creative capabilities such as science, culture, management and the mechanisms and systems of countries
- national will power, including capabilities for strategic decision making and determination to pursue national strategies.

## **How will China work in the UN Security Council in the future?**

From 1949 to the 1970s, China was outside the international system and even acted as a revolutionary against it. Since the beginning of China's reform and openness in the 1980s, it has gradually integrated itself into the current international economic and security system. Especially since late 1990s, China has been a responsible power in the international system. On 20 April 2006, US President George W. Bush said, 'We welcome the rise of a peaceful and prosperous China, which is also supportive of the international system. As the stakeholders of the international system, our two countries share many common

strategic interests.’<sup>5</sup> China would like to continue its role as a responsible stakeholder. From the late 1980s to the early 2000s, China said that it favoured establishing a new international political and economic order that was fair and rational. Now China stresses that it stands for pushing the international order towards fairness and rationality.

The United Nations is still the core of the current international system. China will play a more positive and active role in the UN Security Council in the future, and will support the reform and strengthening of this core institution.

China’s role in the UN Security Council in the future will be governed by the following principles:

1. China will play its role in international society not only according to its national interests, but in order to benefit regional and world peace, development, stability and prosperity
2. China will respond to its international obligations positively and actively
3. China will provide public goods in international and regional affairs.

Since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, there have been some new developments in the international strategic situation. First, non-state actors challenging sovereign states have become important factors, in which terrorism is the most salient threat in the international security and political fields. Second, non-traditional security problems, especially terrorism and the proliferation of WMD, have posed an increasingly serious threat to international society. Third, asymmetrical war has become one of the main forms of warfare. The conflict in Afghanistan between the coalition forces led by the United States and the Taliban along with al Qaeda and the Iraq war are examples of such asymmetrical war. The new developments in the international strategic situation have spurred the major powers to strengthen their cooperation to deal with the new threats and challenges.

The new framework for strategic cooperation and stability between the major powers in the twenty-first century should be established on a new theoretical foundation. At present, the international security situation is undergoing deep changes. The scope of security has been enlarged to encompass not only military issues, but those related to politics, economics, finance, science and technology, culture, and so on. The common interests between countries in the security field have greatly increased, and the interdependence between countries has been strengthened. The models of interaction between countries in the security field are also changing, turning from the original ‘zero-sum’ games to ‘win-win’ or ‘win-win-win’ models. Military means are not enough for dealing with varied security challenges, so it will be necessary to have new means and concepts to maintain stability and peace and to prevent nuclear proliferation.

The trend of globalisation has been imposing great pressure on the international system and has spurred potentially significant changes. The international system includes four major parts: major international actors, the international power structure, international regulation of interaction, and international institutions. In recent years, with the development of economic globalisation, multipolarisation and the democratisation of international relations, the four parts have been in transformation.

Although nation-states are still the major international actors, many non-state international actors have been greatly increasing their influence, including international intergovernmental organisations, transnational corporations and international non-governmental organisations. International terrorist organisations, such as al Qaeda, are also important international actors. These new non-state international actors have caused the diversification of the major international actors. On the one hand, new non-state international actors have offered new challenges to states and sovereignty, and international terrorist organisations have posed serious threats to international security and stability. On the other hand, new non-state international actors have also provided new opportunities for the international community. For example, international intergovernmental organisations have contributed to international and regional cooperation, and transnational corporations have been contributing to international trade and investment.

Since the end of the Cold War, the international power structure has been in significant and profound transformation. We should examine its evolution during the era of globalisation from a number of angles. On the whole, the international power structure has been trending towards multipolarity. In the world economy, the structural concept of a 'centre margin' has given way to the notion of 'tectonic plates'. The centre of gravity of world politics and economics has been shifting from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific area.

New thinking on international relations and new regulation of interactions, such as win-win or win-win-win models and the new security concepts, have been developing and colliding with the Cold War mentality and old thinking, such as zero-sum games, which run counter to current international trends. The results of these collisions will have important effects on the transformation of the international system.

International institutions have also been undergoing reform.

## **China's current policy towards East Asia**

At present, cementing friendly ties with its neighbours is a priority of China's foreign policy. China is doing its best to build good-neighbourly relations and partnerships with them. East Asia is one of the most important areas for China. In recent years, China has sought not only to improve bilateral relations with



other East Asian countries, but to place increasing importance on regionalism and regionalisation in East Asia. The Korean Peninsula is one of China's most important neighbouring areas and China deals with Korean issues from a regional or East Asian perspective.

Although the process of regional economic integration and security cooperation in East Asia, compared with the European Union, has had a late start, during recent years regional institutions have made significant progress, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. These regional institutions have been playing an increasingly important role in the economic and security arenas in East Asia.

These institutions can be divided into diverse types. The first type includes those institutions focused on economic issues, such as APEC. The second type includes those focused on security issues, such as the ARF. The third type are those that deal with economic and security issues, such as ASEAN, ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1 and the EAS.

These institutions are at different levels of development in terms of economic cooperation or security dialogue and cooperation. With regard to economic integration, ASEAN is more advanced than other institutions. Some institutions are still in the process of formation. For example, in North-East Asia, the six-party talks on North Korea could develop gradually into an important mechanism for subregional security dialogue and cooperation, if the North Korean nuclear issue can be resolved within its framework.

ASEAN+3 could develop into one of the most important institutions of regional economic integration and security cooperation. The Asian financial crisis of 1997 made ASEAN member states realise that it was necessary for them to promote regional cooperation with the rest of East Asia. This is because it is difficult for ASEAN, a group of developing countries with small markets and insufficient capital, to overcome crises simply by strengthening cohesiveness. So far, ASEAN has achieved economic development through participation in dynamic trade and investment relations in East Asia. Consequently, it is essential for ASEAN to strengthen cooperation with other East Asian countries, such as China, Japan and South Korea, to overcome its economic difficulties and achieve its long-term development. In November 1997, the first ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea) summit meeting was held. At the Manila meeting in November 1999, the leaders of ASEAN+3 issued a joint statement on East Asian cooperation, in which they agreed to strengthen cooperation in a broad range of fields, including politics, security, economics and culture. Cooperation in the economic and social fields was emphasised.

In line with these developments, at the first ASEAN+3 meeting of economic ministers held in Yangon, Myanmar, in May 2000, the ministers agreed to promote cooperation in nine specific fields, including expanded trade and investment, the information technology (IT) sector and Mekong Basin development. They shared the view that the meeting could provide a valuable opportunity for further collaboration, promote a cohesive response to the challenge of globalisation and consolidate the region's role as a world growth centre.

ASEAN+3 cooperation has made great strides in the financial field. In May 2000, the ASEAN+3 finance ministers gathered in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and agreed to promote measures to strengthen financial cooperation under the so-called Chiang Mai Initiative. Previously, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand had concluded currency swap agreements worth US\$40 million to prevent the recurrence of a currency crisis. Under the Chiang Mai Initiative, these agreements were expanded to include other ASEAN states and China, Japan and South Korea. In addition, the finance ministers agreed to build a 'repo' network of securities repurchasing agreements among ASEAN+3 members (National Institute for Defence Studies 2001:81). The progress of ASEAN+3 cooperation in the financial field reflects the fact that during the Asian financial crisis in 1997, East Asian countries were unable to receive meaningful assistance from the United States and the European Union. East Asian countries had little influence on the policy of the international financial institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which were under the strong influence of the United States and major European countries. In light of this experience, East Asian countries recognised the need to prepare their own countermeasures in case of another financial crisis.

At the fourth ASEAN+3 summit meeting, held in Singapore in November 2000, the leaders reaffirmed the importance of promoting the Chiang Mai Initiative and agreed to organise a study group with a view to creating an East Asian Free Trade Area (National Institute for Defence Studies 2001:81). Since then, a framework for cooperation in trade, as well as finance, has been developing among the ASEAN+3. With economic interdependence between countries in East Asia growing, ASEAN+3 cooperation in the economic field is expected to strengthen in the coming years.

The establishment of the new strategic stability framework between major powers will be beneficial for the long-term peaceful and stable international security environment, which is necessary for China's economic development and national interests. It will also be conducive to global stability and security, including in the Asia-Pacific region, and to China's continuing role as a responsible power, benefiting the interests of all other nations.

China's East Asian policy focuses on continuing to cement China's friendly ties with its neighbours, and persists in building good-neighbourly relations and partnerships with them. China regards this policy as an important part of its greater efforts to seek and maintain a stable and peaceful international security environment in the long term. China will step up regional cooperation, and increase its exchanges and cooperation with its surrounding countries to a new level.

## **China can cooperate with other countries through regional institutions**

The ASEAN+3 framework has become the most important multilateral institution. It was established when there was growing momentum to strengthen regional cooperation among East Asian countries because of the experience of the Asian currency and financial crisis. Since 1997, the ASEAN+3 summit meeting has been held every year along with various ministerial meetings, such as foreign ministers' meetings, under the ASEAN+3 framework. Thus, the ASEAN+3 framework has acquired significant scope and depth.

Furthermore, since the beginning of the ASEAN+3 process, there have been those who believe that ASEAN+3 should deal not only with economic issues, but in the areas of politics and security, including transnational issues. At the ASEAN+3 summit meeting in Cambodia in November 2002, the leaders expressed their intention to develop counter-terrorism measures. At the same meeting, a clear message was issued in the Chairman's Press Statement urging North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons development program.

China has made great efforts to strengthen economic cooperation and to maintain stability in East Asia through the ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+1 mechanisms. During the sixth ASEAN+3 summit meeting in November 2002, China put forward a 23-point proposal to promote regional cooperation and common prosperity in East Asia. Altogether, China signed or released 11 important documents, including the Framework Agreement on China-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation, which launched the process towards a free trade area between the two sides; the national report on China's participation in the Greater Mekong River subregional development, which set in motion cooperation between China and ASEAN in the Mekong Basin; the joint declaration on non-traditional security issues, which broadened the scope of cooperation in this area; the declaration on a Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which provided the political foundation for a stable South China Sea area; the memorandum of understanding on agricultural cooperation, which initiated moves towards China-ASEAN bilateral cooperation in priority areas; and the Asia Debt Reduction Plan to provide Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar with zero-tariff treatment for most of their exports to China, thus making tangible contributions to poverty eradication in the region. The Chinese leader also proposed a medium to long-term

IT cooperation program. ASEAN members unanimously endorsed his proposal. China–ASEAN cooperation in the priority fields is making solid progress.

Under the ASEAN+3 framework, China can cooperate with other countries on some important issues, such as economics and integration, anti-terrorism, anti-piracy, environmental protection, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and so on.

Trilateral cooperation between China, South Korea and Japan provides a very important multilateral mechanism. Spurred by the first China–South Korea–Japan summit in 1999, trilateral cooperation has promoted cooperation centring on economic, financial and environmental areas towards improving prosperity in the region.

At the China–South Korea–Japan summit held in Cambodia in November 2002, the three countries expressed the view that, based on their relationship of trust, they would further deepen ‘cooperation for prosperity’ and promote trilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas. They also exchanged views regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, the three countries agreed that they would promote trilateral cooperation in the future, prioritising the five areas of economics and trade, information and telecommunications, environmental protection, human resources development and cultural cooperation.

During the summit meeting, some economic research institutions of the three countries submitted a report on a proposal for joint policies and proposed a feasibility study of a China–South Korea–Japan free trade zone and its possible economic impact. The leaders of the three countries endorsed this report in principle and supported the proposed feasibility study on the envisaged free trade zone.

At the China–South Korea–Japan summit held in October 2003, at the initiative of Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, the three countries issued a joint declaration on promoting trilateral cooperation, the first such document issued by the leaders of the three countries. The document defined the basic framework and future direction of trilateral cooperation. In December 2003, China, Japan and South Korea agreed to establish a trilateral committee, to be led by the foreign ministers of the three countries, to undertake research, planning and observation of trilateral cooperation in different fields so as to fulfil the objectives put forward in the joint declaration.

China and South Korea have also made significant progress in their bilateral economic cooperation. In 2002, China’s trade with South Korea reached US\$44.1 billion, up by 22.8 per cent from 2001. China (including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) has replaced the United States as South Korea’s largest export market.

The advancement of China–South Korea–Japan trilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas, such as cooperation for prosperity and stability, is the driving force promoting East Asian cooperation. It is expected that China, Japan and South Korea will take the initiative to further advance specific cooperation with ASEAN countries so that this will lead to the expansion and deepening of regional cooperation in East Asia as a whole.

Through the mechanism of trilateral cooperation, China and South Korea can cooperate in the economic and security fields. At present, China, Japan and South Korea are facing many new security challenges, which can be classified into two fields: non-traditional and traditional.

In non-traditional security sectors, China, Japan and South Korea share many common interests and have to cooperate to deal with them. Furthermore, because these challenges are transnational or global problems, China, Japan and South Korea have also to rely on multilateral institutions.

China has become the biggest trading partner of South Korea and Japan. There is great potential for trade and economic cooperation between China, South Korea and Japan, which would be beneficial not only for the three countries, but for the world economy. In China–South Korea–Japan relations, economic exchange has always been at the forefront, and continues to expand and develop. In order to further speed up trilateral economic cooperation, it is necessary for them to develop a framework for a China–South Korea–Japan free trade area in the near future.

China views its relations with Japan and South Korea from a long-term standpoint, concluding that it is in China's national interest to cooperate actively and positively with other countries, especially its neighbours such as South Korea.

China and other countries share many common objectives and interests within the multilateral institutions of East Asia. Close cooperation between China and other countries will be one of the most important preconditions for the establishment of an East Asian free trade area, which will be one of the most important components of Asian security cooperation. US participation in Asian security cooperation is also necessary.

## **China's strategic culture and its impacts on China's security thinking**

China's strategic culture can be divided into three levels. The highest level is Chinese philosophy. The middle level is China's national strategic culture. The third level is China's military strategic culture and foreign strategic culture.

## Chinese philosophy

Chinese traditional philosophy is based on the belief that heaven and man should match well, which means that people must follow the objective laws or the thinking of heaven and must not violate them.

Chinese philosophy focuses on the concept of harmony, which means that people should live in harmony with other people, with the natural world and within themselves (by facilitating harmony between the mind and body).

Chinese philosophy has stressed peace despite differences, which means that different people can coexist peacefully even though they have different views.

Confucian philosophy stresses benevolence, which includes several important concepts, such as peace, harmony, propriety, righteousness, morality and love. Confucius said: 'Harmony is the right way of the world.' He also said: 'Harmony is precious.'

Mo Zi advocated universal love, which means people should love others without discrimination.

## China's traditional national strategic culture

There are several important features of China's traditional national strategic culture.

- Decision makers should understand military issues, although they must not like war. Because sending troops to fight wars can cause a lot of casualties, they are very dangerous (Zhou 1996:16). Mo Zi even opposed all kind of offensive action.
- China should set an example of morality and excellent culture to neighbouring ethnic peoples and nations to attract them to present tribute to the Chinese emperor. Ancient Chinese thinkers advocated 'associating with benevolent gentlemen and befriending good neighbours'. During ancient times, therefore, China established a regional system of tribute within East Asia.
- Chinese civilisation was originally based on agriculture and farming, so one of its major characteristics was avoidance of expeditions of military force. Since ancient times, Chinese people have emphasised defence instead of offence. When the Chinese created the earliest written script, our ancestors used two pictographs to form the character 'force' (*wu*). One pictograph was 'stop' (*zhi*), the other was 'spear' (*ge*). The underlying logic was that wars should be abandoned as an instrument and the use of force could be justified to stop violence. Especially since the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, China has focused on its existing territory instead of on expansion. In the early fifteenth century, even before the period of Western 'geographic discovery', a great Chinese explorer and sailor named Zhen He led the largest fleet in the world on seven voyages westward. These voyages, reaching as far as the

eastern African coast and the entrance to the Red Sea, took Zhen He to more than 30 countries and regions. Unlike later Western explorers, who conquered the lands they discovered, this fleet did not subdue the newly discovered lands by force. This was not a voyage to plunder the local area for treasure, nor was it one to establish overseas colonies. As decreed by the Chinese Emperor, Zhen He's task was to convey friendship and goodwill and to promote economic and cultural exchanges between China and other Asian as well as African nations.

- Modest rulers can launch a just war against other countries (Zhou 1996:33). Some countries with arrogant rulers should be attacked, especially if they can't share their wealth with their neighbouring countries (Zhou 1996:33).
- Fighting for the reunification of China is justified.

### **China's military strategic culture**

- Winning all wars is not the best; defeating the enemy without any war is the best (Zi 1999:35).
- The best way to defeat an enemy is to use stratagems; the second-best way is to use diplomacy; the third is to launch a war. The worst way is to attack castles, which should be a last resort, when no other alternatives are available (Zi 1999:35).
- Military commanders can use all kinds of stratagems to deceive enemies (Zi 1999:10).

### **China's foreign strategic culture**

- Rulers of countries can make use of triangular relations, such as those during the Three Kingdoms of the Wei, the Shu Han and the Wu (AD 220–80).
- Rulers of countries can make use of marriage, benevolence, favour, trade or high-ranking official positions to attract the rulers of neighbouring ethnic groups or split up enemies.
- Countries can use armed forces as a deterrent for diplomatic purposes.

In sum, in China's strategic culture, at the top level, Chinese philosophy is peace loving. In China, there has been no war between religions, and the three major religions—namely, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism—coexist peacefully. At the middle level, China's traditional national strategic culture preferred defence over offence. If necessary, however, rulers of countries can launch military attacks to defend territory and people or to realise reunification. At the low level, China's military strategic culture and foreign strategic culture were realistic. Alastair Lain Johnston's viewpoint, therefore, that China's strategic culture was hard Realpolitik was wrong or only partly correct, because his research only touched on China's military strategic culture and foreign strategic culture during the Ming Dynasty.

## The impact of China's strategic culture on China-US relations

Chinese philosophy has stressed peace despite differences. The philosophy of liberalism in the United States declares that every person is born equal. Liberalism is interested in multilateralism, international mechanisms and human rights in the international field, so if it becomes mainstream in the United States, the possibility of military competition with China will be reduced and disputes between them over human rights could be increased. Neo-conservative thinking, on the other hand, stresses the rule of the jungle and when this philosophy is politically dominant, China and the United States could have some kind of military competition.

According to China's traditional national strategic culture, China would not challenge the leadership of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world, and would like to have a cooperative relationship with the United States, which would be beneficial for China-US relations.

Because China's military strategic and foreign strategic cultures are realistic, if the United States pursues policies of using military allies and sophisticated weapons against China, China will react. It could lead to a security dilemma between the two countries.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Documents of the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, 2002, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, China, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> China's document on its position regarding New Security Concepts, put forward by the Chinese delegation at the meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, 31 July 2002, Seri Begawan, Brunei (*People's Daily*, Beijing, 2 August 2002, p. 3).

<sup>3</sup> A speech by Tang Jiaxuan, then Chinese Foreign Minister, at the fifty-seventh UN General Assembly, 13 December 2002, New York (*People's Daily*, 16 September 2002, p. 7).

<sup>4</sup> Speech by Hu Jintao, Chinese President, at the Summit Meeting of the United Nations' Sixtieth Anniversary, 15 September 2005 (*People's Daily*, 16 September 2005, p. 1).

<sup>5</sup> Speech by US President, George W. Bush, at the ceremony welcoming Chinese President, Hu Jintao, to the White House, 20 April 2006 (*People's Daily*, Beijing, 21 April 2006, p. 1).